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What Lutherans and Other Protestants Can Learn from Orthodox Christians

J. Robert Jacobsen

Much of Lutheranism today places an exaggerated emphasis on the rational and propositional aspects of God's Word at the expense of the Word's emotive and wonder-inducing aspects. We admire the Christ who gives the clever answer to the Sadducees more than the Christ who calms the sea. It is easier for us to identify with Paul who develops a strong argument for justification by faith than Paul who sees visions and revelations, is caught up to the third heaven, and performs the signs of a true apostle with wonders and mighty works. We have tended to narrow the range of our openness to God's Word to the point that its verbal and propositional forms impress us far more than any other. This has brought us to the place where we are today, with much to relearn from other members of the Christian family, especially from those of the Orthodox tradition.

We miss opportunities to communicate the gospel.

In the former Soviet Union the domes of many churches, including the crosses that crown them, bedazzle anyone who glances in their direction. They are covered with gold leaf and capture and intensify the brilliance of any available light. When I asked one elderly priest why believers would spend so much of their scarce money on something like that, he responded without hesitation, "It's the only way we can tell our rulers who our real God is."

By whatever means, our churches should be saying at least three things to all who pass by: "Here we are; you are welcome here; here is where God meets us and heaven touches earth." Church structures and settings that cheat one or more of those three visual messages, or worse still, that give the opposite message to any who see them, demand our urgent attention. We don't need churches that say, "Pay no attention to us," or "We dare you to figure out how to get in here," or "Is this a shopping mall, a theater, or a night club?" Visual forms of God's Word can be powerful. They can be on the front lines of communicating the gospel to people whose ears are not yet open enough to hear it.

We may not appreciate some of the visual

messages encountered in an Orthodox Church but no worshiper is in danger of sensing 1) that heaven has collapsed, 2) or that there is some question as to whether or not Christ has risen and ascended, 3) or that worship is a spectator sport or a purely private affair, 4) or that anyone short of the ill and the dying can remain seated when being addressed by the living God. I especially appreciate the total absence of pews in Orthodox churches outside North America and the blend of reverence, order, and spontaneity that some have characterized as the "organized chaos" of Orthodox worship. Episodes of rapt attention centering on adoration, the Word, and Holy Communion are punctuated by episodes of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving that can take an individual worshiper from one end of the sanctuary to the other, depending on how crowded the church is at any given time.

We can be grateful that after centuries of exclusive domination by black robes and white ruffs or tabs, North American and Third World Lutherans are at least relearning the role of color in the vestments of worship leaders. It's not a matter of cost and extravagance, it's a matter of visual proclamation. A few years ago I discovered that all the colorful vestments in my sacristy closet cost less than the two lined academic gowns owned by a neighboring colleague. Just as one might be excused for doubting the sincerity of a messenger who proclaims victory but is dressed like a mourner, it makes sense to reinforce the verbal proclamation of the victory of Christ with garments and banners one might expect to see at a victory celebration.

We deprive ourselves and others of those parts of God's revelation that are better grasped visually than verbally.

This is a major loss. Who can explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity and its significance for us? You have to have a very specialized mind or be in a very rare mood to be moved by the rational explanations offered by early Church Fathers and classical theologians. In contrast, the God-awareness and self-awareness of

(continued on page 2)

Contributing Editors

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Keston Institute, Oxford

Dr. Anita Deyneka

Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries, Wheaton, IL

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Mr. Larry Uzzell

Jamestown Foundation, Waxahachie, TX

Dr. Alexander Zaichenko

Russian-American Christian University, Moscow

What Lutherans and Other Protestants Can Learn...

(continued from page 1)

an entire people have been transformed through the Word made visible in the early fifteenth century Icon of the Holy Trinity painted by St. Andrei Rubliov. And today that icon speaks the gospel to millions of Christians outside the Russian Orthodox tradition. I am one of them.

Perhaps Henri Nouwen's meditation on this icon is the best way for the eyes of Western Christians to be opened to its message: *Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons* (Notre Dame: 1987). Here is gentleness with authority, the reciprocating love that is God, not the family of God but the Family that is God; and we are invited and enabled to be a part of that Household of Love. Words sometimes seem so clumsy, so artificial to make this holy truth real to me. But the icon never fails to reach my soul through the doorway of my eyes and return me to the truth revealed in Christ (Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 3:1-4; John 14:23-25).

In Helsinki I was deeply moved to encounter a bank of lighted votive lamps under a crucifix near the entrance of a famous Lutheran church. No one needed to tell us that people came there to pray, not just to gawk. The candles said it all. Several dozen visitors moved through the awe-inspiring sanctuary with reverence and a number kneeled in prayer or sat in meditation. A small sign near the votive lamps invited everyone to light a candle as a testimony to Christ, our Intercessor at the throne of grace, the Light of the world. A suggested contribution for each lighted candle went to support the church in its mission to share the light of Christ with others. A local pastor told me they had adopted and adapted this practice from their Russian Orthodox neighbors and it is now widespread in Lutheran churches in major centers throughout Scandinavia. Do we need to consider the power such a visual witness has to help people realize our sanctuaries are houses of prayer for all nations?

We lose much of our God-given capacity to respond to what we see.

I was with two Greek-Catholic friends in the restored Danilov Monastery in Moscow. We were led behind the iconostasis of a chapel not yet dedicated. The priest wanted to show us a new icon created by one of Russia's foremost icon painters. The moment my companions saw the icon they were transfixed by the power of its message. Tears came to their eyes and they broke out in song and prayer.

In Russia I could no longer escape this obvious fact: we children of Western civilization have pulled the shades down most of the way over the window of our souls and we are not even aware of our

impoverishment. We assume the peephole we possess is all the window we really need. Other Christians, simple people using what God has given them, can help us roll up the shades and see what God wants to show us. It is not so much that we in the West are verbally overstimulated as that we are visually understimulated in our normal worship experiences. We are lopsided with souls nourished by adult ears, but infant eyes. A whole range of spiritual experience and entire dimensions of spiritual truth are inaccessible to us in this state. We are in real danger. Anytime we mistake the part for the whole we are in trouble. Not only are we deceiving ourselves when we try to function like this, but we usually end up despising those who are exercising the very capacity we have lost, proudly oblivious to how much we ourselves need it.

I sense so deeply how enriching it could be for our people to recover from the plague of Western rationalism and to reclaim some of their lost giftedness as children created in the image of God, that I can be positively evangelistic about this. If people tell me this or that visual expression of the gospel is offensive or meaningless to them, I quietly suggest to them that it should not be, and I invite them to take the risk of drawing apart the curtain and daring the Holy Spirit to say something to them through the window of their eyes. Doubtless, the church is responsible to ensure that God's Word is being communicated by whatever means. But it is the content of the message and the effectiveness of the form it takes in addressing the whole person that determine whether or not it is evangelical, God's Good News for us. One gift I believe Lutherans can offer others is our commitment to the stringent application of this standard. But we also can learn from others how to apply it so that our visual as well as verbal messages convey the gospel. ♦

J. Robert Jacobsen, former Lutheran bishop of Alberta, Canada, is now a Roman Catholic layman residing in Bashaw, Alberta.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from J. Robert Jacobsen, "What God is Calling Lutherans to Learn from the Orthodox Tradition," Eastern Churches Journal 1 (Summer 1994): 89-106.

We children of Western civilization have pulled the shades down most of the way over the window of our souls and we are not even aware of our impoverishment.

What Orthodox Christians Can Learn From Evangelical Christians

Bradley Nassif

Most of my life and work over the past 30 years has been devoted to understanding God's truth as it has been known in the Eastern and Western Christian traditions. Few Orthodox seem willing to admit that much can be learned from the Christian West. The tendency is simply to lump all Protestant traditions together into one great sea of undifferentiated darkness! What I wish to do here is to offer personal reflections on what we Orthodox can learn from contemporary Evangelical Christians. While I remain convinced that the Orthodox Church preserves the fullness of God's truth, I am equally persuaded that we have not made that truth meaningful and accessible to our own church members and those who peer inside our windows, both Christians and non-Christians. The following are simply reflections shared from the heart rather than a formal technical analysis of our agreements and differences.

