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The Charismatic Movement in Russia

Roman Lunkin

The Charismatic churches that appeared in Russia in the early-to-mid 1990s are a new phenomenon in religious life in post-Soviet society. They differ from Pentecostal congregations founded in the Soviet era in their unique youth culture, their eagerness to organize and apply new methods of missionary and social ministry, and their willingness to speak out on social and political issues. Because of the missionary activity of Charismatics, Pentecostal/Charismatic denominations are now collectively the largest and most actively growing Protestant movement in Russia.

Unregistered Pentecostal Roots

Russian Charismatic ideology emerged from conservative Pentecostalism. Many Charismatic bishops came from unregistered brotherhoods that were the most consistent fighters against the restrictions of Soviet legislation on religion. In addition to unregistered Pentecostals, the followers of Bishop Ivan Fedotov of the United Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith (CEF) became intransigent enemies of Soviet authorities, even to the point of refusing government registration. At the same time, a younger generation of Fedotov's followers (future Charismatics) enthusiastically engaged in missionary outreach in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A majority of preachers and bishops of new Charismatic churches founded in the 1990s were sons of pastors who had served in unregistered Pentecostal churches.

Many underground Charismatic churches and groups came into existence in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the era of Brezhnev "stagnation." One Moscow church that belonged to Fedotov's Union was led by Vladimir Govorushko, a native of western Belarus. The free style of Govorushko's preaching suggests that he was in fact leading a Charismatic congregation, according to Pavel Savelyev, a former member of the church who now serves as director of the Association CEF "Charisma." In the 1980s Western mission organizations working in western Ukraine and Belarus furthered the Charismatic movement, both in those regions and through their support for literature and missionaries from these regions to Russia. Also, the U.S. Assemblies of God conducted evangelistic work in western regions, and the Association of God's Congregations published Pentecostal literature in the Russian and Ukrainian languages (V. I. Leshan, *Liki khristianskogo sektanstva* [*Faces of Christian Sectarianism*], Kyiv, 1988, p. 75). Pentecostal services with a free Charismatic style of worship first rose to prominence in the 1970s in the Baltic republics of the Soviet Union. In the early 1970s Charismatic worship services took place in the historic Oleviste Church in Tallinn, Estonia. This medieval cathedral which served in turn Catholic, Lutheran, then Baptist believers, attracted Charismatic worshipers from all over Russia. However, in 1979 authorities banned Charismatic services in the Oleviste Church.

At the end of the 1970s the most prominent Charismatic churches in the Soviet Union were in Tallinn, Estonia; Riga, Latvia; Rovno, Ukraine; and Gatchina, just outside Leningrad. In the 1980s Pentecostals under the leadership of Bishop Fedotov sympathized with emerging Charismatics because both groups were uncompromising in their refusal to accept state registration and because Fedotov's followers welcomed Charismatic revivals, gifts, and revelations.

Pentecostal-Charismatic Differences

After the fall of the Soviet Union, when churches were free to preach as they liked and were free to conduct social work, traditional conservative Pentecostals and Charismatics parted company. Still, both groups held to basic Protestant doctrines, along with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. In Russia today three Pentecostal/Charismatic streams may be identified: traditional Pentecostals, who emerged in the Soviet period and who observe a strict code of conduct; conservative Pentecostals, who are less strict and who accept more emotional forms of worship; and Charismatics, who accept new revelations from church leaders and who have adopted decidedly emotional forms of worship.

While both Pentecostals and Charismatics practice the gifts of healing, prophecy, and revelation, their presence in worship differs. For example, unlike traditional and conservative Pentecostals, Charismatics may claim healing for an entire stadium audience, with many seeking healing coming on stage.

(continued on page 2)

The Charismatic Movement in Russia
(continued from page 1)

Charismatics also seek an outpouring of the gifts of prophecy and healing at every service. In addition, Charismatics, unlike Pentecostals, typically embrace a more emotional, hard-edged style of preaching with full acceptance of a wide range of dramatic responses, including crying, laughing, and shouting. By contrast, traditional and conservative Pentecostal worship is more subdued.

Western Influences

In the 1990s the writings of Pentecostals Catherine Cullman, Kenneth Hagin, and Rick Joiner circulated widely, while Charismatic evangelists Ulf Ekman from Sweden and Benny Hinn from the U.S. preached to large audiences in Russia. Under the influence of Western Pentecostalism, a substantial portion of Russian Charismatics came under the influence of "prosperity" theology. While all Pentecostals teach that baptism in the Holy Spirit brings blessings, the prosperity preached by many Western Charismatic evangelists and accepted by new Russian Charismatics holds that new believers can expect that "the Lord will set you free from illnesses, provide money, and solve all personal problems." In the 1990s a desire for fast results and maximum growth characterized Charismatic mass evangelism in open-air meetings, cultural centers, and stadiums. The eagerness to create an all-Russian network of Charismatic congregations as soon as possible sometimes led to oversimplification of Pentecostal and Charismatic teachings. The emphasis was on planting as many new churches as rapidly as possible. Many Western missionaries employed Russian and Ukrainian assistants who were recent students of American and Scandinavian Bible schools. Frequently, foreign Pentecostals and Charismatics paid the salaries of new converts to conduct missionary and pastoral work. However, financial aid did not always necessarily lead to the establishment of strong churches.

Bob Veiner, a native of Odessa, Ukraine, a naturalized American citizen, and director of Maranatha College, Watertown, Wisconsin, first visited Russia in 1987. Pavel Savelyev, pastor of Moscow's "Dew" Charismatic Church, relates that in his first meeting with Veiner, "He opened a map of Russia, circled all these cities in Russia with a marker, and said that we would go everywhere." From 1991 to 1993 Veiner conducted revival conferences for believers from all over Russia. At the same time, he actively participated in the establishment of "New Generation" Charismatic churches. Alexei Ledyayev, pastor of a large and wealthy "New Generation" church in Riga, Latvia, whose books were a standard resource for many Russian Charismatic pastors, became the leader of the "New Generation" movement.

Because of the missionary activity of Charismatics, Pentecostal/ Charismatic denominations are now collectively the largest and most actively growing Protestant movement in Russia.

A Proliferation of Charismatic Associations

The three major proponents of Charismatic prosperity theology in the former Soviet Union are the New Generation Church movement, the Word of Life church movement affiliated with Swedish evangelist Ulf Ekman, and the Embassy of God Church in Kyiv, Ukraine, headed by Nigerian-born Sunday Adelaja. Other associations of Russian Charismatic churches that emerged in the 1990s includes the Golgotha (Golgofa) Church movement, launched by U.S. Calvary International; the Chasovnya na Golgofe Church movement, initiated by U.S.-based Calvary Chapel; the Global Strategy Association which began with three Charismatic church plants of Western missionaries in Ivanovo, Kostroma, and Nizhnii Novgorod; the Church of Faith Association, which includes Word of Life churches overseen by missionary Ishoel Maats-Ula, a follower of Ulf Ekman; the Good News Church movement led by Rick Reiner; and Vineyard Churches. All of these movements are members of the umbrella Russian Association of Christians of Evangelical Faith led by Sergei Ryakhovsky.

Charismatic Ascendance

By the end of the 1990s Charismatic-style worship and "health and wealth" theology predominated over more traditional Pentecostalism in Russia. In particular, the promise of a variety of "gifts" appealed to worshippers who were for the most part living in poverty. In 1999, in the moderately conservative Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith-Pentecostals (UCEFP), a group of senior presbyters opposed pastors of large Charismatic churches for leadership posts in the UCEFP. In response, the Union leadership formed a reconciliation commission and stated publicly its opposition to such Charismatic innovations as female leadership and pronounced emotionalism in worship, including "holy laughter," "holy anger," and worshippers being "slain in the spirit" (collapsing on the floor).

Overcoming the 1997 Law on Religion

Charismatic membership in the UCEFP came about as a consequence of a loophole in the severely restrictive 1997 Law on Religion whereby membership in a centralized religious structure offered independent Charismatic congregations the opportunity to be legally registered, to hold worship in rented facilities, and to invite Western missionaries to speak. According to the 1997 law, a congregation could secure legal status only if it had existed for 15 years or if it belonged to a centralized association of churches.

