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Serving by Faith on Sakhalin Island

Sharyl Corrado

Editor's note: In the winter of 2004-05, the author, while conducting research for a dissertation on Sakhalin Island, worshiped in a church fellowship in the capital of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk led by Pentecostal Bishop P.M. Yarmoliuk. Following is her firsthand account of the life and ministry of Rev. Yarmoliuk.

Missionaries from Ukraine and Belarus

Originally from Belarus, Petr Mikhailovich Yarmoliuk has ministered in the Russian Far East since 1987. His family of five is among the many Slavic missionaries serving in remote parts of Russia. (Forty-two of 56 bishops in pastor Yarmoliuk's Pentecostal denomination serving in Russia are from Ukraine or Belarus and at least nine missionary families on Sakhalin are from Ukraine or Belarus.) Christian youth, motivated by the impact of a revival that swept through congregations of (then) unregistered Pentecostals in 1985-86, began to hold secret meetings to pray for places in Russia where the gospel was not preached. As a result, hundreds answered the call to missionary service in remote areas. Initially serving with an informal team of Belarusian and Ukrainian single men and women from various churches, Petr Mikhailovich married in 1989. In preparation for missionary service Yarmoliuk and his Ukrainian bride both took Russian citizenship. When asked about preparation for ministry, Petr Mikhailovich pointed out that in Soviet times, all men in the church preached, and were trained accordingly, albeit without an official Bible school. He has since attended modular courses run by Westerners in the Russian Far East. His wife Lydia, prior to their marriage, spent several years in a vocal trio that accompanied a traveling evangelist in Ukraine, when such activity was still forbidden. She considers that an important part of her preparation for ministry, although she had previously held no official position in the church.

Living by Faith

The Yarmoliuks, like other missionaries at the time, were "blessed" by their home churches for missionary service, but such blessing did not entail financial or other support. On occasion, individuals or teams from Ukraine and Belarus have visited them in the Russian Far East, but no one exercises systematic oversight or administration. Missionaries continue to live by faith, generally supporting their families through secular employment, often construction work, which provided Petr Mikhailovich's income for his first few years in the East. Currently, Lydia works as a clerk at an auto parts dealership, while Petr Mikhailovich serves fulltime as pastor and regional bishop of the Russian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith (formerly Christians of Evangelical Faith-Pentecostal). The family tells story after story of God's provision in the most difficult of times: food from unexpected sources; gifts of warm winter clothes, boots, and blankets; packages from Japan, Korea, Europe, and the United States; a Finnish missionary in Japan who donated dozens of used Japanese cars to missionaries in Siberia and the Far East. Such testimonies abound, and God's provision continues today, as evident in testimonies of the congregation.

When asked about future plans, or if they expect to return home, Petr Mikhailovich responded simply that "where we are together, that's our home." With their three children, they have lived in four Russian Far Eastern cities. Lydia feels it is a supernatural gift that the family has adjusted so easily to new locations. While they have no plans to leave Sakhalin, they do not see it as a permanent home. A number of family members have emigrated to the United States and they do not exclude God calling them there. However, until He does, they remain where they are.

Their families supported their decision to move to the Russian Far East, despite the fact that it meant almost complete separation, above all due to rising costs of transportation. The Yarmoliuks last returned to Ukraine and Belarus in 2001, travel costs covered by an unexpected donation, and have no plans for a future visit. Petr Mikhailovich's mother was especially supportive of their calling. When Petr was a child, she had a vision that he would serve God far away, somewhere people did not want to go. Assuming that meant prison, like his father and grandfather, she was relieved that her son's travel to the Russian Far East was voluntary.

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Evangelism and Social Outreach

The Yarmoliuks have participated in the planting of a number of churches, most recently founding a new church in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk that emphasizes evangelism and social outreach. The small but enthusiastic church of under 40, which meets in the Yarmoliuks' living room, conducts weekly ministry in two local orphanages, a hospital, and a cancer ward. Church members regularly bring recovering addicts and children from the orphanage to Sunday services, and the church seeks to provide housing and meet other needs of former addicts. It is not unusual to find them living temporarily in the Yarmoliuks' living room. In addition, the regional Military Christian Union is based in the church, and they are active in interdenominational efforts, such as the annual citywide Easter choir. Yet there is no inflated pride in their accomplishments or ministry. When an enthusiastic parishioner exclaimed during a service that "our church is the best," the preacher gently rebuked him, reminding all that God calls each church to its own ministry and worship.

May the Yarmoliuks' willingness to follow God alone be an example for those of us tempted to place our trust in our skills, training, donors, and mission organizations.

A Taxing Schedule

Petr Mikhailovich, as bishop, regularly visits churches throughout the island, often driving long hours in bad weather to visit northern Sakhalin. On one occasion he insisted on taking me to the airport at 6:30 a.m., as I was part of the church family. Afterwards, his plans were to drive south to pray for a member of a church facing spiritual battles, return home for the Wednesday evening service, and after making sure everyone gets home (the city's public transportation stops by 9 p.m., so the Yarmoliuks offer rides home to all who attend), drive through the night to a city some distance north, where meetings were planned for the next day. In addition, Petr Mikhailovich serves on the Sakhalin Regional Council for Religious Affairs, along with the Orthodox bishop and various government officials.

The Church's Attitude Toward Money

I was especially struck by the church's attitude toward money, which seemed unusual for both Russian and Western churches. While the congregation is supported entirely by donations, the bishop nonetheless places no pressure to give a certain amount, or to give up comforts in order to donate to the church, as can be the case. Yet the subject of money comes up regularly in sermons, with an emphasis on determining each week in prayer the amount to be given. Parishioners are taught to bring the money they had set aside, making the offering neither a last-minute decision based on guilt or pressure, nor leftovers after the week's expenses. No one is to feel guilty for giving little, nor to feel good about giving much. Emphasis is also placed on living a dignified—rather than a meager—lifestyle, as representatives of God's kingdom on Earth. Parishioners are instructed to dress and act in a way that attracts people to God's kingdom, rather than repels them, a teaching in contrast to the widespread stereotype in Russia that Christians should be poor and unsuccessful.

The Bishop's Advice

When asked what advice he had for Westerners seeking to minister in Russia or the Far East, there was no hesitation in Petr Mikhailovich's response. "Above all, love God and love people, not theology. Introduce people to Jesus Christ. Don't think you need to plan everything well. If God is calling you, go! Don't wait."

On the subject of provisions, he noted, "We have never received a salary, but we have never gone without bread. Listen to the Holy Spirit, to what He is calling you to do. He may not be calling you to go, but instead to support others. We all need to listen to God's voice, and to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. If your ministry is giving, listen to God to know whom to give to. That's how God answers the prayers of those in need—by prompting others to give to them." With his characteristic humor, he said to tell readers: "We seek to be fools for Christ's sake, and we wish them to be wise in Christ" (1 Corinthians 4:10). In addition, he wants to share his firm belief in a coming revival that will begin in the Russian Far East.

An Example to Follow

Without seeking to place a single church, pastor, or ministry on a pedestal, and recognizing that the congregation has many faults (by my third month, I was frustrated with certain things), my time in this Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk fellowship was an encouragement and a learning opportunity that differed from my experiences in larger Russian cities or in the West. May the Yarmoliuks' willingness to follow God alone be an example for those of us tempted to place our trust in our skills, training, donors, and mission organizations. May this church's devotion to society's outcasts challenge us when we are tempted to put our own church's needs and comforts first. May we learn to listen, going where God calls us to go and giving to those whom He calls us to support, as part of His family. And as Petr Mikhailovich challenges us, may we be wise in Christ, while never being afraid to appear as fools for the sake of the Gospel.◆

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Contemporary Religious Life on Sakhlin Island

Natalia Potapova

Editor's Note: The first half of this article appeared in the previous issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report *13 (Spring 2005):5-6.*

The revival of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia as a whole, as well as on Sakhalin, is taking place in the midst of the active spread of doctrines that appeared during the 1990s wave of missionary activity. The majority of missionaries in Russia are representatives of Protestant churches, conquering territory in the Far East, and supplanting Orthodoxy. On Sakhalin, just as in neighboring Far Eastern territories, the 1990s created a situation in which Protestants are in the vast majority, both in number of churches and number of overall active adherents. In 2003 the majority of religious organizations active in the region (71 of 121) are Protestant, and according to official data, they have more than 3,000 parishioners.