A Lament Over Weak Participation in Liturgy

The Orthodox Church throughout the world possesses a very rich and beautiful theological inheritance. Few would dispute the architectural wonder of our cathedrals, the artistic beauty of our iconography, or the inspirational impact of our ancient hymns and liturgical services. Our theological literature from the past continues to define the meaning of the word orthodoxy for those who have lost their way in the contemporary maze of theological liberalism, cultic religion, or postmodernism. We Orthodox have done better than all others at "not changing the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). Still, it is quite obvious from the weak participation in our liturgical services and in the personal lives of our members, that Orthodox Christianity is often failing to meet the spiritual needs of our people. Parishioners are coming and going in and out of church with little visible change in their lives. In short, they do not know the core content of the gospel or how to integrate its meaning into their everyday lives. I realize these are sad things to say, but these are the spiritual realities that harm our lives and weaken our witness to the world.

"Are Our People Evangelized or Sacramentalized?"

Without a doubt, the greatest lesson the Orthodox can learn from Evangelicals is the need for making the gospel much clearer and more central to the totality of our church life. Evangelicals know what the basic gospel is and how relevant it can be to everyday life. I am not saying that all Evangelicals do that, but so many of them have, that they have been collectively identified as the historical phenomenon known as "the Evangelical movement." The most

powerful characteristic of the movement is its grasp on the gospel and its power to transform lives. Is this to say that Evangelicals possess the gospel and Orthodox do not? By no means! What I'm saying is that Orthodox possess it in a formal way but we are not translating it in a relevant, life-changing way. The clarity of the gospel is not intentionally made central to our liturgical services and everyday lives. This is not to say sermons are not preached. They are, and often are eloquent. But very often what priests preach are not the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and His call to total commitment and what that means to everyday life and liturgy. Our leaders wrongly assume everybody knows about that subject. Instead of Christ-centered messages we hear sermons dealing with moral values, social issues, financial giving, the environment, or the need for more church attendance. In effect, the authentic gospel is replaced with a social gospel or a liturgical gospel (as if simply "going to church" is all that is needed). I often wonder, "Are our people really evangelized, or are they simply sacramentalized?" True sacramental preaching makes the gospel central to every liturgical act and every liturgical season of fasting and prayer. Without the centrality of the gospel we end up imposing on our people the evil of religious formalism and barren ritualism. It is, in effect, not a true Orthodoxy but a false Orthodoxy. Consequently, the most important thing that the Orthodox can learn from Evangelicals is not taking for granted that everyone in church is converted and has no need to hear the basic gospel message. The message of the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus must be self-consciously applied to the entire sacramental life of the church. Christ-centered preaching and Christ-centered worship must be faithfully performed by our priests, bishops, and patriarchs if they wish to truly worship God in "spirit and in truth" (John 4).

Focusing on the Centrality of Christ

Consider this single proposition: if the centrality of Christ and His kingdom is faithfully applied, then every evil in the church has the opportunity to be cured because Christ is the cure for all evil. If the gospel is made clearer and more central to all we do in the church, we will truly be Orthodox in reality and not in name only. I am not trying to be simplistic or reductionistic; on the contrary, I am seeking to be faithful to the maximalist vision of the faith of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of all things, and the cure for all our sins and weaknesses. Evangelicals have a much stronger empirical grasp of

(continued on page 4)

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What Orthodox Christians Can Learn...

(continued from page 3)

this truth than do Orthodox. Formally, in its liturgy, sacraments, iconography, hymnography, spirituality, and theological literature, the Orthodox Church is extremely Christ-centered; in practice, however, it is not. Consequently, Evangelicals can help Orthodox learn from what they do right and recover what is within our own tradition.

Be that as it may, numerous consequences result from self-consciously making the gospel clearer and more central to the life of the Orthodox Church, as Evangelicals have done in their churches. The single word that summarizes it all is contextualize. Once the gospel is made visible in all the church's sacraments and liturgical actions, then its preaching, worship, missions, and education will reflect that Christ-centeredness. For example, worship services will be more meaningful because the priest shows how Christ is related to different sacraments. The Divine Liturgy will not focus on the Eucharist per se, but on Christ in the liturgy of the Word and in the liturgy of the sacrament, two complimentary aspects of the Sunday liturgy. Christian education will not simply be about learning the symbolic meaning of the priests' vestments, church architecture, etc., but on how Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity are the primary focus of those vestments and artistic expressions of theology. The church's missionary work will not simply seek to "plant churches" but to "convert sinners" to personal faith in Christ through repentance, faith, and baptism. Finally, in the church's preaching, the gospel of Jesus Christ will be applied to the marketplace of business, school, and family life. There is a dire need to show people how the gospel, the church, and the world relate to each other through living "the liturgy after the liturgy," as one Orthodox scholar put it.

Making the Gospel Clearer and More Central to Life

Orthodox might learn much more from Evangelicals, but if making the gospel clearer and more central to all aspects of the church's life is heeded, then all else will come into proper focus. Christ will be made central to our Bible reading, our worship, our preaching, our sacraments, our spirituality, our education, and our missions. The Orthodox Church has such a long history and rich theology that it is easy for us to lose sight of the forest for the trees. If we are willing to learn anything from Evangelicals, it is the simplicity of their message and grasp of its far-reaching consequences for everyday life. Evangelicals can teach us to consciously enthrone Jesus Christ as the living head of our church, not just in our liturgies but in our hearts as well. If we Orthodox wish to possess a truly incarnational, trinitarian faith then we will need to constantly recover the personal and relational aspects of God in every life-giving action of the church. Failure to do so constitutes an experiential denial of our own Orthodox faith. Even if we Orthodox find Evangelicals theologically deficient in a number of areas, Evangelicals can rightly find us existentially deficient in the practical outworking of our faith. Perhaps if we humble ourselves before our Evangelical brethren we will learn the true meaning of our own faith and in the process bring them with us into the fullness of the life of the church.

Bradley Nassif, Ph.D., is professor of historical and systematic theology, Antiochian House of Studies, Balamand University (Deir El-Balamand, El-Koura, Lebanon, and Cliffside Park, NJ), and founder of the Society for the Study of Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism.

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Resource Notes *Jena Abbott*

Perceptions of a Great Country: Hunches and Pointers in Understanding Russia by Peter Lowman, including tributes to Peter Deyneka, Jr., is now available in a Russian-English diglot edition. Lowman's two-part essay, "Perceptions of a Great Country," was previously published in the *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 8 (Spring 2000 and Summer 2000). The "Chronology of the Life of Peter Deyneka, Jr.," "Lessons for Ministry from the Life and Example of Peter Deyneka, Jr.," and several, but not all, of the tributes included in this 49-page booklet were previously published in the *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 9 (Winter 2001). The cost per copy is \$1.00 U.S. or 30 rubles. To determine postage charges and to place orders, contact Barbara Christensen, Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries, Wheaton, IL 60182; tel: 603-462-1739; E-mail: barb@pdrm.org; or David Westrum or Nadia Emilianova, Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow, Russia; tel: 095-719-7945; E-mail: orders@asr.ru.

Religious Life in Russia: Digest of the Press (WPS Russia Media Monitoring Agency) http://www.wps.ru:810/e_index.html (in Russian & English) The independent media monitoring company WPS (What the Papers Say) has operated this Web site since 1987. It offers access to information carried by Russian newspapers, television, and radio, drawing from over 150 daily and weekly newspapers and magazines published in Moscow and about 400 provincial newspapers from throughout the Russian Federation. It also monitors public affairs and business broadcasts on eight local television and nine radio channels. WPS provides a glimpse of religious life in Russia, including up-to-date information on each religious group in Russia, articles about church and state, crime, and religious minorities, as well as interviews with various religious leaders. WPS offers a press clipping service, broadcast media monitoring, Russian Web monitoring, a catalogue of digests, statistical reports, and a Russian print media guide.

Lutherans in Russia

Valeria Sorokina

Under the Tsars

Lutherans have lived in Russia for more than 400 years. Once a largely German and Finnish ethnic church, today Lutherans increasingly attract Russians who appreciate their spiritual legacy, ecclesiastical traditions, and sound theology. On the other hand, doctrinal unity no longer exists in the Lutheran Church since some have compromised evangelical positions under the influence of European theological liberalism.