The Russian United Association CEF (RUACEF), founded in 1998 in the wake of the restrictive 1997 Law on Religion, has assisted a great number of independent Charismatic churches to maintain a legal existence. The key figure in this "protective umbrella" has been Rev. Sergei Ryakhovsky of the Association "Church of God." RUACEF is a federation of organizations that are independent, but connected administratively and have Charismatic theology in common. RUACEF was the first and the largest Charismatic association and represents the growing Charismatic movement.

Conservative and moderate Pentecostals traditionally have avoided politics. In contrast, Sergei Ryakhovsky is quite vocal about his loyalty to President Vladimir Putin, supports democratic reforms, and condemns terrorism. By these sometimes controversial public stances RUACEF leaders hope to make Pentecostalism a full member of civil society, overcome the prejudices of the authorities, and dispel the social stereotype of Protestants as "sectarians" and "second class."

The Charismatic Association of Christian Churches "Association of Christians," led by Igor Nikitin and headquartered in St. Petersburg, is another large Charismatic grouping. It is characterized by energetic cultural and educational goals. As with RUACEF, Nikitin's association is not highly centralized: it does not have regional bishops and individual churches often combine membership in this association with membership in another Pentecostal association. Priorities of the "Association of Christians" include the development of Christian media and broad-based pastoral education, including the study of the humanities. Nikitin and other leading pastors of the Association hold to the belief that Protestantism and Pentecostalism have deep roots in Russian spiritual history, which helps explain the Association's serious interest in Russian Orthodox Church history and development.

A Blurring of Charismatic-Pentecostal Lines

Pavel Okara heads another large interregional Charismatic body, the Russian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith (RC CEF), formerly the Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith-Pentecostals. In the 1990s so many independent Charismatic churches and mission organizations joined this traditionally conservative association that serious tensions emerged. Differences arose over "new forms" in worship, including the place of emotional, ecstatic praise and the use of rock music. According to Pavel Okara, tensions have subsided in recent years as the appeal of "health and wealth" theology has waned. Okara explains that many Charismatics in his association have become more moderate and are less influenced than previously by more radical Charismatic expressions, such as the phenomenon of the "Toronto blessing" that spread from a dramatic season of revival at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church in 1994. He argues that in the RC CEF it is almost impossible anymore to distinguish between Charismatics and Pentecostals who have adopted various "new forms of worship."

The Perm "New Testament" Church in the RC CEF, which launched active missionary efforts in 1992, now has some 400 churches and fellowships in the Perm Region, Bashkiria, and Tatarstan. Other notable regional groupings in the RC CEF include the Association of Churches of the Republic of Karelia (more than 50 churches and fellowships), the Pskov Church "Emmanuel" (some 20 churches), and the Murmansk Regional Association of Churches (more than 30 churches and fellowships).

Non-Western Influence

Today, not only American but Latin American, African, and South Korean Pentecostalism has influenced the Russian Charismatic movement. For instance, a number of Russian Charismatic pastors borrowed their teachings on "spiritual warfare" from Colombian preachers. Also, church growth through the development of "home groups," a method popularized by South Korean Full-Gospel Pastor Yonggi Cho, has been influential in Russia. In addition, many Pentecostals of Charismatic persuasion have developed an ardent patriotism that is quite striking. They openly declare their political opinions and somehow support both state authorities and movements of democratic reform.◆

Translated by Asya Arushanyan.

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Pentecostal and Charismatic Statistics
and Why They Should Be Used With Caution

Roman Lunkin

My best estimate for Pentecostals and Charismatics in the Russian Federation today is approximately 900,000 believers in four to five thousand churches and satellite group fellowships. However, more precise numbers are difficult to obtain for several reasons.

1. The present Charismatic figures and the totals previously published for traditional and moderate Pentecostals (*East-West Church and Ministry Report* 12 [Summer 2004], 7), undoubtedly include overlap, because some Pentecostal unions are members of Sergei Ryakhovsky's predominately Charismatic umbrella organization, the Russian United Association of Christians of Evangelical Faith (RUACEF).
2. An unknown number of independent Charismatic churches are not affiliated with any church associations.
3. Russian Charismatic churches typically spawn satellite affiliates and groups which are not always included in statistical totals.◆

Charismatic Church Associations in Russia

Association	Leader(s)	Number of Churches and Locations
RUSSIAN UNITED ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIANS OF EVANGELICAL FAITH (RUACEF) Rossiiskii Ob'edinennyi Soyuz Christian Very Evangel'skoi (ROSKhVE) 115516, Russia, Moscow, Prokhladnaya ul. 18 Tel/fax: 321-50-47; 325-57-12 E-mail: office@cef.ru; rufocoef@aha.ru	Sergei Ryakhovsky, bishop and chairman	2,000
MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS OF RUACEF		
"Church of God" "Tserkov' Bozhiia" Russia, Moscow, Porechnaya ul. 15 Tel: 734-94-89	Sergei Ryakhovsky, chairman	
Association Of Churches CEF "Worship" Ob'edinenie tserkvei KhVE "Proslavlenie"	Ruslan Belosevich, bishop	Approximately 30 churches and more than 100 groups in Republic of Khakasia, Tyumen' Region, Republic of Tyva, Altai Region, and other regions
"Churches of Faith" "Tserkvi Very" Russia, Moscow 5th Parkovaya ul. 4-6 Tel: 786-76-56; 786-76-57; 786-76-62	Yelena Krylova, executive director	175
Independent Churches CEF Nezavisimye tserkvi KhVE 109369, Russia, Moscow, Lyublinskaya ul.104 Tel: 349-33-22; Fax: 349-32-16	Alexander Karpachev, executive director	
"Charisma" "Kharizma" 107564, Russia, Moscow Krasnobogatirskaya ul. 38/2 Tel: 963-35-11; 963-37-33 E-mail: rosa@i4j.net; rosamos@orc.ru Web site: www.i4j.net/charisma	Pavel Savel'yev, president	More than 50
"Kingdom of God" "Tsarstvo Bozhie" 129085, Russia, Moscow, Godovikova ul.9/25 Tel: 730-32-44; 730-32-45; Fax: 721-24-44	Manuel Morales, chairman	Nearly 15
"Calvary Fellowship" "Obshchenie Kalvari" 131000, Russia, Moscow Box 152 Varshavskoye Shosse 37 Tel: 748-36-48	Nataliya Zhedrivaya, president	Approximately 100 congregations, mainly located in Central Russia, Tatarstan, and Bashkiriya
"Global Strategy" "Global'naya strategiya" 153000, Russia, Ivanovo Box 37 Tel: 0932-30-15-55	Mark Leonard, president Dmitryi Blagoyev, executive director	Headquartered in Ivanovo. Largest congregations in Ivanovo, Nizhnii Novgorod, and Moscow.
"Good News" "Blagaya vest'" Russia, Moscow 2nd Freznaya ul. 4 Tel: 727-14-70	Rick Reiner, president Nikolai Kulakevich, executive director	

