



# EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT

FALL 2003

VOL. 11, No. 4

## Russian Restrictions on Missionary Visas

Mark R. Elliott

*Editor's Note: The present article is an expanded and updated excerpt from the author's "Orthodox-Protestant Relations in the Post-Soviet Era," forthcoming in Religion in Eastern Europe.*

### A Discrepancy Between Words and Deeds

Last Fourth of July, 2003, several American missionary families were picnicking in a Moscow park when it dawned on them that "All of us are here because we can't be somewhere else. We've all been forced, due to visa refusals, to leave the various provinces where we were ministering."<sup>1</sup> The previous December, in connection with Russia's observance of International Human Rights Day, President Vladimir Putin spoke at a Kremlin meeting of his human rights commission. "There is a big gap," he rightly noted, "between the constitutional guarantees and peoples' real-life opportunities to use them." And the culprit is Russia's "environment of bureaucratic lawlessness."<sup>2</sup> But Putin himself appears either unable or unwilling to combat such lawlessness on the part of officials whose responsibility it is to uphold the rule of law. Not only do federal authorities tolerate widespread discrimination against non-Orthodox believers, in violation of the Russian Constitution, Russian legislation, and international accords signed by Russia, but the state itself is to blame for an increasing number of denials of visas of foreign religious workers. By November 1997 about half of all foreign Catholic priests in Siberia were experiencing difficulties with visas. And more recently in fall 2002 *Keston News Service* reported an increasing number of foreign religious workers being denied visa renewals. Initially many missionaries avoided public protest for fear of jeopardizing the visas of coworkers, but that is beginning to change.<sup>3</sup>

### Eighty-Four Known Visas Denied

In late December 2002 U. S. Representative Chris Smith and U.S. Senator Gordon Smith published an article in the *Washington Times* noting the undeniable hardship visa denials were causing the Catholic Church in Russia, 85 percent of whose priests are foreign born.<sup>4</sup> The rash of expulsions of foreign religious workers, they contended, "smacks of a vendetta aimed primarily at Catholic clergy." While press attention seems to have focused on Catholic expulsions, including that of Bishop Jerzy Mazur

from Irkutsk, in fact, many more Protestants, and possibly more Muslims, have suffered from visas denied or revoked than have Catholics. In October 2002 *Keston News Service* tallied 30 denials and revocations of visas of foreign religious workers.<sup>5</sup> Those, plus names derived from more recent printed sources and e-mail communications to the author, indicate a current total of 84 known expulsions of foreign religious workers (1997-2003), including 54 Protestants, 15 Muslims, 7 Catholics, 3 Buddhists, 3 Mormons, and 2 Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>6</sup> Keep in mind that these totals undoubtedly are incomplete because of the desire of many to avoid publicity.<sup>7</sup> Other difficulties emerging more frequently include the reduction of visa extensions from 12 to 3 months and instances in which one member of a husband-and-wife missionary team is denied a visa renewal.<sup>8</sup>

### The Foreign Workers "Quota" Law

A Russian law that went into effect 1 November 2002 further complicates matters by setting quotas for the number of foreign workers in Russia's various regions. Attorney Vladimir Ryakhovsky of the Slavic Center for Law and Justice notes that "It is not normal for internal affairs administrations to establish quotas for how many priests they need to invite. Under Russia's international commitments, religious organizations should arrange their activity in line with their own canonical statutes."<sup>9</sup> Certainly, the quota law, at the very least, portends additional bureaucratic difficulties with visa renewals.

### American Difficulties Obtaining Russian Visas

Even under "normal" circumstances, Soviet and post-Soviet Russian visas were and are troublesome, expensive, and nerve-wracking to obtain. Procurement of the sometimes expensive and always time-consuming official letter of invitation for non-tourist travelers, the high cost, the limitation of multi-entry visas to 12 months, the frequent receipt of visas at the last minute, lost applications, cumbersome registration requirements upon arrival, and now a new requirement

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## Russian Restrictions on Missionary Visas

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that visa applicants must submit actual passports rather than photocopies to Russian officials—none of these measures inspires confidence and they discourage all but the most determined and persistent from venturing to Russia for any purpose other than casual sightseeing.<sup>10</sup>

### And Russian Difficulties Obtaining American Visas

But to be fair, it must be noted that the United States now places more hurdles before Russian visa applicants than vice versa. Russians face an onerous and humiliating process to obtain visas: long lines, visas issued at the last minute, and numerous and sometimes unexpected denials. The U.S. Embassy refuses 25 percent of visitor visa applications compared to fewer than five percent denials by Britain and Finland.<sup>11</sup> Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Yuri V. Ushakov relates that in summer 2003 a group of Russian teenagers bound for the U.S. at the invitation of a member of the U.S. Congress were told the night before their departure they would not receive visas. Political string-pulling reversed that decision, but most Russians applying for U.S. visas do not have such connections.<sup>12</sup> Certainly, post-9/11 security concerns and a longstanding policy of denying visas to individuals who might attempt to remain in the U.S. justify careful processing. But the cost of applying for a visa and the new August 2003 personal interview requirement make visiting the U.S. not only exceptionally expensive but out of the question for more and more Russians.

Ambassador Ushakov illustrates the predicament:

Consider the realities of life in Russia. It spans 11 time zones and yet has only four American consular posts. A resident of Sochi on the Black Sea coast would have to make a 3,000-kilometer round trip to Moscow, spend the night there and pay a fee (itself nearly a full month's average wage) simply to be interviewed—and might have to wait weeks or months to learn whether a visa will be granted. It was not so long ago that the United States was actively promoting the idea of people-to-people contacts, while the Soviet Union resisted. Now it is the other way around.<sup>13</sup>

The \$100 application fee for a U.S. visa amounts to a significant portion of an average monthly wage in Moscow and the equivalent of a monthly wage or more for many living outside the capital. A Westerner living in Moscow wrote to the *Moscow Times* in late August 2003, "A Russian friend of mine was recently denied a visa for a Ph.D. program in the natural sciences at a well-known U.S. university. He paid \$100 for a two-minute interview that took place in English, during which the consular officer never once looked at any of the documentation my friend produced to show he was not an immigration risk."<sup>14</sup> Of course, a single anecdote of bureaucratic

insensitivity does not make the case, but consider the profits and understandable ill will generated by the business of visa denials. Attorney Kenneth White, managing partner of White & Associates, Moscow, notes, "According to its own numbers, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow denied 30,000 nonimmigrant visa applications in the most recent fiscal year. By charging a \$100 nonrefundable visa application fee, the embassy received \$3 million for applicants who did not receive visas."<sup>15</sup> Taking into account official American and Russian insensitivity and arbitrariness, unjustifiable visa denials by both countries may be seriously and unnecessarily undermining Russian-American relations.

Returning to the case of Western missionaries denied visa renewals, consider the following two cases. 1) Beginning in 1999, American Protestant missionaries Jeff and Susan Wollman worked with orphans in the Kostroma Region: obtaining eye glasses, providing computer instruction, and teaching life-skill classes, among other assistance. They were denied visas in July 2002, as they were told, "in the interest of ensuring national security."<sup>16</sup> 2) Beginning in 1992 a French Catholic monk, Brother Bruno Maziolek, served in Yaroslavl extending humanitarian assistance to needy children, former drug addicts, and the mentally ill, a ministry strongly criticized by the Orthodox archbishop in Yaroslavl. Brother Bruno's visa was revoked in December 2001 on grounds that he posed "a danger to the Russian Federation."<sup>17</sup>

### Missionary Espionage?

Authorities frequently do not offer explanations for visa denials, but when they do, national security and the alleged threat of missionary espionage on behalf of foreign powers are the reasons most frequently cited.<sup>18</sup> The local press in Kalmykia, for example, has alleged that such missionary groups as the Salvation Army, Missionary Aviation Fellowship, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance harbor "western spies" who are "hiding behind lofty charitable ideals."<sup>19</sup>

