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Christian Outreach to Romany in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia

Frank Dawson

History

Romany (Gypsies) have been part of European history since their arrival in the Balkans beginning in the 1300s. Their dark features and unfamiliar customs have set them apart from the peoples they have encountered. But where did these wanderers come from? The clues to their origin are linked to the Romani language, which scholars have found is closely related to ancient Sanskrit. By tracing linguistic clues, scholars now understand that Romany migrated in repeated waves over centuries from what is now northwest India and Pakistan to Persia and the Byzantine Empire. The expansion of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, which conquered the Byzantine Empire, pushed Romany farther afield, so that by the 1500s they could be found as far west as Europe and as far north as Russia. Many mistakenly assumed these nomads originated in Egypt, hence the name Gypsy (English), Gitano (Spanish), or Gitan (French). They call themselves *Romany* or *Roma* and the name for their language (Romani/Romanes) comes from the word *rom*, meaning "man" or "person."

In Europe many Romany were nomadic and followed wanderers' trades such as metal repair and seasonal work. Today, group names often reflect the traditional occupations of their forefathers (for example, Kalderash: coppersmiths; Curara: sieve makers; Usari: bear trainers). In Eastern Europe Romany were exploited as a source of labor. In parts of Romania they were enslaved as late as 1865. In Europe and Western Russia they were sometimes tolerated, in part because they provided services such as horse trading and entertaining. In Eastern Europe and Russia it was fashionable for wealthy landowners to own Romany musical groups to entertain guests on special occasions. In spite of their professional popularity they were sometimes banished, deported, imprisoned, or simply exterminated. During the Second World War the Nazis killed 80 percent of some Romany populations. Today they continue to face subtle discrimination in the West as well as open hostility in Central and Eastern Europe. European Romany

remain a people on the move, prompted partly by political unrest in the Balkans and the Caucasus and partly by ethnic discrimination in Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and Romania. Romany may be found not only in Europe and Russia (some ten million), but also in North and South America, North Africa, the Middle East, China, and Australia, with a current worldwide population estimated at 40 to 60 million.

Romani, the Language of Romany

Romani, the language, is really a language family. Romany, the people, borrowed linguistically from the lands in which they traveled and from the peoples among whom they now live. Romany speak more than 20 different languages and dialects, some as similar as British English and American English, some as distinct as English and German. Oral tradition and suspicion of outsiders remain so strong that some groups oppose the appearance of their language in written form.

Basic divisions in Romani were perhaps originally geographic, as reflected by the names given to some language families (Balkan from the Balkans, Vlach from an area of Romania/Moldova, and Baltic from the Baltic States). However, language groups now cross many national borders, and many countries may have as many as ten different Romany language groups. Due to political and social pressures some groups have lost their mother tongues while others are taking pains to preserve them.

Christian Ministries among Romany

At first glance it appears that few Christian ministries are active among various Romany groups throughout Eastern Europe and Russia. This misunderstanding is due in large part to the lack of communication and information sharing among those ministering to and alongside Romany. Some groups are having measurable results ministering among Romany by creating partnerships with other ministries, agencies, churches, and individuals. This

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GATIEF identifies responsible, educated Romany believers in each country. These local leaders then take on the responsibility of organizing, selecting, and training those Romany who want to serve the Lord.

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article will focus on only a few of these groups. It is the prayer of this writer that this article will spur more partnerships and more open communication.

Gypsy and Travelers International Evangelical Fellowship

One of the most mobile and widespread ministries working among East European Romany is Gypsy and Travelers International Evangelical Fellowship (GATIEF), a branch of Life and Light Mission, based in Ambares, France, and headed by René Zanellato. In addition to outreach in Eastern Europe and Russia, it also ministers in India, Western Europe, Scandinavia, Greece, North and South America, and Australia. GATIEF's vision is a worldwide Romany-led church movement. Its objective is to "establish mission work and train Romany to lead their own people." GATIEF does this by planting churches, organizing seminars, starting Romany Bible schools, and establishing national Romany-led Christian organizations. In Targu Murés, Romania, GATIEF operates a children's home for Roma orphans and a mobile medical unit that treats 600 to 700 children per month. In addition, GATIEF links and coordinates ministries directed toward Romany, with various Life and Light Missions worldwide, and with other missions, ministries, and churches: Full Gospel Fellowship of America, Cornerstone, Gypsy Christian Churches Movement USA, Los Angeles Romany Church, Gypsy Fellowship Trust of India, and others. To do this, GATIEF workers travel extensively, networking with different ministry leaders, meeting Romany believers, distributing Romany Christian videos and audiocassettes, and facilitating television broadcasts of Christian programs in the Kalderash dialect. In Russia alone GATIEF has Christian television programs in ten different cities.

GATIEF does not send Romany missionaries from France or other countries, but rather it seeks local Romany to be the leaders and missionaries within their countries of residence. GATIEF identifies three or four responsible, educated Romany believers in each country. These local leaders then take on the responsibility of organizing, selecting, and training those Romany who want to serve the Lord. Two years ago Liova, a struggling young Romany believer, received an encouraging telephone call from GATIEF. In the conversation René Zanellato explained God's movement among Romany in many countries and GATIEF's media ministry. Today Liova is working among Romany to establish a church in Ufa, Russia, and is directing the duplication, subtitling, shipping, and broadcasting of Christian videos and television programs in Russia. In Kyrgyzstan, GATIEF is enabling three Romany students to receive training that they will be able to use to minister among the thousands of Romany in Central Asia. So far, most

of GATIEF's work in Eastern Europe and Russia has been among Kalderash-speaking Romany.

The European Romany Team

Another group that has focused ministry specifically on Romany is the European Romany Team (ERT) of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), headquartered in Atlanta, GA. ERT missionaries serve in Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovakia, and Russia. One characteristic of the larger agency, CBF, is that it focuses almost exclusively on unevangelized people groups, giving less attention to geographical/political barriers. This "world without borders" ministry perspective seems to work well for those serving among Romany since they are not constrained by borders. Nowhere is this more visible than in the former Soviet Union. In Russia alone, in addition to Russian Baltic Romany, one encounters Kalderash from Europe, Sinti from Germany, Balkan from Yugoslavia, Usari from Bulgaria, Lovari from Hungary, Servi from Ukraine, Crimean from the Crimea, Luli from Afghanistan and Pakistan, and other Romany groups. Each group speaks a different dialect and has specific cultural practices. As a result of the multiple Romani dialects, one goal of Christian ministry in Russia involves working toward the translation of the Bible and Christian literature in each dialect, using the Cyrillic alphabet.

Since many Romany are unable to read, it is important to develop Christian resources on audio and videocassettes in all the various dialects. To meet this need ERT has formed partnerships with United Bible Societies and several national Bible societies, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Campus Crusade (known as New Life in Russia) and its "Jesus" film project, Hosanna (producers of a Baltic Romany New Testament on cassette), Trans World Radio (broadcasting Bible studies in Albania and Romania), and the "Through the Bible" radio program. These partnerships range from formal, contractual agreements to very loose, informal working relationships. In their first year of cooperative efforts, the above ministries were able to plant four new Romany churches.

ERT and CBF place a premium on partnerships. By such cooperative ventures nine groups working with ERT have been able to expand their Romany outreach to include children's education and literature; leadership training; Bible translation, printing, and distribution; humanitarian aid; church planting and construction; small business ventures including livestock projects; literacy training; computer training; Christian camps; and a vast prayer network in various languages.

