



EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT

SPRING 2004

VOL. 12, No. 2

Pastoral Burnout and How to Avoid It

Adrian Dorin Giorgiov

A Hungarian Baptist pastor who had served churches for 35 years was in the process of retiring, when suddenly one morning he was unable to move or speak. Thinking he had suffered a stroke, his family called an ambulance. At the hospital the doctor's diagnosis was burnout, a word that none of the family members understood. It took several months for the pastor to recover completely.

The accumulated stress in this pastor's life included his approaching retirement, the implied expectation that he would leave the parsonage, and the certainty that he could not afford to rent or buy a house. In addition, the church was eager to find a replacement as soon as possible, even before his retirement. He felt as if the congregation did not appreciate his years in the pastorate. While other churches organized special services and large celebrations for their retiring pastors, he received a bouquet of flowers and a few words of recognition at the end of a regular Sunday morning service. He struggled with the feeling of no longer being needed. He had shared his problems with some other pastors, but did not continue to do so, and consequently had too little support and accountability. Later he became involved with a pastors' support group that facilitated his ultimate recovery.

Surveying Pastoral Burnout

The present study analyzes the sources of stress and potential burnout among Hungarian Baptist pastors, focusing on accountability systems that may help alleviate the problem. Consulting Psychologists Press gave permission for its Maslach Burnout Inventory to be translated into Hungarian and to be administered to Hungarian Baptist pastors (85 in Hungary and 53 in Romania). Usable returned questionnaires totaled 102, representing 74 percent of active pastors queried.

The Toll from Overwork and Multiple Congregations

The study clearly indicates that isolation and overwork, in particular, take their toll. Based on this writer's January 2002 survey, 77.6 percent of

Hungarian Baptist pastors acknowledged estrangement from some of their fellow pastors. Also, few Hungarian Baptist pastoral couples have close friends in church because shared confidential information might be compromised. In research done by Ruth Giorgiov among Hungarian Baptist pastors' wives in 1997, 100 percent said they have many acquaintances in church, but few friends.

Within the Hungarian Baptist Union, both in Hungary and Romania, pastors lead an average of 4.1 churches each. Often the pastor visits each church one Sunday a month. Serving several churches takes its toll. The study reveals that pastors who serve eight or more churches scored significantly higher on measures of depersonalization than those who serve fewer churches. Not surprisingly, Hungarian Baptist pastors are in great need of rest. Only 3.7 percent take a day off weekly and many are preaching almost every evening. They are at home on average only 1.5 nights per week.

Accountability Groups

The study brought to light that pastors' accountability to one another is an effective way of lowering burnout. Forty-eight percent share their difficulties in ministry with at least one other pastor a few times a month. The present study supports the principles of accountability and mutual encouragement found in the Bible. It also underscores the value that theologians, psychologists, and pastors place on effective mutual peer support accountability groups. ♦

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Adrian Dorin Giorgiov, "The Effect of Accountability on Pastoral Stress and Burnout Among Select Hungarian Baptist Pastors," Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002.

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The Hungarian Baptist Church in Figures

	Hungary	Romania	Total
Churches	350	219*	569
Membership	11,000	8,560	19,560
Non-members who attend	5,113	3,887	9,000
Active pastors	85	53	138
Hungarian population	10,000,000	2,000,000	12,000,000
Bible institutes (none prior to 1990)			3
Seminaries			1
Seminary students 1980-1989			7
Seminary students 1990-1999			137

*Of this total, 55 were established between 1990 and 1999.

Source: Giorgiov, pp. 3-4; e-mail from author, 15 March 2004.

Hungarian Baptist pastors are at home on average only 1.5 nights per week.

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Book Review

Review of *Bibliologia 1.0 CD-ROM*

Oleg P. Turlac

CD-ROM *Bibliologia 1.0*, released in 2003, is a product of a partnership between Odessa Baptist Theological Seminary (Ukraine), the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association of Evangelical Theological Schools, and the Learning Alliance (USA). It is the first high caliber electronic edition provided for students of theology and church ministers in the countries of the former Soviet Union. "Quote from the Bible 5.0" (*Tsitata iz Biblii*), the nucleus of *Bibliologia*, allows users to easily cut and paste the text of the Russian Synodal Bible (1876). Along with the Synodal Translation this CD-ROM includes several modern Russian and Ukrainian Bible translations.

The program also contains the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament), and various versions of the Greek text of the New Testament. Also included are several English versions of the Bible: the KJV and NASB, as well as a Korean Bible. Along with the

text of the Bible, users will be well served by the commentaries of William Barclay and the *New Geneva Study Bible*, the works of Josephus, and sermons of St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, John Wesley, and Charles H. Spurgeon. The CD-ROM also includes helpful hermeneutical guides for biblical research, including Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*; Richard L. Pratt, *He Gave Us Stories: The Bible Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narratives*; as well as valuable theological resources by Alister E. McGrath, *Understanding the Trinity*, and R. C. Sproul, *Essentials of Christian Faith*. *Bibliologia* also contains various helpful reference sources, such as *Religious-Philosophical Dictionary* by L. I. Vasilenko, and *The Handbook of a Christian Counselor* published by Vozrozhdenie (Billy Graham Evangelistic Association).

Users of *Bibliologia 1.0* serving in the context of the former Soviet Union will be well served by this new CD-ROM. The cost of a single copy is \$5 plus the cost of shipping and handling. For more information consult the following Web sites:

www.e-aaa.org or www.blagodot.org. ♦

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Training Pastoral Counselors in Russia

Dennis Bowen and D. Russell Bishop

In the current Russian social climate people trust church leaders, but there is substantially less trust for mental health professionals.¹ Indeed, psychology and especially psychiatry are mistrusted as tools of state control.² Nonetheless, many pastors in Russia understand that their own training and experience provide insufficient preparation for pastoral counseling.³ Yet one mission leader in the former Soviet Union reports that none of the eight training programs he supervises includes counselor training curricula.⁴

Counseling Classes in Kursk

One typical Protestant theological training program began operating in 1998 in Kursk, Russia, as a partnership between the U.S.-based Evangelical Free Church and the Evangelical Christian-Baptist Union of the Kursk Region. Trinity Bible College is a two-year residential Bible college whose pastoral counseling training component includes two 45-hour courses, "Introduction to Biblical Counseling" and "Marriage and Family." The introductory course covers the biblical basis for counseling, microcounseling skills, theory of the change process, descriptive psychopathology, ethics, and such counseling issues as forgiveness, guilt, and grief. Students practice counseling and diagnostic skills in class, followed by supervised practicums in retirement homes or with volunteer clients in the community. The marriage and family course examines secular and spiritual perspectives on family life, human development, sexuality, premarital preparation, marital communication, parenting, and the family generation lifecycle.