Christians of Evangelical Faith - Pentecostal

Christians of Evangelical Faith - Pentecostal (KhVE) is the largest and strongest Protestant movement on Sakhalin, exhibiting steady growth throughout the period of investigation (1990-2003). The Sakhalin Regional Association of Churches of Christians of Evangelical Faith of the Union of KhVE-Pentecostals in Russia, founded in 1997, is led by Bishop P.M. Yarmoliuk. This is an interdenominational association, to which belong Christians of Evangelical Faith, Evangelical Christians, Presbyterians, and Methodists. Their association with a central organization allowed them to reregister under the terms of the 1997 federal law on religion. All churches that joined the association then registered with the Department of Justice as Christians of Evangelical Faith - Pentecostals. The majority of them had been founded by missionaries from South Korea or the United States. In 2002, one non-registered Pentecostal church, the 20-member Victory Chapel pastored by American missionary L.P. Dominges, was also active in the regional capital, having officially informed the city authorities of its religious activity. Churches of Russian origin also continue to function, several of which were founded by families who arrived on the island in 1975 and achieved registration in the mid-1980s. Currently there are 65 organizations on Sakhalin under the KhVE-Pentecostal umbrella, with 46 clergy, the majority of whom are ordained pastors with some theological training. Conferences are held for pastors four times per year, and they have a Bible school. In addition, they have regular contact with missionaries: in 2001, 43 missionaries visited them (of 67 missionaries visiting Sakhalin overall). In August 2003 alone, Pentecostals received missionaries from the United States, South Korea, and Bulgaria. (Translator's Note: No Western missionaries are known to reside on Sakhalin today. Most missionaries are Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Korean.)

Contemporary Worship and Charity

The rapid growth of Pentecostal churches is evident in all regions of Russia and is generally attributed to their dynamic, contemporary style of worship. Both registered and unregistered Pentecostal churches influence society through their active missionary work and church planting, that often is oriented toward youth. They also are extremely active in charity work. As early as 1994, a foreign missionary undertook an unprecedented journey throughout the island distributing five truckloads of humanitarian aid. Thanks to the active missionary efforts of P.M. Yarmoliuk, whose first trip was in 1999, even the most remote and forgotten settlements are no longer deprived of the gospel. Missionary activity and active social outreach—such as aid to street children and programs for "difficult" children—attract the attention of the population. For example, a pastor, who is also a professor of agricultural sciences, has been teaching children not only the Bible, but basic agronomy. A non-registered church has a puppet theater which performs at orphanages and homes for the aged throughout the island. An interdenominational organization works with prisoners and their families.

"Voice of Hope" Church

The internal dynamics of the development of Pentecostal churches on Sakhalin can be traced to two churches—one "old" church founded during Soviet times, and a "new" one founded by foreign missionaries in the 1990s. The Church "Voice of Hope" of the Christians of Evangelical Faith was the first Pentecostal organization in the region, already registered in 1985. It has had a single pastor, who arrived from (what was then) Belorussia in 1975, and used its own means to build a House of Prayer on the outskirts of town between 1989 and 1993, despite the fact that the majority of parishioners live in the city. According to the pastor, in 2003, the church had 96 members, with an average of 46 at a Sunday service, primarily elderly women, as well as ten children. All are Slavic, with the exception of one young woman of Korean heritage. According to the pastor, their unregistered satellite parish in another town has 30 parishioners.

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"Blagodat" Church

In contrast, the most active and fastest growing church in the KhVE-Pentecostal Union is the Church "Blagodat," of "Grace" Mission, which predicted the end of the world in 1992. Their founder is an American missionary (originally from South Korea), who arrived in Russia in 1991 and has since obtained Russian citizenship. According to the pastor, his church had eight members in 1992 and 300 in 1998, of which 50 percent were youth. In 1998, 60 percent of the members were Russian, while the rest were Korean. Typical sermon topics in the mid-1990s were the alcoholism of the Russian people and a call to "make Sakhalin a blossoming garden." Construction of a church building began in 1998 and was completed in 2000. By August 2003, the church had approximately 600 members. "Blagodat" is a cell or network church; for example, the church planned during 2003 to grow to 1,500 members meeting in 100 cell groups. There were at least 300 people at a Sunday service in 2003, 70 percent of whom were Korean.

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It is interesting to note that those parishioners over 60 years old were exclusively Russian women (no more than 15 people), while the majority were Koreans between the ages of 30 and 50. The church is growing quickly—100 people were baptized in the first half of 2003 alone. A typical sermon in 2003 was about the need to live modestly in order to give more to the church. A common prayer is for God to bless their businesses. The church applies a strategy common among American and Korean missionaries—that of planting new churches in order to attract newcomers to the confession—with 17 registered affiliated churches in 2003, only three of which have an ordained pastor (the rest have lay preachers). As with other churches of the KhVE, parishioners are attracted by extensive charity work including soup kitchens, distribution of free Bibles, the organization of agricultural work for the unemployed, medical services, etc. New churches such as "Blagodat," therefore, grow dynamically, while the congregations of older churches tend to age and to "feminize," lacking active social outreach.

Other Churches and Faiths

In addition to Pentecostals and Orthodox, Sakhalin is also home to smaller numbers of Presbyterians, Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Roman Catholics, Evangelical Christians, the New Apostolic Church, Bahai, and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. In 2002, an Orthodox Jewish organization was registered with ten members, as was a Muslim congregation, also with ten believers. At present, 121 religious organizations are registered on Sakhalin according to the federal law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association." The overwhelming majority of these appeared due to the efforts of foreign missionaries. There are also non-registered organizations that have informed the Department of Justice of their presence. Religious organizations also exist which have not informed the Department of Justice of their presence, but have instead registered and operate as commercial or social organizations.

Orthodox Difficulties

The traditional Russian Orthodox Church, which appeared on the island at the same time as other religions under conditions of complete freedom granted in early 1990s legislation, was unable to compete with other confessions—above all, Protestants—in attracting parishioners. Reasons included limited missionary and charitable activity, fees charged for rituals, the incomprehensible language of its liturgy, the shortage of qualified priests, the lack of elderly Sakhalin residents of Orthodox heritage, the longstanding secularism of the population, and the border location. Nonetheless, the authority of Orthodoxy as the traditional spiritual and ideological foundation of Russian society is great. Regional authorities give unconditional preference to Orthodoxy, resulting at times in the infringement on the rights of other confessions.

Retrenchment Among "Old" Protestants and New Religious Movements

Also evident is the gradual extinction of "old" Protestant religious organizations of Russian heritage, which existed legally in the Soviet era, such as Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Christians of Evangelical Faith, and Seventh-day Adventists, who also proved unable to compete with new, modernized churches in attracting new members. Overall, the religious situation on the island has stabilized. And as the period of religious aggressiveness has passed, the activities of exotic, foreign religious traditions common in the early 1990s (Bahai, Krishna) are also weakening. The rapid increase in the number of religious organizations has ended, and the number of missionary initiatives and the percent of the population considering themselves believers has stabilized. Confessions are becoming equal partners with the authorities in facing critical social issues—above all, the spiritual education of society and the solving of important social problems, such as aid to the poor, the elderly, and orphans.◆

Adapted, with permission, from N.V. Potapova, "Religioznaia zhizn' naseleniia Sakhalina na sovremennom etape (90-e gody XX - nachalo XXI veka)," Kraevedcheskii biulleten', No 2 (2003), 70-95. Translated by Sharyl Corrado.