A recent event illustrates the challenge of working with such a diverse people group and the value of partnerships. A Russian Baptist deacon invited Romany believers to hold evangelistic street services among Baltic Romany in his small city on the Volga River. A young Romany college student

recruited the worship team from various towns in Russia, including a Lovari charismatic pastor, three Kalderash Pentecostal women, two Baptist women: one Crimean and one Baltic Romany, a Baptist student from Kentucky, a Russian Pentecostal, and two American CBF missionaries. The team arranged for singing in various Romany languages and dialects, followed by preaching in Russian.

Others Who Minister to Romany

While GATIEF, CBF, and other ministries make substantial contributions on a broad scale, efforts concentrated on individual locales should not be overlooked. Margaret Jans is a missionary with Ancient World Outreach (Holland), seconded to the Evangelical Alliance-Serbia. In 1994 she began work with Romany children and a few adults in Kragujevac and in 1998 in the city of Jagodina. Her weekly children's clubs have allowed her the opportunity to reach the whole family with the gospel. In one year's time Jans partnered with two Romany Pentecostals in Leskovac to plant a church. On Thursday evenings about 20 adults meet for worship. At the same time two young women, one Brethren and one Baptist, lead the children's Bible clubs. Because of difficult economic conditions in former Yugoslavia and the extreme poverty among Romany, Jans understands the need for a more holistic approach in ministry. "We are looking to help through humanitarian aid. We would like to buy a building that would be used for a Christian preschool, a soup kitchen, a food distribution center, homework tutoring, literacy classes for all age groups, children's Bible clubs, and adult meetings and worship."

Another ministry having profound success at the local level is the Ruth School. In 1992 in southwest Bucharest, Romania, Providence Baptist Church and a group of partners established the Ruth Project, a children's center offering activities, food, and some basic education. In the beginning about 20 children attended the center, which is run

by volunteers. Today 140 children attend the Ruth School in grades one through five and another 110 children attend literacy or day care centers in several other locations. And the program is officially recognized by the Romanian Ministry of Education. Other locations and projects are in the planning stages. The Ruth Project reaches out especially to Romany because of their absolute poverty in Romania, but does not exclude other children in need.

Another collaborative ministry, which has no formal name, seeks to reach Romany in Hungary, East Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Partners in this ministry include the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, the Reformed Church in Hungary, and the European Diaconal Year Network. The group has set up an E-group for further communications. All who are working among Romany are invited to contribute to this partnership's Web site: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/network_roma_projects.

Summary

Ministries among and by Romany are increasing throughout Central and Eastern Europe, some initiated by Western mission groups, others by individual missionaries, and others by local churches. The difficulties arising from variations in dialects, extreme poverty, widespread illiteracy, and racial prejudice against Romany make facilitating a church movement a slow process. In spite of the difficulties, people of God are answering the call and are finding ways to overcome obstacles. In particular, many successful ministries among Romany have multiplied their resources and gifts by developing international, interdenominational, and intercultural ministry partnerships. ♦

Frank Dawson, *Moscow, Russia*, is strategic coordinator of the European Romany Team of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Other team members who assisted with this article were **Keith Holmes** and **Mary Van Rheen**.

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Published Resources

Among the ten reports on Roma published by the **Project on Ethnic Relations (PER)** since 1998, three treat especially important issues: *The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy Paper* (1997); *Roma and the Law: Demythologizing the Gypsy Criminality Stereotype* (1999); and *Roma and Statistics* (2000). For a complete list of publications available at no charge, contact PER, 15 Chambers St., Princeton, NJ 08542-3707; tel.: 609-683-5666; fax: 609-683-5888; E-mail: per@per-usa.org; Web site: www.per-usa.org.

The European Roma Rights Center is a public interest law organization that documents the human rights situation of Roma in Europe through press releases and its journal, *Roma Rights*. Contact: Claude Cahn, Research and Publications Director, ERRC, Box 906/93, H-1386 Budapest 62, Hungary; tel.: 36-1-41-32-200; fax: 36-1-41-32-201; E-mail: ClaudeCahn@compuserve.com; Web site: <http://errc.org>.

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Published Resources (cont. from page 3)

The University of Hertfordshire Press has produced "**The Roma—A Nation Without a Country?**," an annotated catalog of its extensive publishing program on Roma culture, history, and politics. Contact: UHP, University of

Hertfordshire, College Lane, Hatfield AL10 9AD, United Kingdom; tel.: 01707-284654; fax: 01707-284666; E-mail: UHPress@herts.ac.uk; Web site: <http://www.herts.ac.uk/UHPress/Gypsies.html>.

Recommended Reading

Barany, Zoltan D. *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 408 pp.

Crowe, David M. *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1996. 317 pp.

Crowe, David M. and John Kolsti, eds. *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*. New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1991. 336 pp.

Danbakli, Marielle, comp. *On Gypsies: Texts Issued by International Institutions*. Hatfield, England: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1994. 209 pp.

Diamond, Todd. "Strengthening Romany Identity." *Open Society News* (Spring 1998): 8-14.

Fraser, Angus. *The Gypsies*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992. 359 pp.

Guy, Will, ed. *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield, England: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001. 429 pp.

Kenrick, Donald. *Gypsies: From India to the Mediterranean*. Hatfield, England: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1993. 63 pp.

_____. *Historical Dictionary of the Gypsies (Romanies)*. Hatfield, England: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1998. 320 pp.

Puxon, Grattan. *Roma: Europe's Gypsies*. London: Minority Rights Group, 1987. 15 pp.

Schlager, Erika B. "The Plight of the Roma in Eastern Europe: Free At Last? *East European Studies News* (May-June 2001): 5-7.

Romany Ministry Web Sites

www.bcvetovo.hit.bg (Bulgaria)

www.members.truepath.com/sevda/minoreng (Bulgaria)

www.members.truepath.com/sevda/familyeng (Bulgaria)

www.groups.yahoo.com/group/Network_Roma_Projects (Hungary, Netherlands, Russia, Czech Republic, Slovakia)

www.gypsyministries.com (Hungary, Netherlands, Russia, Slovakia)

www.yocc.gcinet.net (Russia)

www.projecttruth.ro (Romania)

www.newlifein.lcms.org (Slovakia)

www.word-of-faith-ch.org (Ukraine)

www.adelkeidproject.org (Women's ministry)

www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/vlib ("Roma/Gypsies: Religion"—links to ministry sites)

www.romanibible.org (list of available Scripture and source information)

www.christusrex.org/www2/gypsies.net (Web site of the Association of Gypsies/Romani International which appears to be a Roman Catholic ministry)

www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/patrin (Romany culture, history, and news)

www.romnews.com (Romany news)

www.religioustolerance.org/roma.htm (ethnic understanding)

www.per-usa.org (ethnic understanding)

www.samford.edu/groups/global/ewcmreport (ministry information clearinghouse)

Selected Ministries and Individuals Working among Romany

To aid in partnership development, contact the following agencies, societies, groups, individuals, and Web sites. (East European countries of service are in parentheses.)