Overall reaction to these courses has been positive. Students appreciate skills training, descriptive psychopathology, and practicum sessions, but question the relevance and validity of pastoral counseling within the Russian Protestant context. Biblical conservatives are often skeptical of psychological techniques in relation to spiritual questions, non-directive pastoral counseling, and the propriety of sex education, even for couples preparing for marriage.⁵ However, younger Russian Protestants generally are more open to social science theory and practice, which contributes to positive opportunities to promote training for pastoral counseling.⁶

Major Stresses in the Russian Church and Society

Major issues in pastoral counseling in Russia today include economic problems, Soviet-induced trauma, limited counselor training for church leaders, setting and maintaining personal boundaries in ministry, and, among theological conservatives, resistance to the utilization of social sciences in church ministry.⁷ Other salient social problems in the post-Soviet transition include growing materialism, increased

crime, and a decline in population and life expectancy due to deteriorating health care and educational systems, alcoholism, drug use, AIDS, and domestic violence.⁸

In the former Soviet Union—and in all former Iron Curtain nations—the first layer of culture derives from the trauma of Soviet rule. Underneath is a Russian layer that is characterized by a collectivist/communal mindset and a strong desire to avoid uncertainty. At the same time, Russians are very well educated, with a 98.4 percent literacy rate.⁹

Problems Western Teachers Face in Russia

Important challenges Western teachers encounter in the former Soviet Union include the conscious or unconscious imposition of Western values,¹⁰ achieving contextually relevant teaching,¹¹ issues of oral and written translation,¹² differing educational methodologies,¹³ and cross-cultural communication.¹⁴ Western faculty teaching in Russian theological institutions usually recognize their responsibility to teach a theologically sound curriculum, while not favoring their own cultural values.¹⁵ But differences do arise. For example, despite Russian and American Protestants holding most doctrines in common, most Western Protestants are Calvinist while most Russian Evangelicals are Arminian.¹⁶ Also, theologically conservative Russian Protestants listen carefully for messages from Westerners that could be perceived to be theologically liberal.¹⁷

Reconciling Psychology and Theology

The relationship of pastoral counseling and social sciences is a question that has been vigorously debated, with Christian viewpoints ranging across a wide spectrum from Bible-only counseling¹⁸ to psychologically informed biblical counseling¹⁹ to an integrationist position²⁰ to a psychologically oriented pastoral approach.²¹ Interestingly, in translating "pastoral counseling" and "Christian counseling" into the Russian language, Russian students suggested *dushepopecheetelstvo*, which literally means "soul care."

Ways to Strengthen Pastoral Counseling in Russia

Relatively few pastoral training texts exist in Russian, with most being translations of American and European authors. Of course, Russia needs indigenous writing in theology and pastoral care, a process that will take time.²² Western teachers usually have prepared curricula, course outlines, lectures, and lesson plans, but such curricula and lessons do not necessarily resonate with what Russian students are used to and expect. Curricula and program development in all spheres of theological

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Training Pastoral Counselors in Russia

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education will need to be revised and shaped to meet Russian needs and worldviews.²³

As Russian students have differing educational expectations in the classroom, so too their expectations for practical training and supervision differ noticeably from those of Western students. Difficulties include a scarcity of appropriate sites for practicum training, Russian students' unfamiliarity with Western models of counselor training supervision, and traditional Russian distrust of authority.²⁴

Greater interaction between Western and Russian educators in the area of pastoral counselor training ought to take place. Regional and nationwide dialogues could help identify the number and effectiveness of trained pastoral counselors in Russia. Informal discussions among Russian pastors, counselors, parishioners, and missionaries could also help identify

counseling needs. Finally, professional exchanges, consultations, and conferences could aid the development of pastoral counseling in Russia. The international divisions of such organizations as the American Association of Christian Counselors and the American Pastoral Counseling Association, among others, could contribute to this process.²⁵ ♦

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Edited excerpt published with permission of the authors and Haworth Press from the American Journal of Pastoral Counseling 6 (No. 4, 2003): 3-22.

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Serial Review

Review of Religion in Eastern Europe

Reviewed by Oleg P. Turlac

Religion in Eastern Europe (previously *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*) is a bi-monthly publication of Christians Associated for Relationships with Eastern Europe (C.A.R.E.E.), affiliated with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Dr. Paul Mojzes, professor of religious studies at Rosemont College, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, and Dr. Walter Sawatsky, professor of church history and mission and director of the Missions Studies Center, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, serve as coeditors.

The journal treats affairs in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union from a variety of theological, ecclesiastical, and national perspectives. The October 2003 issue of Volume 23 includes: "A Strategy for Social Reconciliation in the Ethnic Conflict in Transylvania" by Christian G. Romocea,

a doctoral candidate at the University of Wales, and "Orthodox-Protestant Relations in the Post-Soviet Era" by Mark R. Elliott, director of the Global Center, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. Book reviews include: Perry L. Glanzer, *The Quest for Russia's Soul: Evangelicals and Moral Education in Post-Communist Russia* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2002), reviewed by Donald Fairbairn; and Hanna Diskin, *The Seeds of Triumph, Church and State in Gomulka's Poland* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2001), reviewed by Szolt Enyedi.

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The publication can also be accessed online at <http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/hundergrad/departments/soc-swk/free/>.

Ethics and Religion: East-West Comparisons

Editor's Note: Articles in the present issue by Jan Kerkhofs, Loek Halman, E. I. Bashkurova, and Jerry G. Pankhurst provide comparative data on European and American religious beliefs and ethical perceptions. Findings are based on surveys conducted from 1981 to the present. Readers may be surprised to learn that: 1) overall, religion is a low priority in Eastern as well as Western Europe: family, friends, work, and leisure all rank higher in importance (Kerkhofs); 2) in Russian and Ukrainian homes, teaching children hard work and responsibility is the highest priority, while instruction in religious faith trails in fifth place (Kerkhofs); 3) Russians are far less likely to attend church once a

month than are Belgians, who are considered to be highly secularized (Kerkhofs); and 4) perhaps most revealing, most Europeans (East and West) and most Americans view economic misbehavior and environmental irresponsibility much more negatively than "certain actions in the sexual and bioethical sphere" (Halman and Kerkhofs). For example, for most East and West Europeans and Americans, buying stolen property is frowned upon more than adultery, joyriding is frowned upon much more than homosexuality, and littering is frowned upon much more than euthanasia. (See chart, "What Is Ethical/Unethical?", p.9)

East-West Moral and Religious Values

Jan Kerkhofs

In the present study, Russian results of the European Values Study (EVS) are compared with those of Ukraine and Flanders (sometimes Belgium as a whole), as well as with the Republic of Ireland, a country with values that are often closer to those of the U.S. than those of Europe. Generally speaking, Flanders and Belgium track West European averages.