The first Lutherans appeared in Russia in the middle of the sixteenth century when Ivan the Terrible invited German specialists—military officers, gunsmiths, technicians, and merchants—to modernize the army. They settled in Moscow and in a few cities along the Volga River and the White Sea. The earliest Lutheran Church of St. Michael in Moscow dates from 1576. By 1583 Ivan the Terrible had conquered the present territory of Latvia and Estonia with its large Lutheran population. In the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, German Lutherans spread to the South of Russia, Central Siberia, Ukraine, and Georgia, primarily in locations of military garrisons. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at the invitation of the Russian crown, some 280,000 German colonists made their home in Ukraine and the Caucasus, Volynia, Central Asia, and Siberia, with two-thirds of all settlers being Lutheran.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia has existed for nearly 400 years. The beginnings were laid by a few parishes of Finnish migrants to North Ingria, around present-day St. Petersburg, who moved there during Ivan the Terrible's war with Sweden. By 1640 Lutherans composed one third of the Ingrian population.

In 1703 Peter the Great gave permission to open a Swedish-Finnish Lutheran parish in the newly founded capital of St. Petersburg. Its successor, St. Mary's, is the Cathedral Church of Ingria to this day. In tsarist Russia the Lutheran Church remained a minority denomination restricted to non-Russian nationalities, with no proselytism allowed. Until the 1905 Edict of Toleration Lutherans were not permitted to perform the liturgy in the Russian language. Nevertheless, Russia's annexation of largely Lutheran populations in the Baltic region under Ivan the Terrible and during the Great Northern War (1700-1721) led to an assimilation of German nobility into all areas of Russian administration. This, plus Romanov royal marriages to German princesses, increased the influence of Lutheranism in Russia far beyond the Baltic. By 1914 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia (except for Finland and Poland) included 1,828 churches and prayer houses with a membership of

1,293,000 Latvians
1,100,000 Estonians
1,098,000 Germans
148,000 Finns
12,000 Lithuanians
4,000 Poles
1,000 Armenians
4,000 Other nationalities (including Russians)
3,660,000 Total

Under the Commissars

After the Communist Revolution of October 1917, Lutheran church life changed dramatically. In 1918 the former Russian territories of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, with large Lutheran populations, became independent states. Only 84 pastors served Lutheran churches as of 1922 and the only Lutheran seminary in Leningrad survived just five years, from 1925 to 1929. The period from 1928 to 1938, with collectivization, political purges, and harsh new religious legislation, witnessed the end of official Lutheran work in Russia. From 1938 to 1969 the Lutheran Church of Ingria had no legal existence. Every second Ingrian Finn was killed during World War II or perished in Stalin's concentration camps or in exile. Only in 1970-77 were Ingrian Lutheran parishes reopened in Petrozavodsk, Karelia, and in the Leningrad suburb of Pushkin.

German Lutherans suffered severely as well. After the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Stalin ordered approximately one million Germans in the European part of Russia deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia. Able-bodied deportees were forced to serve in a special Labor Army while all other Germans had to report to officials on a regular basis. In 1956 the first Evangelical Lutheran congregation was registered in Akmolinsk/Tselinograd (today, Astana), Kazakhstan. For ten years it functioned as the only legal German Lutheran church until two Siberian congregations were organized in 1965. Soviet Germans were rehabilitated only in 1964 and could return to their original places of residence only in 1972. By 1980 80 churches had reopened.

The first postwar German churches that appeared were Lutheran Brethren communities, the successors of an earlier revival movement. The rise of Lutheran Brethren Churches, led by faithful lay Christians, was conditioned by ruthless persecution and required determination, a godly lifestyle, and courage. In some places prayer meetings were held up to five times a week. In the absence of preachers, lay members read printed sermons aloud. These communities remained ethnocentric and isolated from each other, making it difficult for the Lutheran hierarchy to integrate them into the church today.

(continued on page 6)

Once a largely German and Finnish ethnic church, today Lutherans increasingly attract Russians.

Lutherans in Russia

(continued from page 5)

Theological Distinctions

Lutheran theologian and professor at St. Petersburg State University, Dr. Sergei Isayev, notes that Lutherans can be described as either conservative or liberal, with the majority of Lutherans today being liberal, Russia included. The liberal wing is represented by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia (ELKRAS), while the conservative wing is represented by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCIR). ELKRAS believes the Scripture contains the Word of God, presuming human elements are present as well, whereas ELCIR believes the Scripture is the Word of God, without human error. Also, ELKRAS ordains women to the pastorate while ELCIR does not.

The Current Situation

On 14 September 1992 the state granted recognition to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia. Its six administrative divisions (*probsts*) include St. Petersburg, West Ingermanland, North West (Karelia), Urals, Siberia, and Russian-speaking congregations. Its 73 parishes and religious communities, with perhaps 13,000 members, use both Finnish and Russian liturgy, but only some 20 ordained pastors currently serve churches. ELCIR's Koltushi Seminary in the suburbs of St. Petersburg has been offering training in theology and social, youth, and music ministry since 1995. Currently the Siberian *Probst* is organizing a new seminary in the city of Krasnoyarsk. ELCIR Bishop Aarre Kougappi, who resides in St. Petersburg, has stated that by 2011 he expects the church will be predominantly Russian-speaking.

Despite the emigration of 2.2 million Germans to the West in the past 15 years, both ELKRAS and ELCIR churches continue to expand and attract new believers of various nationalities. According to ELKRAS Archbishop Georg Krechmar, one-half million Germans still reside in the Russian Federation. The number of Russians attending ELKRAS churches is growing, especially in Central

Asia (up to 30 percent). ELKRAS dioceses consist of European Russia, Urals, Siberia/Far East, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia, with autonomous parishes in Belarus, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. ELKRAS membership is estimated to be 250,000 in 600 parishes, with particular strength in Kaliningrad (5,000 in 40 churches), St. Petersburg (1,000 in two churches), and the Volga Region (12,500 in 42 churches). The General Consistory is located at St. Peter's Church in St. Petersburg. Students of theology are trained in Novosaratovka Seminary in the suburbs of St. Petersburg. Bishop Krechmar, a former church historian at the University of Munich, uses some 25 pastors from Germany to partially alleviate the present pastoral shortage.

ELCIR and ELKRAS produce Finnish and Russian bilingual magazines, *Inkerin Kirkko* and *Der Bote* respectively, and a joint news bulletin, *Lutheran News*. Both churches have been members of the World Lutheran Federation for a number of years. Currently, ELCIR closely cooperates with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Evangelical Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in evangelism, missions, Christian education, radio broadcasting, youth and prison ministries, and social work projects. ELKRAS partners with German and North American churches such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).

Besides ELCIR and ELKRAS, several additional Lutheran missions and parishes function on the territory of Russia. Among them is the Karelian Evangelical Lutheran Church in northwest Russia established by Finnish missionaries and the Swedish parish of St. Catherine in St. Petersburg. The largest is the West Siberian Christian Mission, known as the Bible Lutheran Church, registered since 1992 in the city of Novosibirsk, with an independent seminary. Canonically it belongs to the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and is strongly supported by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Its parishes east of the Urals exercise a great deal of autonomy. ♦

Valeria Sorokina teaches at St. Petersburg Christian University and is a member of St. Mary's Lutheran Church, St. Petersburg, Russia.

ELKRAS believes the Scripture contains the Word of God, whereas ELCIR believes the Scripture is the Word of God.

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Russian Lutheranism: *Between Protestantism, Orthodoxy, and Catholicism*

Sergei B. Filatov and Aleksandra Styopina

The restoration of confessions destroyed or repressed during the Soviet era has often led to the emergence of religious and ideological phenomena that do not have any analogs in prerevolutionary Russia. To a degree this is true about any confession, for it is impossible to enter the same river twice. Even post-Soviet Orthodoxy is far from being the same as prerevolutionary Orthodoxy. However, the metamorphosis of Russian Lutheranism has perhaps been much greater than that experienced by other confessions in Russia.