### Sensitivity Over Siberia and Primorye

As early as January 2000 President Putin approved a national security document that clearly drew the connection between foreign espionage and foreign religions: he specifically warned of "the negative influence of foreign religious organizations and missionaries" and "the cultural-religious expansion of neighboring states into Russian territory." Putin undoubtedly was referring to Siberia and the Russian Far East (Primorye), about which he evidences extraordinary sensitivity and where Protestant churches are more numerous than Orthodox.<sup>20</sup> The now infamous leaked government "Draft Report on Counter-Extremist Measures," published by *Gazeta* in early December 2002, is enough to disturb any defender of religious freedom and civil liberties. Catholics are deemed public enemy number one, while Protestants, especially those congregated east

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of the Urals, are said to pose special dangers to Russia's national integrity:

Under the guise of providing humanitarian aid, many new Protestant organizations have established within various groups of the population a position of self-alienation with respect to the Russian state and national traditions, way of life, and culture that have grown up over the course of centuries. It is especially disturbing that these tendencies have been especially manifested in border regions. The most active expansion of Protestant organizations has been noted in the Far East Federal District where the total number of religious organizations has reached 800 societies. More than half of these have not undergone state registration. More than 60 percent of the religious structures active in the region are financed from South Korea and the USA.<sup>21</sup>

Also in 2000 a civil service professor argued that Protestant missionary activity in northeast Siberia "was part of a U.S. government plan to seize control of the whole of Russia's Far East,"<sup>22</sup> and a newspaper in the west Siberian city of Omsk asserted that spies traverse the region "on invitations issued by religious organizations." A seminar held for religious organizations in the Omsk region included a regional department of justice official preparing those present for closer state scrutiny of religious activities: "You should resign yourself to this and get in touch with us more often." Also in Omsk, an FSB (ex-KGB) security officer now regularly interrogates an Eastern Catholic Rite priest who concludes this is the "gradual restoration of Soviet institutions" and a "slipping back into the old routine."<sup>23</sup>

A 26 September 2002 meeting in Vladivostok of a regional Commission on Questions of Religious Associations voiced alarm at "the enormous number of foreign religious missionaries" in the Russian Far East, reportedly 406, including 265 South Koreans and 114 Americans.<sup>24</sup> In particular, South Korean Protestant churches (Presbyterian, Methodist, and others) and Mormons drew fire at the Vladivostok meeting as "harmful to Russian national interests."<sup>25</sup> As Bishop Veniamin of Primorye and Vladivostok put it, "The main danger of all these religious groups coming from abroad is that they all are unpatriotic. Really, can Americans, Koreans, and others teach people to love our fatherland, native soil, Russia, and to be concerned for it in the way the Orthodox Church teaches, which from time immemorial has united our nation?"<sup>26</sup>

### **Suspicious Study Abroad**

Even Russians who have studied religion abroad are suspect. Russia's new chauvinists see a "threat to national security" in what they contend is "a tendency to drive out loyal and law-abiding clergy and replace them with younger and more educated graduates of foreign study centers."<sup>27</sup> Yet Russia's fiercest enemy of Wahhabism (radical Islam), Mufti Talgat Tadzhuiddin, studied at Egypt's Al Azhar University.<sup>28</sup>

On 9 December 2002 Orthodox apologist Alexander Dvorkin, one of Russia's most aggressive opponents of "foreign cults," spoke in Ekaterinburg at a conference on "Totalitarian Sects: The Threat of Religious Extremism." In the former auditorium of the regional Communist Party school, he asked rhetorically, "You know what they call us? Raw meat. A sect is a meatgrinder that needs new pieces of meat all the time in order to chew them up and spit them out."<sup>29</sup> Ironically, given Orthodox nationalists' fixation on suspect foreign influences, it must be noted that Dvorkin holds U.S. citizenship.

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### **State Concern Over Protestants East of the Urals**

Former Keston Institute Director Lawrence Uzzell asked this author in early January 2003 for evidence I might have detected of Russian authorities paying particular attention to Protestants east of the Urals. In response I noted:

1. My research covering 1997-99 indicated a disproportionate number of incidents of discrimination against Protestants to that date in the Russian Far East (4.8 percent of the population, but 13 percent of reported incidents—9 of 69). In addition, all three missionaries expelled as of 1999 had resided in the Far East: a Korean in Khabarovsk, an American near Khabarovsk, and a New Zealander in Vladivostok. And two of three missionaries murdered as of 1999, a Korean-American couple, had resided in Khabarovsk.<sup>30</sup>
2. Orthodox specialists Jane Ellis and Nathaniel Davis have noted the longstanding relative weakness of Orthodoxy in Siberia, which could lead one to perceive greater non-Orthodox religious strength.<sup>31</sup> Both tsarist and Soviet deportations of suspect minorities no doubt reinforced non-Orthodox strength east of the Urals.
3. Since, due to climactic considerations, the vast majority of Siberians reside close to the Mongolian and Chinese borders, most believers of all persuasions also live close to the frontier.
4. Finally, Americans and Koreans hardly pose a threat to Siberia and the Russian Far East, certainly not compared to the potentially destabilizing phenomenon of large-scale, illegal Chinese immigration into Russia, estimated at 200,000 to five million.<sup>32</sup>

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### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Moscow's sensitivity over perceived threats to its territorial integrity, accentuated by the war in Chechnya, is manifest in the geographic distribution of revoked missionary visas to date: those serving in the Russian Far East and Siberia (21 percent of the Russian population, but 37 percent of missionary visa denials) and those serving in certain ethnic minority regions such as Tatarstan and Udmurtia (8 percent of the Russian population, but 25 percent of missionary visa denials).<sup>33</sup>

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Notwithstanding Russia's wounded pride in the wake of the dismantling of the Soviet empire and its growing chauvinism and xenophobia, the accusation that missionaries pose a threat to the country's national security lacks substance and stands shorn of any credible evidence. Finally, if no truce is called in the

If no truce is called in the "visa war" currently being waged by Moscow—and Washington—it will have serious negative ramifications, not only for religious and cultural relations, but for trade and the global war against terrorism.

"visa war" currently being waged by Moscow—and Washington—it will have serious negative ramifications, not only for religious and cultural relations, but for trade and the global war against terrorism. ♦

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# A Survey of Current Religious Rights Infringements

Felix Corley

*Editor's Note: Oslo-based Forum 18 News Service provides judicious religious rights reporting on post-Soviet territories, with free E-mail subscriptions available at its Web site: <http://www.forum18.org>. Its respected journalists are well known to defenders of freedom of conscience: Felix Corley, Geraldine Fagan, Igor Rotar, and Branko Bjelajac. The cogent and succinct survey of current religious rights abuses in post-Soviet states which follows, well illustrates the capable, ongoing coverage of state and majority faith infringements of freedom of conscience highlighted on a regular basis by Forum 18 News Service.*

Membership in the 55-member Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is not compulsory: states have the free choice whether or not to accept binding OSCE commitments by joining. The commitment of all OSCE states to respect freedom of religion is clear. A 1990 OSCE conference declared "everyone will have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right includes freedom to change one's religion or belief and freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, either alone or in community with others, in public or in private, through worship, teaching, practice, and observance. The exercise of these rights may be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and are consistent with international standards."

Many ask how violators of these fundamental commitments, especially Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, can be allowed to continue as members of an organization whose fundamental principles they blatantly flout. OSCE officials argue off the record that it is better to keep violators in, with the hope that they can be persuaded to mend their ways, rather than expel them, abandoning local people to the clutches of their governments. The result is that persecuted believers in a number of states now have little faith in what the OSCE can and will do to protect their right to religious freedom.

## Religious Worship

An alarming number of states raid religious meetings to close down services and punish those who take part. Turkmenistan is the worst offender: it treats all non-Muslim and non-Russian Orthodox worship as illegal. Uzbekistan and Belarus specifically ban unregistered religious services. In Belarus numerous Protestant congregations, some numbering more than a thousand members, cannot meet because they cannot get a registered place to worship. Officials in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan also raid places where worship is being conducted.