With a look at Europe in general, it is striking that everywhere the degree of importance interviewees attach to six basic aspects of life is about the same, comparing, as far as possible, 1990 and 1999. Family comes first, then work, followed by friends, leisure, and finally, religion and politics (Table 1).

Table 1: Importance of Various Aspects of Life for Europeans

	West		East	
	1990	1999	1990	1999
Family	96	97	97	97
Work	90	89	93	91
Friends	90	94	78	85
Leisure	84	88	76	75
Religion	52	47	40	48
Politics	36	40	41	30

Source: EVS, 1990-1999, in percentage; "very" and "quite important."

The Value of Marriage

More and more people consider marriage to be an outdated institution (Table 2). Comparative figures for the last decades in the West show that this is a phenomenon that is increasing in importance.

Table 2: Percentage of Those Surveyed Who Consider Marriage an Outdated Institution

Age groups	Russia	Ukraine	Flanders	Ireland
18-30	32	28	27	28
31-45	25	17	29	25
46-60	15	15	28	18
60+	10	11	18	16

Source: EVS, 1999, in percentage.

The Value of Education

In the survey, parents were asked which qualities they consider important to teach their children at home. Interviewees selected five items out of a list of eleven. In both Russia and Ukraine, hard work comes first, while good manners and tolerance are much less appreciated than in the West (Table 3).

Table 3: Qualities to Teach Children at Home

	Russia	Ukraine	Flanders	Ireland
Good manners	58	55	85	88
Responsibility	75	75	81	47
Tolerance/Respect	67	65	83	75
Hard work	91	87	26	38
Religious faith	9	17	12	41

Source: EVS, 1999, in percentage. Figures represent averages derived from published findings for four age groups. For example, the nine percent of Russians choosing religious faith is based on four percent of respondents aged 18-30; seven percent of respondents aged 31-45; seven percent of respondents aged 46-60; and 18 percent of respondents over age 60.

Ethics

In the West as well as in the East, older generations find, much more than younger ones, that clear and absolute guidelines concerning good and evil should always be followed. Younger generations claim that circumstances are decisive for good and evil; for them, "situation ethics" prevail (Table 4).

Table 4: Percentages Believing in the Existence of Absolute Clear Guidelines for Good and Evil

Age groups	Russia	Ukraine	Flanders	Ireland
18-30	28	32	19	34
31-45	39	44	27	34
46-60	42	43	33	41
60+	46	52	37	49

Source: EVS, 1999, in percentage for "clear guidelines."

Younger generations claim that circumstances are decisive for good and evil; for them, "situation ethics" prevail.

Belief in God

Only a minority of people (Ireland excepted) believe that God is a person (Table 5). On a ten-point scale concerning the importance given to God, Russians register 5.2, Ukrainians 6.3, Flemish 5.1, and Irish 7.4.

Table 5: Beliefs

	Russia	Ukraine	Flanders	Ireland
Life after death	36	40	37	78
Hell	35	38	14	53
Heaven	36	40	28	85
Sin	68	74	39	86
Reincarnation	32	28	16	23
Telepathy	58	56	37	34
Personal God	32	41	25	63

Source: EVS, 1999, in percentage.

Religious Belief and Practice

In Russia, 50 percent declare they belong to a religious denomination, 91 percent of whom are Orthodox and six percent of whom are Muslim. In Ukraine, 56 percent belong to a religious denomination, 74 percent of whom belong to one of the three Orthodox churches and 15 percent of whom belong to the two Catholic rites. In Flanders, 63 percent say they belong to a religious denomination (59 percent Roman Catholics), and in Ireland, 90 percent (95 percent of whom are Roman Catholics).

Belonging is not the same as believing, nor is believing the same as practicing one's religion. Table 6 shows the percentage who attend church at least once a month and how many go to church less than once a year or never.

Table 6: "Attend services at least once a month or less than once a year or never"

	Russia	Ukraine	Flanders	Ireland
At least once a month	9	16	30	67
Practically never	50	30	45	10

Source: EVS, 1999, in percentage.

In Russia and Ukraine, religion has a different position than in Ireland and Belgium, religion being more important in Ukraine than in Russia and in Ireland than in Belgium. ♦

Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from Jan Kerkhofs, "Values in Russia: An Introduction" in Russia and Europe, A Changing International Environment, ed. Katlijn Malfiet and Lien Verpoest (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2001): 49-70.

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History of the European Values Study

The European Values Study (<http://staff.um.edu.mt/aabe2/EVS.htm>) is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research program on basic human values initiated by the European Value Systems Study Group (EVSSG) in the late 1970s. In 1981 researchers conducted surveys in ten West European states. The project aroused interest in North and South America, the Middle and Far East, Australia, and South Africa where affiliated groups were set up to administer the same questionnaires. A second wave of surveys was launched in 1990 in all European countries, including Switzerland, Austria, countries in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the U.S. and Canada. A third European Values Study (1999/2000), coordinated from Tilburg University, the Netherlands, surveyed the following 36 countries:

Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, and the U.S., representative of about 900 million people. A fourth survey is projected for 2008.

Source: "European Values Study, General Information," www.europeanvalues.nl/info.htm; and Jan Kerkhofs, "Values in Russia: An Introduction" in *Russia and Europe, A Changing International Environment*, ed. Katlijn Malfiet and Lien Verpoest (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2001): 49-70.

The Third European Values Study (1999-2000): Selected Findings on Religion and Ethics

Loek Halman and Jan Kerkhofs

Joyriding, tax evasion, bribery, and benefit abuse—acceptance of such behavior is significantly lower than acceptance of certain actions in the sexual and bioethical sphere.

Trust in the Church?

Trust in the church is far from unanimous in Europe. There are major differences in the extent to which people say they trust the church, with Malta, Romania, and Portugal, where people say they place a great deal of trust in the church at one extreme, and the Czech Republic and, to a lesser extent, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, and Slovenia at the other. It is therefore not possible to identify a clear dividing line between East and West, North and South as regards this matter.

A Secular Europe?

In recent history, individualization and secularization have changed society dramatically, undermining traditional authoritarian religious power in favor of personal autonomy and individual freedom. In terms of religious faith, this is reflected in the gradual decline in church attendance and traditional beliefs, such as belief in a personal God. However, this does not mean that people have suddenly turned atheist en masse. Only a small proportion of Europeans explicitly state that they are atheist: five percent in Europe as a whole, with quite a lot of variation. In France, 15 percent of people say they are atheist, while less than one percent of Romanians and Maltese say they are. In Russia, too, despite strong atheist propaganda, atheism, at five percent, is not widespread.

There is also great variation within Europe when it comes to belief in God. Whereas in countries like Poland, Portugal, Malta, and Italy the vast majority (around 80 percent) say they believe in a personal God, only a small minority do so in Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and the Czech Republic. Agnosticism is particularly common in Russia (31 percent), France (25 percent), Belarus (23 percent), Ukraine (22 percent), and Estonia (21 percent), and is limited to around 10 percent of the population of other countries.