The Emergence of Ethnic Russian Lutheranism

Until the 1980s Lutheranism in Russia was represented by congregations of Germans who were mostly resettled in Stalin's time from the European part of Russia to the Urals and Siberia. They consisted mostly of older believers who were not well educated. These Lutheran congregations were quickly decreasing because of growing emigration. In the 1960s and '70s Lutheranism experienced less persecution [than it had under Stalin], but was dying, nevertheless, for lack of young people and intelligentsia. However, the 1980s saw radical changes in this situation. The most important was the conversion to Lutheranism of a great number of Russians. Lutheran churches have now emerged in almost all large cities of our country with a majority of members being Russian. Lutheran parishes in some cities, for example in Izhevsk, Vladivostok, Krasnoyarsk, and Novosibirsk, can count many hundreds of believers. The social composition of the congregations has changed as well: youth, university students, and persons with higher education play major roles. These people, who by their own life deny the famous slogan of Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Russian equals Orthodox," consider themselves Russian patriots and at the same time followers of Lutheran teaching (even more faithful followers than contemporary Germans or Swedes).

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Lutheranism has developed a religious niche acceptable

to a great extent by many Russians searching for God but unable to find Him either in Orthodoxy or the more radical forms of Protestantism.

Lutheran Theological Distinctives

What are the fundamental features of Lutheran religiosity that have become so attractive to Russian people? Lutherans, representing the first successful Protestant movement, have kept much of their Catholic heritage and, unlike Baptists, Methodists, and Adventists, do not espouse extreme theological positions. Lutheranism does not take a position on the predestination of some to election and others to damnation, but they do acknowledge God's omnipotence and salvation by grace alone. In contrast to other Protestant confessions, Lutheranism places great emphasis upon liturgical life. Lutheran worship services are more solemn and mystical than worship in most Protestant confessions. In their conversations with other people, Russian Lutherans stress their close affinity to the Orthodox Church, its mysteries, and their adherence to common Christian beliefs. Lutherans believe God requires a free and conscious response to His love, more than the observance of formal rules in everyday life. The Bible is the source of truth for Lutherans, but rather than concrete answers, it provides a foundation for thoughts and conclusions.

Lutheranism makes a clear distinction between the sphere of the gospel (religious life proper) and the sphere of the law (regulated by the government). That is why Lutherans have been comfortable with both monarchies (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Germany before 1914) and republics (U.S., Weimar Germany, Finland, and Iceland). The sphere of politics and social life is recognized as autonomous, but a believer is expected to fulfill civil duties because this is God's will.

Lutheranism combines faith and reason, is liturgical and intellectual at the same time, has deep connections with European culture, and easily establishes connections with Russian culture.

Lutheran churches have now emerged in almost all large cities of our country with a majority of members being Russian.

(continued on page 8)

Russian Lutheranism...

(continued from page 7)

Lutherans are oriented towards Western political values, but are not connected to them as directly as are Baptists or Pentecostals. Lutherans can be conservative or liberal. In addition, it is inherent in their nature to have a strong emphasis upon community life and social outreach.

Conservative and Liberal Theology

The regeneration of Finnish Ingrian and German Lutheran churches led to support from Finland and Germany. At times very conservative Russian Lutheran congregations have been in conflict with more liberal Lutherans from the West. Today the Lutheran Church of Ingria has two major overseas strategic allies in the Church of Finland and the conservative American Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, whose ideology is close to that of conservative Russian Lutherans.

The reconstruction of German Lutheranism began after perestroika under the direction of the German Lutheran Church. However, this cooperation brought some challenges to German Lutherans: emigration and fundamentalism. When German leadership tried to make Lutheran Brethren congregations more open, such congregations joined Evangelical Christians-Baptists. The conflict became very sharp at the General Synod of 1994.

Fundamentalist Lutheran Brethren congregations wanted to choose a Russian to lead the Lutheran Church in Russia, but Germans pressed for the election of someone from Germany. At the same time, Russian Lutheran churches began growing rapidly due to the Russian urban intelligentsia's interest in German Lutheran culture and language.

In the West, liberal German Lutheran pastors do not insist on the priority of the Lutheran Church, but rather teach a common Christianity. This is very appealing to many Russian intelligentsia who are religious, but do not want to be in a church. A good example is Pastor Manfred Brokmann in Vladivostok, who is a very talented musician and poet and a strong charismatic leader. Although he is perhaps the most liberal German pastor, many others share similar views and similar successes. Lutheran churches in St. Petersburg, Kazan, Yaroslavl, Omsk, and Khabarovsk, led by pastors from Germany, have become very influential.

One of the reasons for Lutheranism's success is that it fills the empty niche of liberal Christianity in Russia. The Orthodox Church and almost all Protestants and Catholics (even more so Old Believers) hold traditional views on the literal validity of the Scriptures' text and moral principles. The paradox of the situation is that, in contrast to the ideology of the existing churches in Russia, the rest of the population is more secularized than in the West. People not only attend church less often, but they do not hold to the traditional Christian beliefs and morals of people in the West.

Probably the most successful attempt in creating a Russian Lutheran Church is connected with Vsovolod Lytkin, a theater director in Novosibirsk. At the end of the 1980s Lytkin was baptized in a church in Estonia, studied in a pastor's school, and became a spiritual disciple of Jaan Kiivit, Archbishop of Tallinn. In 1993 he organized a Lutheran congregation in Novosibirsk under the jurisdiction of the Lutheran Church of Estonia. By 2000, his church grew into the Bible Lutheran Church, with parishes in many Siberian cities. Lytkin believes his church satisfies the interest of Russian people in Lutheranism without requiring them to identify with a foreign national culture (German or Finnish). He is convinced that Western Protestant and Russian Orthodox religiosity are two extremes: the former, too rational and secularized; the latter, too mystical and emotional. He is especially severe in his criticism of the contemporary German Lutheran Church which, he argues, "is penetrated by the ideas of Calvinism, Baptism, feminism, moral relativism, and secularism and is an example of spiritual degradation." Many scientists in Akademgorodok near Novosibirsk who attend his church say that only the Lutheran Church allows them to organically combine "reason and faith, the rationality of science and the irrationality of religious experience."

Lutheran Russian Roots

Russian Lutherans sense a belonging and cultural rootedness to the Russian soil that is not diminished by belonging to the Lutheran Church. Viacheslav Pliaskin, pastor of Bible Lutheran Church in Irkutsk, said: "There are two major religions in Russia, Orthodoxy and Lutheranism. Since the sixteenth century Lutheranism together with Orthodoxy has formed a part of Russian culture, science, and politics. Without the Lutheran tradition in Russia, only half of Russia would be left and the Lutheran part is not the worst half. You will become tired if you start counting everything that Lutherans have given to Russia. The regeneration of Russian Lutheranism is the restoration of the natural order of things."

One uneducated Russian lady from Saratov expressed it best, explaining the appeal of "Lutheran culture" for Russians: "The Lutheran Church respects people and people here respect each other. Our pastor tells us that whoever misbehaves at the table does not have the true faith. You can laugh, but I am convinced that these words are true. I am surrounded by rudeness, boorishness, obscene language, constant drinking, deception, and violence. After this, when I come to church, I feel like I am in paradise, I am already saved here."

C. S. Lewis-Style "Mere Christianity"

In spite of all the conflicts among different Russian Lutheran factions, including mutual accusations of heresy and absence of grace, Russian Lutherans not only have a conscious understanding of belonging to the same confession, but they also maintain fellowship, hold discussions, and engage in theological debates.

At times very conservative Russian Lutheran congregations have been in conflict with more liberal Lutherans from the West.

In Russian Lutheranism Christian tradition and reason coexist in what one could call a C.S. Lewis-style "mere Christianity." The resulting atmosphere of freedom generates ongoing reflection over major problems of Christian theology. Because of the presence of educated professional theologians and studious, young clergy among Russian Lutherans, no other confession in Russia today has so favorable a condition for the emergence of serious and original religious thinkers. Russian Lutheranism is becoming a serious spiritual and intellectual challenge to Russian Orthodoxy, which the latter will have to soon recognize. Let us hope it will be able to give a truly creative response to such a challenge. ♦

Sergei B. Filatov is an Orthodox layman who holds a doctorate (candidate) degree in history. He is a senior researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and head of a Keston Institute research team investigating religion throughout Russia.