Association	Leader(s)	Number of Churches and Locations
Association of Christian Churches "Union of Christians" (ACC AC) Assotsiatsiya Khristianskhikh Tserkvei "Soyuz khristian" (AKhTs SKh) 196105, Russia, St. Petersburg, Box 275 Tel: 812-316-14-14; E-mail: accr@accr.ru	Igor Nikitin, president	Approximately 300 churches located in northwestern Russia; headquartered in St. Petersburg.
MEMBERS OF ACC AC ASSOCIATION		
Association of Churches "Vineyard" Assotsiatsiya tserkvei "Vinogradnik" Tel. in Moscow: 958-59-66; 118-76-05 The largest congregation: Russia, Krasnoyarsk Region, Krasnoyarsk, Robespier ul. 30, kv. 13 Tel: 3912-22-71-36; 45-36-31; 44-92-45 Web site: http://church-v.chat.ru	Roland Abadier, senior pastor in Moscow Alexander Mishin, pastor in Krasnoyarsk	Approximately 20 churches and groups
REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS THAT ARE MEMBERS OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH OF CHRISTIANS OF EVANGELICAL FAITH		
Perm Diocesan Administration CEF ("New Testament" Church) Permskoe eparkhial'noe upravlenie KhVE (Tserkov' "Noyi Zavet") 614001, Russia, Perm, Ordzhonikidze ul. 90 Tel: 3422-37-21-18; 37-18-64 E-mail: ntc@perm.raid.ru Web site: www.nzv.narod.ru	Eduard Anatolyevich Grabovenko, bishop	Approximately 400 churches and groups located in Perm Region, Tatarstan, and Bashkiriya
Murmansk Regional Church Association Murmanskaya oblastnaya assotsiatsiya tserkvei 184530, Russia, Murmanskaya Oblast Olenegorsk, Murmanskaya ul. 5 Tel: 815-52-58-760 E-mail: occ@monch.mels.ru Web site: www.northchurch.ru	Pyotr Semeonovich Makarchuk, senior presbyter	15 churches and several dozen groups in Murmansk Region
Pskov Regional Association RC CEF (Church CEF "Emmanuel") Pskovskoe Regional'noe ob"edinenie Rts KhVE (Tserkov' KhVE "Emmanuil") 180000, Russia, Pskov, Krestovskoye Shosse 86 Tel: 8112-16-67-89; Fax: 8112-16-67-48 E-mail: emmanuel@sovintel.ru	Nikolai Igorevich Zalutskyi, senior presbyter	Approximately 20 churches in Pskov Region
Association of Churches of the Republic of Karelia (Christian Center "New Life") Soyuz tserkvei Respubliki Kareliya (Khristianskii Tsentr "Novaya Zhizn' ") Russia, Petrozavodsk, Moskovskaya ul. 1 Tel: 8142-74-75-72; Fax: 8142-74-75-72 E-mail: ch.newlife@onego.ru	Feodor Vladimirovich Akimenko, senior presbyter	More than 50 churches and groups in Karelia
Krasnodar Association of RC CEF (Christian Church "Bethany") Krasnodarskoe ob"edinenie Rts KhVE ("Khristianskaya tserkov' "Vifaniya") 350057, Russia, Krasnodar Pashkovskyi, Yugo-Vostochnaya ul. 19 Tel: 8612-39-18-71; 38-27-72; 38-28-72 Fax: 8612-38-25-45 E-mail: office@vifania.ru; church@vifania.ru; vifania@kuban.net Web site: www.vifania.ru	Sergei Yuryevich Nakul, senior presbyter	Approximately 300 churches and groups in cities and villages of Krasnodar Region

What are They Teaching our Kids?

Svetlana Solodovnik and Nikita Sokolov

Rhetoric classes at Moscow's Peresvet Elementary School are not simply for teaching seven-to-ten-year-olds the art of public speaking, but also to lay "the foundations of Christian mentality and behavior." This intent is spelled out in the foreword to the students' textbook, *Introduction to the Cathedral of the Word*. Its author is Sofia Filipovna Ivanova, one of the school's founders. State-run Peresvet is an Orthodox-oriented school, which also has a so-called "ethnic and cultural component." It is therefore allowed to openly engage in "forming religious mentality." It functions according to a special ethnic and cultural program, which includes over 40 schools and kindergartens in the capital.

In addition to the Russian "ethnic component," there are also schools that teach Tatar, Jewish, Armenian, Georgian, Lithuanian, and Greek values and cultures. But Peresvet and the 40-odd other schools are more the exception than the rule. Most of Moscow's state-run schools have resisted the introduction of religion into the classrooms. That stance has been supported, until recently, by Moscow's Department of Education. But things may be about to change. In the last three years, the debate over religion in Russian schools has heated up to volcanic temperatures.

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Careening Towards Orthodoxy

A decade ago, in 1993, the Ministry of Education issued regulations which allowed elective teaching of religious subjects, such as "Foundations of Orthodox Culture" or "History of World Religions." Religious instruction was also allowed, but only at the request of children or their parents, and only outside normal school hours. But even before this legal loophole appeared, missionaries of all imaginable denominations and sects—from Orthodox priests to Moonies—rushed in to fill the demand for meaning in this hitherto forbidden realm. Yet the tide soon subsided. Schools denied Moonies and other questionable sects access, while Orthodox priests, busy with resuscitating their parishes, begged off the additional responsibilities of teaching. The work was unpaid and often unrewarding.

The Search for a Post-Soviet Ideology

The idea of teaching children Orthodox culture was an outgrowth of the collapse of Soviet communist ideology. Society was floundering in an ideological vacuum, so church leaders suggested introducing a system of moral education in schools, to be founded on Russia's traditional cultural and religious values. In some regions, the idea was quickly implemented. For instance, in 1997 in the Kursk Region, where the eparchy was headed by Metropolitan Yuvenaly Tarasov, a fierce advocate of a strong state and Russian Orthodoxy, the course, "Foundations of Orthodox Culture," was introduced in some 300 schools—half of the region's total number. The region's governor at the time was Alexander Rutskoi, one of the convicted leaders in the failed 1993 coup against President Boris Yeltsin. The metropolitan had convinced secular authorities that Orthodoxy was not simply a religion, but an ideology cementing the state and nation together.

Is Instruction Voluntary?

Today, as Russia's leaders search for a new "national idea," minus the Communist husk, the famous formula introduced in 1833 by Minister of Education Count Sergey Uvarov, "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality," may once again find its place. Officially, "Foundations of Orthodox Culture" was introduced as an elective, which means students can refuse to attend. But in most of the region's schools, it is taught as part of the regional curriculum during normal school hours and thus is obligatory for all students.

Despite this fact, school authorities say that students do have a choice. Director of School No. 28 in Kursk, Valery Negukov, insisted that all the 13 fifth-graders who attend the class at his school do so of their own free will. The headmaster's words are supported by the fact that the fifth grade numbers twice as many students. Nevertheless, not all school managers are so scrupulous. "What do you mean, 'whether they want to attend or not?,'" said the head of studies at a school in Zamostyansk, a small town about 100 kilometers from Kursk. "If the subject is in the curriculum, of course, they must attend. There is no need to ask their opinion."

Resistance From Teachers

Early on, the Foundations course faced fierce resistance from teachers. Aside from philosophical concerns about separation of church and state, there was a practical issue—there were no teachers or textbooks for the class. Orthodox clergy could not help; they could not even get enough teachers for theological schools. This left volunteers, which meant opening the schools to lone enthusiasts or shameless hacks. "Today," said Dr. Vladimir Menshikov, program coordinator for Orthodox Culture Studies in the Kursk Region, "Teachers feel acutely that children should be taught not only math and Russian, but also something 'good and right.'" An alternative to the Orthodox idea of "right" is not available in today's Russia: secular society, which, having lost faith in Communist ideals, has not managed during the post-Soviet years to elaborate a system of morals based on liberal, democratic values.

Foundations and other religion courses are presently taught in some 30 Russian regions. Small towns and villages are more likely venues, relying on support of local authorities that is harder to come by in big cities. In Russia's two capitals, religion is still not welcomed in most schools. Thus, out of St. Petersburg's 703 schools, only 10 percent teach

religion courses; in Moscow the number is even lower. This phenomenon is partly due to the stance of the local education authorities, who have repeatedly said they will not let religion into schools. One contributing factor is certainly that big cities have much greater ethnic diversity. "All Moscow schools are multiethnic," said award-winning Moscow teacher Yelena Lubcheva. "In one class, there are children of ethnic Ukrainians, Armenians, Azeris, Tatars, Georgians, Jews, and a dozen other nationalities. It is not a given that they will want to study Orthodox culture. And there is the second question: Who is going to teach it? If it is to be secular teachers, where do we find them?

Divided Public Opinion

Meanwhile, Russian society as a whole is split on the issue of teaching religion in schools. In a multi-year sociological survey, undertaken between 1991 and 1999 as part of the international project, "Religion and Values After the Fall of Communism," headed by Finnish researcher Kimmo Kaariainen, some 42 percent of those surveyed supported teaching religious studies, while 13 percent favored teaching Orthodoxy, 10 percent said schoolchildren should be taught the religion chosen by their parents, and 15 percent opposed teaching any religion in schools.