One notable fact to emerge from the latest study is that belief in a personal God actually increased slightly in some countries between 1990 and 1999. This is particularly true of Portugal, Finland, Lithuania, and Germany. There was a decline only in Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Latvia, and the Czech Republic.

Church Attendance

The decline in the authority of the church has meant that fewer and fewer people attend church services. But here, again, there is no homogeneous picture throughout Europe. Church participation is high in Poland and Malta, where more than 80 percent of respondents attend church regularly (at least once a month). In Scandinavia and most of Eastern Europe, the reverse is true. Romania and Ukraine are important exceptions, however, as more than half of respondents said they regularly go to church. Church participation has fallen slightly in most countries over the past ten years, though not in all countries. Exceptions include Portugal, Slovakia, and Bulgaria, where more people regularly went to church in 1999 than ten years previously.

Moral Relativism

Many people no longer live according to the teachings of the church. Despite the church's strong opposition to contraception, abortion, divorce, homosexuality, and euthanasia, they are either already widespread or on the increase in society. (See chart, "What is Ethical/Unethical?," p. 9.) In most countries, many people believe there are no absolutely unambiguous rules on what is good and evil that apply to everyone, irrespective of circumstances. The view that good and evil depend entirely on circumstances is common, particularly in Scandinavia. Only in Poland and Malta are people slightly more likely to believe there are unambiguous rules. Moral relativism would therefore appear to be predominant in Europe.

In general it would seem that a more permissive climate is developing in Europe. Whereas in 1981 abortion, divorce, and euthanasia were commonly accepted only in the Netherlands and Denmark, in 1999 acceptance is widespread among broad swathes of the European population. However, when it comes to behavior such as joyriding, tax evasion, bribery, and benefit abuse, people are much less forgiving. Acceptance of such behavior is significantly lower than acceptance of certain actions in the sexual and bioethical sphere. Virtually all people condemn joyriding and many are highly critical of bribery. ♦

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from "The European Values Study: Selected Results," http://www.romir.ru/eng/research/01_2001/European-values.htm.

Loek Halman is associate professor of sociology at Tilburg University, Tilburg, the Netherlands, and secretary to the steering committee of the European Values Study.

Jan Kerkhofs, Society of Jesus, is emeritus professor, Catholic University of Louvain, Louvain, Belgium, and one of the originators of the European Values Study.

What Is Ethical/Unethical?

Percentage of Respondents Who Believe a Certain Behavior "Can Never Be Justified"

	Russia*	East Germany	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovakia	Poland	Bulgaria	Western Europe**	U.S.
1. Buying something stolen	90	97	88	79	75	95	90	97	92
2. Threatening workers who refuse to strike	91	89	84	81	70	81	84	90	87
3. Political assassination	93	96	90	80	87	84	87	91	86
4. Throwing away litter	91	87	87	77	76	93	91	88	90
5. Accepting a bribe	70	86	82	77	76	92	93	90	93
6. Joyriding	95	98	83	83	78	97	96	96	96
7. Driving under the influence of alcohol	87	97	93	84	88	95	95	94	94
8. Taking marijuana	93	98	96	84	64	96	96	97	85
9. Claiming state benefits illegally	95	92	73	76	64	83	89	83	86
10. Avoiding a fare in public transport	20	93	81	67	68	87	81	80	81
11. Fighting with the police	43	80	68	70	57	61	76	78	73
12. Prostitution	60	68	73	76	77	90	82	68	75
13. Suicide	67	72	67	75	73	81	80	69	79
14. Keeping money you have found	59	71	73	55	64	75	88	66	53
15. Lying in your own interest	46	70	67	56	65	79	88	69	78
16. Cheating on taxes	67	88	88	70	82	74	78	90	86
17. Adultery	90	86	92	82	74	88	69	73	79
18. Divorce	6	28	21	35	30	43	44	26	29
19. Killing in self-defense	5	43	22	40	25	24	35	32	21
20. Abortion	11	35	24	33	35	62	36	42	48
21. Euthanasia	34	54	50	47	59	81	62	47	45
22. Homosexuality	68	56	55	77	64	85	88	52	64

*Based on a 1994 urban survey conducted by the Department of Social Dynamics of the Institute of Socio-Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

**Averages for West European states of Norway, Sweden, West Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Northern Ireland, Ireland, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands taken from 1990 European Values Study data.

Source: Peter Ester, Loek Halman, and Vladimir O. Rukavishnikov, *From Cold War to Cold Peace?: A Comparative Empirical Study of Russian and Western Political Cultures* (Tilburg, the Netherlands: Tilburg University Press, 1997), 204-05.

The Extent of Religious Belief and Practice in Russia

Elena I. Bashkirova

Data gathered in 1995-99 as part of the World Values Survey used samples representative of Russia's urban and rural working-age population identified by gender, age, and social and occupational affiliation. According to our study, the Russian population is evenly split in regard to religion: 50.5 percent of respondents consider themselves believers and 49.5 percent classify themselves as nonbelievers. Among believers, 91.1 percent were Orthodox, 5.8 percent Muslim, 0.6 percent Protestant, 0.5 percent Catholic, 0.2 percent Buddhist, 0.1 percent Jewish, and about 1 percent adherents of other religions.

The surge of interest in religion in post-Communist Russia was partly a reaction to the former tacit ban on everything associated with church life. We could say that "religion has become fashionable" as the old value system has broken down. But fashions cannot last and the past three

years have even brought a perceptible decline in religious interest. Very few people regularly attend religious services, even among those who consider themselves believers. Only 3.2 percent of respondents attended religious services every week, 5.9 percent every month, 15.2 percent on religious holidays, 7.2 percent only at Christmas and Easter, and 9.7 percent once a year. More than half the respondents had never or hardly ever (except for weddings, funerals, and christenings) attended a church ceremony, and no more than one-quarter indicated they believed in Paradise, Hell, life after death, or the transmigration of souls. ♦

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Elena I. Bashkirova, "Transformation of the Values of Russian Society," *Russian Social Science Review* 44 (January-February 2003): 4-22.

Elena I. Bashkirova is a sociologist with the Russian Public Opinion and Market Research Institute, Moscow, Russia, and a member of the steering committee of the World Values Study.

Is European Secularism the Exception to the Rule?

Jerry G. Pankhurst

The European Values Study (EVS) and the World Values Study (WVS), through repeated rounds of polling, have demonstrated significant differences (and some similarities, to be sure) between the American "open market" pattern of religion and the traditional "religious monopolies" pattern of most of Europe. "American exceptionalism," that is, the apparent religious vigor and diversity of the United States as compared to Europe, expresses itself in higher rates of belief in God, prayer, and church attendance.