## Places of Worship

Opening a place of worship is impossible in some states. In Turkmenistan it is impossible to open a place of worship for non-Muslim and non-Russian Orthodox communities, and those that existed before the mid-1990s were confiscated or bulldozed. Uzbekistan has closed down thousands of mosques

since 1996 and often denies requests of Christian groups to open churches. Azerbaijan also obstructs the opening of Christian churches and tries to close down some of those already open. Belarus makes it almost impossible for religious communities without property to rent or find a legal place to worship. An Autocephalous Orthodox Church (which attracted the anger of the government and the Russian Orthodox Church) was bulldozed in 2002.

## Registration

Where registration is compulsory before any religious activity can start (Belarus and Uzbekistan) or where officials claim that it is (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan), life is made difficult for communities that either choose not to register (such as one community of Baptists in former Soviet republics) or are denied registration (the majority of religious communities in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan). Registration in Turkmenistan is all but impossible (the 1996 religion law requires each community to have 500 adult citizen members), but even in countries such as Azerbaijan or Uzbekistan with less onerous hurdles, registration for disfavored communities is often made impossible. Officials in the sanitary/epidemiological service are among those with the power of veto in Uzbekistan, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Russia are also among states that, to widely varying degrees, make registration of some groups impossible or very difficult.

## Religious Literature

Belarus and Azerbaijan require compulsory prior censorship of all religious literature produced or imported into the country. Azerbaijani customs routinely confiscate religious literature, releasing it only when the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations grants explicit written approval for each title and the number of copies authorized. Forbidden books are sent back or destroyed (thousands of Hare Krishna books held by customs for seven years were recently destroyed). Even countries without formal religious censorship—Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan—routinely confiscate imported religious literature. (Russian-language Baptist magazines were recently burned in Uzbekistan.) Uzbekistan routinely bars access to Web sites it dislikes, such as foreign Muslim sites.

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## A Survey of Current Religious Rights...

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### Individual Rights

Believers in institutions such as prisons, hospitals, or the army may face difficulties obtaining and keeping religious literature, praying in private, and receiving visits from spiritual leaders and fellow believers. Muslim prisoners in Uzbekistan have been punished for praying and fasting during Ramadan. Death-row prisoners requesting visits from Muslim *imams* and Russian Orthodox priests have been denied, even for final confession before execution.

### Discrimination

Turkmenistan has dismissed hundreds of active Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other religious minorities from state jobs. Turkmen and Azeri officials try to persuade people to abandon their faith and "return" to their ancestral faith (Islam). Armenia has ordered local police chiefs to persuade police who were members of faiths other than the Armenian Apostolic Church to abandon their faith. If persuasion failed, such employees were to be fired. Belarus has subjected leaders of independent Orthodox churches and Hindus to pressure—including fines, threats, and inducements—to abandon their faith or emigrate. Officials in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Belarus repeatedly attack disfavored religious minorities in the media, insulting their beliefs, accusing them falsely of illegal or "destructive" activities, as well as inciting popular hostility to them.

### Government Interference

Many governments meddle in the internal affairs of religious communities. Central Asian governments insist on choosing national and local Muslim leaders. Turkmenistan ousted the chief mufti in January 2003. Tajikistan has conducted "attestation tests" of *imams*, ousting those who failed. Islamic schools are tightly controlled. (In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, schools have either been closed or access to them restricted.) Turkmenistan obstructs those seeking religious education abroad. Some countries with large Orthodox communities try to bolster the largest Orthodox church and obstruct rival jurisdictions (Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, and Moldova). Russia has prevented communities from choosing their leadership, expelling a Catholic bishop, several priests, and dozens of Protestant and other leaders.

### Protection from Violence

Law enforcement agencies fail to give religious minorities the same protection as major groups. Georgia has had violence by Orthodox vigilantes, with over 100 attacks in the past four years on True Orthodox, Catholics, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witnesses who have been physically attacked, places of worship blockaded, and religious events disrupted. The authorities—who know the attackers' identity—have sentenced no one. In some

cases, police have cooperated with attacks or failed to investigate them. In Kosovo the NATO-led peacekeeping force and United Nations police repeatedly fail to protect Serbian Orthodox churches and graveyards. No one has been arrested or prosecuted, despite over 100 attacks that have destroyed or badly damaged churches.

### Lack of Transparency

Major laws and decrees affecting religious life are drawn up without public knowledge or discussion. Examples are the restrictive laws on religion of Belarus and Bulgaria in 2002, and planned new laws in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. International organizations such as the OSCE or the Council of Europe may be consulted, but governments often refuse to allow their comments to be published or ignore them. Many countries retain openly partisan and secretive government religious affairs offices. Slovenia's religious affairs office has refused to register any new religious communities in the past three years. Azerbaijan's has stated which communities it will refuse to register and what changes other communities will have to make to their statutes and activities to gain registration.

### Religious Freedom Reporting

Those reporting on religious freedom such as *Forum 18 News Service* ([www.forum18.org](http://www.forum18.org)) and groups campaigning on the issue face lack of cooperation, obstruction, and harassment. Those suspected of passing on news of violations have been threatened in Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan with the aim of forcing silence. In a region without much government transparency or a genuinely free media, officials involved in harassing religious communities often refuse to explain to journalists what they have done and why. Local campaigning groups are denied registration or kept waiting. Demonstrators protesting in Belarus against the restrictive new religion law were fined. Government reports on religious freedom issues to bodies such as the OSCE or Council of Europe are often confidential and closed to public scrutiny.

### Conclusion

Many restrictions predate the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks and 1999 Islamic-inspired incursions into Central Asia, so governments cannot validly argue that such restrictions are necessary to ensure public security. The comprehensive nature of many of these measures shows the hostility of some OSCE member states to the right to exercise the faith of one's choice freely, something described by the European Court of Human Rights in 1993 as "one of the foundations of a democratic society." ♦

Edited excerpt of "Eastern Europe: OSCE Meeting on Freedom of Religion—A Regional Survey," 9 July 2003, reprinted with permission of Forum 18 News Service (<http://www.forum18.org>).

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# Problems and Needs of the Church in Uzbekistan

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## **Division**

The church in Uzbekistan is divided into three separate groups: Russian local Christians, indigenous Christians, and expatriate workers, also called tentmakers. Unfortunately, relations among the three groups are far from good. Russian local Christians tend to be inward-looking and lack initiative for outreach to local Muslims. Evangelization takes place, but only rarely is it aimed at non-Russians. Indigenous Christians are reluctant to cooperate with Russians because they consider them to be oppressors. Converts are anxious to avoid any connection with Russians because this gives their Muslim relatives a reason to attack them. Finally, tentmakers are new to the region (most of them have been in Uzbekistan fewer than three years), they have to adapt enormously to the cultural circumstances of the country, and they almost never cooperate with existing churches. Their work therefore is often small scale and isolated. It is easy to understand that this division of the Body of Christ seriously affects the spreading of God's kingdom in Uzbekistan.

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## **A Lack of Indigenous Leadership**

The indigenous church is young and small. The several thousand indigenous believers come from a Muslim background, though they hardly know what this means. (In Uzbekistan, knowledge of Islamic dogmas is as good as absent.) However, the same goes for Christian teachings. Moreover, converts are a very new phenomenon in Uzbekistan. In most cases they have converted to Christ because of the activities of tentmakers. From the beginning, converts remain loyal to the tentmaker through whose ministry they were converted. As a result, small groups of converts center around tentmakers. Of course, this does not offer a permanent solution because most tentmakers plan to stay in the region for a limited period and because converts need leaders of their own. Unfortunately, no indigenous persons are available yet to take over from tentmakers. It also is impossible to send Uzbek Christians to established Bible schools because their level of Christian knowledge is low. Yet the indigenous church will be able to survive only under strong leadership.