Aleksandra Styopina is a student research assistant for Professor Filatov.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church Addresses in the Former Soviet Union

Archbishop Prof. D. Georg Krechmar
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia, Ukraine,
Kazakhstan, and Central Asia (ELKRAS)
Box 8
53501 Lappeenranta, Finland
Office Address:
Nevski Prospekt 22-24
191186 St. Petersburg, Russia
Tel: 7-812-314-26-53
Fax: 7-812-310-26-55
E-mail: kanzlei@elkras.org
Web site: www.elkras.org

Bishop Aarre Kougappi
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia
(ELCIR)
Box 189
53101 Lappeenranta, Finland
Office Address:
Ul. Bolshaia Koniushennaia 8
191186 St. Petersburg, Russia
Tel: 7-812-312-82-89
Fax: 7-812-312-82-89
E-mail: church@elcingria.spb.ru
Web site: www.elcingria.spb.ru

Archbishop Jaan Kiivit
Kiriku Plats 3
10130 Tallinn, Estonia
Tel: 372-627-73-50; fax: 372-627-73-52
E-mail: konsistoorium@eelk.ee
Web site: <http://www.eelk.ee>

Archbishop Janis Vanags
M. Pils 4
1050 Riga, Latvia
Tel: 371-722-60-57; fax: 371-782-00-41
E-mail: konsistorija@parks.lv
Web site: <http://www.lutheran.lv>

Bishop Jonas Kalvanas, Jr.
Tumo-Vaizganto g. 50
5900 Taurage
Lithuania
Tel: 370-46-611-45 / Fax: 370-46-611-45
E-mail: konsistorija@takas.lt

Father Vsevolod Litkin
Bible Lutheran Church
Novosibirsk, Russia
Tel: 3832-36-42-19
E-mail: vsevolod@lutheran.ru



Book Review

Tserkvy i religiini organizatsii Ukrainy u 2001 rotsi [Churches and Religious Organizations of Ukraine in 2001]. Kyiv: Derzhavnyi Komitet Ukrainy u Spravah Religiyi, 2001.

Reviewed by Vitaliy Bak.

This informative handbook provides a great deal of useful information about churches and religious organizations in Ukraine. Edited by the Ukrainian State Committee of Religious Affairs, the directory gives up-to-date information about Ukrainian churches, monasteries, missions, schools, and a host of other religious organizations. It also lists religious mass media in Ukraine, including general information

about the organizations and their leaders, addresses, and telephone numbers. The *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 19 (Winter 2002) published an excerpt from another study in the area of Ukrainian religious statistics published by the Fund for Democratic Initiatives. Although the study by the State Committee of Religious Affairs is more recent (published in 2001) and contains much useful information, the study by Democratic Initiatives (published in 2000) gives more statistical interpretation. The former is technical, factual, and detailed, while the latter is more general and analytical, giving a larger picture of the religious situation in Ukraine. Students of religion in Ukraine will definitely appreciate both sources. ♦

Evangelical Missions in Russia:

How They Are Misunderstood and the Opportunities That Remain

Mark J. Harris

Editor's Note: Readers may want to compare the findings of Mark J. Harris with similar points made in two articles published in the first volume of the East-West Church and Ministry Report: "Are Evangelicals Interlopers?" 1 (Summer 1993), 3-4; and "For Christian Understanding, Ignorance is Not Bliss," 1 (Summer 1993), 5-7. Both articles are accessible at the Report Web site: www.samford.edu/groups/global/ewcmreport.

Evangelicals are not and will not be considered partners with the Orthodox Church in the work of the evangelization of Russia. Evangelicals and their converts are considered heretics, detached from their Mother.

Why Orthodox Reject Evangelicals

Evangelicals face many dangers ministering in Russia. Some are the result of contrasts between Russian Orthodox and Western Evangelical soteriology (how each understands salvation). The main danger is Orthodoxy's outright rejection of Evangelicals before they have had a fair chance to fully communicate their message. Some of the more common bases of rejection are outlined below.

1. Rejection as Ignorant People

Russians commonly view Americans as people who are spiritually shallow and overwhelmed by the pettiness of their "pop" culture. Too often Western missionaries witnessing in Russia support this contention by their ignorance of Russian culture, history, and religion—all of which is Orthodox to the core. A common response to Americans coming to Russia is: "What can they possibly have to tell us about spiritual matters?" If continued, this lack of proper preparation for communicating in the Russian context will mark Evangelicals as unworthy of a serious hearing.

2. Rejection as Vulgar Worshippers

Orthodox worship is majestic, solemn, and beautiful to the Russian ear. In contrast, the approach to worship preferred by Western Evangelicals frequently strikes Russians as too casual, too common, even vulgar, and is not considered a serious approach to our holy and mysterious God.

3. Rejection as Rationalists

The West tends to look at the East as being too mystical and too ready to abandon attempts to systematize doctrine. The East sees the West as being too logical and too ready to place faith in its ability to understand God who is a difficult reach for mortal man. Western Evangelicals tend to argue their case with reason, as opposed to letting their lives speak for the reality of Jesus Christ in them. Orthodox believers who value experience over doctrine will not respect this approach.

4. Rejection as Worldly

The Orthodox consider worship as a way to bring heaven to earth. This otherworldly perspective causes them to look with disfavor on the attempts of Evangelicals to behave and communicate in a way that makes sense of the world. Attempts to contextualize the gospel will thus often be interpreted as worldliness and Evangelicals will not be respected.

5. Rejection as Heretics

This is the most serious basis of rejection since it undermines the very heart of the message that Evangelicals bring—that the average person can receive the Word of God and become a true believer in Jesus Christ apart from the Orthodox Church—or any other religious institution. Orthodoxy claims to preserve the pure truth of God, which closes the door to outsiders who claim to bring Christianity to Russians. To accept Orthodoxy is to receive the complete package of faith, including all forms of expression that are considered to be authoritative traditions. The work of Evangelicals in Russia is thus considered a cancerous infiltration into the territory of the true church. Evangelicals are not and will not be considered partners with the Orthodox Church in the work of the evangelization of Russia. Evangelicals and their converts are considered heretics, detached from their Mother.

Factors Favoring Evangelical Work in Russia

Despite these misunderstandings, Evangelicals do have promising opportunities to share the gospel in Russia. The following are four factors that work in their favor.

1. Lack of Identity Among Russian Youth

A great many Russian youth do not look to the Orthodox Church to define what should be Russian religion or culture. Many feel Orthodoxy is out of date, or else pay it respect only from a distance. Seventy years of Communism effectively removed Orthodoxy from its place of power in defining Russian reality. Modern Russian youth are looking as much to the West for answers as they are to Russian history, and there is much cultural confusion as a result. The key opportunity is to show Russian youth how Jesus Christ answers their deepest needs within their own context.

2. Weakness of Spiritual Life Among Some Orthodox

Even at the peak of Orthodox power in Russia, it was often said that "the Russian masses were only superficially Christian." This situation continues today. "The lack of real piety and Christian theological understanding among Orthodox has not gone unnoticed by Orthodox clergy and theologians." For Evangelicals, this Orthodox weakness becomes an opportunity only if they can effectively model

spiritual maturity as they labor in Russia. The evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of a witness is every bit as critical as a proper explanation of the gospel message. Those Russians who trust in sacraments and rituals but lack true spiritual life need to see that the lives of Evangelicals offer something they don't have.

3. Theological Differences Among Orthodox

One is able to discover varying degrees of theological leeway in today's Russian Orthodox setting, which present opportunities for perceptive Evangelicals. Recent movements in Russia have shown that a "number of individual Orthodox priests exhibit in their own life and thinking a large measure of ecumenicity and empathy toward Protestants, along with strong evangelical inclinations." Evangelicals are finding bridges of communication with such leaders, but must still be very wise and discerning, not assuming that more is held in common than is really the case. In addition, priests who exhibit such tolerance and acceptance face suspicion from Orthodox hierarchs.

4. Compatibility in Theology

Evangelicals need not stress differences in theology that they find as they examine Russian Orthodoxy. Many doctrines that appear to be strange and unbiblical, such as the doctrine of theosis, appear much more acceptable once studied carefully. Many misunderstandings can be cleared up with open-minded research and contemplation. Many Orthodox emphases can be embraced by Evangelicals who should demonstrate that they share the same spiritual values. Recognizing and building upon compatible teachings may present one of the best opportunities for Evangelicals to make headway in Russia. ♦

Mark J. Harris earned the doctor of missiology degree at Western Seminary, Portland, OR, in 2000. He and his wife Delisa served as missionaries in Riazan, Russia, from 1993 to 2001, focusing on evangelism, pastoral training, and prison ministry.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from "Crisis of Soteriology: Danger and Opportunity for Western Evangelical Evangelism in Eastern Orthodox Russia," <http://www.markharris.us>.