Christian Outreach International

Box 2823

Vero Beach, FL 32961-2823 USA

Joanie Hull, Joanie@coi-europe.cz

Tel.: 800-451-3643; 561-778-0575

Web site: www.coiusa.com

(Czech Republic)

Conservative Baptist International

1501 W. Mineral Ave.

Littleton, CO 80120 USA

Tel.: 720-283-2000

Fax: 720-283-9383

E-mail: cbi@cbi.org

Web site: www.cbi.org

(Czech Republic, Poland, Romania)

Dadder, Pastors Ralf and Dobrina

First Baptist Church
Franga Dere str. 22
9005 Varna, Bulgaria
Tel.: 359-52-307725
E-mail: dadder@ardes.bg
(Bulgaria)

**Dete I Svet
(Child and World)**

Margaret Jones
Evangelical Alliance-Serbia
Jogodina, Serbia
E-mail: margaret@ptt.yu
(Serbia)

European Diaconal Year Network

Mike Labots
Bureau ENA
Postbus 8506
3503 RM Utrecht, Netherlands
Tel.: 31-308-801-544/545
Fax: 31-308-801-585
E-mail: j.galle@sowkerken.nl;
d.verbaan@sowkerken.nl
Web site: www.timeforGod/edyn.htm
(Central and Eastern Europe)

**European Romany Team
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**

Box 450329
Atlanta, GA 31145-0329 USA
Tel.: 770-220-1600
Fax: 770-220-1685
Web site: www.cbfonline.org,
www.gypsyministries.com
(Hungary, Slovakia, Russia)

Finnish Free Mission

Vaika Hikkala
E-mail: hekkalat@saunalantl.fi
(Belarus)

Good News Foundation

6077 Orgovany
Vorosmarty u. 19
Hungary
E-mail: ficsorca@freemail.hu
(Hungary)

**Gypsy and Travelers International
Evangelical Fellowship (GATIEF)**

Box 5
33440 Amberes, France
E-mail: GATIEF@compuserve.com
Tel.: 336-07-03-72-47
Web site:
www.fullgospelfellowshipofamericainc.org/gatief.htm
(Eastern and Western Europe, Russia)

Gypsies for Christ**Romany Gospel Wagon Mission**

32 Ashford Rd.
South Woodford
London E18 1JZ
United Kingdom
Tel.: 020-8530-2471
Fax: 020-8530-4703
E-mail: gfc@breathemail.net
Web site:
http://members.tripod.com/gypsiesforchristuk
(Romania)

Harms, Reinhold and Astrid

Roma-Ministry Sarajevo
Father's House
ul. Josipa Pancica 16
71210 Sarajevo-Ilidza,
Bosnia
Tel.: 387-33-622081
E-mail: harmsjc7@bih.net.ba
Web site: www.crossnet.at/members/weindl
(Bosnia)

Heisey, Peter

Independent Baptist
Str. Migdalului/Sirbu Nr. 12
Timisoara 1900 Romania
Tel.: 40-56-792-866; 40-94-792-866
E-mail: poheisey@mail.dnttm.ro
(Romania)

Hosanna (dramatized New Testament on cassette)

2421 Aztec Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107-4200
Tel.: 800-545-6552; 505-881-3321
Fax: 505-881-1681
E-mail: FCBH@Hosanna.org
Web site: www.fcbh.org

Inasmuch

Ron and Sue Bates
C.P. 53-55 Bucharest 4
Romania
Tel./Fax: 401-240-9331
E-mail: inasmuch@fx.ro
Web site: www.internet-texas.com/inasmuch/
(Romania)

Interconfessional Bible Society

Calea Calarsi, Nr 173
Bl. 42, Ap. 36-38, Sectore 3
Bucuresti, cod 73.449, Romania
Tel.: 40-1-323-43-84
Fax: 40-1-320-84-79
Web site: www.biblesociety.org/bs-rom.htm
(Romania)

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Romany Ministries (cont. from page 5)

**International Mission Board
Southern Baptist Convention**

Box 6767
Richmond, VA 23230 USA
Tel.: 800-999-3113; ext. 1461
Fax: 804-254-8980
E-mail: hope4CEE@pobox.com
Web site: www.hope4cee.org
(Romania)

Olympia Barczynsha

29 Queenswood Rd.
Leeds LS6 3NL
United Kingdom
(Poland)

Otto Family

P.K. 32
Plovdiv 4006, Bulgaria
Tel./Fax: 359-32-8635-23
E-mail: sevda@mbox.digsys.bg
Web site: members.truepath.com/sevda/index.html
(Bulgaria)

Protestant Institute for Mission Studies

Dr. Anne Marie Kool
Kalvin tur 7 II
Budapest, Hungary
Tel./Fax: 36-1-216-20-54
Web site: www.meetingpoint.org/pims
E-mail: amkool@compuserve.com

Ruth School

Gypsy Smith School (pastors' training school)
Str. Talazului 16, Sector 5
Bucuresti 76649
Romania
E-mail: pruth@fx.ro
Web site: www.projecttruth.ro
(Romania, Moldova)

Stichting Holland-Moldova

Niersenseweg 9
8076 PW Vierhouten, Netherlands
Tel.: 0577-411-212
Fax: 0577-411-663
E-mail: st.holland-moldova@planet.nl
Web site: www.holland-moldova.net
(Moldova)

Trans World Radio

Box 12
820 02 Bratislava 2
Slovak Republic
Tel.: 40-1-327-55-16
Web site:
www.gospelcom.net/twr/ministries/wbradio
(Bulgaria, Romania)

**Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches in
Moldova**

Alexandra Hijden St. 94
Kishinev (Chisinau) MD-2001
Moldova
valeriug@ch.moldpac.md

The Protestant mission agency **Pioneers** currently assists a Romany church in Macedonia that holds services twice a week for more than 125 worshippers.

Ministry to Roma: From the Editor's Files

- A Romany church in the village of Barbulesti, Romania, averages a weekly attendance of 400 adults and several hundred children. The church, with the largest sanctuary in Ialomita County, originated from "Jesus" film showings. Initially the film was so popular that it was shown eight times.
- Methodists have established Roma congregations in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, and Ukraine, with the greatest strength in Bulgaria where Methodist pastors preach in five different Roma dialects.
- In the winter of 2000-2001 volunteers from three Roma churches in Sofia, Bulgaria, worked in Mission Possible winter camps teaching reading and writing to 60 children who had never attended school. Mission Possible has organized four soup kitchens serving 230 Gypsy children.
- First Baptist Church, Varna, Bulgaria, has organized worship for Roma in five nearby villages with an average attendance of 30 each.
- The Protestant mission agency Pioneers currently assists a Romany church in Macedonia that holds services twice a week for more than 125 worshippers.

Roma Demographics

COUNTRY	TOTAL POPULATION	EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTS ¹	
Central & Eastern Europe	Operation World Estimates	Minority Rights Group Estimates	
Albania	80,000+	90,000–100,000	“only a few”
Bosnia-Herzegovina	400,000	40,000–50,000	
Bulgaria	300,000	700,000–800,000	10,000–80,000 ²
Croatia	131,000	30,000–40,000	
Czech Republic	300,000	250,000–300,000	
Hungary	380,000	400,000–800,000 ³	
Macedonia	200,000	220,000–260,000	
Poland	30,000	50,000–60,000	
Romania	2,000,000	1,800,000–2,500,000	15,000–90,000 ²
Serbia & Montenegro	300,000	400,000–450,000	8,500–17,000
Slovakia	453,000	480,000–520,000	
Slovenia		8,000–10,000	
Subtotal		4,468,000–5,890,000	33,500–187,000
Former Soviet Union			
Belarus		10,000–15,000	
Estonia		1,000–1,500	
Latvia	8,000	2,000–3,500	
Lithuania		3,000–4,000	
Moldova	105,000	50,000–200,000 ⁴	
Russia	180,000	220,000–400,000	9,000
Ukraine	47,000	50,000–60,000	
Subtotal	332,000	336,000–684,000	9,000
Totals	4,826,000	4,804,000–6,574,000	33,500–205,000

Sources: Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*. Carlisle, England: WEC/Paternoster, 2001); European Roma Rights Center Fact Sheet (<http://errc.org/>); René Zanellato, Gypsy and Travelers International Evangelical Fellowship (GATIEF).