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## **Lack of Knowledge of Christian Teachings**

Seminars, Bible study groups, correspondence courses, and other types of education are all needed to build the church from the very foundations of the Christian faith. Apart from basic teachings, the indigenous church further needs instruction on family problems which are the result of conversions, youth work, Muslim outreach, persecution, and the necessity of lifestyle changes. It seems a good idea to make use of the ample experience of the church in the Middle East.

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## **Severe Oppression of Converts**

Converts in Uzbekistan are a very vulnerable group. In most cases, knowledge of their new faith is very limited. Family members and relations have no consideration for converts who are seen as traitors. Converts often lose their jobs and are banished from their families. Furthermore, when repression comes, converts are the first group to come under attack. Restrictive measures taken by the government include a ban on public evangelism and severe restrictions on the importation of Christian materials in indigenous languages. Pastors of local Russian churches must send Muslims away and must report when Uzbeks join their services. Uzbek converts active in Christian outreach have been arrested, beaten, and in one instance killed. Uzbek secret police pressure Uzbek believers to become informers and offer them cars and other bribes to cooperate. As more Uzbeks come to Christ, we may expect an increasing problem. Since authorities are so opposed to Uzbeks turning to Christ, we must reckon with a backlash. The need to support converts will continue to grow.

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## **Lack of Indigenous Christian Materials**

Many people think the need for literature in Uzbekistan was solved with the printing of the New Testament in 1993-94 and the subsequent printing of 100,000 copies. Also, several separate Gospels have been published and the Children's Bible by Evert Kuyt is a great success. Uzbek believers are very fond of this book because it contains no translation errors at all. But apart from these books, Uzbek believers have no other literature: no Bible study material, no concordances, no publications on Islam and Muslim outreach, and, most of all, no complete Bibles in indigenous languages with the exception of Tajik. Yet the need for such materials is great and growing. Only Uzbeks in the major cities are capable of reading, writing, and speaking Russian. In the countryside, knowledge of Russian is almost absent. With growing self-awareness, many Uzbeks refuse to learn Russian and this trend will continue. Therefore, it is essential that Christians in the West work to make many more titles available in Central Asian languages.

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## **Emigration**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a wave of emigration of non-indigenous nationalities started from Central Asia. First, practically all Germans left the region and then Russians began leaving. Of course, this had its effects on the church in Uzbekistan as well. Russian and German congregations that numbered thousands of members now number a few hundred. Church choirs are decimated, youth leaders

*(continued on page 8)*

The church in Uzbekistan is divided into three separate groups: Russian local Christians, indigenous Christians, and expatriate workers, also called tentmakers. Unfortunately, relations among the three groups are far from good.

## Problems and Needs of the Church...

(continued from page 7)

have left, pastors and elders have emigrated to Russia, Germany, Canada, or the United States. The trend is expected to continue, meaning more and more churches will have great difficulties functioning.

### Church News Hardly Reaches the West

Communication with and from Uzbekistan is a major difficulty. Its telephone system is outdated and under KGB surveillance. Telephones and faxes of all major church leaders are bugged. This means that Christians have to be very careful in sending church news out of Uzbekistan. Tentmakers often have the most

modern means of communications (computers with modems), but usually they do not have time to spend communicating with the West. As a result, news about the church in Uzbekistan rarely circulates abroad. Without regular information about the situation, interest among supporters and those who pray and fast for the church will decrease. There is a great need to provide supporters with adequate information for prayer. This needs to be achieved, of course, without compromising the safety of Uzbek Christians. ♦

*Edited excerpt reprinted with permission of Open Doors International from its Web site. See Country Profiles: Uzbekistan: [www.gospelcom.net/od/content/uzbekpro2.htm](http://www.gospelcom.net/od/content/uzbekpro2.htm).*

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## Christian Camping in Russia

Viktor Artemov

*Editor's Note: The present article is based on 30 surveys completed by Russian church leaders in November-December 2002. Respondents were primarily pastors and youth leaders serving in churches that have organized summer camp programs. (See Sidebar: "Participating Churches," p.10.)*

Christian camping is not only an effective method of evangelism for teenagers and youth, it also is a "school of life" for church members who take part. Survey participants, regardless of location, denomination, or size and age of their churches, are convinced of the importance of Christian camping, both for individual camp workers and for church members who are involved indirectly. For many young church members, camp is the first and only opportunity to discover and test their abilities. Many workers receive their calling during camp and become active in other church ministries.

### Survey Questions and Responses

To the question "Do you consider Christian camp ministry important for your church?" all respondents gave positive responses, including the following comments:

- It strengthens relationships among youth and teenagers in the church.
- Camp helps discover talents and develop abilities of potential church leaders.
- Non-Christians learn about God and begin to understand what church is all about.
- Christians grow stronger in God and increase in the knowledge of God.
- Campers acquire positive skills for living in society.
- Non-Christian parents learn about God and receive a good impression of the church.
- Non-Christians respond more readily to an invitation to camp than to church.
- Camp is a good place to have a first encounter with Christianity: non-Christian youth not only hear about Christian values, they also experience them.
- Camp provides wholesome recreation for teenagers and youth.

Arguments used most often concerned the strengthening of relationships, the potential to develop church leaders, and the opportunity to evangelize youth and, indirectly, their parents.

In addition to recreation, camping ministry requires a huge responsibility of camp staff. Counselors typically have groups of seven to nine campers for whom they are accountable before the law. In the same way other staff members are responsible for the safety and health of program participants during various camp activities. Despite short camp sessions—in most cases ten days—staff members can see real results. Probably this is the key to the powerful impact that camp has on the development of potential leaders: nothing else forms character as effectively as a sense of responsibility and the achievement of a goal.

Responses to the question “What do you see as special about the impact that Christian camping has on youth compared to the impact of other youth programs in your church?” included the following:

- The unique camping atmosphere allows participants to quickly build close relationships.
- Close relationships allow counselors to communicate Christian values to campers.
- Campers experience Christianity firsthand through prayer, singing, and love in action.
- The staff’s modeling of faith makes a strong impression upon campers.

The comment most frequently noted concerned the positive impact of the unique camp atmosphere while the second most frequently cited comment related to the development of positive relationships.

To the question “Does the Christian camp impact only campers or does it impact staff as well?” the following responses were given:

- At camp many young people receive their call to ministry and after camp they begin to serve in the church.
- Many staff members discover new abilities.
- Most staff members develop their abilities.
- At camp the life of the staff improves in quality.

The response cited most often concerned the call to ministry. A church that consists of highly motivated members is every pastor’s dream. If the church pastor and the youth leader work in close cooperation with the camp director, the camp will be able to perform two functions: change the lives of campers and transform the spiritual condition of individual church members.

To the question “Does the Christian camp only influence church members who are directly involved in its operation or does it also influence the general atmosphere in the church?” the following responses were given:

- Church members care for the success of the camp, and this motivates them to pray and improves the general spirit in the church.
- The majority of members take part in camp through prayer, donations, or physical service during the preparation stage, and this unites church members.

- After camp, staff members return inspired, and this has a positive effect on the general atmosphere in the church.

### **Keys to the Effectiveness of Christian Camping**

Robert Kobiush, president of Christian Camping International in the U.S., sees four factors that contribute to the effectiveness of Christian camping.

- *Physical Setting:* At camp all staff, campers, and guests come under the influence of an irrefutable truth: “Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, so that people are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).
- *People:* When campers or guests come in contact with camp staff who desire to be salt and light, they see the redemptive work of God and their minds and hearts are opened.
- *Message:* Campers and guests are given opportunities to examine Scripture in real-life situations, which brings the Word to life.
- *Program:* Properly organized, the camp program is a powerful instrument of change in the lives of campers and guests.

In summary, Christian camping offers four chief benefits:

1. It provides opportunities for young Christians to engage in ministry, which leads many to commit themselves to specific work in the church.
2. It is an effective means of evangelizing and discipling teenagers and youth. Non-Christians do not respond to invitations to come to church, but they will readily attend a Christian camp. It is easier to communicate spiritual values in a camp setting than in Sunday school or in other programs.
3. It has a positive influence on the life of the whole church, transforming the lives of campers and staff. As a result the church receives new members (campers who come to Christ at camp) and renewed and inspired “old” church members (those who work as camp staff).
4. It is a natural for Russian culture.