Given the dramatic transformation of the Soviet Union into 15 separate states and the overthrow of every Communist regime in East Central Europe in the last years of the 20th century, many of us expected, or at least hoped, that the 21st century would witness the development of new, energized markets for religion across the region, like the pattern in the United States. However, EVS, WVS, and similar survey projects demonstrate that the societies of this region resemble more the West European secular model. As explanation, it has been argued that, historically, established churches have denied individuals the freedom of religious searching and religious entrepreneurship. This argument, growing in prominence in the sociology of religion on both sides of the Atlantic, suggests that we need to take a longer-term view of developments than Halman and Kerkhofs do when they state that:

In recent history, individualization and secularization have changed society dramatically, undermining traditional authoritarian religious power in favor of personal autonomy and individual freedom. In terms of religious faith,

this is reflected in the gradual decline in church attendance and traditional beliefs, such as belief in a personal God.

In fact, church attendance and indicators of traditional beliefs have been stronger for some time in the individualistic American open market than in countries such as Britain, France, or Sweden. While Poland and Ireland tell us there are other factors at work (perhaps, for example, Catholic Church participation in defensive nationalism), still, the overall pattern is that secularized Europe is the exception and the more vigorous American model may be more typical of much of the rest of the world. Grace Davie recently made this argument in *Europe, the Exceptional Case: Parameters of Faith in the Modern World* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 2002).

Here is where our concern for the post-Communist experience of East Central Europe and Eurasia confronts historical reality: namely, this region of the world is, indeed, dominated by secular, old-establishment patterns of indifference and low religious activity. Communism, no doubt, amplified these patterns, but they began to surface well before the Communist era. In religious terms, the essential division between East and West is not along the old European capitalist-Communist divide, but rather a line drawn down through the Atlantic. Not old secular ideologies, but religions with monopoly tendencies may be the greatest enemies of individual faith and freedom of conscience in the modern world. ♦

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Not old secular ideologies, but religions with monopoly tendencies may be the greatest enemies of individual faith and freedom of conscience in the modern world.

Russian-German Mission Work in the East

John N. Klassen

Russian-German Baptist and Mennonite migrant churches in Germany have an active ministry in Russia and neighboring states, lands they called home for several centuries. But before detailing that story, some historical background is in order.

Identifying the People of the Story

Russian-German *Aussiedler* (resettlers) living in the West are descendants of German farmers who immigrated to Russia in the eighteenth century upon invitation of Catherine II. Beginning in 1763 some 30,000, mostly Hessians, settled along the Volga River. The first Mennonites moved eastward 25 years later. During a period of 75 years some 10,000

Mennonites established four colonies with some 90 villages, most on or in the vicinity of the Dnieper River in present-day Ukraine. From 1803 to 1845 the largest group, about 60,000, mostly Swabians, settled on the western and northern shores of the Black Sea despite severe difficulties.¹

Economic and political conditions in Germany were difficult. Young families needed land, while many craftsmen lacked work.² The young Tsarina Catherine promised not only land and work in Russia's newly conquered territories in Ukraine, but religious freedom. In addition, some German migrants were inspired by apocalyptic visions of Christ's imminent second coming in the East.³

New German settlers in Russia were about 55 percent Lutherans (known as *Evangelisch*, which is a German synonym for "Protestant," rather than "Evangelical" in the Western theological sense), 35 percent Roman Catholic, and 10 percent Mennonite. Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century many German settlers in Russia experienced a pietistic spiritual awakening and church renewal.⁴ In the wake of this revival new church groups came into being: Evangelical Lutheran Brethren,⁵ Mennonite Brethren,⁶ and German-speaking Baptist churches in Russia and Ukraine.

Tsarist Russification and Immigration

Much earlier, German professionals and artisans had settled in Russia before the settlers came to cultivate land in what is now Ukraine. They typically lived in cities and for the most part assimilated into Slavic culture.⁷ But the German farming population that immigrated to Russia has a different history. Although given citizenship in their new homeland, they, by law and preference, built colonies that were segregated from the surrounding Slavic population. And the religious freedom they enjoyed did not extend to converting their Orthodox neighbors to Protestantism. When in the 1870s Russia began the russification of its German colonists and forced military conscription of the largely pacifist population, Germans began a large-scale immigration to North and South America.⁸

Post-World War II Immigration

The more recent post-World War II western resettlement began as a program to reunite families separated by the massive upheavals connected with fighting on the Eastern front, 1941-45.⁹ Some family members lived in the USSR and others in Germany. Initially the former Soviet Union tried by every imaginable method to hinder Soviet-Germans leaving its territory.¹⁰ However, Moscow's political liberalizations under Mikhail Gorbachev (1985-91) set in motion a large-scale immigration of ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union to Germany that by 2002 numbered over two million. They included approximately one million Lutherans, 500,000 Roman Catholics, 280,000 Baptists and Mennonites or their descendants, and 220,000 who belonged to other churches or no church. Moscow permitted the first handful of Russian German Baptists and Mennonites to depart the Soviet Union for Germany in 1963, but no appreciable number left until after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985.

Although no official statistics exist for the number of Protestant, free church families entering Germany, a reasonable estimate would be that from 1963 to 2001 the total is approximately 280,000.¹¹ Factoring in births, deaths, and immigration out of Germany, the post-World War II *Aussiedler* population in Germany today, including descendants, is approximately 335,000. Of this total, about 81,000 are adult members of Baptist and Mennonite

churches who migrated to Germany. The rest are minors or adults who are affiliated with, but are not members of, the above denominations.

German Resettlement

Upon arriving in Germany, these free church immigrants joined established German Baptist and Mennonite congregations. But culturally the *Aussiedler* came to realize they were strangers in their own homeland.¹² Initially—and even today—many resist change, in particular as regards religious customs. As a result, *Aussiedler* have established new congregations in order to practice their faith according to familiar traditions. Only about 11,000 *Aussiedler* joined existing German churches. Most, instead, established their own churches, called prayer houses, approximately 400 to date.¹³ New *Aussiedler* churches have been growing at an above-average rate of three to five percent annually. As of 2002, of the approximately 70,000 members in *Aussiedler* congregations, about 32,700 had joined through baptism, while the remainder were new immigrants.¹⁴ Thus the number of *Aussiedler* believers in their own and in traditional German churches totals approximately 81,000.

Resettlers, Evangelism, and Missions

Contrary to popular opinion, Russian German Christians entered their old/new homeland with a concern for evangelism and mission. And their understanding of the mission of the New Testament Church has been growing. Basically it begins in the home, continues in Sunday school, and leads from evangelism in church services to public meetings. To illustrate this active commitment to evangelism, between 1970 and 2001 approximately one third of baptisms (10,500 out of 31,500) were young people and adults from non-believing families.¹⁵

Aussiedler Christians and their congregations evidence a growing concern for mission work, both in former East Germany and outside Germany. To date this concern has found expression primarily in short-term endeavors. But more and more *Aussiedler* believers are moving to other countries and are working cross-culturally. With their home church or a mission society serving as the sending agency, most combine evangelism with social and material help. The amount of food, clothing, literature, etc. *Aussiedler* Christians are donating for mission work, primarily in the former Soviet Union, is probably unparalleled in history.¹⁶ ♦

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(continued on page 12)

Contrary to popular opinion, Russian German Christians entered their old/new homeland with a concern for evangelism and mission.