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Christian Responses to Trafficking in Women from Eastern Europe

Mark R. Elliott

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Catholic Efforts

Catholic bodies have been particularly active in Europe publicizing the plight of trafficked women and taking steps to provide protection and care for women leaving prostitution. The international Catholic charity, Caritas, organizes prevention campaigns, operates safe houses, and assists in the repatriation of trafficked women. In addition, it helped launch a joint Protestant-Catholic coalition: Christian Action and Networking Against Trafficking in Women (CAT). In 2003 CAT published *Christian Action and Networking Against Trafficking in Women*, aptly described as "an action-oriented guide for awareness-raising and social assistance." In addition to outlining the alarming dimensions of trafficking, the study provides sound, practical advice for Christians motivated to move beyond concern to action.[1]

Sister Eugenia Bonetti leads the efforts of some 200 nuns in the Italian Union of Major Superiors, working fulltime to provide housing and security for hundreds of women trafficked to Italy from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world.[2] In addition, two Italian priests also assist many victims of trafficking in Italy. Don Cesare Lo Deserto founded a safe house where, to date, over 1,000 victims of sexual trafficking have found safe haven, protection, and compassionate care in his shelter.[3] Similarly, Father Oreste Benzi, founder of the Pope John XXIII Community, has helped over 2,000 women escape the control of traffickers and pimps. On 15 May 2002 this man of compassion accompanied 500 former prostitutes, mostly from Eastern Europe and Africa, to a general audience with John Paul II.[4]

Additional Protestant Efforts

Other West European, mostly Protestant, direct intervention charities ministering to prostitutes and former prostitutes include The Scarlet Cord (Amsterdam), Christian Aid and Resources Foundation (Amsterdam), Door of Hope (London), One25 Limited (Bristol), and Alabare Christian Care Centers (Bristol). These groups reach out to local women and women trafficked from Asia, Africa, and, increasingly, Eastern Europe. Other Christian ministries combating trafficking and aiding its victims in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union include Door of Life (Thessaloniki), Lydia's House (Athens), International Teams (Athens), The Lost Coin (Athens), Rahab Ministry of Hungarian Baptist Aid (Budapest), United Methodist Committee on Relief (Pristina, Kosovo), Ministry to Women in Prostitution (Bishkek, Kyrgyzia), and NGO "Suyuu-Bulag" (Bishkek, Kyrgyzia).[5]

Emma Skjonsby is a missionary with International Teams ministering in Athens, Greece, to women engaged in prostitution. During Easter season, 2004, she shared the following with her supporters:

> Everywhere we went that night, the presence of the Lord went ahead of us. It was the first brothel I'd been in and I cautiously push open the door and stepped inside. It's a bare room, lined with benches and a curtain. We catch sight of an old, lumpy woman with half her teeth missing and a suspicious look on her face. "What do you want?" she asked. We explain that we brought a gift for the girls working there and asked to speak with them. Another woman, let's call her Eleni, pokes her head out to see what's going on. We wish her a happy Easter and invite her to pick a candle. As we offered the brightly wrapped [Jesus film] video and the candle to Eleni and then to the madame, it was so beautiful to watch their expressions soften from suspicion to surprise and joy. When was the last time they were loved?[6]

More recently, Emma and her co-laborers reached out to "women working out of hotels, cafeterias, bars, brothels, and the streets" during the August 2004 Athens Olympics.[7]

Make Way Partners is a U.S.-based Evangelical mission that works "to prevent and combat" sexual trafficking in women and children. Founders Milton and Kimberly Smith, with the help of Western churches and Christian entrepreneurs, organize "income generation teams" in Ukraine and Moldova, "planting small businesses through local Christians."[8] Integra Venture, a faith-based community economic development agency based in Bratislava, Slovakia, also believes helping economically destitute women obtain gainful employment is a critical component in preventing sexual trafficking. The economic opportunities offered to victims of trafficking by such groups as Integra Venture, MakeWay Partners, the Salvation Army, and World Vision provide women "not just a way out, but a way of transcending the evil that has imprisoned them."[9]

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The Romanian Orthodox Church

Unfortunately, most churches in post-Soviet Bloc states do not appear to have recognized the seriousness of sexual trafficking from and within post-Soviet states. One encouraging exception is the Romanian

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Christians, West and East, must decide how best to comfort the afflicted and how best to afflict those who grievously harm millions of women and children created in the image of God.

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

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Orthodox Church. Patriarch Teoctist has asked priests to include warnings against trafficking in Sunday sermons. He also has spoken out on national radio against this evil. And the threat of trafficking is now a compulsory subject in Romanian Orthodox seminaries.[10]

An indomitable American Baptist minister, Lauran Bethell, who in 1987 established a safe house in Thailand for former prostitutes, spearheaded an "International Consultation on Ministry to Women in Prostitution" at Green Lakes, Wisconsin, 7-13 August 2004, with over 200 participants from 26 countries. While the largest number of Christian ministries works in Asia, at least ten groups represented at the Green Lakes consultation provide care for trafficked women in Western and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.[11]

The Role of Faith-Based Organizations

Whatever Christians have done to date to combat trafficking, it still must be conceded that in this cause the church as a whole has been a sleeping giant. Nevertheless, there is hope in its untapped potential. Sister Mary Ellen Dougherty of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops gave a brief but power-packed call to arms at a Vatican-sponsored anti-trafficking conference in June 2004. Her presentation, "The Role of Faith-based Organizations in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons," deserves to be studied closely. In it she ably argues there is a "logic" in "lodging anti-trafficking work in faith-based organizations."

1. They possess "theological perspectives on justice that mandate action."
2. They possess a phenomenal networking potential through the broad-based geographic reach of local houses of worship.
3. And they have history and staying power, offering "continuity, stability, and permanence to the work."

Furthermore, there are reasons for "hope as we pursue efforts to eliminate human trafficking."

1. "Knowledge of human trafficking is spreading."
2. "There is [growing] power and authority behind the message against human trafficking. Governments across the world are converging around this common cause. Where they are not, there is the constant and concrete reminder to them that this is a human rights issue. It is becoming increasingly clear, even to indifferent and corrupt governments, that opposition to trafficking will not go away.
3. "Finally," she relates, "there is hope in prayer. We all have our prophets and our saints. In their struggles against injustice, they did not waste their lives. They did not simply visit the world. That is why they are prophets and saints. We are in good company."[12]

In Conclusion

It is imperative for believers to come to terms with the abominable assault on the God-given dignity of every woman and child perpetrated by traffickers, pimps, and johns. And after comprehending the massive dimensions of this international slave trade in women, Christians, West and East, must decide how best to pray and put feet to prayers, how best to comfort the afflicted, and how best to afflict those who ignore the most basic of human rights and who grievously harm millions of women and children created in the image of God. ◆

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Multicultural Theological Education in Kazakhstan

Choon Taeck Kong

The Kazakhstan Evangelical Christian Seminary (KECS), which was founded in 1993, was the first Christian seminary to open following Kazakh independence in 1991. From the outset the seminary has been Evangelical, interdenominational, and international. Students learn from professors with ministry experience in Kazakhstan and from visiting professors from churches and seminaries around the world. The Lausanne Covenant is an adequate summary of the doctrinal position of KECS.