Protestantism is “foreign” to Russian culture, whereas camp fits the context very well. Young people are unaccustomed to the church, but at camp they feel at home from the very beginning. ♦

*Viktor Artemov is director of the Resource Team of Christian Camping International in Russia.*

**Non-Christians respond more readily to an invitation to camp than to church.**

## Christian Camping International

While Christian Camping International (CCI) works in various republics of the former Soviet Union, its ministry in Russia began in 1991 with two camps. In 2002 it served 14,780 teenagers and youth in 128 camps in Russia operated by more than 505 churches representing 19 denominations. CCI has also published 25 camping manuals, songbooks, and program guides in Russian. In 2002, using these materials, CCI trained 685 leaders in its annual seminars. In addition, CCI provides instructors for a Christian camping course in the Christian Education Department of St. Petersburg Christian University.

In 2002, six new camps joined the CCI Camp Association. Given Russian economic realities this represents very significant growth because the budget of a four-week camp in most cases is larger than the annual budget of a church. In spite of the high cost, congregations continue to raise funds to underwrite summer camps.

CCI's fast growth can be explained by the fact that the idea of camping fits Russian culture so well. For persons born and raised in Russia it is a very natural and longstanding practice to send children to summer camps, which are part and parcel of the culture. In 1989 alone, 28,000

Pioneer camps in the Soviet Union hosted 15 million campers. These large numbers speak to the popularity of camping. Long before 1991, the year CCI began working in Russia, churches had been running children's camps. But these efforts primarily involved relatively short hikes or one- or two-day retreats.

It may be argued that CCI's greatest significance for Protestants in Russia derives from its interdenominational character. Representatives of various denominations and churches take part in training events unified by a common idea of Christian camping, which is the common ground for open cooperation. This atmosphere helps representatives of different denominations notice good qualities in other churches and reevaluate their attitude to those whose "thinking" is different. As a result, many students develop a positive attitude about other denominations and are ready to work interdenominationally. Also, some camps work on an interdenominational basis, inviting both staff and campers from different churches. Young people who attend such camps learn to accept other denominations. In the future it is quite possible these young people will become church leaders, preserving their openness to other denominations.

## Congregations Participating in the Survey

**Bethany Church**, Krasnodar, approximately 3,000 members, founded in 1970. This church is non-denominational with a charismatic style of worship. It began operating a camp in 1991. Poll respondents were Pastor Sergey Nakul, 49, and Youth Minister Yuriy Semenov.

**Light to the World Church**, Khabarovsk, approximately 168 members, founded in 1994. This Christians of Evangelical Faith Union (Pentecostal) church began operating a camp in 1997. Poll respondent was Pastor Andrey Evstratyev, 37.

**An interdenominational church**, Khabarovsk, approximately 70 members, founded in 1992. This church of Baptist orientation began a camp ministry in 2000. Poll respondents were Pastor Yuriy Shostov, 62, and Camp Director Svetlana Mayboroda.

**New Way Church**, Nalchuk, approximately 180 members, founded in 1992. This Evangelical Christian-Baptist church, which first opened a camp in 1995, has a ministry among Muslims. Poll respondents were Pastor Pavel Pogodin, 50, and Slavik Malinovskiy, leadership training program coordinator.

**Evangelical Christian Church**, Ryazan, approximately 48 members, founded in 1999. Part of the Evangelical Christian Union, this church began a camp outreach in 1999. Poll respondents were Pastor Eduard Egov, 24, and Youth Ministry Coordinator Alexander Shevchenko.

**Evangelical Christian Church**, central Russia, approximately 350 members, founded in 1934. This Evangelical Christian Union church operated its first camp in 1995. Poll respondents were Pastor Peter Mirauchik, 54, and Mikhail Lukin, youth leader.



I continue to appreciate the timely articles that come out in the *East-West Church & Ministry Report*. In the last two years we have been observing a tightening of the reins around religions not sanctioned by the state in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union. The new tactics being used include administrative restrictions which are generally not viewed as violating religious rights, namely visa cancellations or denials to foreign workers, refusal to register valid visas and limiting them to three months, undue scrutiny by tax police of indigenous religious organizations, restrictions on transfer of funds to indigenous agencies from abroad, non-prosecution of hate crimes, slanted media coverage, fines, delaying registration of religious organizations, etc.

These restrictions are often applied selectively,

which only confirms the suspicion that they were "ordered from above." Individually, each administrative measure may not amount to much, but taken together they are like the threads that bound Gulliver and made the sleeping giant immobile.

*A missionary who prefers to remain anonymous*

I enjoyed reading Bradley Nassif's article on what Orthodox believers can learn from Evangelicals—see *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 11 (Spring 2003), 3-4. Not many people in that tradition have the courage and humility to admit to this. The same is true in the opposite direction.

*Danut Manastireanu, World Vision, Romania*

## RESOURCES

### **An Anonymous American Missionary Responds to Lawrence Uzzell's Review of *Ekspansiya [Expansionism]* by Nikolai Trofimchuk and M. P. Svishchev, *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 11 (Winter 2003), 12.**

Having now served in Russia for ten years, I have seen much evidence that Trofimchuk's thesis is valid. Much more than many people realize, churches are a reflection of the culture in which they are rooted. C. S. Lewis once said that when a church feels it has made its place in the world, it often finds that what has actually happened is that the world has made its place in the church.

I have been in several missionary flats where large expenditures had been made to import all-American appliances and furnishings, reproducing almost exactly all the conveniences of an American home. I have listened to Americans "evangelizing" (?) Russian guests with a whole evening of jokes about how backward Russians are and how advanced Americans are. The Russians were probably thinking exactly the opposite, of "nyekulturniy" simpletons who don't even try to understand Russian culture. Some Russian pastors have been so infected with Americanism that they are obviously working toward the day when they can join other Russian pastors in America. One Russian told us that he had visited a single church in California that had 40 Russian ex-pastors. This disease makes it extremely difficult for Russians to separate the gospel of Christ from the gospel of Americana.

I had a conversation about seven years ago with a missionary when the subject of Russian Orthodoxy came up. He emphatically disclaimed any interest whatsoever in the subject and didn't even agree that understanding what Orthodox believe was relevant to his work of church planting in Russia. For a significant number of American missionary organizations I am acquainted with, the main goal is to reproduce as closely as possible a "native" church in Russia that is 100-percent loyal to all the programs of the home office in America. "It worked in Haiti and in Africa and in Papua New Guinea, so it should work for Russia!" When it comes to freedom of religion, many groups support it where they think it is useful to advance their program, but they actually operate in a different way.

The "successful" missionary in many cases may be simply the one who is most effective in maintaining a strong base of support at home. This means that the one who fits in best with American culture is most likely to be sent to the foreign field. Quite often the ones who are missionaries are those most deeply committed to the social and cultural organization they represent. They are inclined to be servants of the organization first and that definitely includes the culture of the organization. Therefore, there is a strong tendency toward the very problem Trofimchuk has highlighted.

I think one reason for the wide discrepancy between what is reported as happening here in Russia and what is really observable is a matter of definition. Quite a few American church organizations count even the slightest indication of a profession of faith as a conversion. Careful studies of actual church attendance are much more reliable than reports of conversions. From what I have observed (and I still would be considered an outsider), it appears that indigenous Russian Protestant groups have been much more successful than American Protestant missionaries. From where I am located there is little visible evidence of any great revival with tens of thousands of converts in Russia. The situation here more or less stabilized five or six years ago. For every evangelical group gaining members, another probably is losing members. In the long run, the greatest beneficiary of the era of "Perestroika" still appears to be the Russian Orthodox Church.