Editor's Note: *The European Roma Rights Center Fact Sheet, noted above, gives official statistics, but these figures so seriously undercount Roma that they are not included here. See Roma and Statistics (Princeton, NJ: Project on Ethnic Relations, 2000).*

Notes

¹Unless otherwise noted, estimates for Evangelical Protestants are from Johnstone and Mandryk, *Operation World*.

²Low estimate from Johnstone and Mandryk, *Operation World*; high estimate from René Zanellato, Gypsy and Travelers International Evangelical Fellowship.

³Based on NGO and Romani estimates rather than Minority Rights Group estimate of 550,000–600,000.

⁴NGO and Romani estimates from Veronica Leila Szente, “Field Report, Moldova,” *Roma Rights* (Summer 1997), 1, rather than Minority Rights Group estimate of 20,000–25,000.

Bulgaria and Religious Liberty Today

Felix Corley

“If Bulgaria was not seeking entrance into the European Union there would have been no chance for registration.”

Bulgarian believers and human rights activists identify their government's failure to adopt a new law on religion to replace the 1949 Denominations Act as one of the country's main religious liberty concerns. Several attempts have been made to adopt a new law—some of which would have severely restricted religious rights for minority faiths—but all have been unsuccessful. Three drafts are currently in contention. On a local level, municipal authorities have severely restricted some religious communities they dislike, banning them from meeting or handing out religious literature in the street or refusing to grant them local registration. Some believers who feel their rights have been infringed have been forced to take their cases to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg.

Nevertheless, in recent years Bulgaria has made some progress in improving religious rights. In an important decision, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in October 2000 that the government had meddled in the right of the Muslim community to freely choose its own leadership by rejecting the validly elected leader and accepting a rival leader in his place. Also, in January 2002, after an eight-year battle, the government finally recognized the Church of the Nazarene. “My opinion is that the reason for the long delay is that there are many different powerful groups within

Bulgaria that do not want any outside groups to come into the country, especially evangelical groups from the West,” Rev. Jay Sunberg, the church's superintendent in Bulgaria, told Keston News Service. “If Bulgaria was not seeking entrance into the European Union there would have been no chance for registration.” He describes the rights his church has finally achieved: “We can function more openly, we can print literature in our own name, we have a possibility of becoming junior members of the Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance, we can rent halls and purchase property more easily, we have more credibility and legitimacy, we can put our name on the door, and we can start new works much more easily.”

However, not all groups that have applied for registered status on a national level have achieved it. Two independent Protestant churches, a Roma church in the northwestern town of Lom and a church in Krichim near Plovdiv, are preparing to challenge denial of registration at the European Court of Human Rights (to whose jurisdiction Bulgaria is subject as a member of the Council of Europe). ♦

Felix Corley is a correspondent with Keston News Service.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Keston News Service, 20 May 2002. Keston's Web site is www.keston.org.

Evangelical Christians in Bulgaria

Nikolai Nedelchev and Latchezar Popov

In 1948 Communist authorities imprisoned most Protestant denominational leaders and officials of Bulgaria's Evangelical Alliance. In addition, many pastors and church members were beaten, arrested, and put in prison and church properties and buildings were confiscated. Since 1985 Pentecostal and Church of God believers in particular have been developing secret groups that over time have become new churches.

Restrictions on Evangelicals: On Again, Off Again

After the fall of the Communist regime in November 1989, evangelical churches in Bulgaria experienced dramatic growth. Most doubled or tripled in size and many new churches opened. However, in 1993 the Bulgarian legislature passed a law restricting the activities of non-Orthodox religious groups, targeting evangelicals in particular, but also some cults and sects. As a result of this legislation, many local churches found it more and

more difficult to rent facilities for worship services and public activities. These state restrictions led to church closures while many other churches faced serious problems. Fortunately, since 1996, while the law still hampers non-Orthodox, government enforcement has not been as strict as previously and society has developed more respect for evangelicals, giving them enough freedom to operate. These improvements owe much to the Rule of Law Institute that was founded in 1995 with the help of Advocates International and to the Human Rights and Religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF). In just a few short years the Rule of Law Institute gained momentum, visibility, and effectiveness in publicizing infringements of religious liberties. At the same time, the WEF Commission has been a great encouragement to evangelicals as well as a means of building bridges to the Orthodox and other religious groups in Bulgaria.

Evangelical Strengths

Research conducted by the Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance, completed in September 2000, identified 1,100 Protestant pastors in Bulgaria. They serve in some 1,530 evangelical churches, only 55 percent of which own their own buildings. Nevertheless, theological education is well established in the Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute, in which all Protestant denominations participate. Bulgaria is also beginning to send evangelical missionaries to other countries, changing from a missionary-receiving into a missionary-sending country.

The Churches, Society, and Culture

Parachurch organizations and evangelical denominations have quite a strong influence in society. Most charitable activities—support for orphanages, hospitals, prisons, and many other social activities—are undertaken primarily by evangelicals and Catholics. However, at this point evangelicals still do not emphasize cultural involvement and artistic expression such as music, writing, and acting, and as a result exert little influence in Bulgarian cultural life.

Evangelical relationships with other faiths, however, are quite strong, except in the case of Orthodox. Evangelical leaders over the past ten years worked hard to achieve agreement or even

develop a partnership with the Orthodox. Unfortunately, Orthodox isolate themselves—partly because they are jealous of evangelical successes and partly because they have their own problems. On the other hand, evangelicals work quite closely on legal issues with Catholics and other religious groups. Through the Helsinki Committee in Bulgaria and the Tolerance Foundation, evangelicals have worked together with many other faiths to counteract threats posed by the proposed new Law of Religion.

In summary, the state looks upon the Orthodox Church as a symbol of patriotism, considering other faiths subordinate. Democratic politicians who followed the Communist epoch are not inclined to show sympathy to non-Orthodox, considering the risk of possible loss of electoral support if they speak otherwise. This helps explain why the current parliament has no evangelical representatives. ♦

Nikolai Nedelchev is president of the Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute, Sofia, Bulgaria, and director of the Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance. **Latchezar Popov** is an attorney and chairman and director of the Rule of Law Institute, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from the Rule of Law Institute, European Evangelical Alliance, New European Forum, "Case Study Bulgaria," Paris, France, 8–10 June 2001.

Research completed in September 2000 identified 1,100 Protestant pastors in Bulgaria in some 1,530 evangelical churches.

A Bulgarian Church and Missions Chronology

2nd Century	First Christian churches founded near Burgas
865	Christianity became the official religion of Bulgaria with the aid of missionaries Cyril and Methodius and their disciples
1396	Muslim Ottoman Turks completed their conquest of Bulgaria and imposed severe restrictions on Orthodox Christianity
1843	The Four Gospels published in the Bulgarian vernacular
1856	Congregational Church missionaries began work in Bulgaria
1857	Methodist missionaries began work in Bulgaria
1865	Baptist missionaries began work in Bulgaria
1865	First Protestant Bible school opened in Plovdiv
1871	Bible translation completed in the Bulgarian vernacular
1877–78	Russo-Turkish War freed Bulgaria from Ottoman Turkish rule
1891	First Seventh-day Adventists settled in Bulgaria
1921	Pentecostal missionaries began work in Bulgaria
1944–91	Communist rule imposed severe restrictions on all religions, including Christianity
1949	Communist authorities tried and convicted 15 Protestants, including Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, and Pentecostal leaders, on false charges of treason and espionage
1991	The Bulgarian Orthodox Church suffered a schism which continues to the present

Religion and the Russian Press Since 1990: Journalists Most Actively Writing on Church Subjects

Yakov Krotov

Editor's Note: The previous issue of the East-West Church & Ministry Report carried Yakov Krotov's article, "Religion and the Russian Press Since 1990." Both selections were translated by Vitaliy Bak.