The original language of instruction at KECS was Russian. However, after experiencing frequent cultural and linguistic conflicts, it became clear that Kazakh language instruction was needed as well as Russian. So in September 1997, KECS became the first seminary to have a Kazakh language department in addition to a Russian program. It is true that Kazakh does not easily lend itself to academics. For example, this language includes dozens of words for *camel* and *sheep*, but none for *computer*. So it is a challenge for translators who themselves are new to the faith. Also, English-speaking lecturers who use translators for classroom teaching usually find that they can only cover two-thirds of the material in a Kazakh class that they can cover in a Russian class. Nevertheless, KECS feels that it can continue to develop Kazakh theological language by using it in seminary education.

Admissions

All students interested in entering KECS begin their course of studies in a one-month residential discipleship course. During this period students live and work together as they are taught basic principles of Christian living and character development. Those who pass this course are invited to study in the full academic program. At this point, KECS does not have a set academic requirement for admission, primarily because the Evangelical church in Kazakhstan is so new. When KECS opened in 1993, anyone who professed faith was invited to become a seminary student. But each year, as the church matures, the seminary is able to be more selective in admissions. The general literacy rate is quite high, about 95 percent, and academics are a high core value. In terms of an academic level of instruction, it may be helpful to think of freshman/sophomore (junior college) students.

Kazakhstan, in which KECS is privileged to serve, is a multiethnic and multicultural nation of approximately 17 million, with 46 percent Kazakhs and 35 percent Russians, with smaller numbers of Ukrainians, Germans, Uzbeks, Uigurs, Tatars, and Belarusians. The demographic picture of the KECS student body reflects the ethnic diversity and change in the country. Since 1991 Russians in large numbers have returned to Russia or have chosen to migrate to other countries. As Russian influence declines, as it has been doing since the fall of the Soviet Union, ethnic revival movements have become active—and it shows today in KECS's student enrollment. Increasingly larger numbers of Kazakh students enroll as a result of Kazakh ethnic revival and dynamic evangelistic movements in the country. As the formerly dominant Russian culture declines, other ethnic groups become more active in society.

When KECS opened, Russian enrollment was nine, it peaked at 21 in 1997, and was nine once again in 2000. A Kazakh enrollment of three in 1993 increased to 36 in 2000.

KECS Enrollment by Nationality

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Russians	9	9	13	11	21	12	18	9
Kazakhs	3	7	3	5	5	29	36	36
Germans	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	0
Koreans	2	0	2	5	2	2	3	1
Ukrainians	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Africans	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Canadians	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Azerbaijani	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Jews	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Tajik	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gypsies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**15**	**17**	**19**	**23**	**29**	**43**	**60**	**53**

Community worship at KECS allows students to practice and experience different kinds of theological expression. To maximize the learning experience, students in mixed ethnic groups of five are required to visit different ethnic churches in the city of Almaty where KECS is located. This is to let them widen their worship experience and to develop more meaningful ones for their ministries.

Student Demographics

Students range in age from 18 to their 50s and come from various Protestant denominations. Though students reflect different levels of spiritual maturity, all have been recommended by their pastors. Some are university graduates while others have only completed high school. Most have been believers for only two to five years. They have not had a very wide exposure to the Christian world, theological issues, or even news of the world beyond Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, they are open and enthusiastic learners who especially want to know how to understand and apply the Bible in their lives.

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To maximize the learning experience, students in mixed ethnic groups of five are required to visit different ethnic churches to widen their worship experience.

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The Seminary does not provide all student living expenses, but does support some portion of it. Students are expected to ask God for needed expenses. Those from Almaty who are single or married without children are supported with monthly living and transportation expenses of $70. Single students from outside Almaty and married students with dependent children are supported with $80 for living and transportation expenses. Married students with three or more children are supported with $90 for living and transportation expenses.

Students are open and enthusiastic learners who especially want to know how to understand and apply the Bible in their lives.

Course of Study and Schedule

Students who are interested in general church and ministry work are invited to study for one year. Courses are intended to teach students the Bible, church history, and practical ministry skills. Students who show promise as church planters, pastors, professors, or in other specialized areas of ministry are invited for a second year of study. Second-year courses are taught in a two-year cycle. Those professors who come every year to teach alternate their courses each year. For example, a professor who teaches "Matthew" one year teaches "Psalms" the following year. Thus, those who study two years gain wider knowledge for their ministry.

Two-Year Curriculum

Biblical Studies
Old Testament Survey
New Testament Survey
Individual book studies from the following areas:
Pentateuch
Old Testament Poetry
Gospels/Life of Christ
Acts and Early Church
Pauline Epistles
General Epistles
Revelation

Theological Studies
Doctrine of God
Doctrine of Humanity
Doctrine of Salvation
Doctrine of the Church
Biblical Theology
Eschatology

Church History
Early Church to Middle Ages
Reformation to Present

Practical Theology
Preaching
Christian Education
Ethics
Church Growth
Spiritual Gifts/Team Ministry
Bible Study Methods
"Experiencing God"

Missiology
Non-Christian Cults and Religions
History of Missions
Urban and Rural Missions
Contextualization
Apologetics
Islam-History and Evangelistic Approaches

The Kazakh New Testament is now complete, but to date the only portions of the Old Testament in the Kazakh language are Genesis, Ruth, Jonah, I and II Kings, I and II Samuel, and some Psalms. Many Kazakhs understand the Russian Bible and most have it available to read those portions that are not yet in their language. Courses the administration would like to add, once faculty training permits, include Russian Orthodoxy and cultural studies of the ethnic peoples of Kazakhstan and how to reach them.

Classes are held weekdays except Wednesday, which is devoted to training and practice in evangelism. On this day gifted evangelists teach in the morning and lead students in practical work for the rest of the day. Wednesday is also a day for continuing education. About 25 KECS graduates in ministry gather each week for fellowship and instruction.

In Conclusion

More than 225 students have graduated from KECS and are now involved in various ministries. Most graduates are making an impact in their homes, churches, and society for the Lord Jesus. KECS seeks to encourage those who are called to pastoral ministry and those whose calling is to other careers as "salt and light" in this very secular nation. ◆

Edited excerpt published with permission from Choon Taeck Kong, "Multicultural Theological Education at the Kazakhstan Evangelical Christian Seminary," D.Min. thesis, Claremont School of Theology, 2002.

Choon Taeck Kong *is founder and president emeritus of Kazakhstan Evangelical Christian Seminary, Almaty, Kazakhstan.*

Religious Education in Post-Soviet Latvia

Anta Filipsone

Under the new conditions of freedom, it gradually became clear that Christian churches in Eastern Europe had bought their survival at a very high price. Existing within deformed societies, they in turn were considerably deformed by totalitarianism. Consequently, as Lutheran pastor Juris Rubenis has noted, "The church could not urge society toward new spiritual life and truth if it had not yet resolved the burdens inherited from the past." Yet the process of clarification and cleansing turned out to be "very complicated and, at times, unrealizable."[1]

Even after ten years of freedom the process of clarification and cleansing is not yet complete. To this day in most countries of the former socialist bloc, Christian churches still have not recovered from what Georg Lukacs called the "persecution syndrome." He characterizes it as follows:

> It was difficult to forget the times of oppression and persecution and change the attitudes caused by the pressure of discrimination. Consequently the oppressors were blamed for all the failures and mistakes of the churches. The time of oppression was a favorable time for charismatic personalities and private adventures, but destroyed the need for cooperation and organized structures.[2]

In Latvia, too, the challenges of the historical heritage are sometimes confused with the pressures of the pluralistic post-modern world. For example, L. G. Taivans acknowledges, "While much blame for the decline of religious practice and belief can be placed at the doorstep of organized and militant Soviet atheism, not all of its inroads and seeming victories are the result of its own actions and policies, but rather, can be found in the peculiar mix of Latvian history and the worldwide process of urbanization and modernization."[3]

In order to discern the sources of various challenges and design adequate strategies for dealing with them, Christian churches in Latvia are working in several directions—reclaiming and strengthening their particular confessional identities, reestablishing theological education, developing ecumenical dialogue and cooperation, and rethinking their social status.