One is able to discover varying degrees of theological leeway in today's Russian Orthodox setting, which present opportunities for perceptive Evangelicals.

Christian Roots as a Missionary Strategy In Kazakhstan

Constantine Prokhorov

In Central Asia today missionaries have discovered many biblical motifs in indigenous cultures. Let me share a few examples.

1. The traditional Kazakh *yurta* (wigwam) has a remarkable triple crossing of bars in the upper part of the construction against the background of the open sky. Our Kazakh missionaries preach to their countrymen that this is a reminder of the Trinity and the past Christian history of the Kazakhs.
2. Nestorian Christians lived in many Central Asian nations in the Middle Ages before the Muslim invasion of the region. Kazakhs also have an old (genuine Christian) saying, "If somebody casts a stone at you, do not cast it back, but feed your enemy."
3. The Kyrgyz groom compliments his bride with the ancient endearment, "You have sheep's eyes." Again, our missionaries interpret this saying as follows: "The humility of God's sheep means the readiness of the Bride of Jesus Christ to meet with her Groom."
4. Some Central Asian nations strictly forbid any breaking of bones of cattle or sheep in slaughtering and cooking their meat, just as we find in the biblical tradition (Exodus 12:46, John 19:36).

Christian roots discovered in national cultures are used with some success by missionaries in Central Asia today. They preach in many rural areas using special "missionary tents" and even "missionary *yurtas*." The latter are a much more attractive construction for the indigenous people. During the last few years, many books of Scripture have been translated into Central Asian languages and the Word of God itself has become the best missionary in the region. Our Kazakh brothers even say their new Kazakh translation of the Bible is much nearer to the original Hebrew and Greek texts than is the Russian Bible. Our missionary projects, including visits to the majority of houses in our countries, are successful mainly because of the free distribution of some hundred thousand copies of the New Testament.

The providential idea of our missionaries stressing the historical Christian roots of many contemporary Muslim nations of Central Asia has meant a wonderful breakthrough since the fall of Communism. Our missionaries sometimes ask their countrymen: "Why do you confess Islam, the religion of the conquerors of your forefathers, rather than Christianity as did your forefathers?" ♦

Constantine Prokhorov is a 1997 graduate of Odessa Theological Seminary and teaches church history in several Evangelical Christian-Baptist seminaries in Kazakhstan and Siberia. He lives in Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan.

Scripture translated into Central Asian languages has become the best missionary in the region.

A Seismic Shift in Christian Publishing

Marsh Moyle

Content that communicates truth to a hungry heart is what brings about change.

Globalization Firsthand

I was born in London, then spent ten years in Malta in the dying days of the British Empire. I lived in Austria for 17 years, smuggling books and Bibles to Eastern Europe. My Finnish wife and I currently live in Slovakia. My son, who was born in Austria, speaks Slovak, German, and British English and presently lives in South Africa. He has cousins who are Finnish, English, and Australian. I have two sisters who live in Australia and one who lives in England. One is married to a Malay and the other to a Maltese. My parents, who live in England, come from Cornwall and Devon and have French and Norwegian roots. I work in Russia, Ukraine, and Central Europe, and my closest friends live in South Africa, Slovakia, Bulgaria, America, Austria, and England. My computer was made in Japan from ideas developed in California and Texas, with parts from Taiwan. My shoes were made in Italy of Brazilian leather and my jacket was made in Korea with New Zealand wool.

The Stunning Pace of Chance

These facts raise some deep questions for me. There are days when I am not sure where I am, who I am, or where I belong. Sometimes I find life confusing and the choices overwhelming. I live in a time of massive change. In the year I was born the population of the world was approximately 2.8 billion people; now it is more than 6.2 billion. In 1975 when I first began working we communicated using the postal service. In Austria, we waited two years for a phone line. The object of my coveting at that time was an IBM typewriter with an automatic backspace white eraser. Because of Bible smuggling I was blacklisted in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, two countries that no longer exist. I remember crying with friends as the Berlin Wall came down. Later, the first phone call I received from Eastern Europe was from someone hoping at last that no secret policeman would be listening. He started with the question, "Can I do this?" One of the participants in the first publishing house we set up in Czechoslovakia asked if it would really be possible to get permission to do it. Then we suddenly realized we did not need anyone's permission—if we took the risk.

In the 1980s we set up a secret publishing house in Bulgaria. Trying to give responsibility back to the local church community, we discussed book selection. One of the men said, "Bring us all the books and let us choose." He was dismayed when I told him there were some 60,000 Christian books in the English language. I could not even bring him all the catalogues. At that time, Christian titles in Bulgarian, including all editions of the Bible and songbooks, numbered only 100. He had no concept of the possibilities in front of him. His reality was limited by his experience.

Speaking to Deep Longings

Content that communicates truth to a hungry heart is what brings about change. We need publishers who put effort into content and substance and authors who recognize the times and speak truth in ways that grip the heart, letting people know they have been understood. We need to speak to those longings caused by the gap between the reality of God and our daily lives. In spring 2002 we had Russians, Ukrainians, and Slovaks with us for four weeks in our study community. All were converts of recent years and, for the most part, members of young churches. One of the reasons they were with us was so we could listen and come to understand their basic beliefs. We learned important lessons from those days. While many said they believed the Bible to be the Word of God, they did not refer to it much. It would be easy to think they did not know how and needed to learn. Our observation has been, however, that appeal to any authority is often rejected instinctively. It would be easy to publish books about the authority of the Bible or the Holy Spirit, but today's claims to authority by institutions, individuals, or even the Bible are often associated with strong negative experiences. These people were brought up under strong, even crushing authority. When the pressure was removed they found it hard to open up, to relate to others. After years of violation, they find they are affected by their past, with a strong emotional reaction to any authority. The state abused and manipulated them. Too often church leaders, following the Soviet model, did the same.

Christian publishers should not primarily be in the business of producing books. Book production is secondary to content. They should be in the ideas business. If ideas touch readers in ways that help them understand, in ways that move them, there will always be readers. What we're looking for is the place where anxieties, longings, and inconsistencies lodge and where life doesn't fit together. All people need to articulate their experiences, but not all are gifted enough to do this. Books allow someone else to speak for us, so that we can see ourselves accurately portrayed and hear our thoughts meaningfully articulated.

Listening to Readers

Only through the gift of listening can our readers be understood. As James 1:19 says, "Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger." When we publish material that appeals to the hungry heart, we publish truth that touches people. But how can we understand those hungers? Through careful listening. We can call it market research, but I suspect it is much more than that. A Russian friend went to a church where they had all the answers, but they'd forgotten what the questions were. "Our problem as

Evangelicals," he said, "is that we are often afraid of listening and asking questions. Maybe we're lazy, but maybe we're afraid of vulnerability. Proper doubt is the birthplace of learning."

Boundaries by Henry Cloud is an excellent book for Russians trying to discover how the individual is separated from the collective, but the book could be even more powerful if redrafted to fit the Russian context. John MacGregor of L'Abri said the following in a talk called "Generation X, the Lost Generation": "We must speak to the inner man. We must not be distracted by the facade. We must not be put off by cynicism. We must not pander to superficial felt need. Rather, we must address true need, speak to deepest fears, and touch the point of despair and lostness."

Articulating Undefined Beliefs

We have incredible gaps in our churches between belief and practice. We say these marvelous creeds, these wonderful words, but our practice doesn't reflect our words. Francis Schaeffer said, "All men have two creeds: What they say they believe and

what they act on. And what they act on is what they believe." Very often what we act on is unarticulated belief and instinct. It is important to realize that when we join any social group, including the church, we pick up its vocabulary. In making the transition our underlying beliefs often remain unchallenged. Our readers need our help to articulate those undefined beliefs.

Does the book bridge the gap between the reality of God and daily life? Are our books beautiful? Do they reflect the Creator of the universe? Or does the content or the packaging make promises it cannot keep and thus increase cynicism? When God looks around my warehouse, does He recognize Himself in the product stored there?

Marsh Moyle is president of SEN, a Christian consulting and publishing agency based in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Excerpt published with permission from an address given by the author at the Evangelical Press Association Convention, Colorado Springs, CO, 29 April 2002. The unabridged text is accessible at http://www.citygate.org/friendsofsen/root/reports_/?fa=God%20who%20communicate.