I have been intrigued by the "Bible Belt" phenomenon. I understand that Russia, just like America, has a "Bible-Belt" where almost all the churches do better. Here in northwest Russia, it seems the majority are very European and not very interested in spiritual questions. I have been told there are regions in southern Russia where the interest in spiritual affairs is much more intense. No matter what the case may really be, I am convinced that Russians themselves are best qualified by far to reach the Russian people. ♦

Quite a few American church organizations count even the slightest indication of a profession of faith as a conversion. Careful studies of actual church attendance are much more reliable than reports of conversions.

## Romanian Christian Internet Resources

Valentin Teodorescu, compiler

### **Romanian Christian links**

<http://members.tripod.com/nouasperanta/linkrom0.htm>  
(in Romanian)

Sponsored by "Noua Speranta," a Romanian Evangelical organization that provides resources for youth and Christian families. Contains 176 helpful Romanian Christian Web sites (especially Evangelical but also Orthodox and Catholic), including organizations, magazines, radio and TV, publishing houses, Romanian churches in Romania and in other countries, Christian schools, Christian resources, and music. It provides especially strong coverage of Evangelical radio, TV, and publishing houses.

### **Evangelical Magazines**

<http://www.magazinettraining.com/magazinedata/romania.htm>  
(in English)

Provides address and telephone (and eventually Web sites) for 35 Romanian Evangelical magazines and identifies the purpose of each publication.

### **Baptist Union in Romania**

<http://www.baptistnet.ro> (in Romanian)

This denominational Web site contains contact information for the Baptist Union of Romania and its churches, Romanian Baptist schools and faculties, news, articles, Christian resources, and a directory of 63 Romanian Christian Web sites.

### **Noua Speranta (New Hope)**

<http://members.tripod.com/nouasperanta/linkrom3.htm>  
(in English)

Identifies Romanian Christian Web sites, including charities, evangelistic ministries such as Youth for Christ Romania, and Christian camps.

### **Evangelical Associations**

<http://www.biserici.ro/home1024.html> (in Romanian)

Contains an extensive list of 164 Romanian Evangelical Web sites, especially associations, foundations, and societies (focused especially on charity and evangelism), arranged in alphabetical order. Not all Web addresses currently function.

### **Orthodox Church in Romania**

<http://www.crestinism-ortodox.ro> (in Romanian; partially in English)

Contains a great deal of helpful information regarding the Orthodox Church in Romania, including the church's organizational structure, Orthodox perspectives on the Romanian population and its origins, Orthodox theology, history of Christianity, patristic theology in the Romanian Orthodox Church (with a short history of patristic and post-patristic theology with a special focus on its influence on Romanian Orthodoxy), Romanian monasteries, religious art, music, and architecture, the lives of Romanian saints and other saints related to the Romanian Orthodox Church, the life and theology of the great Romanian Orthodox theologian Father Dumitru Staniloae, and a useful directory of 72 Romanian Orthodox Web sites.

### **Roman Catholic and Eastern Rite (Greek) Catholic Churches in Romania**

<http://www.catholica.ro> (in Romanian)

Contains helpful information regarding both the Roman Catholic and Eastern Rite (Greek) Catholic Churches in Romania, with a short history of each bishopric and a biography of each bishop. It includes probably the strongest religious news digest in the Romanian language regarding especially the Romanian Catholic Church and the Catholic Church worldwide, but also with coverage of Eastern Orthodox and Protestant developments. This Web site also contains an excellent online bookstore, in which one can order any book from any Romanian Catholic publishing house.

### **Eastern Rite (Greek) Catholic Church in Romania**

<http://www.bru.ro> (in Romanian)

This helpful Romanian Eastern Rite (Greek) Catholic Church Web site includes a short biography of each bishop, two short histories of this church, including a Catholic perspective on the beginning of Christianity in Romania and the Reformation in Transylvania. It also contains important Romanian and international Catholic links.

### **Evangelical Statistics in Romania**

<http://www.oci.ro> (in English and Romanian)

O.C. International (formerly Overseas Crusades) has developed this excellent, comprehensive Web site that contains information about 460 Evangelical Christian organizations in Romania (probably the most comprehensive list), including address, E-mail, Web site (81 to date), and a comprehensive description of each agency's purpose and activities. Agencies are listed both alphabetically by county and by type of ministry. It also contains very comprehensive information regarding Evangelical church growth in Romania: maps and statistics with the Evangelical population and churches (especially Baptists, Pentecostals, and Brethren), noting the growth of these churches in the last ten years. Statistics and maps refer to the entire Romanian population and to each Romanian county.

### **British Charities in Romania**

<http://www.cleaford.co.uk/linksuk.htm> (in English)

Sponsored by Cleaford Romania Charity Links, this site consists of a directory of 170 British charities and missions working in Romania, providing address, E-mail, Web site, and a description of purpose and activities.

### **Evangelical Churches in Romania**

<http://www.biserici.ro> (in Romanian)

Contains a short, sometimes hostile description of each Romanian Evangelical denomination from at least two points of view: that of the Romanian Minister of Culture and Religion and that of an Eastern Orthodox writer. It also contains a directory with news from the Christian world (Romanian and international), two search engines (with addresses of Romanian Evangelical churches and phone numbers

for Evangelical church leaders), and a helpful directory of 164 Romanian (especially Evangelical) Christian links, including Christian associations (focused especially on charity and evangelism - 86), mass media, education, publishing houses, music, churches, and Christian directories. Not all Web addresses are currently functioning.

#### **Eastern Orthodox Apologetics**

<http://www.ortho-logia.com> (partially in English and partially in Romanian)

This site focuses on Eastern Orthodox apologetics, especially winning Evangelicals to Eastern Orthodoxy. The English portion of the site contains interesting, academically oriented articles including "The Place of Scripture in the Orthodox Tradition" by Romanian Evangelical theologian Danut Manastireanu and "Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism: The Status of an Emerging Global Dialogue" by U.S. Orthodox scholar Bradley Nassif. The Romanian portion of the site is more hostile to Evangelicals and does not reach the same academic level, including a book by Orthodox convert Franky Schaeffer and standard Romanian Orthodox answers to popular Evangelical critiques of Eastern Orthodoxy.

#### **Evangelical Resources**

[www.roboam.com](http://www.roboam.com) (partially in English and partially in Romanian)

Romanian Baptists in the U.S. have developed this helpful site, which provides useful information for Romanian Christians who have immigrated to the West (with an interesting debate about the morality of the immigration). Contains useful information for preachers (theological resources, church history, sermons, and sermon illustrations), and for Sunday school teachers and youth group leaders. The site also includes treatment of the beginning of Christianity in Romania, the beginning of the Baptist movement in Romania, a Baptist-Orthodox dialogue, and a very

interesting article about the best way to share the gospel in an Orthodox context. It also provides materials for Christian families, many media resources, and very useful links for general information about Romanian history and geography.

#### **Bible Study Program**

<http://www.ib-ro.org/> (in Romanian)

Contains a Bible study program written by Benjamin Faragau, a Baptist theologian from Cluj, which is used in many Evangelical churches in Romania. The study program has as its philosophy the idea that the main goal of studying the Bible is not the fulfillment of our needs (idolatry), but rather the knowing of God the Father and Christ, the Son. For that reason the program helps build a solid theological perspective on the Bible as a whole and on the Old Testament as a basis for a full understanding of the New Testament. Each year three books of the Bible are studied. Although the program is geared for a literate but not academic Evangelical audience, it is based on respected, serious hermeneutical tools.

#### **Adventist Union in Romania**

<http://www.adventist.ro> (in Romanian)

Contains contact information on the Adventist Union of Romania and all its churches. Provides Web links to all Romanian Adventist schools, faculties, radio broadcasters, publishing houses, resources, foundations, and associations. It also includes a helpful digest of Romanian and international news regarding the Adventist Church and a valuable file with important official documents of the Adventist Church (not only from Romania): a church manual and the Adventist position regarding such social and political issues as human rights, religious freedom, the family, homosexuality, birth control, and military service.