Generally, journalists are not included who publish in only one newspaper without influencing its religious orientation. For example, the present listing omits authors at *Nezavisimaia gazeta* who do not publish elsewhere.

Aksiuchits, Viktor (*Nezavisimaia gazeta*). An Orthodox dissident in the Soviet period who managed to avoid imprisonment, Aksiuchits became an organizer of the Russian Christian-Democratic Movement during perestroika. He then took extreme, anti-Western positions, blaming the intelligentsia alone for the 1917 Revolution and occasionally writing articles against the U.S., the new world order, etc.

Asmus, Valentin (*Radonezh*). A priest at the Nikolskaia Orthodox Church in Moscow, he specializes in monarchist and anti-ecumenist propaganda.

Babasian, Natalia (*Russkaia mysl'*; *Novoe vremia*). Regularly publishes articles criticizing the Russian Orthodox Church for nationalistic and antidemocratic tendencies.

Bukalov, Alexey (*Segodnia*; *Novoe vremia*). A government correspondent in Rome who frequently publishes articles about the pope and the Catholic Church.

Bychkov, Sergei Sergeevich. While he still was an atheist he became acquainted with Fr. Aleksandr Men. At the beginning of the 1970s he was baptized and worshiped regularly at Fr. Men's church. He married and later divorced a relative of Fr. John Meyendorf, then married a second time. Since Soviet times he has regularly published material about artists in *Sem'ia*, *Moskovskie novosti*, and *Moskovskii komsomolets*. In the 1990s he wrote on church life for *Moskovskii komsomolets* and was the most active critic of Metropolitans Yuvenalii (Poiarkov) and Kirill (Gundiaev). At the same time that he was praising Metropolitan of Voronezh Methodii and Patriarch Alexii, he was pointing out his closeness to Fr. Men. He did not defend freedom of conscience, but he did criticize Bishop Tikhon (Bronnitskii) who defended Aleksandr Dvorkin, the leader of Orthodox antisectarian efforts.

Chapnin, Sergei. Head of the official *Moscow Church Herald* since 2001, he formerly wrote for *NG-religii* under Maksim Shevchenko. An opponent of ecumenism and freedom of conscience, he oversees Sobornost (<http://www.sobor.ru>), an Internet site that includes a regular survey of Orthodox news.

Chistiakov, Georgii (*Russkaia mysl'*; *Ogoniok*). A specialist in ancient literature, he became a priest in the 1990s in the church of Fr. Aleksandr Borisov, where he has a teaching ministry. Often writing on general ethical issues, he carefully avoids criticizing the Russian Orthodox Church and advocates tolerance for Catholics.

Deutch, Mark. In the 1970s he became acquainted with Fr. Aleksandr Men, was baptized, went abroad, and worked for Radio Liberty (RL). After RL moved from Munich to Prague in 1999, he returned to Russia and became a staff journalist for *Moskovskii komsomolets*. He majors in critiques of Communists and nationalists, but during the 1990s debate over freedom of conscience he criticized "totalitarian sects" and supported Aleksandr Dvorkin and Bishop Tikhon.

Dvorkin, Aleksandr Leonidovich. In the first half of the 1970s he studied in a teacher training institute, but did not complete the program before immigrating to the U.S. After completing a degree at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in the U.S., he returned to Russia at the beginning of the 1990s. Since then he has specialized in attacks on non-Orthodox movements ("totalitarian sects"). Following Fr. Oleg Steniaev's criticism of his emotionally charged campaign against threats to Orthodoxy, he was transferred from the Mission Department of Fr. Ioann Ekonomtsev to the Orthodox Publishing Department of the very nationalistic Bishop Tikhon. In 1999, with funds from the Moscow Patriarchate, he started publishing the magazine *Prozrenie* against infidels and he has written harsh criticism of Fr. Men for *Radonezh*. He actively criticizes the West while maintaining his U.S. citizenship.

Falikov, Boris (*Russkaia mysl'*; *Novoe vremia*). A specialist on India, he publishes rather infrequently, primarily in defense of freedom of conscience.

Aleksandr Leonidovich Dvorkin actively criticizes the West while maintaining his U.S. citizenship.

Gal'tseva, Renata Aleksandrovna. She writes regularly for *Novyi mir* and also has been published in *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, and *Kontinent*. A specialist in the works of philosopher and theologian Nikolai Berdiaev, she is known on the one hand for criticizing paternalistic, antirationalistic, and clerical tendencies within the Orthodox Church, and on the other hand for criticizing "liberalism" and "postmodernism" in Orthodoxy. She argued for the introduction of television censorship, participating in discussions on Duma legislation for that purpose.

Kolpakov, Aleksandr. This nonbeliever and professional orientologist was a lead writer on religion for *Moskovskii komsomolets* in the 1990s, praising Bishop Mefodii of Voronezh and only softly criticizing some minor problems in the Russian Orthodox Church.

Kolymagin, Boris (*Literaturnaia gazeta*; *Obshchaia gazeta*; *Russkaia mysl'*). A defender of reform-minded Fr. Georgii Kochetkov, he writes reviews of new religious books. He has headed an Internet magazine at <http://religion.russ.ru> since February 2002.

Komarov, Evgenii. A former worker in the publishing department of the Moscow Patriarchate and court photographer of the Patriarch. He parted with Bishop Tikhon (Bronnitskii). He regularly writes on the subject of religion in *Novye izvestiia*, primarily criticizing bishops, including the Patriarch, but softly.

Koroliov, Aleksandr. Responsible for religion reporting for *Trud*, propagating Orthodoxy as the state religion.

Krakhmal'nikova, Zoia Aleksandrovna. Imprisoned by the Bolsheviks for publishing and disseminating the *Orthodox Almanac* via *tamizdat* (cassette tapes). Occasionally publishes newspaper satires against the Moscow Patriarchate in *Novoe vremia* and *Literaturnaia gazeta*.

Kublanovskii, Yurii. Journalist and poet who emigrated to the West at the end of the 1970s and who returned to Russia in 1991. In addition to heading a department in *Novyi mir* he writes a column of television critique for *Trud*. His writing defends nationalistic ideas while attacking both the West and Communists. He published a memoir about Fr. Aleksandr Men, whom he did not know well, presenting himself as a liberal thinker. He received a government prize for his articles.

Kuraev, Andrei (*Radonezh*; *Trud*). Son of a Soviet *nomenklatura* activist, Kuraev graduated from the Department of Marxist Studies at Moscow State University. He became a believer and was baptized at the beginning of the 1980s. Metropolitan Kirill

(Gundiaev) sent him to study at the Orthodox Academy in Romania. In 1990 he was ordained a deacon. Upon returning to Russia in 1990 he became a speechwriter for the Patriarch. His criticism of Metropolitans Kirill and Yuvenaliy (Poiarkov) in the secular press for their liberalism and ecumenism may explain his dismissal as a speechwriter for the Patriarch. He has since halted such attacks and now concentrates on accusations against all manner of non-Orthodox (from Protestants to followers of the religious cult figure Nikolai Roerich). He has been known to criticize Fr. Aleksandr Men and to make anti-Semitic statements.

Kyrlezhev, Aleksandr. Considers himself primarily a theologian. A regular writer for *Russkaia mysl'* (now usually under pseudonym) and *Kontinent*, he defends an Orthodox "middle way" between nationalism and "extreme" liberalism.