Confessional Identity, Theological Education, and Ecumenical Cooperation

After the restoration of religious freedom in Latvia, Christian churches experienced the "shock of modernization," concluding "neither the pre-Communist practice of interweaving state with church nor the ghettoized or underground existence of past decades"[4] would permit an open, pluralistic, democratic, and capitalist society. The new opportunities and freedoms that were offered to churches required new qualifications that not every church worker possessed.

Eastern European Christians want to protect the authentic, dynamic, and vital faith which they developed during years of persecutions from what they regard to be the sterile Christianity of the West. According to Rubenis, Westerners look upon East Europeans as "immature children who could eliminate their deficiencies only by completely adopting the theology and practices of West European churches." Without denying the need to learn from both achievements and mistakes of Western Christians, they still regard it important to assert, "We East Europeans are not just needy and immature orphans, but people gifted with a rich history and experience."[5]

Eastern European Christians want to protect the authentic, dynamic, and vital faith which they developed during years of persecutions from what they regard to be the sterile Christianity of the West.

Church and Society

After the reestablishment of religious freedom in Latvia, the public status of Christian churches changed. First of all, as they became seen and heard, they started experiencing ebbs and flows in popularity. Second, not only did the churches become visible, but they also became accountable and liable. Very soon it turned out that "the church knew that it needed to influence the public life of the nation, yet it did not quite understand how to go about it."[6] Rubenis attributes this confusion mainly to a lack of adequate theological and pastoral education:

> It must be admitted that the clergy was not always able to speak to people in a way that they could understand or that related to their lives. Far too often the clergy was under the illusion that quick evangelism was attainable by putting rigorous and moralizing pressure on people. This, in turn, only annoyed people and pushed them further away from the church.[7]

Yet other experts, such as R. Putnis, think that reasons for the current difficulties in relations between churches and society go deeper, that the Lutheran church lacks both the means and desire for meaningful dialogue with society. According to Putnis, church leaders often display a lack of reality and an ignorance of the true needs and hopes of parishioners and all inhabitants of Latvia. Putnis is critical of public activities of the Lutheran church because, in his opinion, they are not directed to the right issues:

> Women's ordination, gays and lesbians, abortion, and, of course, taxes on church property are the only topics which have motivated Archbishop Vanags to express his opinion. Where are his activities in such areas as poverty, prostitution, homeless children, relief, development of democracy, political participation, evaluation of the effects of totalitarianism—both in the society and in the church—integration of minorities, tolerance, openness, education, sects, integration

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> into Europe, and environmental problems? Even though these are problems which confront every Christian on a daily basis, they are dealt with in very few homilies.[8]

In general, Putnis is concerned that "in the Lutheran church of Latvia it is difficult to find a place for an open and honest forum on such issues" due to "a lack of intellectuals among parishioners (which leads to the lack of Christian debates on social issues in church), poor theological education of clergy, and correspondingly poor knowledge of Christian doctrines in society." Instead of dealing with problems related to widespread social tension and religious pluralism in Latvian society, "the church displays heightened centralism" and, as a result, according to Putnis, has an insignificant public role.[9]

In Estonian public schools many zealous Christians rushed to teach religion and failed due to the lack of pedagogical experience and professional skills.

In Estonia, by Comparison

Comprehensive studies on the development of religious education in Latvia after the collapse of the Soviet Union are lacking. However, in neighboring Estonia, where the situation is somewhat similar, such research is being carried out by historian and theologian Pille Valk from Tartu University. She concentrates on the effects of Soviet atheism on the religious thinking and imagination of Estonians and the challenges that Estonian religious education is facing in the transition from a closed totalitarian system to an open, pluralistic, postmodern society.

Valk lists the following factors that strongly influence the development of religious education in Estonia: (a) Almost all people over 30 (parents and teachers) have experienced the influence of a strongly atheistic education, and their knowledge of religion is limited. (b) Many people have no contact with the church, and for them religion is something alien. (c) In the Soviet period, religion was a very private matter. (d) Due to the heritage of the former totalitarian regime, many people do not trust new "prophets" and ideologies. (e) The sometimes aggressive activities of various new religious movements have created skepticism and fear of religion. (f) Yet for many people, formal connection to a church still appears to be part of the national identity.[10]

As a result, even though many people seemed to be interested in religion and even supported teaching religion in public schools, at the same time, introduction of religion in Estonian schools in 1991 triggered sharp discussions in the press formed by ideas of personal freedom and pluralism as well as residues of Soviet ideology and atheist propaganda. Today Estonian public schools offer a Christian ecumenical approach to religious education to provide knowledge about religion and to help in understanding the world, culture, and the role of the religious dimension in human life. Religious education in public schools also supports students' moral development and the formation of national identity as well as attempting to create preconditions for personal religious choices.[11]

Valk acknowledges that the status of religious education in Estonian public schools is still quite vague. Usually it is school principals who, depending on their personal attitudes, decide whether religious education will be taught in their schools or not. In addition, when schools initially became open to religious education, many zealous Christians rushed to teach religion and failed due to the lack of pedagogical experience and professional skills. Unfortunately, since then those individual failures have been exaggerated, generalized, and presented as reasons for leaving religious education out of the curricula of many schools.[12]

Today no school in Estonia has systematic religious education from the first to the last grade. Teachers must develop curriculum mostly by themselves. In terms of resources, initially it was quite common that teachers had only their own copies of the Bible and perhaps one book of Bible stories for the entire class. Thus, the lack of teaching materials was one of the most serious problems. Today the situation has somewhat improved, but it is "not yet normal."[13] ◆

Editor's Note: The conclusion of this article will appear in the next issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Anta Filipsone, "A Critical Analysis of Approaches to Religious Education in Public Schools of Post-Soviet Latvia," Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 2002.

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Church and State in Bulgaria Today

Dony K. Donev

Postcommunist Protestant Revival in Bulgaria

For those of us who lived through the last days of Communist Bulgaria, the fall of the Berlin Wall was a modern-day miracle. On 10 November 1989, the day after the border between East and West Berlin opened, Todor Zhivkov, Bulgaria's Communist leader of over 30 years, resigned. That same year, with the church no longer suppressed, evangelistic meetings began in many Bulgarian towns and villages. Despite pressure and constant media attacks, the Protestant movement grew rapidly. In the first five years of democracy, several Pentecostal churches in Bulgaria exceeded a membership of one thousand. Many Muslim and Roma communities were reached with the gospel. The Mission for Christian Upbringing ministered to over one million people including not only Bulgarians, but Turks, Roma, Serbians, Pomaks, and Russians. In 2001, the Bulgarian Church of God counted 32,000 members, with 250 ministers in some 400 congregations nationwide. In 2003, the Bulgarian Assemblies of God reported over 50,000 members, with 150 national pastors in 550 churches, plus a Bible school with 173 students. Thus, the Protestant movement, which numbered approximately 13,000 members in 1975, grew to 55,000 in the 1980s, and to over 100,000 members by 2000, in a nation of eight million.

Dr. Stephen Penov, a professor at Sofia University and a member of the Bulgarian Academy of Science, serves as a parliamentary expert on human rights and religious confessions. In a recent interview he estimated that church membership in traditional Protestant churches in Bulgaria is over 60,000, while new Protestant denominations have a membership of approximately 50,000. Bulgaria is also home to approximately 70,000 Catholics, in contrast to the majority Eastern Orthodox, who number 6,000,000.

The Confessions Act of 2002

In 2001-02, the Bulgarian Parliament considered three drafts of legislation to replace the Communist Law of Religion, which had been the single guideline for church-state relations since 1949. Attorney Borislav Tzekov, from the Novoto Vreme political movement, crafted the bill that received the most attention. In an interview for *Sega* newspaper, he defended his draft, declaring that it was only opposed by "approximately 50 people protesting in front of the Parliament and by a small group that was liberally financed by sects most hostile to Orthodoxy."