Perhaps in response to this uncertainty in society, advocates of religion classes have founded a movement, which gathers annually for "International Christmas Educational Readings," organized by the Moscow Patriarchy, the Inter-Religious Council of Russia, and the Ministry of Education. "Traditional values and ideas of Orthodoxy are an indispensable condition for society's well-being," said Zinaida Vedyakova, a teacher from Lipetsk in a speech at last year's event. "When children become familiar with the Foundations of Orthodox Culture, the psychological microclimate in the classroom changes for the better; children become more thoughtful about their actions."

Opponents, meanwhile, fear that, under the guise of "foundations" and "culture," children will be brainwashed with sermons, schools will be clericalized, and the courses will foster religious conflict. "I am an atheist, and in my family no one was ever religious," said Pyotor Bizyukov, from Kemerovo. "I don't consider the Orthodox Church the foundation of Russian culture. Just remember how the Church persecuted Tolstoy. I don't want my children to be indoctrinated with anything at school. And I have no doubt this will be the case when I hear bureaucrats and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church talk."

The debate has at times become so heated it has led to rallies, public protests, and even lawsuits. In 2002, human rights activists Lev Ponomaryov and Yevgeny Ikhlov filed a suit against the publisher of Alla Borodina's textbook, *Foundations of Orthodox Culture*. The case is still pending. The plaintiffs argue that the textbook's politically incorrect retelling of the Crucifixion encourages anti-Semitism. "Children perceive a textbook to be the ultimate truth," said Ponomaryov, "and in this case the author is too ardent and biased, advocating the views of the Orthodox Church." "In the absence of clear-cut methodology and approved textbooks, and given the very inconsistent position of the Education Ministry, which, it seems, just cannot decide for itself what the course should consist of, teaching the Foundations of Orthodoxy remains an unintelligible, amateur initiative," said Nikolai Mitrokhin, Director of the Institute for Religious Studies in the CIS and Baltic States.

Putin: Adding to the Confusion

As if all this were not enough, President Vladimir Putin has joined in the debate, although his stance is about as clear as the Education Ministry. "We have a Constitution and Russian laws, according to which the church is separated from the state, and, likewise, the state is from the church," Putin said in February. "And it is not planned to change anything in this respect." The final decision whether to teach religion in schools, Putin continued, could be made only after a broad public discussion. But a month prior to this, on Christmas Eve, during a visit to a monastery, Putin said: "Orthodoxy is part of our culture. So it would not be right to draw a definite separating line between this culture and the church. In our country by law the church is, of course, separated from the state, but in the souls and the history of our people they were always together and will stay that way."

Russia's "powers that be" wish to remake Russian schools into places of indoctrination, rather than enlightened, democratic education. A guarantee of freedom in education must instead be grounded in citizens themselves and in a desire to make schools serve the interests of society and its individuals, rather than the state. ◆

A guarantee of freedom in education must be grounded in a desire to make schools serve the interests of society and its individuals, rather than the state.

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Czech Evangelicals and Evangelism

David Novak

I believe that the church is tempted to share cheap grace. While contextualization of the gospel is necessary, it does not mean leaving out what people do not like to hear. We cannot say, "Because people love freedom, we should not speak about obedience."

The Evangelical church needs to ask if it is mission-oriented or self-oriented. Church leaders will have to teach that mission is not something unusual, but an integral part of the church.

Vestiges of Moral Grounding in a Secular Society

In the Czech Republic, former president Vaclav Havel remarried one year after the death of his first wife, Olga. Many people claimed that one year was too short a time before a new marriage and that he probably dated his new wife even when Olga was alive. People saw it as being very immoral. It occurred to me that even such a godless nation as ours speaks about "immorality." In Czech history, people sense an even bigger discrepancy: the bloodshed associated with church struggles through the centuries is one of the main reasons people are so hostile to the church today. Yet, as the example of Havel shows, Czechs still are very sensitive to what one says and how one lives. Find below selected principles the Evangelical church could follow in order to reach the Czech people.

Holistic Evangelicals

Many Czechs are still infected by the Communist view that Christianity is only for the weak and the helpless. The generation over age 45 grew up under Communism and was taught that faith is a private matter. Christians have accepted this privatization of faith. As a result many are unable to reflect intelligently on their faith and beliefs. They are born again, they live very moral lives, many are very good in their professions, but most do not publicly share their faith. I do not mean one has to be a street evangelist, but a believer should be able to comment on a non-Christian worldview from a Christian perspective through the media, books, and public speeches. Such public apologetics are still very unusual in Evangelical circles. Believers need to understand that regardless of where they are, they are called to be *vox Dei*, the voice of God. As Louis J. Luzbetak writes, "The mission of the Church is to be the *vox Dei* in matters of faith and morals, in matters of love and justice, in matters of peace, reconciliation, and salvation."

Loving Through Relationships

One of the clearest results of my survey research is the fact that relationships play a key role. Church leaders consider relationships vital for the conversion of Czechs. Many people are deeply frustrated by never-ending corruption and scandals, by the inability of courts to deal with criminals, by the fact that most Communist leaders and tyrants have not been brought to trial. As J. Locke writes, "Fatalism grips the Czech mentality, and any attempt to 'candycoat' the Christian message by ignoring the realities of life will meet with little success. They [Czechs] have seen centuries of conquest and defeat, life and death. They believe that nothing really changes" (Contextualizing the Christian Message for the Czech Republic," http://www.strategicnetwork.org/index.php?loc=kb&id=3561&mode=v&pagenum=1&lang).

Loving Through Hope

Such a situation can be a challenge for the churches. Evangelicals can show that there is hope as they reflect God's love in their churches. "Love of neighbor," writes Luzbetak, "is not something accessory to mission and is not primarily a kind of lure for winning converts; it is, in fact, nothing less than a basic constitution of the Kingdom" (*The Church and Cultures; New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990], 4).

Loving Confrontation

Francis Schaeffer explains that God's truth and the work of Christ's church require loving confrontation: "There are three possible positions: unloving confrontation, no confrontation, and loving confrontation. Only the third is biblical" (*The Great Evangelical Disaster* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1985], 402). But love does not mean that we will always agree or that we will be silent in areas in which we disagree.

Loving Through Grace

Charismatic leader John Wimber once said, "Many of our churches look like hospitals where one is not allowed to bleed" (T. Dittrich, "Interview with J. Wimber," *Život Viry* 7/8 [2003], 30). The problem is that many non-Christians still think that to be a member of the church means to be morally perfect. Evangelical churches need to develop an atmosphere in which it is clear that the church is for bleeding people. This is possible only in an atmosphere of grace. If Czech Evangelicals want to be successful in their mission, they need grace and they need to offer acceptance in their churches. As an elder in one of the fastest-growing Evangelical local churches in the Czech Republic (growth rate of 12 percent per year), I know that almost all new members give as their primary reason for joining, "the atmosphere of grace and acceptance they feel inside the church."

Honest Evangelicals

Czech Evangelicals should be clear in assessing the consequences of theological liberalism and pluralism. Many in the largest Protestant churches in the Czech Republic have embraced theological liberalism. One of the main reasons for their liberal orientation is the influence of the universities where their pastors have studied: The Protestant Theological Faculty of

Charles University and the Hussite Theological Faculty of Charles University, Prague. During the Communist era, Evangelical pastors could only study in these theological schools. To offer an alternative to provide a solid grounding in Evangelical theology, the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Prague (ETS) was founded in 1991. Statistics and surveys very clearly document a massive exodus of literally thousands of members from state churches. Theological liberalism is not the only reason for this exodus, but I strongly believe it is one of the reasons.

A second destructive force in Czech church life concerns the uniqueness of Christ. In multi-religious dialogue, we still must affirm our center: Jesus Christ. In the Czech context, Evangelicals have to be strongly Christ-centered. Pavel Cerny writes, "In relating to secular and religious people, the Christian church today must be ready and open to dialogue marked by humility, integrity, and sensitivity." Some will accuse Evangelicals of intolerance, black-and-white thinking, exclusivism, perhaps even fanaticism. But Evangelicals must hold to classic Christian teaching without compromise.