**Valentin Teodorescu**, a native of Pascani, Romania, is a student at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, AL.



## **Book Review**

### **Theological Reflections**

Reviewed by *Oleg P. Turlac*

The Euro-Asian Accrediting Association of Evangelical Theological Schools (CIS) published the first issue of *Theological Reflections (Bogoslovskie razmyshlenia)*, *Euro-Asian Theological Journal* in Spring 2003. The purpose of the journal is to acquaint the contemporary Christian world with theological thought in the former Soviet Union. It publishes theological articles by authors in the Evangelical tradition.

The aim of *Theological Reflections* is to provide space for the development of Eurasian theology and to stimulate Christian authors to reflect on theology and the practice of ministry in the Evangelical community in the former USSR. The first issue, with articles published in Russian and English, includes: "The Life of Jesus According to Paul" by Viktor Kalashnikov, member of the faculty of theology at Odessa Baptist Theological Seminary (Ukraine), "The Roots of

Scientific Bible Criticism" by Johannes Lange, instructor in theology at St. Petersburg Christian University (Russia), "The Matrix of the New Covenant for Contextualizing the Gospel Among the Slavic Peoples" by Dr. Mark Saussy, professor of theology at Kyiv Theological Seminary (Ukraine), "The Significance of 'One Flesh' in Relation to Marriage" by Katharina Penner, instructor in New Testament Greek at the International Baptist Theological Seminary (Prague, Czech Republic), "The Lutheran Church in Ukraine: In Search of a National Identity" by Dr. Victoria Lyubashchenko, a member of the Ukrainian National Academy of Science, and "Paul Tillich's Position on Visual Arts and Architecture" by Michael V. Riaguzov, a graduate of Moscow Architectural Institute and architect of numerous Protestant church buildings in Russia.

*Theological Reflections* will be exceptionally helpful for missionaries working in the countries of the former Soviet Union and those seeking to understand the rich theological heritage of Evangelical Christians in Eurasia. ♦

For more information about the journal go to [www.e-aaa.org](http://www.e-aaa.org). The cost of a single issue is \$3. The cost of mailing to Europe is an additional \$3 and an additional \$4.50 to North America. Checks can be sent to the following address: EAAA International, 335 Southcote Rd., Riverside, IL 60546; tel: 708-447-8773; fax: 708-447-8794; E-mail: [sandylaw@ameritech.net](mailto:sandylaw@ameritech.net).

 **Book Review**

**Robert P. Geraci and Michael Khodarkovsky, eds. *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. 356 pp.**

*Reviewed by Sharyl Corrado.*

Robert Geraci and Michael Khodarkovsky have done the missions community a service by compiling in one volume 12 sketches on the history of missions and Christian ministry among non-Orthodox peoples of the Russian empire and early Soviet Union. Even more helpful, a common focus of the collected articles is the relationship of missionaries to the state, which remains a key issue today. A quick perusal of this volume, covering missions from Chechnia to Alaska, Buriatia to Uzbekistan, among Muslims, animists, Buddhists, Catholics, Jews, and Orthodox dissenters, will quickly dissolve Westerners' common tendency to proclaim their ministry the first in a region or among a certain people. Yet as well as the diversity of locations and people-groups targeted, even more striking, perhaps, is the range of methodologies applied, including both Russian and native-language education, medical and humanitarian ministries, public and private debates, financial and material rewards, and even occasional imprisonment for refusal to comply.

Of interest to Evangelicals will be the work of Professor Nikolai Il'minskii, of Kazan Theological Academy, and Bishop Ivan Veniaminov, who served nearly 50 years among the Alaskan Aleuts (1821-1867) before becoming Metropolitan of Moscow. Il'minskii, who taught at the Kazan Theological Seminary from 1846 to 1870 and worked with the Russian Ministry of Education until his death in 1891, was a pioneer in the use of native-language education, translation of the Bible and Christian literature into minority languages, Orthodox use of the vernacular rather than literary languages in reaching minorities, and the training of non-Russian clergy and missionary personnel. Taking the unprecedented step of moving into the Tatar quarter of Kazan to improve his language skills, Il'minskii throughout his life treated Christian Tatars as his children, devoting his life to their spiritual wellbeing. His schools for baptized Tatars, training children in

the faith from a young age, soon became a model adopted throughout the empire.

Fr. Veniaminov, a charismatic priest, accomplished scholar, and wise politician, was innovative and controversial in his adaptation of Russian Orthodoxy to meet the needs of his non-Russian flock. Combining Orthodox theology with Enlightenment rationalism, Veniaminov strove to first gain the trust of those he served, learning from them about their own religious faith and practices, and only later telling them his story. Only after significant time had elapsed were natives offered the sacrament of baptism. Concerned about the physical health of Native Americans, he refused to enforce the Lenten fast among a people whose diet consisted almost exclusively of meat and refused to criticize too harshly the polygamy prevalent among the small populations of native peoples. His efforts were rewarded when his flock remained faithful after the sale of Alaska to the United States and the influx of large numbers of well-funded Presbyterians.

For those wishing to delve deeper into the methods of Il'minskii and Orthodox missions among Muslims and animists in European Russia, two contributors to this volume have recently published relevant monographs as well. Robert Geraci's *Window to the East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001) examines in detail the ministries of Il'minskii as well as his opponents, working among Christian and Muslim Tatars in the Kazan region. And Paul Werth's *At the Margins of Orthodoxy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002) focuses on the obstacles faced by missionaries, including resistance and recurrent apostasy as well as the challenges of success. In addition, selected articles in *Russia's Orient*, edited by Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), explore the difficult relationship of religion to ethnic identity, attempts (and failures) by the state to use religion for political gain, and methods of resistance by which natives strengthened their old faith despite pressure to convert. For those wishing to learn from the past, familiarity with the issues described in all four works could prove of immense value to those ministering among the native peoples of the former Russian Empire today. ♦

Familiarity with the issues described in all four works could prove of immense value to those ministering among the native peoples of the former Russian Empire today.

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 **Book Review**

***Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2003***

*Reviewed by Oleg P. Turlac*

*Trafficking in Persons Report*, prepared by the U.S. Department of State, provides current information about slavery and slave trading in the world today, including the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. This 174-page study sheds light on worldwide trafficking in women, children, and men as a result of social conflict, natural calamities, and harsh

economic circumstances. The situation in relevant countries of the world is described under three major headings: prevention, prosecution, and protection. The report will help Christians and all people of good will to familiarize themselves with the troubling facts about human trafficking. It can serve as a motivation for action to help victims of forced labor and sexual exploitation. The report can be downloaded from the Web site of the U.S. Department of State at: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/>. ♦

## Teaching Cross-Culturally

(continued from page 16)

conformity to a group, or a blend of these extremes. They must also decide whether individual [status] roles will be open to all, narrowly defined and limited to a few select individuals, or a blend of these extremes. Each variable may be described as a continuum—weak to strong demands for conformity to a group and weak to strong differentiation of social roles and status.

The expectations of students who see the teacher as an authority figure contrast sharply with the expectations of students who see the teacher as a facilitator. Students who see the teacher as an authority figure do not value independent thinking; they merely want the teacher to tell them what will be on the test so they can memorize it. When the teacher tries to encourage questions and interaction, the students often feel it is a waste of time.

Pamela George, whose book *College Teaching Abroad* (1995) surveys Fulbright scholars who have taught in various countries around the world, summarizes the frustrations they experienced: "I would say, 'What about this?' And then I'd wait. I'd sit there and sip my tea...Nothing. Then I'd call on somebody, 'Chung, what do you think?' He would look down at his book...[silence]...[silence]. I have no experience with this—the experience of calling on a student and the ability of that student to outwait me!"

This professor, working from the teacher as facilitator role, expected interaction with his students. He expected them to ask questions or at least to answer when called upon. The students, however, reared in a tradition in which status is important and the teacher is the authority, were unfamiliar with that pattern. They were in class to learn from the professor, and the only questions they expected to answer were those that had clear right or wrong answers. [But] the incarnational teacher is willing to give up aspects of the teacher role that fits his or her cultural background and take on the role that fits the social-cultural world of the students.