On 12 December 2002, the Center for Religious Freedom in Bulgaria submitted a detailed analysis of the proposed legal modifications to the Bulgarian Parliament. The reaction of the Center represented the opinion of Bulgarian Evangelicals, the Bulgarian Orthodox Alternative Synod, and a number of other denominations and religious groups, supported by a membership which greatly exceeded the number quoted by Tzekov. In the analysis, Center Director Viktor Kostov indicated that the Tzekov Bill "voided the right to freedom of religion, introduced religion-based discrimination, neglected the recommendations of Council of Europe experts, and proposed a discriminatory registration system."

On 18 December 2002, 18 religious and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) submitted a petition to the president of Bulgaria insisting on an emergency meeting in order to express their reservations, the need for a Council of Europe analysis, and the need for a presidential veto. The meeting never took place, but on 20 December 2002, the Bulgarian National Assembly nevertheless passed the Tzekov Bill. Regardless of all warnings, the law followed the lead of the 1997 Russian Law on Religion, declaring Orthodox Christianity to be the "traditional religion" of the country. The newly accepted law had been prepared, presented, and implemented in cooperation with the Bulgarian Directorate of Religious Affairs. In the words of its director, Dr. Ivan Zhelev, "The main goal was to defend the position of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and to convince heretics to return to it."

Religious Freedom and Human Rights Concerns, 2003-04

The 2002 Confessions Act designates the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as a traditional religious confession. The special privileges granted to this church establish religious inequalities that contradict the Constitution of Bulgaria, Article Nine of the European Convention, as well as other international agreements. Nor does the Act address the religious needs of minority ethnic groups. All denominations, with the exception of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, must register with the Sofia Municipal Court, but the legislation does not specify the requirements for granting registration. Also, the law does not make provision for appeals in cases where the court fails to, or refuses to, register a religious group. This gives the court undefined control over the existence of religious confessions. The role of the Directorate of Religious Affairs in the registration process is mentioned, but not clearly defined. Furthermore, registration is granted only to organizations with a recognized, centralized structure, which is against the traditions and bylaws of many of the confessions in Bulgaria and creates new problems on the local level.

The very fact that the law purposes to solve the problem within the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is based on the presumption that the church is not able to solve its own problems, and therefore, requires the assistance of the state. Public worship is prohibited without denominational registration. Also, no provisions are made for foreign missionaries,

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Regrettably, the Confessions Act fosters an atmosphere conducive to discrimination and harassment against "non-traditional" religious minorities.

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The [Orthodox] church today has failed to recover and reclaim its biblical identity and is becoming simply a state institution with a predetermined interest in a strictly regulated sphere of social life.

chaplains, or pastoral care in the army, prisons, hospitals, and elder care facilities. Regrettably, the Confessions Act fosters an atmosphere conducive to discrimination and harassment against "non-traditional" religious minorities. It defines neither procedures (delays, appeals, nature and role of the Directorate of Religions) nor substantive criteria for registration. It also fails to recognize freedom of conscience explicitly, as well as the right not to believe, and does not clarify the rights of believers within unregistered religious communities.

The Council of Europe insisted that the arguments in Article Seven for "national security" and "political goals" should be excluded from the text. It also regards the existence of a state church and the recognition of its "special role in the life of the state" as incompatible with the European Convention of Human Rights. In addition, religious freedom and human rights advocates warned that attempts of the state to establish a totalitarian order in the church after 15 years of democratic transition were unacceptable tendencies that could fuel conflicts among denominations, the government, and NGOs. Unfortunately, the government ignored these warnings.

The Church in the Hands of an Angry State

On 21 July 2004, on orders of Bulgaria's Chief Prosecutor, police stormed 250 churches affiliated with the Alternative Synod and detained its clergy. The purpose was to restore control of these sanctuaries to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which enjoyed state recognition. Father Pissarov, priest at the Dormition of the Mother of God Orthodox Church in Sofia, locked the doors of his sanctuary to prevent police from entering. A special force's team first scattered citizens who were protesting around the church and then pulled open the doors with the use of a vehicle. Although the priest was unarmed and did not resist arrest, five policemen held him on the ground directly under the crucifix while others kicked him in the face with their army boots. Father Pissarov was hospitalized with a serious concussion, broken teeth, and other injuries.

The conflict followed a decade of schism within the Bulgarian Orthodox Church between the traditional Orthodox confession headed by Patriarch Maxim and an Alternative Synod headed by Metropolitan Pimen, who has accused the patriarch of having served the former Communist regime since his appointment in 1971. "This is not the way the unity of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church should be restored," commented former president of Bulgaria Petar Stoyanov. Two Bulgarian ex-prime ministers, Phillip Dmitrov (1991-92) and Ivan Kostov (1997-2001), also stated that the actions of the state were in violation of basic human rights and religious freedoms. Kostov criticized the Confessions Act of 2002 for providing justification for such police action and called for its immediate revision.

Outside Bulgaria, United States Helsinki Commission Chairman, Representative Christopher Smith, charged that "Bulgarian authorities have abandoned neutrality and chosen sides, potentially endangering religious freedom." He urged the Bulgarian government to "end this embarrassment, lead by example, and honor its OSCE human rights commitment toward religious freedom." Luchezar Toshev, Director of the Confessions Commission, explained that the Confessions Act was not intended to solve the schism within the Orthodox Church and charged that the use of police in church business was incompatible with any style of European democracy.

In Summary

Unfortunately, the 2002 Confessions Act does not foster an atmosphere of religious freedom, pluralism, and tolerance where everyone enjoys the right to believe, or not believe. The question is: will Bulgaria be accepted into the European Union if the Confessions Act is not significantly amended? Its supporters argue that establishing a state religion has its precedents in Europe in both Catholic and Protestant states. However, none of the West European states passed through half a century of Communism. Forcibly excluded from politics, the church was removed from interaction with society. Under the Communists the role and function of the church were strictly regulated by the government. As a result, the church today has failed to recover and reclaim its biblical identity and is becoming simply a state institution with a predetermined interest in a strictly regulated sphere of social life. The government cannot and should not allow tradition to dictate special privileges for any denomination.

The struggles concerning the Bulgarian Confessions Act are not over. On 18 October 2004, after the unfortunate police actions of the previous July, opposition Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria presented Parliament with recommendations for changes in the law on religion. Less than a week later, perhaps in response, the government announced the formation of a new confessions commission, consisting of representatives from government departments of internal affairs, finance, and health. This body strongly resembles the Kremlin's Interreligious Council, but, unfortunately, Bulgaria's commission does not include representatives from any religious denominations.

The time has come for the Bulgarian church to rediscover its identity by revisiting its biblical theology. Common theological presuppositions within the faith of all Bulgarian Christians support religious tolerance. What is needed is a healthy environment for interdenominational partnership. The first step towards such a goal may have been a meeting of Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant believers that occurred on 23 October 2004. In a roundtable discussion, Christians from various confessions explored the theme of the "Universal Character of the Christian Church." Those present favored freedom of worship according to one's religious convictions and freedom from fear.◆

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Editor's note: For background on the Bulgarian Orthodox schism see Janice Broun, "Divisions in Eastern Orthodoxy Today," East-West Church and Ministry Report 5 (Spring 1997), 1-3.

Hungary, Poland, and Romania as Mission-Sending Nations

Scott Klingsmith

Poles probably have participated in more cross cultural missions than any other East Central Europeans to date. However, quite soon Romanians are likely to enjoy that distinction. The Hungarian Reformed Church is the largest Protestant church surveyed, but its active church membership is smaller than that of Evangelical churches in Romania. Poland's population is nearly twice that of Romania's, but its Evangelical population is only a fraction of Romania's. Evangelical churches in Poland and Hungary are minuscule, in contrast to Romania, where they number approximately half a million.