Evangelical Commitment to Mission

Our survey of Czech church leaders revealed that "Christians do not see mission as a priority." Certainly, one of the reasons is that believers are not taught the proper place of mission in the church. Unfortunately, Czech Evangelical churches are mostly attended by the middle class, and sometimes, the upper class. For example, in my home church, 90 percent of the congregation is university educated, with almost no members from the lower classes or from the fringes of society. We have special organizations taking care of these people, like the Salvation Army and Nadeje (Hope) for the homeless, Teen Challenge for drug-addicted youth, charities for single mothers, and so forth. From the outside it looks as if these organizations are for "big sinners," while the church is for the "average" or "little" sinners.

I see several reasons for such a situation. First, in many cases, to take care of the homeless, drug addicts, single mothers, and others, specialists are needed. At the same time, we have to ask whether the second reason for this situation is that the church has a problem accepting sinners. Faced with such a situation, we have to remember that 35 percent of church leaders surveyed felt social work was as important as mission. A third factor may be the small number of believers in the Czech Republic and what surveyed church leaders called a "bad spiritual atmosphere." Sadly, a fourth factor may be the church itself. The Evangelical church needs to ask if it is mission-oriented or self-oriented. Church leaders will have to teach that mission is not something unusual, but an integral part of the church.

Creative Evangelicals

One of the reasons Paul was so successful in mission was the fact that he was able to communicate to listeners in their own language (I Corinthians 9:19-23). As for modern day equivalents, sports and English evangelistic camps seem to be good tools for reaching young people, while British-born Alpha small-group Bible study courses are for all generations. To make English camps more effective they should be offered to adults as well as young people. Because of Communism, the middle generation could not study English. Many people over 40 feel handicapped not being able to communicate well in English. Opening English camps for older generations could be a good possibility. Such camps have happened several times, and they were very well accepted. Second, hunger to study English is so strong that missionaries could connect with the unreached middle generation through English classes taught throughout the year. By this means they will very quickly have many natural contacts with non-Christians over age 40. Third, missionary teachers have great opportunities to share topics in English classes that connect with important areas of human life. Fourth, Alpha courses involve all ages in the church: youth, middle, and older generations. These courses help Christians develop good common ground with their non-Christian neighbors.

Evangelicals Working Together

Survey findings clearly indicate tension and misunderstanding between Western missionaries and local churches. But the goal is to work together. I see several ways the relationship could be improved. First, missionaries should work under the authority of the local churches. By authority I do not mean tyranny. The vision of the local church should be the starting point for missionaries. One way the two can work together is to pair a missionary with local church follow up. At the same time, missionaries do face the predicament of trying to serve two masters at the same time: the local church and the sending agency. The only solution is for the sending agency to communicate directly with the local church to try to really understand the context in which the missionary is serving.

In addition, missionaries should not be under pressure to achieve quick results. Certainly it is very difficult for missionaries to share with their supporters that, after several years, no one has become a Christian through their ministry. They should realize that Czechs can be very resistant, and missionary supporters need to be understanding and patient.

Finally, missionaries and even mission agencies should consider providing support for national workers. This is a sensitive issue, but one national who knows the language and culture can do a lot of work. There should be very serious discussion of who should be supported and what kind of system there should be for supporting nationals.

Biblically Grounded Evangelicals

A study of Paul's epistles can serve as a basis for missions in the Czech Republic. Evangelicals concerned about missions should be asking some key questions: 1) How important a place does mission play in the churches?

(continued on page 10)

Missionaries face the predicament of trying to serve two masters at the same time: the local church and the sending agency.

Respondents believe the most effective evangelistic tools today are English camps, camping trips in the countryside together with Christians, and the growing popularity of Alpha courses.

Czech Evangelicals and Evangelism
(continued from page 9)

2) How effectively do preachers and teachers connect their preaching and teaching to the idea of mission?
3) What is the attitude of church people towards those who are outside the church?
4) What are their relationships with non-Christians?
5) Are they motivated to reach out to non-Christians?
6) Do people in the church really believe in the uniqueness of Jesus?
7) If they claim that Jesus is Lord, what does it mean in practice?
8) How do they understand multi-religious dialogue?
9) Is faith only a matter of objective knowledge or is it also a matter of personal experience?
10) Are church people able to share with others how they became Christians?
11) Are they able to share in contemporary language?
12) How effectively is our faith reflected in our daily lives?
13) Is our life a consistent message?
14) Do people in the church understand well that faith is inseparably connected with daily life?

In summary, the main obstacles Evangelical church leaders see are Christians with few contacts with non-Christians and Christians not recognizing mission as a priority. Respondents believe the most effective evangelistic tools today are English camps, camping trips in the countryside together with Christians, and the growing popularity of Alpha courses.◆

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Protestant Church Growth in Russia

Andrei E. Blinkov

By God's grace, several hundred Protestant churches are open in the Moscow Region today. Unfortunately, most are small and grow rather slowly. Small churches average 20 to 50 members, while a church of 200 is considered large. Russia includes three registered Pentecostal unions, one led by Bishop Pavel Okara, one by Bishop Vladimir Ryakhovsky, and a third by Rev. Alexander Purshaga. In the Moscow Region these three unions number about 110 registered churches. Only five have 500 or more members and some churches do not grow at all.

Numerically speaking, God's army in Russia is not really victorious today, either Orthodox or Protestant.

Slow Evangelical Christian-Baptist Growth...

At the end of 2000 the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (ECB) organized a conference, "Central Russia in the 21st Century," to consider church-growth strategies. Ruvim Voloshin, head of the Union's mission department, shared that the population of Central Russia is about 38 million, while total membership of Evangelical Christian-Baptist churches is 23,000. Very few new churches have been planted in recent years. The total number of ECB churches in the Union grew from 1,320 to a little over 1,400 in a ten-year period.

...And Few Practicing Orthodox

In spite of the fact that the majority of Russians consider themselves Orthodox, officials claim that only four to five percent of the population are practicing Orthodox. At the same time, the Internal Affairs Ministry reports that not more than 1.5 percent of the population attend the largest Orthodox celebrations —Christmas and Easter. Numerically speaking, God's army in Russia is not really victorious today, either Orthodox or Protestant.

Church Growth Factors

Still, some churches are growing; for example, the Charismatic church "Rosa," which grew from zero to some 800 members in 12 years. A survey of 20 Russian pastors and church leaders yielded over 100 factors influencing church growth in Russia. Pastors identified a majority of the same factors discussed in such church-growth literature as George G. Hunter III, *Church for the Unchurched*, and Harold L. Fickett, *Hope for Your Church*. This suggests that a certain set of factors influence church growth worldwide.

Factors contributing to Russian church growth can be reduced to 17 points:

1. The church is open to the work of the Holy Spirit and believes that all the New Testament spiritual gifts are available today.
2. The church is motivated by faith. Both the pastor and the laity believe in church growth and are ready to sacrifice to see it happen.
3. The church has a strong, gifted, spiritual senior pastor who is a visionary and a driving force for growth. People have confidence in him or her.
4. The church has strong leaders, good organization, and leadership training.
5. The church provides sound biblical teaching that brings vision and unity to the body.
6. The church obeys the Great Commission in genuine love and compassion for lost, unchurched people. Its main business is to reach people for Christ. The church is open to new forms of outreach.
7. The church focuses primarily on a target group such as youth, intellectuals, or former drug addicts, and adapts its language, music, and culture to this population.

8. The church is well organized but not bureaucratic or inflexible.
9. The church develops small groups in which members receive regular pastoral care.
10. The church is disciplined and earnest in prayer.
11. Worship is inspiring and full of love, sincerity, and enthusiasm.
12. The church engages in many social service ministries to non-Christian people, meeting the needs of the unchurched in order to win them to Christ.
13. The church mobilizes laity and works diligently to involve all members in ministries according to their gifts.
14. The church has an adequate building for its meetings.
15. The church has financial and humanitarian support from abroad.
16. The church emphasizes the importance of members' commitment to tithing.
17. Members minister to one another's needs in love and are open to cooperation with other churches.

Three Priority Factors

A second survey distributed to 50 Protestant pastors and church leaders across Russia found that a majority agreed that the paramount factor in church growth is openness to the work of the Holy Spirit and the exercise of all New Testament gifts. Respondents gave three factors the highest priority after the ministry of the Holy Spirit:

1. The church is motivated by faith. Both the pastor and the laity believe in church growth and are ready to sacrifice to see it happen;
2. Worship is inspiring and full of love, sincerity, and enthusiasm; and
3. The church provides sound biblical teaching that brings vision and unity to the body.