Levinson, Lev. A regular author for the human rights paper *Ekspress-khronika*, Levinson specializes in articles defending freedom of conscience. He is an assistant to Duma Deputy Sergei Kovalev, as he had been earlier for Fr. Gleb Yakunin and Vladimir Borshchev.

Makarkin, Aleksey. From 1998 to 2001 he worked for *Segodnia*, actively championing religion from a progressive Orthodox perspective. In 2002 he began writing for *Ezhenedel'niy zhurnal* (formerly *Itoji*).

Medvedeva, Irina, and Tatiana Shishova. Their specialty is articles that attack sex education instruction as contrary to Orthodoxy.

Mikhailov, Boris. An art critic and former museum worker at Ostankino. He became a priest at the beginning of the 1990s, specializing in efforts toward the full restitution of church property to the Moscow Patriarchate.

Minkin, Aleksandr. In the first half of the 1990s he was a regular contributor to *Stolitsa* and *Moskovskii komsomolets*. He blamed the KGB for the murder of Fr. Aleksandr Men and stated that the KGB encourages gossip about Orthodox-KGB cooperation in order to weaken the church. He has revealed government corruption and at the same time has defended and continues to defend the KGB as a necessary institution. Official favor may be deduced from his possession of a dacha in the "President's" village.

Mitrokhin, Nikolai (*Russkaia mysl'*). Author of a handbook of biographies of bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate, he specializes in collecting information about Russian Orthodox bishops and the economic activity of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Zoia Aleksandrovna Krakhmal'nikova was imprisoned by the Bolsheviks for publishing and disseminating the *Orthodox Almanac* via *tamizdat* (cassette tapes); occasionally publishes newspaper satires against the Moscow Patriarchate.

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Aleksandr Iosifovich Nezhnyi caused a sensation at the beginning of perestroika with his articles that for the first time presented the Orthodox Church in a sympathetic light; an Orthodox believer who defends freedom of conscience.

Religion and the Russian Press (cont. from page 11)

Nezhnyi, Aleksandr Iosifovich (*Russkaia mysl'*; *Moskovskie novosti*; *Izvestiia*). A writer and journalist since the Soviet period, he caused a sensation at the beginning of perestroika with his articles that for the first time presented the Orthodox Church in a sympathetic light. An Orthodox believer who defends freedom of conscience, he has authored books about Bolshevik persecution of the clergy and has harshly criticized Andrei Kuraev for anti-Semitism and incorrect methods of polemics against non-Orthodox groups.

Nikolaeva, Olesya. Poet and wife of journalist Vladimir Vigilianskii, she actively criticized Orthodox "modernists" at the end of the 1990s.

Okhlobystin, Ivan (*Kommersant*; *Izvestiia*; *Versiya*). An actor and journalist, he directed a Channel Six television program on Orthodoxy. At the beginning of 2000 he was ordained a priest by the bishop of Kazakhstan Metropolitan Vladimir (Ikim). He criticizes non-Orthodox and praises the Patriarch.

Pavlov, Innokentii (*Russkaia mysl'*). A priest who worked for many years for the Russian Orthodox Department of External Church Relations. In the 1990s he was a strong defender of freedom of conscience and criticized the Patriarchate for its extreme closeness to the government, which cost him his job.

Pozdniaev, Mikhail. A journalist and an Orthodox believer since Soviet times. In the 1990s he wrote on religion for *Stolitsa* (now closed), for *Obshchaia gazeta*, and since 1998 for *Ogoniok*. The author of very well written accounts of church life, he has criticized the Moscow Patriarchate harshly for its compromises with both Communist and post-Communist authorities. His brother Dionisii works in the Russian Orthodox Department of External Church Relations, specializing in China. He left *Ogoniok* in February 2002 and now works in "Zakharov" Publishing House.

Shchipkov, Aleksandr. Son of Tatiana Shchipkova, an Orthodox believer imprisoned for her religious beliefs in the 1980s. In collaboration with Sergei Filatov he specializes in research on new religious movements in Russia. He hosts a religious program on radio "Russia." In 2000 he advocated that the government strengthen its control over religious life.

Shevchenko, Maksim. An editor of the religion department of *Nezavisimaia gazeta* until February 2002, he now is attempting to organize a new religious newspaper. In 1994 he invented the term *pravoslavizatsia*, the process of drawing together the Orthodox Church and the state, seeing the process as beneficial for both. He is an opponent of the West, ecumenism, and freedom of conscience. A Russian nationalist and champion of the Patriarch, he at the

same time criticizes shortcomings of the Orthodox Church at the level of provincial dioceses.

Shevelev, Vladimir Vladimirovich. For many years the secretary of the Communist Party organization in the atheist magazine *Nauka i religii*, he has headed the religion department at *Moskovskie novosti* for the last 15 years. A nonbeliever, he tries to uphold freedom of conscience and tolerance and at the same time respect the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy.

Shishova, Tatiana—see **Medvedeva**.

Sitnikov, Mikhail. He wrote regularly for *Russkaia mysl'* newspaper and worked on the radio program "Sofia." A defender of freedom of conscience, he nevertheless has advocated limitations as regards "socially dangerous" religions.

Sokolov, Maksim. Became well-known at the time of perestroika through his anti-Communist satires. He previously worked for *Kommersant* and now works for *Izvestiia*. He defends the glory of Russia, advocates restricting the electorate through a property qualification, actively supports Andrei Kuraev, and criticizes intellectuals for their indifference to his apologetic works. (Intellectuals supported the apologetics of Fr. Aleksandr Men in contrast to Kuraev's anti-Semitism.) At the beginning of the 1990s Sokolov was one of the idols of the democratic intelligentsia, but by the end of the decade he was criticized for anti-Westernism, militarism, and incorrect methods in polemics. He now is a regular host on Channel One, doing a sophisticated job of propagating government positions.

Soldatov, Aleksandr (*Moskovskie novosti*). From the middle of the 1990s, although still a journalism student at Moscow State University, he started writing in the secular press on church topics. He belongs to the camp of "alternative" Orthodox who criticize the Patriarchate for its compromises with Communists, for its "liberalism" in matters of church discipline, and for its ecumenism.

Soldatov, Andrey. Since 1999 a writer for *Versiya* and manager of the Web site: www.agentura.ru. Specializing in pro-KGB propaganda, several of his articles have furiously attacked the Roman Catholic Church, accusing it of spying on Russia.

Strel'chik, Evgenii. Executive secretary and head of the religion section at *Vecherniaia Moskva*. He criticizes the Patriarchate gently and writes as well on non-Orthodox religions. Since 1998 he has been authoring articles for *Nezavisimaia gazeta*.

Talalai, Mikhail Grigorievich. Publishes in *Russkaia mysl'* and from 1999 in *Nezavisimaia gazeta*. In addition to articles on religion in Russia, this resident of Florence writes about church life in Europe.

Tomaeva, Tatiana. A Catholic on the staff of the Slavic Law Center of Anatolii Pchelintsev, she has written on freedom of conscience for Catholic papers and, since 1998, for *Nezavisimaia gazeta*.

Vigilianskii, Vladimir. He was a professional journalist for *Ogoniok* before the collapse of the Soviet Union. He immigrated to the U.S. at the beginning of the 1990s but was not successful there, divorced, and came back to Russia. He then became a priest, although married for a second time to Olesia Nikolaeva. (Probably the first marriage was deemed invalid because it occurred before his baptism.) He works in the Church of St. Tatiana at Moscow State University. Head of the Union of Orthodox Journalists, he periodically publishes anonymous reviews in the secular press, defending the Patriarch and the Russian Orthodox Church from all criticism. He regularly broadcasts a religious TV program on Channel Six.