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Selected Russian-German Mission Efforts in the East*

AGENCY/CHURCH	EVANGELISTS/ MISSIONARIES	EFFORTS IN FORMER EAST GERMANY	EFFORTS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION (BY PERCENTAGE)	ASSISTANCE TO DATE
Hilfswerk Aquila Liebigstrasse 8 D-33803 Steinhagen, Germany Tel: 05204-88803	3		Kazakhstan 85 Moldova 10 Russia 5	Literature 55 tons Clothing 550 tons Food 55 tons Medical 11 tons Building Materials 90 tons Vehicles (in 5 years) 23 tons
Bibel Mission Pfarrer-Henning-Strasse 4 D-63868 Grosswallstadt, Germany Tel: 06022-25271	5		Kazakhstan Moldova Russia Ukraine Belarus	Clothing 25 percent Food 25 percent Literature 25 percent Other Help 25 percent Total: 3.8 million Euro in money and in kind
Missionswerk Friedensbote Vollmestrasse 51 D-58540 Meinerzhagen, Germany Tel: 02354-77780	7	20 percent	80 percent FSU breakdown: Estonia 5 percent Georgia 15 percent Yakutia 15 percent Kazakhstan 5 percent Kyrgyzia 15 percent Russia 15 percent Ukraine 30 percent	Clothing 25 percent Food 5 percent Church Building 30 percent Church Planting 30 percent Literature 10 percent Total: 1.5 million Euro in money and in kind
Logos International Ehlenbrucher Strasse 96 D-32791 Lage, Germany Tel: 05232-96010	3	25 percent	75 percent FSU breakdown: Belarus 12.5 percent Kyrgyzia 25 percent Russia 50 percent Ukraine 12.5 percent	Belarus 10 tons (4,000 Euro) Kyrgyzia 40 tons (50,000 Euro) Russia 40 tons (50,000 Euro) Ukraine 10 tons (4,000 Euro) Total: 100 tons (108,000 Euro)
Neuwied Mennonite Brethren Church Pablo-Picasso Strasse 5 D-56566 Neuwied-Gladbach, Germany Fax: 02631-947248	3 couples with families**	75 percent	25 percent Pervomysk Schutschinsk Vosneshensk	Church Building Money and Manual Help Church Purchase Humanitarian Aid

*The author queried five mission agencies and one church that are involved in ministry in the East. The table is based on the responses of four agencies and one church in fall 2003. Four additional mission agencies deliver approximately the same average volume of assistance as the groups listed. Also, approximately 23 individual churches are as active and generous as the Neuwied congregation. Churches tend to work more in former East Germany than in the former Soviet Union.

**Also, one missionary family serves in New Guinea.

Moldovan Evangelicals: Struggling to Overcome a Fortress Mentality and Emigration

Oleg Turlac

I serve in the context of Evangelical churches in Moldova in the former Soviet Union. One of the problems I encountered early in my ministry involved church members misunderstanding the relationship between the form and content of gospel proclamation. For the many years of Soviet domination, an atheistic government persecuted believers and prohibited almost all church activities. With the exception of worship, strictly controlled by the KGB (Committee of State Security), registered churches were not allowed to have Bible study, youth, or prayer groups.

Changes at a Furious Speed

Then, at the end of the 1980s with Gorbachev in power and perestroika underway, the church received significant freedoms that expanded dramatically after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991. These new opportunities excited Evangelicals, but they also posed problems for communities that found themselves totally unprepared to exercise new liberties. Would they be willing to change? Would Christians be able to use new strategies and methods in ministry? In a recent article on Ukrainian Evangelicals since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Mennonite Central Committee volunteer Mary Raber writes, "Where else in the world have changes in worship, education, and opportunities for ministry taken place with such furious speed? Where else have Evangelical believers been called from relative isolation to creative engagement with a society that used to actively persecute them?"¹

A Church Not Ready to Reach Out

State prohibitions established in the 1960s became so ingrained in most congregations that they had come to consider some of them as divine commandments. Churches lost track of what the state prohibited versus what the Bible prohibited. Yet reaching young people for Christ demands new methods. When I returned to Moldova in 2000 after graduating from Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, I served as youth minister at Bethel Evangelical Christian-Baptist Church in Kishinev, Moldova. From the very beginning I realized that if our youth ministry were to grow, we had to employ new approaches to reaching lost teenagers and young adults. The church had to stop being just a club for formerly persecuted Christians. But many Christians refused to change, saying, "If people want salvation, they will come to the church even without invitations." That was true at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, but since 1995 many people have lost interest in Christianity. The church, however, was not ready to reach out. In 2002 Bethel Church did not have a single evangelistic event that targeted the lost and unchurched.

New Approaches

In ministering to young people I decided to employ different forms of proclamation of the biblical message in addition to preaching: praise and worship songs and drama. I decided to use these forms, especially drama and the visual arts, because they appeal to teenagers. They also seemed to attract non-Christians who attend our Wednesday night youth worship services. Because, for a long time, the sermon was the only form of gospel proclamation in the Soviet Union, the church where I serve is still quite hesitant to accept any other forms of outreach. Some people think that staging dramas based upon biblical stories is a disgrace to the house of the Lord.

The problem also involves an understanding of the church building as a place where God lives and is constantly present, similar to an Old Testament understanding of the Jerusalem Temple. Believers are hesitant to allow drama or any other church activities other than worship in the sanctuary.

In the last three years, through use of new forms of gospel proclamation, I have seen more than 30 young people surrender their lives to the Lord and become actively involved in youth ministry. Drama and contemporary worship music have attracted many young people from the neighboring high school, such that we often have eight to ten visitors every Wednesday night. Some now attend regularly and have joined the church.

Resistance to Change

My most difficult task is explaining to the congregation and its pastors that this change in form does not imply a change in the essence of the gospel message. On the one hand, people would like to keep all the good traditions that preserved the church through the crucible of persecution. On the other hand, I see a need for Bethel Church to become more involved in reaching out to people in the neighborhood. Part of the difficulty stems from the reluctance of the senior ministers to enter any kind of dialogue on this subject. Because of this attitude the church misses many opportunities to witness in the neighborhood and in the city. As Sergei Sannikov points out, "The contemporary church finds itself in new circumstances. Although it is obvious to all, many do not understand that we need to change forms and methods of ministry without changing underlining principles and foundations."²

How can a church preserve its identity, yet reach the world that surrounds it? How can it be separated from the world, yet not be closed to the world? A lot of parents in our church are concerned that visitors to our youth worship services will influence their children in a negative way. At the same time, many older believers who hold to a persecution mentality do not want the church to expand its ministry to the lost.