Everyone involved recognizes that churches in East Central Europe do not have a lot of money, although significant differences exist among the countries in terms of per capita income. Romania's average income is only about one third that of Poland or Hungary, which limits its missionary potential to some degree. However, it is not as poor as Ukraine or Moldova, which are missionary sending nations, and its spiritual dynamism suggests great potential for growth. Churches in all these countries struggle to pay their pastors, maintain their facilities, and provide social and financial assistance for church members who are unemployed, handicapped, widowed, or otherwise left uncared for by the state. Many, especially in Romania, have taken on large building programs which have left them beggars for help from Western Christians. Few wealthy businessmen belong to Evangelical churches, while most believers are living on the edge of survival. In none of the cases studied do national Christians fully support their own missionaries. Exacerbating the actual financial difficulties, Christians in these countries are used to thinking of themselves as poor.

Despite these handicaps, most leaders interviewed felt that the necessary financial resources would be found if a compelling vision for missions were communicated. Financial difficulties exist, but people will give if they believe the cause is worthy. Christians in East Central Europe have offered relief for flood victims, supplied food and clothing for Gypsy villages, published Bibles for people who had never had them, and sent missionaries to unreached areas.

Communism meant not just the restriction of physical movement (travel), but the restriction of mental movement (imagination). The 1989 Revolution brought not just freedom to act, but freedom to think about acting. The primary effect of the changes was the creation of conditions in which missions activity could become a reality.

Very few people in East Central Europe are struggling to develop a biblical theology of mission. Most people are still at the initial stages of building interest and motivation. Few have read missiological literature, most of which is available only in English or German anyway. Respondents made reference to a few basic resources such as the Perspectives course, Patrick Johnstone's *Operation World*, or missionary biographies.

Missions is understood by most people first of all as something which is done locally. In Hungarian mainline churches, missions became the totality of church ministry. In Romania and Poland, mission means ministry outside one's own local church: sending the choir to sing in another church, sending a preacher to another church to hold an evangelistic meeting, handing out tracts on the street, helping poor people, and running a drug rehabilitation center or clinic.

The notable exception to this conception of missions comes from the Lutheran Mission Society of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, whose members had been involved in foreign missions as young people and who kept that vision alive. A few people prayed for missionaries in other countries, but did not dream of missions for themselves. Otherwise, the overwhelming majority saw missions only as local ministry, in some ways synonymous with evangelism or simply ministry--everything the church does. One wonders to what extent sharing one's faith is part of the Hungarian historic church message and practice, at least as it would be defined by Evangelical groups. The emphasis is more on service and living out one's faith in daily life rather than evangelism or public proclamation of the gospel. One comment that American Evangelicals "can go 'Shine, Jesus, Shine' somewhere else" illustrates this attitude. It is not possible to determine at this time to what extent this evangelistic reserve is the effect of having the movement led by a missiologist rather than a pastor or evangelist or to what extent it reflects theologically more liberal views present in the historic churches.

One must ask to what extent those who are involved in the historic churches in Hungary would be comfortable with missionaries from Poland and Romania. Hungarians in mainline churches say Evangelicals speak a different language, even when they speak Hungarian. They say, "It hurts your ears." In Poland and Romania, one does not hear the kind of questioning of truth or of the gospel that one does in Hungary. The movement is driven by a simplicity of message that many Hungarians would consider simplistic. An interesting comparison can be made between Hungary, where church leaders debate local versus foreign missions, but do little of either, and Romania, where active home missions has aided the development of foreign missions. Those doing mission at home, especially church planting, find it easier to become involved in cross-cultural ministry.

An interesting comparison can be made between Hungary, where church leaders debate local versus foreign missions, but do little of either, and Romania, where active home missions has aided the development of foreign missions.

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Hungary, Poland, and Romania
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Many of those questioned spoke enthusiastically about the role that Western missionaries have played in encouraging missions. They have demonstrated, simply by their presence, the value of going to other countries. Some were very positive toward the possibilities of national churches sending missionaries, often when national believers themselves were not. A few outsiders have made themselves insiders (including Anne-Marie Kool in Hungary, Malcolm Clegg in Poland, and Tom Keppeler in Romania). These missionaries have been fully accepted into the national society because of their mastery of language and culture, their willingness to live like the people, their humility and willingness to learn, and usually, their presence in the country before the 1989 Revolution.

To what extent is Christian witness "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread" and to what extent is it the rich offering scraps to beggars?

On the negative side, respondents gave numerous examples of missionaries who did not model humility or a willingness to learn. These missionaries refused to learn the language and culture and had no understanding of the religious and historical context. Some were motivated by a naive view that, as a consequence of decades of Communism, Eastern Europe was a spiritual desert with people waiting with parched mouths for someone to bring them the cold water of the gospel. Some missionaries used money indiscriminately, attracting people with less than pure motives, or drawing them from established churches.

Does the act of giving carry with it a sense of superiority? To what extent is Christian witness "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread" and to what extent is it the rich offering scraps to beggars? One Nazarene church in Bucharest consists of only six families, each with five or more children. Nevertheless, it fully supports a missionary family in Ethiopia because it has a vision to see that country reached for the gospel.

Missionaries from East Central Europe rarely command a higher standard of living than those they serve, suggesting that a servant attitude matters more than material resources. ◆

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.

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Book Review

Henderson, Sarah L. *Building Democracy in Contemporary Russia: Western Support for Grassroots Organizations.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Reviewed by John A. Bernbaum.

Professor Sarah L. Henderson's study of Western support of grassroots organizations in Russia is an articulate and sober analysis of the impact of foreign aid on a society going through a "momentous transition." This well-researched book looks at Russia's attempt to dismantle socialist institutions and to replace them with democratic and free market structures. Within this larger transformational process, Henderson focuses her study on the development of civil society—the realm of activism in which citizens form and join organizations that are situated between state institutions, businesses, and families.

The basic question addressed is "the degree to which Western assistance can facilitate the emergence of civil society and, ultimately, democracy in countries where domestically such impulses are nonexistent or weak" (p.1). The core issue is whether or not Western efforts have helped, hurt, or been irrelevant to Russia's civic transformation. This question is timely and significant, considering that the U.S. government spends $700 million per year on democracy promotion programs, distributed to approximately 100 countries worldwide, and that funding of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is a $7 billion industry worldwide.

For those of us who work for educational or mission agencies, Henderson's study offers valuable insights on civil society building efforts that carry over into other charitable and humanitarian fields. Her book will be helpful for those who make decisions about building non-profit programs in the post-Communist world.

Henderson discovered "four strange and paradoxical effects" of foreign aid, despite the enormous goodwill of the donors. (In my experience, these same effects can also be seen in support provided by religious organizations and Christian foundations.) First, one of the goals of Western aid is to facilitate small grassroots initiatives, yet Russian civic organizations often mimic the organizational style of the funding agencies and quickly become centralized and bureaucratized. Second, civil society groups are supposed to be grassroots, bottom-up organizations, but many of them lack a grassroots constituency. They build offices with updated computers and fancy newsletters, but they have not generated a following among the citizens they were created to serve. They also often lack oversight mechanisms or accountability.

Third, Western aid often results in a fairly distinct civic elite within the NGO community. Foreign aid creates "haves" and "have nots"—those who get outside funding and those who do not. In addition, Western aid often is concentrated in the major cities, such as Moscow and St. Petersburg, and rarely finds its way to provincial capitals. Fourth and

finally, many of the newly created ivic organizations do not act very civilly towards eac ı other, often consciously maintaining small men ɔerships, hoarding information, and competing with c :her civic groups. Outside aid does not seem to ameliorate these problems, but rather makes them worse, according to Henderson.