Zolotov, Oleg. Authored occasional articles about religion in *Trud*, primarily informational. One such piece criticized Satanists.

Zolotov-Svetozarov, Andrei. A writer for *Nezavisimaia gazeta* and *Moscow Times*, he received the prestigious Templeton Prize for his articles on religion in 1998. He is rarely published in Russian. He did not participate in the freedom of conscience debate, but did make a claim during the financial crisis of 1998 that the falling value of the ruble was profitable for foreign missionaries. During the conflict in Serbia he strongly criticized Western military actions. ♦

Yakov Krotov is a church historian and journalist living in Moscow. His informative Web site (<http://members.xoom.com/krotov/engl/myen.html>) focuses on Russian church history and contemporary church-state issues.

Andrei Zolotov-Svetozarov received the prestigious Templeton Prize for his articles on religion in 1998.

RESOURCES

“Witnessing to People of Eastern Orthodox Background: Turning Barriers of Belief into Bridges of Personal Faith” summarizes the ministry philosophy of Matt Spann, a missionary in Moscow from 1994 to 1998 with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. In this 2001 doctor of ministry project for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, Spann provides a brief overview of the history of Eastern Orthodoxy, followed by a description of doctrinal differences between Orthodoxy and Protestantism in areas such as authority, tradition, sin, grace, salvation, prayer to saints, and icons. He addresses several of these topics from a distinctly Baptist point of view. Appendices contain a useful bibliography, a calendar of Orthodox feast days, and a glossary.

Spann focuses on ministry to those who know about Orthodoxy but are not actively committed to Christ. His 52-page work discusses how to present the gospel in a way that is understandable to those who have been influenced—but not transformed—by Orthodox Christianity. He explains that “a person cannot build a bridge until he or she knows where the river is.” Spann summarizes current evangelical perspectives on Orthodoxy, especially those of Don Fairbairn and Dan Clendenin, noting where popular or folk Orthodoxy contradicts official doctrine. He does not venture far beyond explanations given by Fairbairn and Clendenin, but

he does present several practical ideas for using insights from theology and church history in late-night, kitchen-table discussions. For each highlighted doctrine, he identifies Orthodox beliefs that would appear to be “barriers” to faith. He then demonstrates how to address these “barriers” and turn them into “bridges” to win people to personal faith in Christ. Spann encourages an indirect approach when addressing controversial theological topics. Thus, he emphasizes foundational biblical principles related to particular issues (such as praying to saints), rather than direct attacks upon such practices.

This work could have been strengthened by interacting more with the works of Russian Orthodox authors such as Aleksandr Men who, in his evangelism, emphasized scriptural teaching and fellowship with Christ. He, like Spann, struggled to reach nominally Orthodox people and introduce them to Christ in a life-changing way. Also, a number of recent works that attempt to gain insights from the ancient Eastern faith, such as *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox in Dialog*, edited by James S. Cutsinger (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), could have been useful. Finally, the annual conferences of the Society for the Study of Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism include presentations of theological papers written by leading Orthodox and evangelical

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Some readers may conclude that Spann has oversimplified aspects of both Orthodox and Protestant doctrine, but evangelical missionaries may well find his advice valuable in helping friends sort through essential questions of faith.

Resources (cont. from page 13)

scholars (including J. I. Packer, Gerald Bray, and Tom Oden). One hopes that the author will be able to access these papers for future projects.

Some readers may conclude that Spann has oversimplified aspects of both Orthodox and Protestant doctrine, but evangelical missionaries may well find his advice valuable in helping friends sort through essential questions of faith. One of the most practical suggestions in this work comes as Spann addresses the mystery of God:

Be careful not to reduce God and the way of salvation to a collection of spiritual formulas to be mastered. Even though such an approach may appeal to some of the more western-oriented intellectuals, such an approach is theologically alien to the Orthodox mindset and culturally foreign to the Slavic way of thinking. By reducing great truths to simplistic formulas, there is a danger you will be seen as not appreciating the great mysteries and deep truths of the gospel.

Matt Miller, currently a Ph.D. student in Russian church history at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, works in Russia with the Evangelical Free Church Mission.

Editor's Note: Matt Spann's project is available on the Internet at http://www.namb.net/evangelism/iev/PDF/BB_E_Orthodox_Manual.pdf.

Together in Mission: Orthodox Churches Consult with the Church Mission Society, 25–30 April 2001, Moscow. London: Church Mission Society, 2001. Reviewed by Mark Elliott.

This 73-page document includes reports from a missions consultation sponsored by the Church Mission Society (CMS) involving representatives of 13 Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches and Anglican, Baptist, Pentecostal, and Independent churches. As the title suggests, partnerships are highly prized in this volume, with those linking CMS and various Orthodox churches in joint efforts clearly in evidence. Three articles in particular document CMS outreach in post-Soviet lands in the 1990s: "Orthodox Mission Today" by Archpriest Vladimir Federov; "From an Orthodox Perspective" by Fr. Cristian Popa; and "Beginnings for CMS in Russia and Eastern Europe" by Martin Thomas.

Theological pluralism has had its way in the CMS for many decades, which explains why this reviewer in Russia has met CMS workers of decidedly contrasting theological persuasions ranging from liberal to evangelical. However, this document seems to reflect a genuine desire to champion a consistently biblical formula stressing

both verbal proclamation of the gospel and Christian witness through a wide range of commendable social assistance and community development projects. The report highlights creative CMS engagement in missionary training; drug rehabilitation, prison, and hospital ministry; and outreach to children at risk, the elderly, and women in crisis.

The report is available for £5 from CMS, Partnership House, 157 Waterloo Rd., London SE1 8UU, United Kingdom; tel.: 020-7928-8681; fax: 020-7401-3215; E-mail: markoxbrow@aol.com; Web site: www.cms-uk.org.

Mark Elliott is editor of the East-West Church & Ministry Report.



Safronov, Sergei. *Russkaya pravoslavnaya tserkov v kontse xx veka [The Russian Orthodox Church at the End of the Twentieth Century]*

(<http://pubs.Carnegie.ru/workpapers/2001/1/toc.asp>). Reviewed by Nathaniel Davis.

Sergei Safronov clearly has a broad, wide-ranging knowledge of the current state of the Russian Orthodox Church. His monograph is interesting and easy for a reader of Russian to absorb. The author's intention is to provide an analysis of the dynamics of the structures of the church, but the window he opens on the reality of church life deals primarily with the Orthodox Church's episcopal hierarchy.

It is true that Safronov discusses the low attendance figures for Russian churches, problems connected with religious educational institutions, the slow recovery of monastic life, and the geographic distribution of parishes in the Russian Federation in 1999. Why he confines his statistics in this last case to Russia, I do not know, as only about half of Russian Orthodox parishes are located in the Russian Federation. He could rather easily have found statistics for Ukraine, Moldova, Central Asia, and the Baltic states for 1999. I myself published these figures in *Religion in Eastern Europe* (December 2000).

As far as convents are concerned, Safronov does give figures for all of the Russian Orthodox Church's canonical territory (the former U.S.S.R.), consisting of 347 dioceses in Russia, 116 in Ukraine, 14 in Belarus, 33 in Moldova, and 24 in the rest of the former Soviet Union. Despite the fact that the text is rich in facts and figures, the author provides no documentation. Regarding Orthodox educational institutions, Safronov correctly notes that church authorities are struggling to educate clergy at all levels and are lagging still further in their efforts to establish Sunday schools and other lay educational institutions.