At the same time, the two least important factors dealt with material concerns: financial and humanitarian support from abroad and an adequate building.

According to the second survey, many pastors believe the factors influencing church growth worldwide are exactly the same as those needed in Russia. Pastors whom I contacted agree that the Holy Spirit's ministry is the supreme factor of church growth. Praise God that many churches in Russia (even those that are not Pentecostal) have a sincere openness to the work of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts.

The Cell-Church Model

The pastor, however, will limit church growth if he fails to delegate authority. It is impossible for one person to provide adequate pastoral care to more than 100. In the wilderness Moses was not responsible for the direct care of the whole nation. Instead, God instructed Moses to "provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens....So shall it be easier for thyself and they shall bear the burden with thee" (Exodus 18:19-22). This is the classic example of a cell-church model. The "New Generation" Church in Yaroslavl, for example, places a lay pastor over every five home groups and a zone pastor over every group of 25 home groups. Zone pastors work closely with both lay pastors and senior pastors.

Missions...

Growing churches, even if small, are mission-minded. For example, our church of only 45-50 people sent a missionary to Uzbekistan and partially paid for his ministry there. Larger churches can do much more. The Word of Life Church in Moscow has sent out more than 50 missionaries to the Moscow Region, to the Caucasus, and to the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union.

...And Meeting Human Needs

The church needs a strategy to build relations with unchurched people. This is especially true in Russian circumstances, where many people consider every non-Orthodox church a cult. Still, there are keys to people's hearts. One very important key is meeting people's needs with Christian love and compassion. Jesus did the same: He healed the sick, cast out demons, and fed people. The better a church can find out society's needs and meet them, the more successful it will be. Today, Russian churches that understand this principle are growing. One example is a small Baptist church in a Russian village where authorities wanted nothing to do with Baptists, considering them members of a cult. Nevertheless, local Christians decided to do something good for the government. They painted a shabby old fence around the park directly in front of the mayor's office. That mayor was astonished and his attitude towards Baptists seriously changed.

Many Russian churches engage in outreach to people addicted to drugs and alcohol. The "Light of Jesus" Church in Zelenograd grew from some 80 to 120 people in two years after organizing a Christian rehabilitation center for drug addicts. Today about one half of church members are either former drug addicts or their family members!

One sister in our church saw a need in public schools where many young women suffered from early pregnancies and abortions. She answered a call to begin a pro-life ministry, including free programs consisting of lectures with basic information, a video, preaching of the Gospel, and distribution of Bibles and tracts. God has enabled us to preach the good news to more than 1,200 high school students in 14 different schools. Most of the students have been very receptive, some even asking us to return to tell them more. It is illegal to preach the Gospel in public schools, but through this ministry the doors were opened. Other churches regularly minister in hospitals, orphanages, and prisons while others are feeding homeless people.

(continued on page 12)

There are keys to people's hearts. One very important key is meeting people's needs with Christian love and compassion.

The Homogenous Unit Principle: Pro and Con

At the outset of my study of church-growth principles, I did not anticipate the significance of factor seven for Russia: essentially, the classic homogenous growth principle focused on a single group such as youth or former drug addicts. The demographic segmentation of large Russian cities presents increasing opportunities for churches to focus on particular populations, according to education, wealth, employment, or ethnicity. In the last decade, Moscow, for example, has become home to many more minority populations.

The average Russian church member never considers these developments. Furthermore, many Russian evangelicals reject the focus on "homogenous units," seeing it as a violation of Christ's commandment to love all. Many simply see the homogeneous unit principle as wrong and believe the church should reject it. At the same time, we already can see that some churches are mostly composed of young people, while others primarily reach drug addicts and members of their families. There is a church of students on the campus of Moscow State University, an Armenian Pentecostal church in Moscow, and there are many other examples.

Is there a way for a church to reach people who are different from most members of the church? I think yes. And the easiest way is to start specialized home groups where people who are different can feel comfortable. A good example is the Word of Life Church in Moscow which won several Vietnamese for Christ. They formed a separate group within the church, with their own interpreter who translates sermons into Vietnamese. They have their own home group but they worship together with Russians on Sunday. Another example is special groups for the deaf. They would not stay in the church without the fellowship of others with the same needs.

I encourage our pastors to pray more about a variety of ministries that their members can undertake, using their God-given spiritual gifts. This is the great hidden potential of the Russian church.

Comparing Russian Surveys with Western Church Growth Research

Russian pastors agree with church growth specialists C. Peter Wagner and Christian A. Schwarz that Christ is the foundation for the church and that the driving force in church growth is the Holy Spirit. They also affirm the special importance of *inspiring* worship, *empowered* leadership, and *passionate* spirituality. Unfortunately, according to survey results, Russian pastors do not emphasize *gift-oriented* ministry. Yet when a majority of church members are open to actively using their God-given gifts, church growth will follow. Russian pastors also gave low priority to the importance of *functional* structures. This is an indication of general organizational problems in Russian churches. Congregations and pastors should work hard to become much more disciplined and organized. Russian pastors also gave little emphasis to *need-oriented* evangelism, that is, meeting the needs of unchurched people in order to win them to Christ. I encourage our pastors to pray more about a variety of ministries that their members can undertake, using their God-given spiritual gifts. This is the great hidden potential of the Russian church. And let's never forget that the main church growth factor was, is, and will be the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit and His spiritual gifts in the Church of Jesus Christ. To Him be all the glory! ◆

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Missionary Sending Movements:
A Polish Case Study

Scott Klingsmith

The Polish Catholic Church has a longstanding missionary tradition. Today, over 1,000 Polish Catholics serve as missionaries worldwide. One Polish missiologist even estimates 6,000 Polish missionaries serving abroad. To give one example, it is estimated that one-third of all Catholic priests in Austria are Polish. Even during Communist times many Polish missionaries served outside the country.

Biblical Mission Association

Missions is a much newer idea for Protestants. Campus Crusade has sent Polish student workers to Russia and Ukraine, and some local churches have sent a few missionaries. But Biblical Mission Association, founded in 1995, was the first Evangelical Protestant Polish mission agency that had the specific purpose of commissioning cross-cultural missionaries. It consists of four branches: Mission to the East (MttE), Wycliffe-Poland (W-P), Mission to Poles in the East, and Ministry to Ukraine. In 1995, the first two of these branches were small missionary initiatives, trying independently to obtain legal recognition from the Polish government. They became aware of each other and decided to combine forces in order to simplify the registration process. They have a common board, office, and accounting,

but in terms of ministry focus and direction they operate independently. Mission to the East is based in Wroclaw, in southwestern Poland, and has primarily Baptist and Navigator roots. It focuses on the former Soviet Union, specifically Central Asia, with a primary emphasis on evangelism and church planting. Wycliffe-Poland, with headquarters in Ustron in south central Poland, has primarily Lutheran and Wycliffe roots. It has people spread around the world from Mali to Central Asia to Australia, concentrating on Wycliffe's Bible translation and literacy work.

The third branch, Mission to Poles in the East, focuses on Polish minorities in Lithuania. The fourth and newest movement, Ministry to Ukraine, recently joined Biblical Mission Association (BSM, using the Polish acronym). The impetus for this ministry came from the president of BSM (currently also director of Wycliffe), and involves ministry to several Gypsy churches and villages in western Ukraine. It provides clothing, supports school teachers, provides meals for school children, and funds church buildings. Wycliffe's specific involvement relates to literacy programs in the schools.

The first Protestant missionary couple departed from Wroclaw for Central Asia in 1993 to join an American team already in place there. Before any Evangelical mission agency was in place, this couple received some financial help from friends, but with no guarantee that more money would come. They were followed in 1994 by a single woman. BSM was founded in 1995, in part to care for these missionaries already on the field. By summer 2000, BSM had 12 full-time missionaries serving in a wide variety of locations, including Tanzania, Mali, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan. Others were in England and Australia, preparing for further ministry. The mission has around 50 members who pay annual membership fees and attend periodic meetings. In addition to sending and supporting missionaries on the field, BSM has sponsored several projects, the largest of which has been the publication of portions of the New Testament in one of the languages of the Tuareg people in Mali. Other projects include humanitarian and educational aid to Gypsy communities in Ukraine. In Central Asia, BSM missionaries have started an English-language school and some businesses, through which they partially support themselves. BSM publishes a regular magazine, *Idzcie [Go]*.