Another helpful insight Henderson offers is her description of "principled clientelism." She observes that over time "unequal vertical relationships" develop between donors and NGOs in which the two work to mutually justify the other's continued existence. For example, recipients of foreign aid have to satisfy two audiences—their domestic constituency and their donors. What often happens is that recipients focus on the "voice that matters" (the donor agency) and an unequal patron-client relationship gradually emerges.

While Henderson's book focuses on women's organizations in Russia, her insights have broader applicability and can help others involved in private sector initiatives in Russia and other post-Communist countries. While her diagnosis is sound, she does not offer many meaningful recommendations for changing how foreign aid is channeled overseas.

Her summary is sobering and worth highlighting: "Donor policies have tended to over-institutionalize a select group of NGOs, create problems of long-term sustainability for the sector, concentrate power into a small number of activists, and further isolate groups from their own hypothetical target populations" (p. 175). These lessons are helpful and deserve consideration by the missions community as it partners with churches and Christian ministries in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.◆

Dr. John A. Bernbaum *is president of the Russian-American Christian University, Moscow, Russia (1995-). He formerly worked for 20 years with the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, Washington, D.C.*

Book Review

History of Euro-Asian Evangelical Movement 2.0 and 3.0 CD-ROMs

Reviewed by Oleg P. Turlac.

The History of Euro-Asian Evangelical Movement 2.0 CD-ROM was released in 2002 by the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association of Evangelical Theological Schools (EAAA) with support of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). This selection of primary sources and modern research on the history of the Russian Evangelical movement from the mid-nineteenth century includes Sergei Sannikov, ed., *A History of Baptism;* Sergei Savinsky *et al., A History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR;* Vladimir Franchuk, *Russia Asked the Lord for Rain*; and such journals as *Bratskii vestnik [Fraternal Herald]* (1945-93); *Vestnik istiny [Herald of Truth]* (1976-94), and other documents related to the life of Baptist, Pentecostal, Mennonite, and Adventist communities.

The History of Euro-Asian Evangelical Movement 3.0 CD-ROM, released by EAAA and MCC in 2003, contains the following sources: E. Kubryn, *New Faith;* G. Domashovetz *et al., Historical Sketch of the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Church; Baptist Ukrainy [Baptist of Ukraine]* (1926-28); and *Bulleten' uznikov [Prisoners' Bulletin]* (1982-84, 1986), as well as other previously unavailable archival documents.

Both CD-ROMs will serve well those interested in the history of the Evangelical movement in Russia and the former Soviet Union and will offer access to rare and very valuable documents that shed light on the persecuted church in Russia and the former USSR.

More information about the CD-ROMs can be obtained at: www.e-aaa.org. The cost of each is $4 plus $2 for shipping and handling. Direct requests to the office of EAAA, Box 51, Odessa-91, 65091, Ukraine; email: eaaa@te.net.ua.◆

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Experimentation in Worship

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people ask from time to time, such as, "Why do you do this kind of work?" Several of the patients have confessed faith in Christ. It is likely that in due course some of the patients contacted through the Order will move to the facilities being built at the Beteli Center. Two part-time chaplains will be appointed, one Baptist, the other Orthodox, to celebrate mass and offer pastoral care to patients. By offering counsel to members of each other's faith community, it is hoped that fears and mistrust can be overcome.

Baptists in Georgia benefit from long-term relationships with key leaders of the Orthodox hierarchy, dating back to their university days. They self-consciously seek to acculturate their mission within Georgia's Orthodox context, drawing upon religious elements of Georgia's national heritage and incorporating them into their worship and witness. "Learning from the Orthodox Church without simply copying it," is how it is described. More conservative Baptists have been critical of such reforms, although an official European Baptist Federation inquiry in 2003 found in favor of their remaining within the family of European Baptists. The current reforms within the Georgian Baptist Church are widely regarded as visionary, although some observers believe "the majority of Baptists may not be ready" for the changes.◆

Source:
"Report of a Visit to Georgia, 16 - 18 August 2004."

Darrell Jackson, *based in Budapest, Hungary, is a British Baptist pastor, serving as Researcher in European Mission and Evangelism for the European Council of Churches.*

Experimentation in Worship:
A Georgian Baptist Case Study

Darrell Jackson

"If we ever achieve anything through our experiments we would like to share them with other Baptists, to help them overcome their suspicion of a particular form of communicating the gospel." The goal, is "to break the free church fear of beauty and its commitment to mediocrity."

The School of David

Bishop Malkhaz (Songulashvili), of the Baptist Union of Georgia, has a vision for his flock: "To be the church in Georgia for Georgians," a church that is "theologically of the Reformation, but culturally Orthodox." Worship in this Protestant communion is neither European nor North American. The Georgian Baptist School of David exists to raise the musical and liturgical standards in local congregations. Georgian Christianity in its various expressions is neither fully Western nor fully Eastern, neither European nor Asian, a place of contrasts and contradiction. Careful attention is paid to architecture, aesthetics, and the order of the liturgy, which is participatory and multi-sensory. Litanies (prayers read sentence by sentence for the congregation to repeat) allow the uninitiated to participate without any feeling of disorientation.

The sense of Baptist identity is preserved through social ministry (the priesthood of all believers), in the provisional nature of the worship tradition (the bishop referred several times to the reforms with the word *experiment*), and the development of cultural styles understandable to Georgians.

Critics have claimed that the ministry and mission of the Georgian Baptist Church is syncretistic, but Bishop Malkhaz is quick to point out that their practice is to learn from others, not merely to borrow. Diversity is encouraged and it is not unknown for worship styles within the same service to appear inconsistent. The Lord's Supper might contain twelfth-century Georgian music, contemporary music, and liturgical dance. The church celebrates major church festivals and uses a calendar that honors saints and godly individuals from all Christian traditions, including John Wesley, Martin Luther King, Jr., William and Catherine Booth, and several Georgian Orthodox not yet recognized as saints by their own church. Meetings are held in the Baptist Cathedral in Tbilisi every Wednesday evening to teach the practice of prayer, with time for questions and answers on spiritual, political, personal, and biblical matters.

The School of St. Luke

Western Baptists, as well as others, are likely to be shocked initially on discovering a Baptist school teaching iconography. Two young, talented iconographers, painting icons in the pre-canonical ninth-century Georgian style, are developing a freer style of icon painting than the formalized icon painting of the Byzantine and Russian Schools. The seven male and female students (two Orthodox and five Baptist) show promising signs of innovation in a contemporary style. Bishop Malkhaz and other Baptist leaders view icons as one means of communicating the gospel. The bishop shares, "If we ever achieve anything through our experiments we would like to share them with other Baptists, to help them overcome their suspicion of a particular form of communicating the gospel." The goal, he says, is "to break the free church fear of beauty and its commitment to mediocrity."

Prior to the fall of Communism, Soviet authorities allowed only one Baptist congregation in Georgia, in the capital of Tbilisi. Now, every major city has a Baptist church. From 20 churches in 1992, the denomination now counts 60, with a further 60 small mission stations.

The Order of St. Nino

The Baptist Order of St. Nino for women currently consists of 11 nurses (two with medical degrees) and 48 volunteers reimbursed on an expense-only basis. Celibacy is not a requirement. The Order supports 11 diaconal stations in Georgia, six of which are in Tbilisi, with a vision for more. An ambulance service and home visits are the main means of offering primary healthcare. In a society emerging from a regime under which the church was not allowed to offer social care, the Order has had to overcome initial suspicion. These Baptist sisters began by collecting the names and addresses of people known to be in need of health care. They now have many hundreds of people under their care. The German Baptist Gemeindearbeit in Berlin has offered the sisters further training in diaconal ministry. Medical and nursing qualifications are augmented with this training. Services offered in this way have given rise to opportunities for verbal witness in several situations. The sisters are trained to deal with questions that

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