(continued on page 14)

Drama and contemporary worship music have attracted many young people from the neighboring high school, such that we often have eight to ten visitors every Wednesday night.

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Moldovan Evangelicals

(continued from page 13)

How can this issue be addressed when the church leadership shows little concern for young people? Very little help comes from the church, yet it expects the youth ministry to grow and prosper.

Migration to the West

The identity of the church has changed over the last ten years. Due to Moldova's poor economy, in the last decade more than a thousand Bethel church members, including five pastors, have emigrated. Consequently, even though many new believers have joined the church, still membership is decreasing at an alarming rate. This is an issue that has touched hundreds of Evangelical churches in every republic of the former Soviet Union.³ As Alexander Valuiskey notes, "Now that emigration has become a chain reaction, perhaps the majority of Evangelicals of the older generation will leave Russia. Our hope is in new churches with members from many families who lack the opportunity to emigrate."⁴

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Book Review

Aagaard, Anna Marie, and Peter Bouteneff. *Beyond the East-West Divide: The World Council of Churches and "the Orthodox Problem."* Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001.

Reviewed by Don Fairbairn

Since its inception in 1948, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has struggled—and failed—to live up to its name. The Council is not representative of all branches of Christendom: neither the Roman Catholic Church nor most Evangelical denominations are members. Since 1998 an additional crisis has emerged, as the Bulgarian and Georgian Orthodox Churches have left the WCC and other Orthodox groups have threatened to do so. This book, written collaboratively by American Orthodox theologian Peter Bouteneff and Danish Lutheran theologian Anna Marie Aagaard, lays out the major reasons for Eastern Orthodox ambivalence toward the WCC and a possible avenue for further collaboration between the two.

Bouteneff explains that the Orthodox understanding of the Church makes participation in the WCC tenuous at best. The Orthodox communion sees itself as the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, from which all other churches are separated to a greater or lesser degree. As a result, the Orthodox demand that any true unity between the scattered churches involve the sharing of the Orthodox faith (with the Nicene Creed at the center of that faith) and the sharing of a common order (the apostolic succession of bishops stretching from the apostles to the present). Bouteneff argues that from an Orthodox point of view, churches cannot

Ways to Welcome Youth

I have tried to communicate to the church and its leadership that unity does not mean uniformity, the latter being a concept that the Communist regime planted in the hearts and minds of the people. Unfortunately, insistence upon uniformity still is ingrained in the consciousness of many churches in the former USSR. By way of contrast, in the post-Soviet era I believe there should be a place for generational diversity within the church.

Young people choose to go to churches that are welcoming and that are open to new forms of worship. If we see our youth as the future of the church, they should be encouraged rather than discouraged. If the church does not support a vibrant youth program, the congregation will be dead in two decades, especially with the increasing immigration rate. Youth ministry and evangelism should be established as priorities in the life of the church. If not, we risk losing our young people who will go to other churches and will find something else to do with their time and resources. Christians are Christ's disciples who are to go into the world to preach the gospel (Matthew 28:16-20), instead of remaining a closed community in which there is no place for newcomers. ♦

worship together until they have this common faith and common order.

Aagaard argues that in spite of different Orthodox and Protestant understandings of the Church, they do have a common worship that can be the basis (or at least the starting point) for real unity. This common order, she argues, arises out of the worship of the early Church, based on the pairing of Word and sacrament, preaching and Eucharist. This twofold pattern of worship, so obvious in Orthodox and Roman Catholic circles and also present in many Protestant traditions, is the basis for Aagaard's assertion that we have a united Christian worship.

What is not reflected in this book, of course, is an Evangelical Protestant perspective. I would like to comment briefly on two ways in which such a perspective might contribute to Bouteneff and Aagaard's discussion. First, Evangelicals agree with Bouteneff that there can be no true unity if there is not a common faith. Yet many WCC churches do not affirm the Trinity or the personal deity of Christ in the way that both Orthodox and Evangelicals understand these central truths. At the same time, Evangelicals will be quick to point out that the Nicene Creed, affirming the Trinity and Christ's divinity, is an occasional document, written to deal with particular heresies, not intended as a comprehensive statement of faith. Evangelicals affirm crucial aspects of the faith about which the Nicene Creed is silent (God's free acceptance of sinners at the beginning of faith is one that comes readily to mind), and insist that true unity among churches would require agreement on these aspects of faith as well.

Many WCC churches do not affirm the Trinity or the personal deity of Christ in the way that both Orthodox and Evangelicals understand these central truths.

Second, from an Evangelical perspective, both Bouteneff and Aagaard concern themselves with matters of structure, as if structure were the path to unity. Bouteneff insists on a unified church order (an apostolic succession of bishops). But if such a structure is so essential to the nature of the Church, why is the New Testament virtually silent about it? The pastoral epistles, of course, show enormous concern for the character of church leaders, but comparatively little concern for their functions and interrelationships. Aagaard insists that a common order or structure of worship (Word and sacrament) is crucial to unity. What she writes here serves as an important reminder to those Evangelicals who have forgotten the importance of sign or sacrament. But surely such structure will not provide a basis for true unity. If all churches were to have a common governmental system and a common order of worship, that would constitute only the superficial appearance of unity. Structure cannot bring about unity when there is no common content of faith.

Evangelicals believe that at the center of any real unity lies doctrine, not structure or worship, as important as they are. Worship is the central activity of the Church, but a unity of worship can be achieved only when we are clear and united about who is the God we worship, about what He has done for our salvation, about what He is doing in us, among us, and through us. A genuine search for unity among the churches must be concerned not primarily with ecclesiology or structure, but with theology proper, christology, pneumatology, soteriology. Such a search must look at the varied language we use in different churches and seek to discover whether we actually do believe the same thing about God, humanity, and salvation. Only in this way can we grasp the degree to which we are united or divided. Real unity is not something that human beings can forge; it (or its absence) is something we can only discover. ♦

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A genuine search for unity among the churches must be concerned not primarily with ecclesiology or structure, but with theology.

The Lord's Prayer Across Cultures

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almost 45 years...we have been told there is no God...[but] I want to speak to you in the name of this God." For several minutes thousands upon thousands in the square below chanted, "There is a God. There is a God." Then Degulescu led the citizens of Timisoara in the Lord's Prayer. No one had told people to kneel, but all did. That Christmas Eve the people prayed, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And the next day, Christmas, Ceausescu's hated regime collapsed and one of the twentieth century's most evil rulers paid with his life for his crimes. Romanian Emil Bartos remembers more than once in those heady days mass recitations of the "Our Father." "It is interesting," he notes, "that the entire country knew how to pray the Lord's Prayer, although [Romania] was called an atheist country." Karl Barth once said, "To fold one's hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world."