Mission to the East

Mission to the East (MttE) was formed by two men associated with Biblical Theological Seminary (BTS) in Wroclaw. Through their travels around the Soviet Union, both before and after the 1989 Revolution, they saw the potential for Poles to be involved in missions in that part of the world. The first Polish missionaries went on a short trip to Central Asia in 1992, where they caught the vision for long-term ministry. The next year they returned with almost no money, traveling six days by train and with no idea of what to expect. MttE gradually developed as a way to provide support for this couple and other missionaries who began to join them.

Wycliffe-Poland

Wycliffe-Poland (W-P) grew out of contacts that a Polish evangelist made with the director of Wycliffe-Germany at a 1990 conference for evangelists in East Germany. He invited this man to Poland and the two of them traveled the country, speaking to churches and student groups. In 1992 they offered the first mini-Summer Institute of Linguistics course, with around 20 participants from all of Poland. Eventually a missions organization, loosely associated with Wycliffe International, was started to motivate and encourage missions from Poland.

Polish missionaries to the East see God at work in the preparation of the conditions for missions on the field. Under Communism, they were required to learn the Russian language in school, but hated it and usually did not give their studies much attention. However, now that freedom has come for Poles to work in Central Asia, Russian is the common language. BTS's president says, "Ironically, God has a great sense of humor: the oppressing factor helped those guys share the gospel in a new situation."

Malcolm (Marek) Clegg

Malcolm Clegg is a British missionary who has lived in Poland since 1983. He serves with Navigators, teaches missions at BTS, and is president of MttE. Malcolm, or Marek in Polish, has a positive reputation. Poles characterize him as different from most Western missionaries because he speaks Polish well and understands Polish culture. As a student in the Soviet Union in 1977, Clegg met Poles who were smuggling Bibles into Russia. One of the first Westerners to see possibilities for Poles to be involved in missions, his participation at BTS from its inception has given him influence with a wide variety of students. The seminary president recalls that "From the very beginning we knew mostly from Marek Clegg that we would change the mentality of young leaders and we would push them out of the country."

Burkhard Schöttelndreyer and Jurek Marcol

In 1991 Burkhard Schöttelndreyer, director of Wycliffe-Germany, traveled in Poland and other East European countries, encouraging young people with a vision for reaching peoples who did not have the Bible in their own language. He was a key influence on Jurek (Jerzy) Marcol, one of the crucial Polish leaders who today is president of BSM and director of W-P. Jurek became a Christian in 1981 through reading the Bible. The motivation to serve came along with his conversion. He immediately wanted to go to a Bible school in Switzerland to be trained for missions. However, as he and his wife were preparing to go, Poland's declaration of martial law destroyed any chance of their leaving the country. Nevertheless, he learned German and English with a view of possibly using them in cross-cultural ministry. In 1991 he went to a conference for evangelists in former East Germany, where he met Burkhard Schöttelendreyer and learned about Wycliffe. Contact with the outside world opened his eyes to the needs of the world and the possibilities for Bible

(continued on page 14)

The first Protestant missionary couple departed from Wroclaw for Central Asia in 1993.

(continued from page 13)

translation work. He worked as a Wycliffe representative for a few years before deciding to start a Polish organization with an emphasis on Bible translation and literacy. Although he originally desired to be a missionary himself, he came to see that he could be more useful if he stayed home as a promoter of missions.

Although most Poles are not in the habit of giving regularly or systematically, they do exhibit great generosity when they see needs, responding spontaneously and practically.

Andrzj Horyza and Zbszek Pawlak

Andrzj Horyza teaches practical theology at BTS and is vice-president of BSM. His interest in missions was kindled primarily by reading about persecuted Christians around the world. "A particular kind of literature stimulated our thinking. Someone gave me a copy of *Open Doors Magazine* in 1989, the first year anyone could obtain such literature about the persecution of Christians in different countries." As a result of attending an Open Doors conference in 1990, he was motivated to spend a summer in the Soviet Union east of the Urals. He began a prayer group at BTS, which eventually included about half the student body. He took young people with him to the east who never came back the same. A final key person is Zbyszek Pawlak, the first Polish missionary sent out by MttE. He, along with his wife, Asia, first went to Central Asia in 1992 to explore possibilities. In 1993 they went with a one-year commitment and have stayed 11 years so far.

Estimates of the number of participants in longer or shorter term trips within the context of BSM range from dozens to several hundred. Given the small size of Evangelical churches in Poland, this is significant. The number of individuals and churches who support missionaries is growing and the prospects for further growth appear positive, with a number of people either preparing for or considering missionary service.

Funding Polish Missions

Funding for Polish missions presents a mixed picture. On the positive side, beginning in 1994, reforms permitted tax breaks for charitable donations, helping agencies to organize more formally. The director of MttE reports that currently, major support comes from a few Christian businessmen who give large gifts, while a few dozen individuals and a few churches give relatively small gifts. Although most Poles are not in the habit of giving regularly or systematically, they do exhibit great generosity when they see needs, responding spontaneously and practically. They have generously supported flood relief, gifts of Bibles and clothing for Gypsy villages in Ukraine, and the publication of Bible translations in Mali. Such initiatives, one respondent reported, are "bringing new life into the churches."

What Hurts Missions Funding

Negatively, according to several sources, many Polish churches are nearly moribund. Statements such as, "Churches are still pretty dead down the line," and "The church needs to wake up," are common. Most congregations and pastors are not interested in cross-cultural missions, although a few exceptions can be found. Many young people are frustrated with the state of their churches and desire to see more active ministry outside the church. Some congregations have difficulty seeing the need to minister cross-culturally, especially if their denomination has no church in the next town. Also, Evangelicals have no tradition of cooperation. Pastors are often suspicious of programs that are not sponsored by their denomination. A leader notes: "People aren't used to working together. Pentecostals don't work with Baptists, and certainly don't work with Catholics. Nobody works with Lutherans, because they're sort of half-Catholic anyway. So what's this, who's behind this? Who controls this? Is it Baptist? Not Baptist, then I'm not really interested."

Many people are getting poorer. Unemployment is high, sometimes up to half the congregation. Evangelicals, where Polish missionaries have their contacts, typically belong to the poorer part of society. In addition to this difficulty at home, missions abroad are getting more expensive. As one example, when the first missionaries went to Central Asia, they needed $150 per month; now they need about $750 per month. Before, travel was very cheap; now it costs around $2,000 to move a family there. Consequently, the percentage of income coming from Poland is getting smaller. Currently MttE covers 25 to 30 percent of costs, obviously making partnership with outsiders necessary. Finally, where poverty is not the impediment to giving, people are becoming more attracted to what money can buy. As one leader says, "If you come on Sunday, you will see that we struggle with the same problems as other churches—lack of parking spaces."

Nevertheless, in general, Poles surveyed felt that a clear missions vision and motivation would allow significant giving, even given a difficult financial reality. "I think the Polish church could very easily be self-supported and could easily support 100 percent of missions efforts, but like many other sinners we feed ourselves first." Still, one mission leader says, "Now is time to help those who have less."

Western Missionaries: Pro and Con

As one might expect, various opinions, at times totally conflicting, were heard on the question of the influence of Western missionaries on the Polish mission movement. Some spoke of the time before the 1989 Revolution when they interacted with Western missionaries from Operation Mobilization, Navigators, and Biblical Education by Extension who did not necessarily talk about Poles being involved in missions, but impressed on a generation of young leaders the fact that they needed to be active in sharing their faith to reach their world. Missionaries provided models of people who were willing to make great sacrifices to help people of other countries.

A second view is that Western missionaries had absolutely no influence, either positive or negative, with the significant exception of Marek Clegg, who is not seen as a typical Western missionary. A third

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view is that missionaries have been a big factor. A pastor cited SEND International and CBI missionaries, noting one single woman in particular who has modeled missionary life for a whole group of young women.