After briefly examining the number and arrangement of dioceses, Safronov turns to the heart of his study, his examination of the episcopate. He

discusses generational change and renewal, the bishops' autonomy in their own dioceses, the rare cases of removal or disciplinary action against bishops, the relatively frequent transfer of bishops, the "fast tracks" to become a bishop, the socio-economic origins of the bishops, and the dioceses from which most of them seem to come. He notes that bishops are now being consecrated at a younger age and Moscow's authority over Orthodoxy in Ukraine is weakening—even in the branch that remains loyal and subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate. He writes about the unpopularity of ecumenism among the bishops, their predominantly conservative and nationalistic political views, and their generally unsuccessful forays into politics—as distinguished from cooperative relationships with power centers of local political governance. He describes Patriarch Aleksii II's extensive travels which have the purpose of binding together the hierarchy and the faithful.

Safronov examines the Orthodox Church's efforts to overcome its severe financial stringencies through export-import deals, banking, commercial sales, and trade in consumer goods. Some of these activities have become controversial, as Safronov notes, and Metropolitan Kirill (Gundyaev) has been singled by the heat of recent revelations. Safronov evaluates the work of many of the Russian Orthodox bishops and the standing of the dioceses they lead.

It would be surprising for me, or anyone, to agree with all his choices. For example, his selection of the Barnaul Diocese, led by Bishop Antoni (Masendich) as one of seven "brightly shining" jurisdictions, is odd. Bishop Antoni led a body of Ukrainian Autocephalists into a merger with the dissident Ukrainian Orthodox Church in June, 1992, recanted, and then rejoined the Russian Orthodox Church loyal to the Moscow Patriarchate. Named ruling bishop of Barnaul, Antoni became the lightning rod for numerous complaints, allegations of financial impropriety, and divisions within the diocese. Perhaps the allegations were not true, or perhaps Bishop Antoni overcame his difficulties. He certainly is a man of initiative, vigor, and enterprise. Between 1994, when he came to the diocese, and 1999, Safronov's benchmark year, the number of parishes in Bishop Antoni's diocese grew from 52 to 142, an impressive accomplishment. So Safronov may be right in this, as in so many other judgments.

Nathaniel Davis is Hixon Professor of Humanities at Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA.



The Magazine Training Institute (MTI)

evolved from a training program begun in Eastern Europe in 1989 by Director Sharon Mumper, who was managing editor of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* before she founded MTI. It has since expanded into

the former Soviet Union and Asia. MTI's goal is to encourage and strengthen Christian publishers and provide them with resources as they work to build the church and reach people for Christ. During the last 14 years MTI has organized dozens of publishing conferences and courses throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Its current focus is on intensive, one-week courses on writer training, magazine editing, the business of magazine publishing, and magazine design. Manuals on editing, business, design, and writing are available in a variety of languages. MTI also distributes a cassette tape writing course and is developing a publishing business tape set. MTI has a library and resource center in Vienna to assist Christian publishers in person and by mail. Manuals and tapes from these seminars are available for purchase. For more information contact: MTI, 2502 Baden-Leesdorf, Austria; tel.: 43-2236-540762; fax: 43-2236-540764; E-mail: info@magazinetraining.com; or visit the MTI Web site: www.magazinetraining.com. The MTI Web site includes a directory of Christian magazines published in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and hundreds of samples of materials used by publishers for use with authors, subscribers, and advertisers.



Snow, Donald. *English Teaching as Christian Mission: An Applied Theology.* Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001. Reviewed by Cathy Thornberg Sheets.

As a Christian English teacher working overseas I often wrestle with two expectations: to teach English well and to evangelize, with evangelism being the more important of the two. Realizing my personal goals and the expectations of my supporters back home, I try to balance a desire to be professional in my teaching and at the same time fulfill my missionary call to be a witness. Christian English teachers often can feel defeated trying to do both.

In *English Teaching as Christian Mission: An Applied Theology*, Donald Snow merges the two seemingly unrelated pursuits. He asserts emphatically that while English teaching is an admittedly unique Christian service, it is no less a legitimate one. Yet Snow does more than legitimize English teaching as Christian mission. He defines this mission as a ministry of reconciliation: between God and man, between the West and other nations, and between Western and non-Western Christians.

As an English teacher in Russia, I am especially challenged and encouraged by Snow's specific emphasis on reconciling West and East. I believe the goal here should be the healing of historic conflicts and misperceptions and Western missionaries' interaction with, and learning from, non-Western Christians. For some this includes the Russian Orthodox Church. Snow states, "Many CETs

Moscow's authority over Orthodoxy in Ukraine is weakening—even in the branch that remains loyal and subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate.

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Stumbling Block to Stepping Stone

Pavel Ryndich

Editor's Note: Pavel Ryndich is a pastor in the village of Bor, near Nizhnii Novgorod, Russia. Averaging 300 in weekly attendance, this Pentecostal congregation has planted two sister churches in Russia and one in Germany and anticipates launching another in Nizhnii Novgorod in the near future. Nizhnii Novgorod native Pavel Ryndich came out of a life of drinking, drugs, and violence. When he became a Christian he shared his radical change of heart with his addicted friends, who began meeting together with him on a regular basis. His congregation today is composed primarily of new converts from the drug culture. The same is the case for the new church fellowship he established among Russian-Germans and indigenous Germans in Saxony, Germany.

The Lord turns my every stumbling block into a stepping stone.

We recently lost the possibility to gather for Sunday services. The city government prohibited us as a cult because we are not Orthodox. At first this was a shock to me. I wondered how 200 people could serve God without a building! It is cold outside. But God always knows a way out. About a month and a half after the loss of our church building we began to conduct our services in cell groups. We are doing great. I thought it would be a disaster without Sunday services for the whole church. While in some ways we lost advantages, on the whole I think we have benefited. Our people have become stronger and more active and they are more responsible and closer to each other. I did not know that the church not only can survive in such a situation

(loss of the possibility to gather), but can even grow! It is incredible! Now we minister in the following way: I gather all the leaders of the church once a week and preach a sermon. Then they share this sermon with the cell groups in their Sunday services around the city. So every person in the church receives spiritual food. New people come and receive Jesus. What is also positive is that we lose fewer people among new believers because their cell group services offer more love and consideration and acceptance than large Sunday services. Also, now more people come to all-night prayer meetings. This brings me joy! The Lord is great. He turns my every stumbling block into a stepping stone. ♦

Resources (cont. from page 15)

[Christian English Teachers] who have the opportunity to participate in the local church in the host country find it to be one of the most rewarding and meaningful aspects of their experience" (165). In turn, Snow encourages CETs to bring their newfound knowledge and experience back to their home churches.

Drawing from years of experience in this field, Snow deals with a remarkable number of vital questions and problematic issues that most Christian English teachers overseas face. He establishes the important role of teacher as learner in this ministry of reconciliation. For virtually every issue tackled, Snow examines a variety of angles and perceptions. These insights provide readers with tools that they can use to make their own conclusions as they seek to promote peace and reflect Christ all around the world.

Snow tends towards the theoretical, presenting issues in broad terms, but his study does make room for practical suggestions. I believe this book should be mandatory reading for church mission boards and for all English teachers heading overseas. For those of us who have been teaching English on the field for some time, this book is an excellent plumbline against which to measure personal experience. ♦

Cathy Thornberg Sheets teaches English at the Russian-American Christian University, Moscow, Russia.

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Editor.....Mark Elliott
Assistant Editor.....Jena Abbott
Designer.....Carlie Cranford

EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT

The Global Center
Beeson Divinity School
Samford University
Box 292268
Birmingham, AL 35229
Tel.: 205-726-2170
Fax: 205-726-2271
E-mail: ewcmreport@samford.edu
Web site: <http://www.samford.edu/groups/global/ewcmreport>