Francis Schaeffer said, "All men have two creeds: What they say they believe and what they act on."



Book Review

Sharon Linzey, editor. *Christianity in Russia and Post Communist Europe, 2003. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library Publishers, 2003. 377 pp.*

Reviewed by Sharyl Corrado.

Sharon Linzey must be commended for compilation of an impressive reference work, a valuable international and interdenominational directory of current Christian ministry efforts on behalf of post-Communist Europe. Over a decade of research, supported by a variety of academic institutions and ministries, has culminated in this 377-page volume detailing international ministry efforts on behalf of post-Communist Europe from Australia to South Korea, Brazil to the Vatican, and national churches and ministries in the region itself. Arranged geographically, each entry lists contact information, description of activities, publications, and denominational and other affiliations. Inclusion of Web sites and E-mail addresses, as well as mailing addresses and telephone numbers, facilitates communication among organizations wishing to cooperate in a given region or ministry focus. This directory is invaluable to all wishing to network, share resources, or simply learn from the experiences of others. Introductory articles by Russian Orthodox priests Yakov Krotov and George Kochetkov provide insights especially valuable to Westerners seeking to serve in primarily Orthodox regions.

However, this volume must not be understood to be comprehensive or even representative of Christian ministries currently operating in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Distribution of questionnaires, arguably the most practical method of collecting such enormous amounts of data, excludes organizations not represented at large central gatherings or missing from the centralized mailing lists accessible to a Western sociologist. Conspicuously underrepresented in the territories of the former Soviet Union, for example, are Orthodox Churches and ministries, as well as the majority of smaller churches and ministries outside large cities. Note, for example, that Nizhny Novgorod, the third largest city in Russia, is listed as having no Orthodox Churches or ministries (try telling that to its bishop!) and no Western Protestant churches (what would the city's Vineyard, Calvary Chapel, or Global Strategy World Missions pastors think?).

Because of the tremendous volume of data provided, this reviewer would suggest that future editions be published as a searchable database for sale as a CD-ROM, allowing keyword searches to supplement the broad categories such as sports, humanitarian, and cultural, listed in the index. More attention to editing would also improve the utility of the volume. A quick glance noted incorrect transcription of Cyrillic names, inconsistent or incorrect geographic listings, multiple entries for the same organization, and irregular or poor translations of organization names. For example, on pp. 309-10 Nizhegorodskaya Oblast is listed separately from its capital, Nizhny Novgorod. While eight organizations are listed in Nizhny Novgorod, one from the city is inexplicably (although not falsely) listed with organizations from the oblast. Another Nizhny Novgorod ministry is inaccurately included among ministries in the Novgorodskaya Oblast. Even more confusing, affiliation is claimed with "Christian Organization of Students, Russia," an organization that appears in the previous column as "Soobschestvo [sic] Studentov Khristian (CCX) - The Fellowship of Christian Students" (although the reader is given no clue that these are the same group), and in the index incomprehensively as "Soobschestvo [sic] Fellowship Students." Furthermore, its contact name and E-mail are inaccurate and its description as a 13-member local fellowship is misleading, given the organization's presence throughout Western Russia and Siberia. Unfortunately, such mistakes appear to be prevalent throughout the work.

This volume is an extremely impressive attempt to catalog a tremendous variety of Christian church and ministry efforts on behalf of the countries of the former Soviet bloc. Linzey must be commended for her vision and efforts toward such an overwhelming project. While the size of the undertaking renders comprehensiveness and accuracy virtually impossible, the extent of her research worldwide makes the volume invaluable in terms of scope and geographic diversity. This is a necessary reference tool for any individual or organization wishing to learn from, partner with, or assist other believers with similar goals and visions for Christian service in this part of the world. ♦

Sharyl Corrado is a doctoral student in Russian history at the University of Illinois, Urbana, IL.

The East-West Church & Ministry Report: History, Coverage, and Readership

Mark Elliott

Editor's Note: On 22 November 2002, approaching the tenth anniversary of the launching of the East-West Church and Ministry Report, founding editor Mark Elliott presented a paper on the Report at the national convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, in Pittsburgh, PA. The full text is published in the June 2003 issue of Religion in Eastern Europe. Excerpts printed below give summary data on the Report's history, coverage, and readership.

The early 1990s witnessed an explosion of East European mission activity. In 1991 alone, public meetings dealing with East European missions numbered at least 16.

As founding editor of the *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, this writer seeks to be an objective and independent observer of developments in the post-Soviet orb. Yet at the same time as the *Report* aspires to dispassionate analysis, it naturally is influenced by its editor's own participation in the drama that has unfolded in the wake of glasnost and perestroika. Like the great majority of Soviet and post-Soviet specialists who entered the field at any point prior to 1989, I have seen my research methodologies, travel, contacts, and career dramatically transformed since 1989. My graduate work in modern European and Russian history (University of Kentucky, 1969-74) began with a decided focus on political and military affairs. And my revised dissertation, published in 1982 under the title *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and America's Role in Their Repatriation* (University of Illinois Press), dealt with political, diplomatic, and social history. Meanwhile, in my early visits to the Soviet Union (1974, 1981, 1985, 1989), I took what opportunities came my way to worship with fellow believers and was deeply moved by the tenacity and perseverance of Christians under siege. Those church visits ultimately drew me into an exploration of Russian church history and church life that continues to this day.

With glasnost and perestroika came a flood of new opportunities for travel, research, and cross-cultural collaboration in Soviet and then post-Soviet territories. What was true for academia and business was also true for churches and ancillary mission agencies, often referred to as parachurch missions. The early 1990s witnessed an explosion of East European mission activity. In 1991 alone, public meetings dealing with East European missions numbered at least 16.

It was at just such a gathering at the Chicago O'Hare Sheraton Hotel in June 1992 that various church and mission representatives urged the publication of a newsletter as a clearinghouse for information relating to Western Christian missions in Eastern Europe. Individuals who were key catalysts in the launching of what became the *East-West Church & Ministry Report* included Peter and Anita Deyneka (Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries), Billy Melvin (National Association of Evangelicals), and Peter Kuzmic (Evangelical Theological Seminary, Osijek, Croatia).

From Subventions to Subscriptions; From Print to Internet

While Wil Triggs, Deyneka staff member and founding coeditor, and I decided questions of coverage, format, and frequency of publication, Billy Melvin provided key contacts that led to foundation grants that saw the *Report* launched, with the first issue published in early 1993. In 1995, after two years of substantial grant support, the *Report* began to wean itself from dependence upon outside funding. It managed to survive the transition to a subscription-based newsletter and has maintained a stable, if modest, circulation to the present. 1996 brought additional change with the introduction of an E-mail subscription option. As expected, print subscriptions declined, but steadily growing E-mail subscriptions have more than compensated. Since mail service is problematic for much of the *Report's* intended constituency, E-mail has permitted the *Report* to reach a much more geographically dispersed audience. It has also tremendously simplified the process of communication with writers as well as subscribers. Since 1997 the *Report* Web site (www.samford.edu/groups/global/ewcmreport) has posted the full text of all issues more than one year old. These back issues on the Internet are available without charge, while a keyword search function expedites use of the *Report* for purposes of research.

Content

In its first ten years of publication the *Report* has addressed three issues more than any others: (1) mission case studies and advice for cross cultural missionaries, including examples of effective and ineffective outreach; (2) the interface of Orthodox and Evangelical Christianity in theology and in practice; and (3) East-European religious demographics, including statistical breakdowns by confession and denomination, by membership and attendance, and for missionaries, by country, organization, and terms of service.

Articles on Missions

Mission case studies and articles offering advice on best practices have included the following: Christian ministry to particular groups: women, youth, orphans and street children, alcoholics, prisoners, and Roma (Gypsies); medical ministries; sports ministries; and humanitarian aid guidelines.