In contrast, Poles suffered from some Western missionaries' insensitivity and the relatively high standard of living they enjoyed. Polish leaders also reported being treated like cheap labor, translating for outsiders when they themselves were capable of preaching and teaching. They felt manipulated, or watched others being manipulated, by the promise of money or the threat of losing money. Now that Poles are missionaries themselves, they have to wrestle with the same issues from the other side. They have the money and resources to help and serve in poorer countries. Particularly in Ukraine they are the rich ones, who come in for short trips from the outside and use translators. They are attempting to avoid the mistakes they perceived when they were the receivers, but they recognize that the issues are not as clear cut as they previously thought.

The Advantages of Polish Missionaries

Respondents enumerated several of the advantages Polish missionaries have enjoyed, especially those working in Central Asia. Many, especially older, Poles speak the Russian language, allowing them to move rapidly into ministry. In one Central Asian situation American missionaries recognized the effectiveness of Poles and switched places, putting them in charge of local mission work. Second, the living standard was not so different, at least when Poles began in the early 1990s. It was relatively cheap for them to live in Central Asia. Third, the cultural gap is not as big as for Westerners, and Poles do not need visas. Further, since Poles do not have much money, they focus on relationships. People they serve likewise have little money and value relationships. Finally, Poles' experience under Soviet domination has prepared them well for ministry in certain countries. They go to Central Asia as fellow sufferers at the hands of Communist overlords.

The goal of MttE was actually to create an alternate missionary network that would be non-Western funded, using non-Western methodology. "This was our desire from the start. What we do will be eastern: eastern methods, eastern approach, eastern mentality, reproducible." Adds a colleague: "We're trying to do something that has our Slavic atmosphere rooted in our relational cultures." This nontraditional approach has opened doors where Westerners might not be welcomed and where outsiders would need more time to adapt to be effective.◆

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Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Scott Klingsmith, "Factors in the Rise of Missionary Sending Movements in East-Central Europe," Ph.D. dissertation, Trinity International University, 2002.

A Response to Peter Mitskevich

(continued from page 16)

theology and practice existing in evangelical churches. Quite often only minor theological changes take place in the seminary environment. What is actually changing is the angle from which a person is looking at theology, church traditions, and methods of conducting ministry. The question is, how should the word "theology" be used? If it indicates the basic doctrinal beliefs that the student holds to, then only minor changes occur in the minds and hearts of students. If we use it inclusively, as an indicator of basic beliefs plus local church traditions and ways of doing ministry, then yes, major changes can be expected. But even then changes should not be viewed negatively. Quite often graduates come back charged with a new vision for the local church, and if they are supported by the leadership, such vision can result in dramatic church growth and helpful perspectives on reaching the lost.

The Church and the Academy

Mitskevich asserts that the seminary experience is too academic, with students seeing as their models professors and seminary leaders, rather than local pastors. The remedy is pastoral involvement in the lives of seminaries, with ministers on campus regularly visiting with professors, administrators, and students from their churches. Also, it will help if faculty participate in the lives of local churches. At the College of Theology and Education in Kishinev, Moldova, most faculty are involved in local church ministry. Students see them in classrooms during the week and in pulpits on Sundays. This approach creates a positive connection between the church and the academy, between pastor and professor.

Study in the West

Mitskevich asserts that students enroll in seminary in order to work with Western missionary organizations or to receive scholarships to study in Western schools. The author of the report has already pointed out that students are often not being accepted by local churches. Churches cannot offer them salaries and ministry positions. Often the only choice graduates have is to work with missionary organizations, where their help is much needed. Quite often graduates combine ministry in churches as volunteer, unpaid ministers, while making their living working for missionary organizations.

Many students desire to study in the West after seminary in the former Soviet Union. This is not surprising because in some schools more than 50 percent of courses are taught by visiting professors from overseas. Also, more theological literature is available in Western schools than in the former Soviet Union, and students find the greater diversity of opinion in the West to be stimulating.

Rev. Mitskevich himself received the Master of Theology degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. I am sure that students at the Moscow Baptist Theological Seminary, where he served as the academic dean, as well as churches of the Russian Evangelical Christian-Baptist Union, benefited greatly from the education he received in the U.S. Why should others be denied this opportunity? The concern, however, is the likelihood of graduates of Western schools returning to their homeland to minister.

Mitskevich is also concerned about graduates' willingness to serve where they are needed. But church administrators do not provide data on churches that are in need of ministers. So often it is being said that "the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (Matthew 9:37), but no information is being provided beyond that. Perhaps church unions and associations should make lists of church openings available to theological schools, which could then supply the demand and thus contribute to the solution of the problem. Unfortunately, networking between churches and seminaries in the former Soviet Union is too often in short supply.◆

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A Response to Peter Mitskevich on Theological Education

Oleg P. Turlac

Editor's note: The present article is a response to Peter Mitskevich, "Problems I See with Theological Education," East-West Church & Ministry Report *12 (Fall 2004), 5-6.*

Peter Mitskevich, vice-president of the Russian Evangelical Christian-Baptist Union, has outlined some of the burning concerns in theological education today. While his report provides helpful information, I want to give a different perspective on the issues raised.

Theological Education and New Converts

Rev. Mitskevich states that new converts should not be admitted to seminaries because they lack spiritual maturity. Yet some schools do set reasonable admission standards. For example, the College of Theology and Education (Kishinev, Moldova) and Odessa Baptist Theological Seminary require of applicants two years of membership in a local evangelical church. St. Petersburg Christian University even has a prerequisite of two years of active ministry in a local church.

Also, because of mass immigration of Christians from Russia to the West, new converts have to take their places, and their theological training is vital for effective church leadership and sound theology. Seminaries have to work with young people who are eager to learn and who are committed to serving in their homeland. Seminaries should direct their programs to respond to the needs of this new generation of students.

Academic Training and Ministry Involvement

Rev. Mitskevich states that seminaries are receiving fewer quality applicants. It is quite evident that the quality of education in many Russian public schools is declining. Because of corruption and economic crisis, students, especially those who do not live in Moscow or St. Petersburg do not receive a strong education. Perhaps seminaries should redirect their curricula to address the academic shortcomings of incoming students, paying more attention to the development of critical thinking and writing skills. I agree that the problem exists, but the question remains, "What have we done to address it?"

Another burning issue is the separation between academic studies and practical ministry. It is quite common for Russians to distinguish between "the mind" and "the heart." I believe that theological training should emphasize both formal education and passion for ministry. Academic studies should be viewed in the light of practical experience brought into the classroom. I think seminaries should reevaluate their mission and curriculum so that the latter will support the former.

Theological Education and Spiritual Qualifications

One of Mitskevich's theses states that students are not qualified spiritually. They come without a call from God and do not want to be missionaries. They come for answers and stay in school for years. But should seminaries teach only students with a clear call from God to be involved in ministry, or should seminaries serve as a place students can receive a call and have it shaped?

Staying in school for years should not necessarily be regarded as something negative. Different people have different talents, and some may be more predisposed to teaching and writing than pastoral ministry. Gifts of the Spirit are diverse, but all of them are needed in the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:5-11). One of the greatest needs of theological education in the former U.S.S.R. is the lack of theological literature written by national authors. We need those who will excel in their education to produce quality indigenous texts for use in our schools.

Church Attitudes toward Seminary Graduates

Mitskevich argues that students are not being sent by churches. The majority of evangelical schools in the former Soviet Union, to my knowledge, require letters of recommendation from local churches and ministers. Why is it, then, that students are not being sent by churches? Quite often a church participates in the process quite passively, simply issuing a letter of recommendation to the candidate. Theological education is still not seen as a necessary ingredient in one's ministerial vocation. Education in general is still widely associated with atheistic training received by many young people in Soviet times.

Maybe the question should be phrased differently: Do churches plan for a student to return after three to four years and do they have a vision for where that student can serve? Many churches do not plan ahead in this way. Worse yet, some churches send some young people to seminaries because they ask too many questions and cause trouble for the pastor.

The author of the report also argues that churches will not accept graduates due to changes in their theology. Seminary is a place of change. It is not necessarily the place where one's theology changes in a dramatic way. It is rather a culture where one is taught to think critically through the questions of

(continued on page 15)

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