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### Cheating—or Helping One Another?

Many teachers express deep frustrations about students who cheat on tests. Educator Ted Ward told me a story of an experience he had in Ghana. When he observed people giving one another answers, he asked for the definition of cheating. One man stood up straight and announced, "Sir, cheating is withholding information from those who need it!" Such a definition is diametrically opposed to the typical western definition. The cross-cultural teacher, therefore, must grapple with complex cultural realities. Students may value group learning and try to support one another in the testing process. Under some circumstances, that may be the most effective method to achieve learning.

The culture of prestige often surprises foreign teachers. In some places in Asia, students stand and either bow or clap when the teacher enters the classroom. Some western teachers comment on how uncomfortable this makes them feel, and one person told me that she vigorously discouraged this practice in her classes. What she did not realize was she was breaking down respect patterns concerning the ascribed status of a teacher. The consequences of such a seemingly innocuous decision may not surface until many years later.

Still another cultural surprise may be appropriate dress. In America, the current trend in businesses and churches is casual dress. The expectations in a status-oriented society, however, demand that a teacher dress according to his or her position. Many Americans cringe at the thought of wearing a coat and tie or high heels and stockings, but if that is the accepted dress, then the western educator should follow.

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### The Culture of Planning

In western schools, there is a strong developed culture of planning. This value is so important that accreditors may censure school leaders who fail to maintain adequate systems of planning. In this cultural climate, most teachers and school administrators develop habits and expectations for planning in their daily and long-term routines. We plan budgets, maintain an inventory of materials and supplies, schedule maintenance, and conduct periodic evaluations to revise programs and plan for the future. Western teachers who work under national leaders in two-thirds world schools frequently fault these leaders for failing to meet their planning expectations. A [relaxed] orientation prevails throughout much of the two-thirds world, not because all non-westerners think this way, but because economic and political uncertainties force such people to accept ambiguity and unforeseen events. One may order all the supplies necessary for the coming school year well ahead of time, but if war stops planes from flying and trucks from driving, the materials will not arrive on time. "Strategic waiting" may prove more effective than "strategic planning."

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### The Political and Historical Context of Learning

It is absolutely essential to have a basic understanding of the political context in which a school operates. The best way to begin is to find the most current books on the political and economic situations of the country. These works usually provide the important historical context of the nation and an interpretive analysis that helps one process complex information and draw applications for working in that nation. To review more current events, read news sources on the Internet and find articles that provide analysis of these events.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of learning about the political realities while you are a beginning learner. One of our students conducted research in Ukraine a few years after the collapse of Communism. He discovered that asking seemingly innocuous questions such as "How many students are in the school?" produced a great deal of suspicion. Why did he want to know? What was he going to do with the information? Further, when he tried to observe classes or ask for advice on teaching, he found people extremely reluctant to help. He soon learned that these activities were considered politically risky; people were afraid he might disclose information that could cost them their jobs or their standing with officials. He had to develop other nonthreatening ways of learning to continue his research program.

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### Teachers Learning to Learn In Order to Teach

In many two-thirds world cultures, a deep relationship does not begin until there is debt and reciprocal obligation. We have found that one of the best ways to signal our desire for a deeper relationship is to ask others for help. This phase of the relationship causes much stress to many westerners. For self-sufficient westerners, asking for help is much more difficult than giving it, yet asking is the most important step in initiating relationships in many non-western cultural contexts. ♦

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Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from the authors' *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003). \$12.99.

# Teaching Cross-Culturally

Judith E. Lingenfelter and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter

*Editor's Note: Since the fall of Communism, large numbers of teachers, pastors, and evangelists from the West have lectured and preached in post-Soviet states in seminaries, churches, mass meetings, and conferences. All indications are that this itinerant ministry continues in force, with particular ongoing importance for the hundred-plus new Protestant seminaries that still have limited numbers of indigenous faculty with higher degrees. As a follow-up to a previous East-West Church and Ministry Report article: Mark R. Elliott, "Guidelines for Guest Preaching, Teaching, and Cross-Cultural Communications," 10 (Spring 2002), 8-12, the editor commends the advice on teaching abroad provided here by experienced cross-cultural educators Judith E. and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter.*

Teaching cross-culturally requires that we "consider others better than ourselves" (Philippians 2:3), yet we are convinced of the superiority of our training and gifts. As teachers we must begin as learners.

## The "Hidden" Curriculum

Schooling always occurs in a larger cultural context, and the "hidden curriculum" is the cultural agenda for learning that surrounds schooling. If we think about education as the entire process of cultural transmission, cultural learning surrounds the much smaller "stated curriculum" of schooling. This hidden curriculum is "caught" rather than "taught."

## Teachers as Learners

The first principle is to become a learner in the new cultural context. To be an effective cross-cultural teacher, one must learn the other-culture perspective. An example of my failure on [the Pacific island of] Yap to decipher the hidden curriculum occurred when teaching the color wheel. The first day I confidently held it up and had students repeat the colors in English after me. They did fine until they came to the colors blue and green. Only ten years later, when reading about differences in cultural perceptions of color, did I realize what I had done. I had failed to ask why my young students knew all the colors except blue and green. I now understand that on this tiny island surrounded by the ocean, they use many words to capture the distinctions of blue and green necessary to function effectively in their environment.

Teaching cross-culturally requires that we learn to think outside our cultural and contextual expectations and to look for solutions beyond our training, experience, and expertise. We must begin to think about our faith in Jesus Christ as the beginning of our liberation from our cultural bias. As Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:1-5, we are to regard others as better than ourselves and make their interests at least equal to our own.

We often see another's culture of teaching and learning as deficient and think of our own culture as superior. As Christian teachers we know we should "consider others better than ourselves" (Philippians 2:3), yet we are convinced of the superiority of our training and gifts. As teachers we must begin as learners—observing carefully our students and the diversity of cultural ways in which they learn.

## How Teachers Should Act

People who teach cross-culturally encounter differences in the expectations students have of the way in which teachers should conduct themselves in the classroom. The first variable one must seek to understand is the degree to which a society values conformity, to the collective or group expectations of family and community.

The second variable of importance is the degree to which a culture values the separation of roles and assigns high or low status to those roles. A Confucian teacher, for example, has a special and highly respected role, located among other high status positions in society. The teacher has the authority, and therefore, a student would never question the teacher's word. The teacher is absolutely respected, and as a result, students always stand when the teacher enters the classroom, bow in deference, and listen carefully, writing word for word what the teacher says. A western teacher's role can vary widely. Western teachers of children have authority and demand respect, but they encourage questions from students and may even tolerate argument. Teachers of teens and adults often take a "peer expert" role, seeing students as peers who lack a teacher's expertise, but who are partners in the teaching and learning process. The cultural contrast is in the degree of separation and status.

Each society must define its social relationships with reference to these two variables. People must choose whether to value individual autonomy,

EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT, published quarterly by the Global Center, seeks to encourage Western Christian ministry in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union that is effective, culturally relevant, and cooperative. It also serves as a forum for the exploration of a variety of issues relating to Christianity's presence in Europe's formerly Marxist states. Letters to the editor are welcomed. Subscription rates are \$44.95 per year (U.S. and Canada); \$54.95 (international); and \$19.95 (E-mail). Reprint and photocopy policy: 1) Quantity photocopies or reprints of up to three articles from a single issue may be distributed or reprinted with no royalty charge. 2) Written permission is to be secured for each distribution or reprinting. 3) The following statement is to be carried on each photocopied article reproduced and each article reprinted: **Reproduced (or Reprinted) with permission of EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT.** Currently indexed by OCLC Public Affairs Information Service (formerly PAIS), Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), and Zeller Dietrich (formerly Zeller Verlag).

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### EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT

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Birmingham, AL 35229

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