A Call to Family and Community

This powerful prayer is not only a call to faith and a call to justice, it's also a call to family and community: the first two words, "Our Father," say so much. When I asked my friends worldwide if they could share any especially meaningful times of worship involving the Lord's Prayer, Bill Vermillion, missionary and acting dean of the Moscow Evangelical Theological Seminary in Moscow, wrote back, "Yes. At chapel one of the students used this as the text for his message. Then at the conclusion of his sermon, we prayed line by line. Several students had tears in their eyes as they reaffirmed the Father's care. This was especially meaningful since two-thirds of our students have no father figure and one-third never knew their father." But in the Lord's Prayer we not only have sonship, we have brotherhood. As early as the third century,

Cyprian made the same argument from North Africa before his martyrdom: "The Teacher of peace and Master of unity would not have man pray singly." We don't pray "my father;" we pray "Our Father." We don't pray: "Give me my daily bread;" we pray "Give us our daily bread." We don't pray "Forgive me my sins;" we pray "Forgive us our sins." We don't pray "Lead me not into temptation" and "deliver me from evil;" we pray "Lead us not into temptation" and "deliver us from evil." We are such slow learners. I guess that's why we are bombarded with so many plural pronouns—to make sure we get it, that the Lord's Prayer is a call to community and family.

Self Absorption, the Mother of All Sins

Not long ago missionary Mary Raber discovered a devotional gold mine in a bookshop in Lviv, Ukraine: *Molitva Gospodnya [The Lord's Prayer]*, published in 1996 but written many years before by Metropolitan Veniamin of Pskov. "Until recently this study was just a typewritten manuscript in a monk's cell." But now Mary Raber shares this treasure with us. Metropolitan Veniamin wounds our egos as, like Cyprian, he probes the difference between *me* and *us*. He writes, "We must remember that God does not love me alone: He is not only my Father, but Father of us all We modern people have become so egotistical, so in love with ourselves that we don't even think about praying for everyone. Each one lives by himself and for himself. This self-absorption is the greatest evil in the world. Everything comes from that. By that sin the first angel fell. It is the mother of all other sins. But that's not the way it was. And it's not the way it should be, or the way it will be in the Kingdom of God."

May the Lord forgive us for those many times when our prayers on our knees have not been our prayers on our feet. ♦

Bread is needful, but so is gratitude for bread.

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

The Lord's Prayer Across Cultures: Ever Comforting, Ever Convicting

Mark R. Elliott

Editor's Note: The first half of this article was published in the previous issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report 12 (Winter 2004), 9-10.

I met economist Alexander Zaichenko in 1990. Working with him on various projects, I have developed a deep respect for this dear brother in Christ. Alexander has shared with me the extraordinary role the Lord's Prayer played in his own path to faith. In Soviet times, he explains,

We had no chance to read the Bible. It was forbidden not only to read it, but even to search for it. I remember when I was a student I bought a rather rare collection of short stories by Tolstoy [see "The Wood Cutter"]. While reading it I unexpectedly came across a very strange combination of words and phrases. They were not only strange, but filled with vigorous power. And I decided to learn them by heart. And for many years I repeated them in the hard moments of my life. Only after 20 years did I manage to get a Bible, which was smuggled from the West by a friend. In the very next day of reading this strange book I again came across these wonderful verses. And I immediately recognized them as my "old friends," because I had learned them by heart many years before. It was the Lord's Prayer. Thanks to this, I remained with the Bible and met Christ as Lord and Savior. Later I realized that by some heavenly reason Communist censors didn't wipe this [prayer] from Tolstoy's book.

Daily Bread

Over and over, Jesus' model prayer has proven to be a lifeline in the face of the extremities of life and death. Alexander Zaichenko puts it even more pragmatically: "I don't know how it is in the West, but here in Russia the Lord's Prayer is the most popular 'emergency prayer.'" Asking the Lord for daily bread is rarely an emergency prayer for believers in the West, but it is for many worldwide. This fourth petition, writes a missionary to Ukraine,

"takes on a whole new meaning when you finally leave the U.S. and have to depend on supporters to send money so that you can live." In the same vein, a Russian seminary professor shares, "We do not receive our salary precisely on payment day, let alone workers of state factories, therefore we pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.'"

Nazarene missionary to Russia Carla Sunberg shares that there have been times in recent years when "our elderly people only had tea and bread for many days. I think the entire concept of daily bread," she continues, "makes much more sense in this part of the world. Good bread is made without preservatives. It doesn't last long so we need it daily. Just as the manna in the wilderness could not be collected and stored up, our bread over here also cannot be stored up. We need it—every day—and we must go to our Father every day."

Carla Sunberg is exploring a theme that others have recognized as well, that the word "daily" can serve as a warning against amassing wealth and stockpiling material possessions. In the fourth century, St. Basil the Great explained his understanding of "daily" this way: "The bread that is spoiling in your house belongs to the hungry. The shoes that are mildewing under your bed belong to those who have none. The clothes stored away in your trunk belong to those who are naked."

Czech theologian Jan Lochman notes that in his native tongue one traditional term for "bread" also means "prayer before meals": *bozi dar*, "God's gift." Lochman's point is that daily bread and gratitude to God should never be separated. Bread is needful, but so is gratitude for bread. Lochman says, "lack of gratitude" for daily bread helps explain our modern "madness of consumption and waste." Vladimir Dudintsev was able to assert publicly in 1956, in a momentary thaw in the Soviet cultural deep freeze, that man is more than a material being. The title for his novel, taken from Matthew 4:4, is stunning, given the dominance of Soviet atheism at the time: *Not by Bread Alone*.

The Lord's Prayer with Feet

The modern rap on the Lord's Prayer, indeed on prayer in general, is that it's passive. It can be, but it need not be. What we can say with confidence is that the Lord's Prayer can have feet. In 1989-91, we witnessed the televised spectacle of the collapse of Communism—from Prague to Warsaw to Bucharest to Moscow to Alma Aty. What stunning times those were, and not least for the role played by the Lord's Prayer in public protest. In Prague hundreds of thousands knelt in Wenceslas Square and prayed the Lord's Prayer in unison. Within days a Communist regime fell.

Thy Kingdom Come

And on Christmas Eve, 1989, in Timisoara, Romania, Baptist Pastor Peter Degulescu spoke to some 200,000 of his countrymen from the city's opera house balcony. This was the same vantage point Communist dictator Nicolai Ceausescu had used to address crowds on annual visits to the city. But on this occasion the story was radically different. Pastor Degulescu, who had been summoned by the crowd, declared, "For

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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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ISSN 1069-5664