The article in this genre that has generated the greatest editorial response from readers is "Collectivism in the Russian World View and Its Implications for

Christian Ministry" 6 (Fall 1998): 12-14; 7 (Winter 1999): 9-10. The author, Steve Chapman, served as a missionary with the Evangelical Free Church in a Muslim region of Russia and is married to a Russian currently enrolled in a U.S. medical school. Another well-received contribution of this type, one that stresses both Orthodoxy's positive and problematic influences upon Russian culture, is a two-part article, "Perceptions of a Great Country," 8 (Spring 2000): 1-3; 8 (Summer 2000): 11-12. The author, Peter Lowman, is a British academic and pastor who frequently spoke to Russian student groups in the 1990s. It was reprinted in Moscow in 2002 in a Russian-English diglot, together with memorial tributes to highly respected missionary Peter Deyneka, Jr. (1931-2000), who first urged the wide distribution of Lowman's reflections.

The *East-West Church & Ministry Report* also frequently tackles point/counterpoint mission theme debates, examples of which include Western funding of indigenous missionaries: 4 (Winter 1996), 2-5; bribery: 5 (Winter 1997), 8-11; language study methodologies: 4 (Fall 1995), 4-6; and the pros and cons of Western subventions for East European Christian publishing: 8 (Spring 2000), 3-8, 16, 15.

Articles on the Orthodox-Protestant Interface

After articles on missions per se, the second largest number of articles in the *Report* treats Eastern Orthodoxy, especially its uneasy relationship with Protestants in Eastern Europe. A sampling of articles exploring the Orthodox-Protestant interface includes a summary of five Protestant perspectives on Orthodoxy: 3 (Spring 1995), 5-7; an article that notes the frequently overlooked affinities of Eastern Orthodox and Slavic Evangelicals, in contrast to Western Evangelicals: 3 (Fall 1995), 16, 15; tributes to Father Aleksandr Men: 7 (Summer 1999), 1-5, 16; the debate over what constitutes evangelism and proselytism: 8 (Fall 2000), 1-3; and the troubled trika of The CoMission, the Russian Ministry of Education, and the Russian Orthodox Church: 8 (Summer 2000), 1-5.

Articles on Demography and Religion

The *Report* also has frequently entered the murky waters of demography and religion. Enumerating the region's believers and missionaries is fraught with multiple, methodological dangers. But, hopefully, attempts at balanced, educated guesses are preferable to no figures at all, and preferable to wildly divergent, contradictory claims by various parties. The *Report's* estimates of the number of East European missionaries have prompted reactions of both "too high" and "too low," which, on balance, is some comfort: 2 (Winter 1994), 5; 3 (Fall 1995), 3. Attempts at quantifying church allegiance have been at least as problematic and contentious an exercise: 9 (Summer 2001), 1-12, 16. Perhaps the biggest debate in the *Report* to date on church statistics has centered on the new second edition of David Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia* which, in this editor's opinion, frequently overstates Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic

allegiance in post-Soviet territories: 9 (Summer 2001): 4-5, 16, 9; 9 (Fall 2001): 11-12.

Other Themes

Additional themes receiving ongoing coverage in the *Report* include: (1) state and majority faith interference in religious minorities' exercise of freedom of conscience; (2) Protestant theological education; (3) East European Catholicism; (4) Christian themes in East European film; and (5) new religious movements in the post-Soviet era.

In the future, subjects this editor would like to address more fully include Pentecostal and charismatic church growth, church finances, church- and mission-sponsored microenterprise development projects for the benefit of indigenous churches and charities, and Christian ministry to the handicapped. As for geographic regions, the editor hopes to publish more on the Balkans, Central Asia, and Siberia.

The *Report* also carries reviews of books, videos, and Web sites dealing with religion in post-Soviet states. Its annotations for one-hundred-plus religion Web sites have been collected from various issues of the *Report* and have been posted on the *East-West Church & Ministry Report* section of Samford University's Global Center Web site under the heading of links: www.samford.edu/groups/global/ewcmreport.

The *East-West Church & Ministry Report* is a member of the Evangelical Press Association and received EPA Awards of Merit in 1993, 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2001. It is indexed by OCLC Public Affairs Information Service (formerly PAIS), Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), and Zeller Dietrich (formerly Zeller Verlag).

A Subscriber Profile

Based on surveys conducted in 1998 and 2001, a profile of the typical subscriber is as follows: male (86%), in his 40s or 50s (60%), Protestant (94%), holding an M.A. or doctoral degree (64%), who uses a computer 20 or more hours per week (62%), and who regularly uses the Internet (98%). The typical subscriber is most likely to be a missionary (42%), a mission administrator (42%), an educator (36%), or some combination of the above.

In Conclusion

A major goal of the *East-West Church & Ministry Report* from its inception has been (1) to publish material from academic sources that could benefit the understanding and ministry of East European missionaries and church administrators in East and West; and (2) to publish material drawn from the experience of missionaries and indigenous Christians in post-Soviet territories for the benefit of academics with an interest in religious life in Eastern Europe. Letters to the editor and anecdotal evidence suggest that the *Report* is reaching both an academic and missionary audience. The *Report's* goal for its second decade of publication is to develop a much wider readership among both academics and the church and missions community. ♦

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Mark Elliott is director of the Global Center, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, AL, and founding editor of the *East-West Church & Ministry Report*.

Giving Guidelines for Russian Short-Term Missions

Connie Robbins and Rodney Hammer

Many national churches have become dependent on Western funding and do not do ministry on their own. Any gift may tend to perpetuate this cycle of dependency.

1. Before arriving in Russia think about what commitments your church may wish to make.
2. You will be presented with great needs, both on a personal and church level. Your Christian compassion will make you aware of situations that could be helped by your generosity. Many are legitimate, but not all, and rarely is money a real solution.
3. Some Russians view foreigners as sponsors. You will likely be asked to assist in some needy project. Both culture and language have played a part in foreigners making promises they were not able to keep. Know how to say no if you are not absolutely certain you can fulfill a promise.
4. Some individuals have been known to present heartbreaking situations to every foreigner who would lend them an ear. Others, including church leaders, have presented the same need to many potential donors without informing those donors of duplicate gifts. Because cases of this sort are not isolated, it is best to first talk to a missionary. Assist those you feel led by God to assist, while at the same time being a wise steward of God's money.
5. If you choose to give money, please check with the missionary you are working with or a head pastor to be sure the gift fits into long-term strategy. A loving, well-intended monetary gift may be counterproductive to a church-planting missionary strategy and may have unintended negative results. Giving directly to a local missionary who can help distribute the funds is one alternative. Using a missionary as a middle-man can provide some on-site accountability.
6. Give money only when it is possible to track its use for the purpose specified. Many national churches have become dependent on Western funding and do not do ministry on their own. Any gift may tend to perpetuate this cycle of dependency.
7. Giving subsidies quickly breeds the negative result of dependency, non-reproducible methods, and non-indigenous strategies in the field.
8. Funding large projects without consultation can lead to difficult situations. Large projects have their place (i.e., assistance in building training facilities), but sometimes prove counter-productive.
9. Do not plan projects that endanger the future of the work. Missionaries face dangers gladly because of the call of God upon their lives, but wise missiology demands prudent planning. In many countries, public evangelistic events are legal and often helpful. However, in some situations a public campaign may prove ineffective, lead to the expulsion of missionaries, and endanger national believers. Again, consultation and coordination with national church leaders and missionaries is vital.
10. Russians are very gracious people. In the Russian context, hosts will often answer in the affirmative to save face even though they may not understand the request, it is not appropriate, they do not know how, or are unable to do what you ask. If possible, seek advice from a longterm missionary. We encourage you to be sensitive to the cultural mores and to focus on being people-oriented rather than task-oriented.
11. Many groups see the opportunity to help a national by providing an educational opportunity in the West. This practice is sometimes warranted but should be coordinated very carefully through indigenous church leaders and missionaries. Training in a distant context is often a mistake.
12. When you have had a life-changing experience in a warm and hospitable Russian home, it is natural for you to say to your Russian host family, "Come and stay with me some time." This politeness is often misunderstood to mean you will help a Russian family get to the West to visit you. A Russian international travel passport has numerous restrictions and is very costly. You will often be expected to pay all of the costs, including travel expenses. We suggest you avoid a good bit of pain and financial burden by carefully weighing what you say to your hosts. ♦

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from "Guidebook for Volunteers to Russia," posted on the following missionary Web site: www.khabarovskhorizons.com.

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Editor.....Mark Elliott
Assistant Editor.....Jena Abbott
Designer.....Jennifer Myers



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>

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Connie Robbins, Khabarovsk, Russia, and Rodney Hammer, Prague, Czech Republic, are missionaries with the International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention.