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Superbook to the Rescue: Christian Animation on Soviet Television

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A Mountain of Mail

"We have never had such vast amounts of mail come into our post offices in any given four weeks." So reported officials at Moscow's Central Post Office in 1991 following the airing of episodes of the Superbook Christian animated series on Soviet television. According to Canadian-Finnish producer Hannu Haukka, who had worked for six years to see Superbook gain Soviet air time, "It was an incredible sight. A mountain of mail spread all over the floor of the building. They were deluged with letters. No previous program on Soviet television had ever triggered such a response from its viewers."

Who is Hannu Haukka? How did Christian programming make its way onto Soviet television? And what happened to that mountain of mail in Moscow's Central Post Office? Answers to these questions will bring to light one of the most extraordinary, and seemingly improbable, episodes in the history of Christian mass media and in the history of Soviet media.

Hannu and Laura Haukka

Hannu Haukka, born in Finland in 1954, immigrated with his family to Canada in 1957 and settled in Vancouver, British Colombia. Haukka attended Katinala Bible College in Finland and traveled from there to the Soviet Union some 20 times between 1971 and 1976. In 1974 he was ordained a minister in the Pentecostal Church in Finland. Haukka's wife, Laura, a native of Russia, has been an active partner in his broadcasting ministry, which began with radio work in 1977. After radio broadcasting assignments in Austria with Earl Poysti (Pocket Testament League) and in Sweden with IBRA Radio, Haukka and his wife moved to Helsinki, Finland, in 1980 to launch a weekly Finnish radio program under the auspices of IBRA-Finland. The Haukkas' growing interest in television, as well as radio, is reflected in the name of their ministry, International Russian Radio/TV Ministries (IRR/TV), founded in 1987.

First Acquaintance with Superbook

As the Haukkas were searching for a video product for Russian children, Finnish friend and computer program supervisor, Keijo Palonen, mentioned to them that he had seen animated Bible stories called Superbook, produced by the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) in the United States. Haukka immediately recognized the Russian potential of this innovative, professionally produced animation that was both entertaining and biblically faithful. That took considerable vision on his part, given the longstanding, heavy hand of censorship on all Soviet media. (*Editor's Note: But there were the beginnings of cracks in the Red armor. For example, "Dallas" could be viewed in Tallinn, Estonia, in the Soviet Union, in the late 1980s in households with antennas directed across the Gulf of Finland to Helsinki.)*

Obtaining Rights; Obtaining Airtime

In 1986 Hannu Haukka approached David Clark, CBN Vice President of Marketing, seeking to secure Russian rights to Superbook. Following up on a written request, Haukka called Clark on 1 April 1986, but was unable to secure a commitment from CBN by phone:

> We said to David that we needed to come to Virginia Beach [Virginia] to negotiate the rights for Superbook. But we didn't know which way the issue would go — would they give us the rights or would they not? Because we were a small organization, we said to David, "We can't invest the money just for nothing. I mean, if you can't tell us on the phone whether we can get the rights or not, we won't even come. Because we can't afford it. We can't afford the air tickets." The only thing he said was "Come on over. We will try to be as thoughtful as possible, as considerate as possible." So we decided finally that we would come. We would take the risk and pay the airfare.

By 8 April 1986 Clark granted Haukka the rights to dub Superbook into Russian, but the CBN executive was skeptical that Russian TV viewers would ever see it because of Soviet censorship. The U.S.S.R. was still a closed Communist country and unlikely to broadcast a television series with religious content. In addition, if the series caught the attention of Soviet authorities, there was the possibility they could ban it from Russian video as well as television markets.

In the months that followed, Haukka dubbed four episodes into Russian at the IRR/TV studio in Finland.

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Superbook: *(continued from page 1)*

These video episodes were then smuggled into Russia by volunteer couriers. Haukka knew his intended audience. As a Finn, he understood better than most Westerners. In addition, his wife was Russian, and he had spent time in the Soviet Union. He also knew the extraordinary potential of Soviet television to reach a mass audience. In 1940 the Soviet Union was home to only 400 television sets, but by 1976 the U.S.S.R. was producing seven million sets annually. Whereas only five percent of the Soviet population watched television in 1960, by 1986 that figure had jumped to 93 percent (Ellen Mickiewicz, *Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988], 3). If Superbook could ever make its way onto Soviet television, it could reach an enormous audience.

By May 1990, Superbook was being shown during prime-time on Soviet Central Television which had a viewership of almost 300 million across the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Vietnam.

The Launch on Leningrad Television

In Spring 1989 Leningrad Television was preparing a documentary on religion in the Soviet Union. Haukka relates:

> Well, this is what happened. In the course of doing a documentary, the camera team (from Leningrad TV) stumbled into a private home where our first Superbook video cassettes were already available and they [the parents] were showing them to the kids in the family. And when the team came in to shoot footage for the documentary, they saw the children watching these Christian videos, and they noticed that this product was not made in the USSR. It caught their attention; it was the episode on how the world began. The film crew included a small portion of Superbook in the documentary on religion which was aired on Leningrad TV.

Heartening Response

Both the family and Leningrad TV took a risk in April 1989 by airing footage from a video that had been smuggled into the country, but the response could not have been more heartening. The two-minute excerpt from Superbook that aired on Leningrad Television as part of the hour-long documentary on religion in Russia sparked tremendous, favorable audience response. Telephone calls and letters poured into the offices of Leningrad TV, asking what the excerpt was and whether more could be shown. Leningrad TV then opened negotiations with Haukka that only a few months later led to a contract for the Russian version of Superbook to be aired as a weekly program. The Leningrad television channel on which the documentary aired was the third largest in the U.S.S.R. Leningrad TV could be seen throughout Russia proper and many of the other republics, with an estimated viewership of 70 million.

After about eight weeks on Leningrad TV, Channel One of Soviet Central Television in Moscow called to negotiate a contract to air Superbook as well. By May 1990, Superbook was being shown during prime-time on Soviet Central Television which, because it was a satellite-based system, had a viewership of almost 300 million across the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Vietnam (E-mail from Hannu Haukka to Mark Elliott, 16 October 2005). This was the first time in the history of the Soviet Union that a Christian television series was broadcast.

As noted, providing viewers with an address to request more information led to a flood of mail into the Moscow Central Post Office. The letters expressed appreciation for the programs and, in almost every case, parents and children asked how they could find God. Within four weeks after the end of the series, viewers wrote over one million letters in response. When news of the success of Superbook in Russia reached CBN and after Haukka delivered some of the mountain of mail to Virginia Beach, CBN executive Michael Little pledged financial help to speed up the dubbing process and to allow Haukka to pursue other broadcasting opportunities. CBN entered into a joint venture with Haukka's International Russian Radio/Television and Soviet Central Television to co-produce three one-hour television specials, the first of which was called Superbook Party. It, in turn, generated millions of letters, as did the airing of Superbook in the early 1990s in other regional languages: Estonian, Latvian, Belarusian, Karelian, Moldovan, Armenian, and Georgian. IRR/TV, all totaled, received over five million letters in response to various showings of Superbook in Soviet bloc states (Haukka to Elliott, 16 October 2005). Four weeks into the launch of the Superbook series, Soviet Central TV President Mikhail Nenashev had many of his staff threaten to resign in protest over the airing of Christian programming, but Nenashev stayed the course and the series continued to air. ✦

Editor's note: For information on current projects and programs of IRR/TV in Russia, the Middle East, and China, consult the ministry's Web site: http://www.irrtv.org/ministries.html.

Edited excerpt published with permission from Preethi Fenn Jacob, "Diffusing an Entertainment-Education Television Series Across National Boundaries: Superbook in the Former Soviet Union," Ph.D. dissertation, Regent University, 1999.

Urban Church Growth In Hungary

Mark Aderholt

With the arrival of a new political reality in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, many evangelical churches enjoyed a phase of positive, and in some cases, unprecedented numerical growth. The sudden absence of governmental restrictions upon sharing one's faith had two primary results. Many Evangelicals launched bold initiatives to share their faith in Jesus Christ with family, neighbors, workmates, schoolmates, and friends. Simultaneously, the general population momentarily was unusually open to new ideas.

Though the number of evangelical believers increased in many societies, not all churches experienced growth. Many churches found themselves unwilling or simply unable to welcome vast numbers of new believers into their fellowships. The evangelical subculture found the influx of new believers with little or no church background threatening. As the window of receptivity slipped away, churches by-and-large returned to the status and condition they experienced prior to the massive political changes. The church preserved its subculture, but it missed a great opportunity for exponential kingdom growth.

Three New Churches

Budaörs

Yet three churches in the vicinity of Budapest, Hungary, managed to confront the new realities and to sustain growth. Dúrkó István, a young church planter, sensed the strategic importance of reaching the capital city with the Gospel message. Meanwhile, in the 15 years following the abolition of Communism, the city of Budapest had been expanding steadily westward. In 2003, István started a church in the heart of the western suburb of Budaörs, renting a meeting place in a local school. Located in the center of 15 to 20 large, Communist-era apartment buildings, the church focused on community needs.[1] Today, the pastor and the church leadership continue to pursue their vision of not only building a strong community church through small groups, but starting additional churches as well.

Rózsakert

In the years immediately following the collapse of Communist rule in Hungary, a few Baptist churches observed the window of openness to the Gospel and launched bold initiatives. One such church was the Budafok Baptist Church, the largest Baptist church in the capital city region, with a membership of nearly 400. The church leadership recognized that its traditional methods and liturgy would serve as a barrier to reaching the new, emerging culture in the southwest part of the city. They therefore commissioned three families to begin a new, contemporary church focused on the residents of the Rózsakert (Rose Garden) neighborhood in the very heart of their district.[2] The church meets in a rented school cafeteria in the midst of a large, multi-apartment housing complex in southwest Budapest. This congregation emphasizes both spiritual and numerical growth through more than 12 small groups for all ages that meet in church members' apartments in surrounding neighborhoods throughout the week.

Gazdagrét

In 1989, the Hungarian Reformed Church planted a church in the midst of the densely populated district of Gazdagrét which houses 22,000 residents. The church met first in an apartment, then in a school, and later in this residential district's only community center. On Easter Sunday, 2004, the church officially moved into its own building strategically located in the center of Gazdagrét.[3] The primary focus of the church is young, working class families living in the immediate neighborhood.

Growth Analysis

Budaörs

The first year (2003) for the Budaörs church plant was spent developing plans, assimilating a pastor, and worshiping together weekly in both homes and the school building. Since each family was new to the area, contacts came slowly and word-of-mouth invitations proved ineffective. With key outreach projects aimed at students and families in the immediate area, in the summer of the second year (2004), church members managed to make positive, initial contacts with members of the community. As these friendships developed over the course of the following months, the church continued to grow. By the beginning of the third year (2005), the membership reached more than 50.

Continued growth in 2004 - 2005 can be attributed to three major factors. First, the Budaörs Baptist Church is the only evangelical church in this entire suburban community. Though Hungarians are very familiar with Catholic and Reformed churches, the word Baptist is relatively unknown. Those raised Catholic tend to remain Catholic throughout their lives, but the Budaörs Baptist Church is the natural choice for membership and involvement for non-Catholics in the community.

The second factor contributing to the church's growth in the past two years is its focus on meeting needs in the surrounding neighborhoods. By offering educational services, such as English language camps, small groups for mothers, and recreational opportunities for students through sport camps and film clubs, the church has gained positive rapport with residents. These positive relationships have served to combat some of the negative associations in Hungarian culture with *ismeretlenség* (being unknown), making assimilation into church life less intimidating.

The third factor explaining the church's growth is its corporate vision, based on implementation of the Acts 1:8 Plan. The four simultaneous commitments undertaken with this plan include outreach that is local (a healthy church starting a church in the suburb of Budaörs); area-wide (a new church plant in the neighboring community of Törökbálint); regional (planting Baptist churches among the 150,000

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By offering English language camps, small groups for mothers, and recreational opportunities for students through sport camps and film clubs, the church has gained positive rapport with residents.

Urban Church Growth in Hungary

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Hungarians living in Ukraine); and global (planting healthy churches in Kazakhstan). In fact, the church sent out its first missionary couple after only eight months of existence and provides a considerable portion of the support for these missionaries. The steady focus on obedience to the Great Commission serves not only to energize the church but to keep it from developing an inward-only focus that would stifle growth and expansion. Furthermore, the Acts 1:8 Plan has increased both attendance and giving and has strengthened the overall evangelical mindset in the Budaörs Church.

Recognizing the need for fellowship with members of their own culture, each church has placed relationships and the importance of small group discipleship as key tenets of its methodology.

Rózsakert

Through home Bible studies and student outreach projects Rózsakert church leaders discovered that youth between the ages 16 and 22 are very receptive to the Gospel. According to the pastor, six years is the average time span for a non-believing adult to learn the faith, make a decision for Christ, accept believer's baptism, and become a responsible member of the church, whereas it takes only six weeks (on average) for non-believing students to work through the same process.[4] This discovery led the church to place a primary focus on student outreach. As a result, in four years the church membership more than doubled, with more than 50 baptisms.

The first factor contributing to the church's growth in recent years is what missiologist Donald McGavran has defined as the harvest principle. The goal is "winning the winnable while they may still be won."[5] The church shifted its focus from non-believing adults to students and divorced women living in the area, resulting in dramatic growth. The pastor reported that in the church's first five years, efforts to win adults and families from non-church backgrounds simply did not succeed.[6] But in 1996, leaders of the church's few student outreach groups decided to take a chance by inviting all its students to attend a worship service. Many students accepted the invitation and shortly thereafter made decisions to follow Christ, were baptized, and joined the church. A similar turn of events occurred among divorced women leading single-parent families. A great number of women who participated in the church's single-parent support groups eventually took part in an Alpha Course, a small-group Bible study with an evangelistic thrust. This was followed by a brief course on baptism and theological distinctives that led to a large number of women giving their lives to Christ, accepting baptism, and joining the church.

A second major factor in Rózsakert Church growth is its emphasis upon small groups. Pastor Kovacs believes every member "should spend at least the same amount of time in a small group" as in weekly worship.[7] This emphasis on small groups not only provides members with a place to grow in the Word; it also allows non-believers to experience Christian fellowship without immediate pressure to make a commitment. Currently, the church hosts more than 12 small groups (based on age categories) in the homes of church members. Paul Cho, describing small groups in his Yoido Full Gospel Church (Seoul, Korea), states that each group leader takes "a prescribed training program," and this leader in turn chooses an assistant who becomes the group leader when the original group grows large enough to split into two.[8] Following Cho's principle, each group at Rózsakert contains at least two strong, spiritual leaders who are held responsible for spiritual and numerical growth. The pastor meets with these leaders monthly (25 men and women), using this time to further mentor and develop each leader.

Gazdagrét

One major factor contributing to the growth of Gazdagrét Reformed Church is its focus on one distinct level of society and its utilization of Donald McGavran's "homogenous unit principle."[9] The distinct segment of Budapest society in this case is young, lower-middle class families and poorer families approaching middle class status. Since the needs of these families are relatively similar, the church has developed an approach specifically addressing the concerns of Gazdagrét residents in these ranks. As the church employs the homogenous unit principle, members develop relationships with residents and share the Gospel. As a result, they have seen neighbors become Christians without crossing social, racial, linguistic, or class barriers. In turn, new converts tend to join the church, become active members, and invite other young families in their network to do the same.

A second key factor at Gazdagrét is the focus on building true community among believers. In the larger cities of Europe finding a sense of community is difficult, particularly in societies with a low degree of trust. By offering a safe, easily accessible venue through home groups, worship services, and family events, the church helps families connect with others and grow in faith. Thus, the church is positioned for growth through the relationships church members form with other residents of the community.

Conclusion

The churches described above have each capitalized upon common sociological and spiritual realities found in urban centers in Central and Eastern Europe. Recognizing the need for fellowship with members of their own culture, each church has placed relationships and the importance of small group discipleship as key tenets of their methodology. Recognizing the need to mobilize laity, church leaders have stressed the importance of training and mentoring for their congregations.✦

Notes

[1] Interview with Pastor Dúrkó István, Budaörs Baptist Church, 17 August 2005.
[2] Interview with Pastor Kovács Géza, Rózsakert Baptist Church, 17 August 2005.
[3] Interview with Pastor Lovás András, Gazdagrét Reformed Church, 18 August 2005.
[4] Kovacs interview with author, 17 August 2005.
[5] Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990), 188.
[6] Kovacs interview with author, 17 August 2005.
[7] *Ibid*.
[8] Paul Y. Cho, *More Than Numbers* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1984), 148-49.
[9] McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,* 167.

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Icons: According to Villagers and Theologians

Margaret Paxson

Editor's Note: The following account is based on anthropological field work by the author beginning in 1994-95 in a Russian village some 300 miles north of Moscow. The village, "Solovyovo," is a pseudonym which has been used to protect villagers' privacy.

How did the Great Social Experiment fare? It educated with images of a great and radiant future. It offered new leaders without the trappings of religion's dulling "opium." It offered explanations and inspirations. When that did not work, it droned with endless speeches and took children from their homes to educate them in its precepts. When that did not work, it took people away in the night, and battered them into some semblance of animal submission. But do such methods work? Is this how hearts, minds, and memory are transformed with any degree of efficiency?

Tat'iana Ivanovna

On the morning of 19 August 1991, two weeks after I had arrived in St. Petersburg for the very first time, I was awakened by the telephone and the sobbing of an old woman. It was Tat'iana Ivanovna, the babushka with whom I was living. Sickness? Death? I came out of my room and was told that Gorbachev was very ill and would have to leave his post as president. Of course, so much more was buried in that phrase. Certainly, the long arc of Tat'iana Ivanovna's life had passed through several extraordinary times like this. I had heard stories of living within the barricaded city of Leningrad during World War II, when hundreds of thousands of people starved to death, and how she had fed her husband with dandelion leaves that she had gathered at the botanical garden where she worked. I had heard how her father had been exiled and killed for being a priest in the 1930s.

I got dressed for the day, and as I was leaving the apartment, Tat'iana Ivanovna, still crying, took me by the arm and led me into her room. It was almost bare. I noticed an icon, elaborately gilded, nestled into a corner. Tat'iana Ivanovna tapped my arm and gestured up to the icon. "Pray," she told me between sobs, tapping my arm and gesturing again and again up to the icon, calling on me to pray. For a woman whose years spanned the entire history of the Soviet Union and who must have prayed countless times before that same icon (watching wars, the starvation of her husband, the denigration of her beliefs), the answer of the question of *komu obratitsia* (to whom should one turn) in times of trouble, was to the image that lived within that corner space, known for hundreds of years as the *krasnyi ugol* or "red corner."

The Red Corner

Krasnyi means red, or beautiful. While I was living in Solovyovo, the *krasnyi ugol*, the red beautiful corner, was adorned in almost every village home with icons. The icons were often placed on a special shelf *(bozhnitsa)*, sometimes next to crosses and treasured possessions such as photographs and keepsakes. At the time of death, I saw the deceased in a household laid out in line diagonally with the icon corner, with her head under the icons, for three days. Ritual objects (such as coins, soap, and a towel) and small icons were then placed on the body; and offerings and other ritual objects (candles, glasses of vodka) were arranged by the icons.

The red corner of a village home is a physical space where symbolic force is densely packed. Although the icons that fill corners are religious objects, the icon corner is not defined by its Orthodox religiosity per se. As Vladimir Propp confirms, "Certain pagan, and, later, Christianized practices are connected to this corner."[1] After churches were destroyed in and near Solovyovo and a generation or two went by, little was remembered of Orthodox ritual. But icons, by far the most powerful religious objects in village life, have remained a focus of supernatural powers. Villagers passionately agree on one thing: Icons are indispensable.

Villagers passionately agree on one thing: Icons are indispensable.

"You Have to Have an Icon"

Larisa Andreevna: It's bad to live in a house without an icon. There ought to be an icon. If you take an icon out of a house, everything leaves behind it. That's what happens. These people are now bad. Sick ones. Sorrowful ones. Drunkards. In everyone's house stood icons. And for him who carried out the icon, in that house, there will be no happiness. Only sorrow/misfortune.

Villagers told me again and again that icons in the home are mandatory. The icon is there so that "God protects better," says Valentine Ivanovna. Elena Andreevna concurs with urgency in her tone: "You have to have an icon in the house. We consider that you have to have an icon in the house." More important than the performance of Orthodox rituals

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of any particular kind is the dire importance of keeping the icon in the living space.

Q: What can happen if there is no icon in the house?

Antonia Sergeevna: Without an icon, as they say, oi, unbaptized; so that's all not good. It's something terrifying, even to say it with your tongue. It is necessary to believe. As if with the soul, you are a believer. We have no church now. No one goes. And in the soul we keep it all. There is something. And in fact, there is something. Let these icons be there.

The icon keeps the home safe, protected from illness and from terrible forces that can bring misfortune of all kinds.

Antonina Sergeevna knows no prayers; nor does she go to church ("no one goes"). But without an icon, something unspeakably terrifying may be at hand. The icon in the home keeps the home safe, protected from illness and from terrible forces that can bring misfortune of all kinds.

The question follows, then, what exactly is in that icon in the corner? What are those framed faces with the mournful eyes that look down at every village family? As a first step into the complex space that is the corner, I begin with a brief discussion of the theology of the icon. This requires regarding the problem not only in the eyes of villagers, but in the eyes of (particularly Russian) philosophers and theologians as well. Here, it is my aim to underline the symbolism of icon veneration as expressed by philosophers of religion, people who are enjoined with explaining religion in its official, ideal manifestation. It does not follow, logically, that the ideals of church philosophers would have any necessary relationship to how people worship. And yet, some common resonance does appear to exist.

Icons and Orthodox Theology

In the context of Orthodox theology, it would be difficult to overstate the centrality of icons in the practice of worship. The Orthodox icon has its roots in the theology of Greek Orthodoxy, which came to power in Russia in the tenth century AD. Given the prohibitions against idolatry in Judaism and Islam, it is not surprising that the use of images of the holy person of Christ was debated for centuries before finally being officially accepted by Eastern Christianity. The disputing groups were known as iconoclasts ("icon smashers") and iconodules ("icon lovers"). The iconodules eventually triumphed, and their triumph was not merely a theological one; it also marked the development of a style of worship centered on the visual image.[2]

Churchgoers in Russia are, indeed, icon lovers. Today, in Orthodox churches the priest may or may not be heard or heeded in his sermon or his service, which is chanted in Old Church Slavonic, a language only vaguely comprehensible to laypeople. But the space around icons draws ardent attention, as people stand in front of them in crowds. They light candles under them, speak to them, and kiss them. Sometimes they cry in front of them. They stare at the icon's face, the icon's eyes. Many turn to them for healing, succor, and hope, and for more than that as well.

In the debate between the iconoclasts and the iconodules, the point was made that icons per se were not being worshipped and adored. It was, rather, the truth that came through the icons that was venerated. Icons represented divine beauty, which was manifested on Earth through the agency of the icon. In this theological view, icons can be seen as the conduits for holiness, not as the substance of holiness themselves, and in this way iconodules sought to distance themselves from advocating idol worship. So, if icons are conduits, what are they carrying? If they are mirrors, what are they reflecting? The language used by theologians to describe the powers of icons centers around metaphors of light and those of passive envelopment: that is, the light or truth of icons clothe, flood, or immerse the worshipper.[3]

In Solovyovo, there are hints of the notion that being in front of an icon can provide good "energy," a positive, freeing, lightening feeling that floods or envelops a person.

Emma Dmitrievna: When a person stands in front of an icon, he is always converted into a peaceful mode; so many people have prayed around them [the old icons]; there is so much good/kind energy, that just standing near the icon helps. Because there is so much kind energy.

In the exegesis of Orthodoxy, when an icon is seen and reflected upon by an individual, that icon is understood to be felt; that is, a part of the "grace of God" is said to flow through the icon and has an effect upon the worshipper. As Leonid Ouspensky writes, "When we begin to strive with all our will power towards the beauty of the likeness, divine grace makes virtue flourish upon virtue, elevating the beauty of the soul from glory to glory, bestowing upon it the mark of likeness."[4] In other words, the act of reflecting on the icon is felt to draw in a transformational power, that is, the grace required to transform man into God's holy image.

Although being an artistic creation, icons have the power to draw individuals to their spiritually "true" images. In this line of thinking, the theologian Nicholas Zernov wrote that icons "were dynamic manifestations of man's spiritual power to redeem creation through beauty and art."[5] Access to divine truths is accomplished without the need of words or sermons. It is as though the human heart were made to respond to divine truths such as they are beheld in icons. They are "philosophy in colors"[6] or "visible prayers"[7] where the sight of and reflection on the beauty of a particular image is what is required to grasp divine truths. In the rhetoric of Orthodox theologians, they are above sermons and above exegesis. If one is to begin to regard them sociologically, they provide, in their democracy, a fundamental accessibility to divine truths, one that need not be carried through the will of a priest. Zernov, indeed, stresses the "corporate nature" of the Mass in Eastern Orthodoxy, where the priest is little seen and little heard.[8]

Icons and Idols

Icons are images and they are objects. The question has emerged in the history of Russian

popular religion as to the relationship between images/objects and worship before the Orthodox Church came to the countryside. This discussion has often been framed in terms of *dvoeverie*, the idea that Russian religious faith is double faceted marked by a mixture of "paganism" and Orthodoxy. Although I believe it is an oversimplification to say that this faith is marked by a homogeneous mix of two elaborate theologies, one Christian and the other "pagan," the emergence of the concept of *dvoeverie* has allowed academic discourse to explore the sometimes awkward question of how religious faith may not be purely (theologically) religious.

Theology offers exegeses on the relationship between person and image. It tells us what should happen when interacting with holy objects. We should feel awe, grace, new senses of spiritual light and beauty, an immersion in truth. We should feel fear. Standing in front of the icon, we should change fundamentally and directionally. Villagers turn to icons with an understanding that is informed, but not defined, by this.

The notion that an icon can transform a person (or a people) toward some abstract, spiritual ideal was not clearly evidenced in Solovyovo. If icons can "flood" a person with some positive "energy," this energy does not appear to be transformational. Icons can give one a feeling of "lightness," but do not "change" the spiritual image of man to an idealized, divine one. Icons are certainly healing objects and in that sense agents of change but they are not fashioners of spiritual character. Theology appears to wish for transformation of the spiritual self; the villagers wish to lighten the load. ✦

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Margaret Paxson, Solovyovo; The Story of Memory in a Russian Village *(Washington, D.C. and Bloomington, IN: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Indiana University Press, 2005), 217-27.*

Notes:

[1] *Russkie agarnye prazdniki* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo "Azbuka," 1995), 25, n.5.

[2] Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin, 1991), 40.

[3] G.P. Fedotov, *The Russian Mind: The Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 33. See also Alexander Soloviev, *Holy Russia: The History of a Religious Social Idea* (Geneva: Mouton, 1959), 6.

[4] *The Theology of the Icon* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978), 185.

[5] Ware, *Orthodox Church*, 42; Ouspensky, *Theology*, 197.

[6] Fedotov, *Russian Mind*, 368.

[7] Ouspensky, *Theology*, 211.

[8] Nicholas, Zernov, *Three Russian Prophets: Khomiakov, Dostoevsky, Soloviev* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1973), 31.

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The notion that an icon can transform a person (or a people) toward some abstract, spiritual ideal was not clearly evidenced in Solovyovo.

Theology appears to wish for transformation of the spiritual self; the villagers wish to lighten the load.

Catholicism in Russia Today

Dennis J. Dunn

Editor's Note: The first portion of this article appeared in the previous issue of the East-West Church & Ministry Report.

Catholic Literature

A serious concern of the Catholic Church in Russia has been its lack of publications and literature. In October 1994 the Church began publishing a newspaper, *Svet evangeliia [Light of the Gospel)* for the European part of Russia. For the Asian part of Russia, the Church began publishing *letter from Siberia* (in English) in 1993 and a newspaper *(Sibirskaia katolicheskaia gazeta)* in 1995, both of which feature regional religious news.[1] In May 1996 the Vatican approved a Russian translation of the Catholic Church's basic catechism. Besides the catechism, the Church in Russia also published a *Dictionary of Liturgical Terms* for the Latin Rite in June 1996. In 2002 the Church published the fourth edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and, for the first time, a Russian Catholic encyclopedia, which provides a wealth of information about the Catholic Church.[2]

Orthodox Hostility

Another critical problem that the Catholic Church faces in the new Russia is the old issue of Orthodoxy's hostility to and suspicion of the Catholic Church.[3] The Orthodox Church, which also suffered terribly under the Communists, objects to the Catholic Church in post-Soviet Russia on four grounds. First, there is the continuing issue of theological differences, principally papal primacy and the *filioque* question [concerning Orthodox objections to the Catholic addition of "and the Son" to the Nicene Creed without the consent of an ecumenical council]. Second, Orthodox leaders believe that the Catholic Church is attempting to convert to Catholicism Orthodox believers and Russian non-believers who, Orthodox think, belong to their mission field. Orthodox officials regularly denounce the "proselytizing" efforts of the Catholic Church in lands that are historically Orthodox.[4] They are particularly irritated that some of Russia's most dynamic intellectuals are converting to Catholicism. Third, the Russian Orthodox Church views the Catholic Church's growth in Ukraine, particularly the revival of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, with its five million believers, to be a Trojan horse and a sinister attack upon Orthodoxy. The Russian Orthodox Church insists that the problem of "uniatism" be solved by Rome abandoning Eastern-Rite Catholics. Theological issues are decidedly secondary to Russian Orthodoxy's preoccupation with the existence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Finally, Orthodoxy believes that it needs time to rebuild its resources in order to compete with the Catholic Church and other Western faiths.

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Catholicism in Russia Today

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The Catholic Response

On the issue of Catholic missionary efforts in Russia, the Catholic Church stresses its recognition of Russia as an Orthodox land. It further emphasizes that it has no intention of converting Orthodox believers to Catholicism and is not engaged, as Orthodox leaders charge, in "proselytism." Metropolitan Kondrusziewicz has stated that "I always repeat that for me Russia was, is, and will remain an Orthodox land. In Russia, conversion from Orthodoxy to Catholicism is a rare occurrence. And I am against such conversions."[5] Indeed, there is little evidence that the Catholic Church is attempting to convert Russians, and Catholic leaders in Moscow emphasize that they do not proselytize but cannot proscribe Russians from seeking out Catholicism.[6]

Although Catholic leaders readily grant that Russia is an Orthodox land, they argue that the Catholic Church, too, has a place in Russia, that it has a following that needs to be served, and that it must receive into its midst any Russian who voluntarily seeks Catholicism.[7] The Russian Orthodox Church, however, does not want any Russians, even willful atheists, becoming Catholics. Its definition of proselytism includes not only voluntary conversions to Catholicism or Protestantism of Orthodox believers and non-believers who never attended the Orthodox Church, but also missionary activity by non-Orthodox Christians among Tartar and Uzbek Muslims. Of course, there are Catholic groups in and out of Russia who harbor hopes of "converting" Russia, but such Catholics certainly are a minority and are in conflict with the official position of the Vatican and Catholic church leaders in Russia.

The Russian Orthodox Church definition of proselytism includes not only voluntary conversions to Catholicism or Protestantism of Orthodox believers and non-believers who never attended the Orthodox Church, but also missionary activity by non-Orthodox Christians among Tartar and Uzbek Muslims.

Orthodox Reaction to Catholic Administrative Changes

Until February 2002 the Vatican called its administrative divisions apostolic administrations, rather than episcopal dioceses. The Russian Orthodox Church objected to a Catholic episcopal structure on the grounds that there were already existing Orthodox episcopal dioceses and that any Catholic effort to set up dioceses challenged Orthodoxy's legitimacy, was canonically redundant, and smacked of proselytism. The Vatican, however, opted to normalize its administrative structure in February 2002, in spite of Orthodox and Russian nationalist objections. A distinct chill has descended upon Catholic-Russian relations since the Vatican decided to restructure its apostolic administrations into dioceses.[8]

Additional Hardships

Possibly to retaliate, since February 2002 local government authorities and Russian Orthodox officials have blocked the building of Catholic churches or threatened to close existing Catholic churches in Magadan, Saratov, Pskov, Yaroslavl', and Vologda. The reasons given range from pastors who lack a residence permit, which the government has not provided, to charges that Catholics were engaged in espionage. Also, since February 2002 a growing number of Catholic clergy, capped by Bishop Jerzy Mazur, have had their return visas canceled. On 20 April 2002 Metropolitan Kondrusziewicz declared that "an organized campaign is being waged against the Catholic Church in Russia."

Answering Orthodox Charges

All things considered, there was nothing unreasonable about the Vatican's decision to change the name of existing administrative divisions from apostolic administrations to dioceses, which is what existed in tsarist Russia and is the common organizational structure of the Catholic Church worldwide. The Catholic Church has existed in Russia for centuries, and the fact that it wanted to restore its administrative structure and position destroyed by the Communists was not a threat to Orthodoxy or evidence of proselytism. Furthermore, Orthodoxy has organized its followers who are not in Russia into dioceses. For example, there are Russian Orthodox dioceses in Germany, France, and the United States. The same is true for Kaliningrad Oblast, now part of Russia, but prior to World War II part of Germany. This region is predominantly Lutheran, with some Catholics, but virtually no Orthodox.

The Catholic Church in Russia does have a significant advantage over the Russian Orthodox Church in that it has the support of the worldwide Catholic Church. Virtually all Catholic priests in Siberia have phones, fax machines, and access to the Internet. Orthodoxy cannot yet match this technology, and it has no large, sophisticated external source to which it can turn for financial support. What it does have is influence with Russian and pro-Russian Orthodox political authorities, which it uses to frustrate Catholics.

In Defense of Catholic Presence in Russia

The Catholic Church, it is true, is foreign in the lands that formed old Muscovy, but it was present in St. Petersburg from its inception. Furthermore, it had a unique position in Siberia from the earliest days of tsarist rule, as the religion of the many Catholic Poles, Germans, and Lithuanians who, because of government action, resided there. It was also not foreign in the lands that Russia conquered, including Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, and Novgorod.

Orthodoxy maintains that it is the national religion of Russians and other East Slavic peoples and that a powerful central authority is needed for Russia's revival and survival. However, it seems to push that agenda at the expense of the Russian people and of cooperation with other religious traditions that could help rebuild Russian society. A growing number of Russians have found Orthodoxy's approach to religion to be wanting and have found a spiritual home in other religions, particularly Protestantism and, among some young intellectuals, Catholicism.[9] Most Catholic parishioners, according to one survey, "are young, mainly students, and members of the intelligentsia. The survey notes that the general high level of education among parishioners (mainly artists, teachers, and academics) gives Catholicism greater influence and appeal" than other religions.

"Catholics," the survey concluded, "are as a rule well-educated, with a Western outlook: for many of them the concepts of culture and freedom are linked primarily with the Catholic Church."[10] ✦

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Dennis J. Dunn, The Catholic Church and Russia; Popes, Patriarchs, Tsars and Commissars *(Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004). Ashgate Web site: http://www.ashgate.com.*

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Notes:

[1] All information on publications is from Yuli Shreider and Yuri Genedkov, 19 May 1996, pp.42-45. See also Yuli Shreider, "Russian Catholicism," *Religion, State and Society* 24 (March 1996), 55-64.

[2] Richard Szczepanowski, "Moscow Prelate Says New Dioceses Supported by Most Russians," *Catholic Standard*, 7 March 2002, www.cathstan.org/news/03-07-02/3, p.2.

[3] Daniel L. Schlafly, Jr., "Roman Catholicism in Today's Russia: The Troubled Heritage," *Journal of Church and State* 39 (Autumn 1997), 681-97, provides a good overview of the historically estranged relationship between Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Quoted in *Istina i zhizn'*, No. 9, 1994, pp. 13-14.

[6] Lawrence Uzzell, "Russians and Catholics," *First Things* (October 2002), 2.

[7] *Svet evangeliia*, 25 June 1995, p.5.

[8] Geraldine Fagan, "The Vatican Gets Tough with Russia," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 25 February 2002, pp. 1-2.

[9] Sergei B. Filatov, "Fenomem rossiiskogo protestantizma" in Sergei B. Filatov, ed., *Religiia i obshchestvo: ocherki religioznoi zhizn sovremennoi Rossii* (Moscow: Letnii Sad, 2002), 289; Sergei B. Filatov and Lyudmila Vorontsova, "Katoliki i katolitsizm v Rossii" in *ibid.*, 289.

[10] Filatov and Vorontsova, "Katoliki i katolitsizm v Rossii, 289.

Private Christian Colleges and Universities in the Former Soviet Union

Perry L. Glanzer and Konstantin I. Petrenko

Editor's note: The first portion of this article appeared in the previous issue of the East-West Church & Ministry Report.

Former Seminaries Developing or Hoping to Develop into Liberal Arts Colleges

St.Tikhon Orthodox Humanities University (Moscow, Russia)

St.Tikhon University grew out of underground Bible courses offered during the Revolution. After Communism, St. Tikhon's future leaders began holding classes on the campus of Moscow State University, and in 1992, it became an institute focused on training priests. Officially founded by the Moscow Patriarchate, it has now become the most influential theological institution of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was the first theological institution to receive accreditation from the Ministry of Education (1997) and was later called upon to develop the national standards for theology that are now used in more than 30 theology departments at state universities. St. Tikhon, however, always had a larger vision for education beyond theological training. According to its marketing material, it traces its vision to St. Tikhon, the Orthodox Patriarch persecuted after the Revolution. Thus, within the last half-decade, it has added faculties in history, philology, and pedagogical studies. Officials say it now educates 2000 full-time students on its Moscow campus, as well as hundreds more through the university's distance education program. (For more information, see http://pstbi.ru/.)

St. Tikhon University has now become the most influential theological institution of the Russian Orthodox Church.

St. Petersburg Christian University (St. Petersburg, Russia)

The history of St. Petersburg Christian University (SPCU) goes back to 1990 when Logos Biblical Institute was established in Russia's Krasnodar Region, in an effort to provide theological education to future leaders of evangelical churches in Russia and the former Soviet Union. In 1992, the institute moved to St. Petersburg and received its current name. Although originally founded by the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, SPCU describes itself as a non-denominational institution. The university offers bachelor's degrees in theology, Christian education, and youth ministry as well as graduate programs in biblical studies and church history. However, the leadership of the university is hoping to expand its current academic offerings to include non-theological majors. St. Petersburg Christian University is a member of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. (For more information, see http://www.spcu.spb.ru/.)

Ukrainian Catholic University (L'viv, Ukraine)

The Ukrainian Catholic University originated from the L'viv Theological Academy, which was founded in 1994 through the joint efforts of the international and local Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC). The academy officially became a university when in 2002 it began offering humanities

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programs in addition to its theology and philosophy degrees. According to its mission statement, "The Ukrainian Catholic University is an open academic community living the Eastern Christian tradition and forming leaders to serve with professional excellence in Ukraine and internationally for the glory of God, the common good, and the dignity of the human person" (http://www.ucu.edu.ua/eng/). It also boasts of being "the first university opened by one of the Eastern Catholic churches." In its short history, it has graduated 151 students, and it currently enrolls over 200 students. Almost all of the students are UGCC, although it also accepts other students. (For more information see Dorothy Ellen Pfeiffer, "Ukrainian Catholic University: Restoring Christian Values and Civic Engagement in Post-Soviet Ukraine," M.A. thesis, Harvard University, 2005.)

Because Christians were discouraged or prohibited from attending higher education under Communism, it is not easy to find Christians with advanced degrees to work as professors.

Zaoksky Christian Humanities and Economics Institute (Zaoksky, Russia)

Another unique attempt to establish a distinctly denominational Christian college has come from the Zaoksky Christian Humanities and Economics Institute in Russia's Tula Region. Zaoksky is affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, which makes it Russia's first confessional faith-based liberal arts university associated with a specific Protestant group. The institute was established by the Eurasian branch of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and has been in operation since 1987. Like the Russian-American Christian University (RACU), Zaoksky offers degrees in economics and social work. The leadership of the institute is hoping to begin an English-language program as well. Zaoksky considers integration of faith and knowledge the focus of its education and sees its mission as developing highly moral persons and qualified professionals. (For more information, see http://www.zau.ru/about/index.php?depts=institute.)

Challenges Facing Christian Higher Education in the Former Soviet Union

The Funding Challenge

In order to survive and prosper, the leaders of these institutions have had to overcome a number of unique challenges. First, financial difficulties plague post-Soviet higher education as a whole. Tuition-driven private universities are especially under tremendous pressure to find the necessary funding to cover faculty and staff salaries as well as rent and maintenance for facilities. Here, there is an important difference with regard to institutions funded largely by the West, such as RACU, Lithuanian Christian College (LCC), Zaoksky, Ukrainian Catholic University, and St. Petersburg Christian University, and those started by indigenous individuals, groups, and organizations, such as the Russian Christian Academy for the Humanities, St. John, and St. Tikhon. All the indigenous universities have been able to grow on a much more limited budget. St. Tikhon, for instance, for a time existed primarily on the sales from its bookstore and the voluntary efforts of professors committed to the endeavor. Now, it is receiving financial support from Russian businessmen and the local government. It also received back a building previously held by the Communist government that was originally owned by the Orthodox Church. The other indigenous universities also survive primarily on tuition as well as domestic donations and grants.

In contrast, the Western colleges cannot cover their more expensive operating budgets with their tuition revenues and are still heavily dependent upon Western funds and leadership. For instance, Zaoksky receives support from the international Seventh-day Adventist community and the costs of both RACU and LCC are heavily subsidized by the evangelical Christian community in North America. Some are attempting to find other means of support. Zaoksky, for instance, has established small agricultural businesses that serve the community.

Close State Oversight of Curricula

A second challenge facing these schools concerns the centralized nature of higher education in the former Soviet Union, particularly in Russia. For example, in Russia private institutions of higher education, faith-based institutes, and universities are required to offer educational programs in full compliance with the standards and guidelines of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry dictates which courses are to be included in the programs, how many classroom hours are to be allocated for each of them, and what content should be covered. Since the Ministry's guidelines do not provide space for distinctly Christian disciplines, faith-based higher educational institutions are limited in choosing the courses and content which would help integrate faith and learning. This fact does not mean courses emphasizing Christian content may not be required, but it can limit the amount of electives a student can take. In our interviews with university leaders in Russia, we found that indigenous leaders less prone to follow the letter of Russian law had little problem with this issue, but universities sponsored by Western groups expressed greater difficulty. Nonetheless, they still found ways to address the problem. For instance, RACU has developed an additional block of courses dedicated to shaping a worldview. This curricula includes Old and New Testament surveys, a course entitled Christianity and Education, and a senior ethics seminar.

Recruiting Challenges

Recruiting is another special concern for faith-based private higher educational institutions, both in regard to faculty and students. Because Christians were discouraged or prohibited from attending higher education under Communism, it is not easy to find Christians with advanced degrees to work as professors. Sometimes it is also difficult to recruit students from the Christian communities these institutions are trying to serve. Because believers were largely denied access to higher education during the Soviet period, a large number of them, especially those middle aged and older, tend to distrust education and dismiss it as irrelevant or even destructive to Christian faith.

Demographics

The demographic crisis currently occurring in the former Soviet Union also poses a significant problem for colleges and universities. The number of high school graduates is falling off dramatically, especially in Russia. There simply are not enough young people to go around. The result is that it is a very hard environment to start a school. Nonetheless, the specialization of Christian universities can also be seen as a strength in this environment, since faith-based institutions offer a unique form of education in Russia and are able to distinguish themselves from the over 3,000 state and private institutes and universities that currently operate in the country. The connection to Christian communities also offers helpful marketing connections. RACU, for instance, attracts students by making presentations and posting information in churches and at Christian youth conferences and other gatherings.

Job Placement

Another practical challenge for faith-based private institutions is making sure graduates find job placements in their area of study. While in the Soviet era the government took the responsibility for providing university graduates with job placements, the situation is different today. It is now the task of individual educational institutions and the students themselves to find employment. Moreover, Russian employers still tend to distrust the education of young private institutes and universities, making it difficult for graduates to find good employment. Nonetheless, a strength that Christian universities bring to this problem is that many share connections to Western organizations and companies. A couple of them, such as RACU and LCC, also require their students to be fluent in English. As a result, all of their graduates are fluent English speakers capable of working in the international context. The language requirements also allow RACU and LCC to develop partnerships with Christian colleges and universities in the United States and to invite foreign professors to teach at the university.

The Perils of Government Oversight

Finally, private higher education as a whole is only beginning to gain the recognition of the general public and government agencies. In the Soviet Union most people are unfamiliar with it, often misunderstand it, and believe that it provides a poor quality education. Also, because faith-based colleges and universities are few in number, government officials often confuse them with theological seminaries. In practice, this makes it difficult for the former to win the favor of regional authorities and federal government agencies, as well as acquire or sustain their licenses and accreditation. Thus, it is crucial for Christian colleges and universities to build relationships with state officials because their power to license and accredit gives them the power of life and death over these institutions.

Conclusion

Overall, the emerging faith-based institutes and universities represent a recent trend toward the development of the Christian academy within the former Soviet Union. While some of these faith-based institutions have been established as liberal arts school, others originated as seminaries and later expanded their academic programs to include non-theological degrees. In a situation of declining interest in theological training and a growing demand for liberal arts higher education, it is reasonable to expect that more seminaries will consider broadening their programs. As a result, this process may further spur the growth of Christian higher education in Eastern Europe as liberal arts colleges emerge within the Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic traditions.

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In a situation of declining interest in theological training and a growing demand for liberal arts higher education, it is reasonable to expect that more seminaries will consider broadening their programs.

Pentecostal Revival in Post-Communist Bulgaria

Dony K. Donev

The Bulgarian Protestant movement today claims over 100,000 members. This number is almost ten times higher than a 1975 German study which gave a figure of approximately 13,000 "known" Protestants in Bulgaria.[1] In the 1980s, with many Western missionaries visiting Bulgaria and gathering information about underground churches outlawed by the Communist regime, this number grew to 55,000.[2]

Although international reports confirmed the existence of over 100,000 Protestants in Bulgaria as early as 1994,[3] the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute counted only 42,000 Protestant believers in Bulgaria in the 2002-2003 national census. This number was challenged in 2004 by Dr. Stephen Penov, a Sofia University professor and member of the Bulgarian Academy of Science. According to Dr. Penov, who is also a parliamentary expert on human rights and religious confessions, members of traditional Protestant denominations in Bulgaria exceed 100,000; in addition, membership in new Protestant denominations totals approximately 50,000.[4] Since 1989, Bulgaria has experienced a

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Pentecostal Revival

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sustained Pentecostal revival, claiming over 100,000 new believers. Therefore, it is not surprising that over 80 percent of Bulgarian Protestants are Pentecostal or claim Pentecostal experience.

Protestant Beginnings

Protestant work in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire began in the 1800s when the Sultan granted permission for British and American missionaries to work there. In the 1820s, the British Bible Society developed a Protestant translation of the Bulgarian Bible, which was completed and published in Constantinople in 1871. During this same period, various Protestant denominations began mission work in Bulgaria, including Congregationalists (1856), Methodists (1857), Baptists (1865), and Seventh-day Adventists (1891). In 1871, the first Bulgarian Protestant Church was founded in the town of Bansko. By the time Bulgaria gained its independence in 1878, Protestantism was well established in Bulgarian culture.

> The average Bulgarian Protestant is 1) basically evangelical in doctrine; 2) more Arminian than Calvinist; 3) Pentecostal/Charismatic in experience; and 4) more theologically conservative than liberal.

Pentecostal Origins

Ukrainian immigrants Zaplishny and Ivan Voronaev first introduced Pentecostalism to Bulgaria in 1920, preaching in the Methodist Church in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where several were baptized with the Holy Spirit. This event marks the beginning of Bulgarian Pentecostalism. In the 1920s, the movement spread throughout the country under the leadership of Nikolai Nikolov. On 28-31 March 1928 at a national assembly, a new denomination formally emerged in Bulgaria under the name Union of Evangelical Pentecostal Churches. The organization, also known as the Pentecostal Union, affiliated with the U.S. Assemblies of God.

Pentecostal Division

The Bulgarian government required the newly formed denomination to secure legal registration, which caused a great deal of controversy and division. A conservative Pentecostal group, with congregations located mainly in Northern Bulgaria, left the union and adopted the name Tinchevists after the name of its leader, Stoyan Tintchev. The Tinchevists, who are also called Northern Brothers because of their location, later became known as the Bulgarian Church of God. Unstable leadership and disagreements over internal organization were the main factors behind the split between the Pentecostal Union and the Church of God. Unfortunately, even after the replacement of the original leaders, reunion proved impossible because of the crisis related to Communist rule.

In 1944, with Red Army backing, a Communist government came to power in Bulgaria. In 1949, Communist authorities tried and convicted 15 Protestant leaders on false charges of treason and espionage. The division among Bulgarian Pentecostals continued during the Communist regime. The Pentecostal Union secured legal existence by registering with the Communist state. This action, however, led to government interference in church life and the planting of secret agents within the denomination's administration. The Bulgarian Church of God, on the other hand, chose to remain underground and suffered severe persecution as a result. According to archival sources, the Bulgarian Church of God had only 600 members nationwide in 1974. By 1981, however, this number grew to 2,000, with congregations in 25 cities. Membership totaled 4,000 by 1986 when the denomination affiliated with the U.S. Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee).

Pentecostal Growth

In 1986, the Bulgarian Pentecostal Union had approximately 10,000 members. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the denomination participated in a Pentecostal revival that swept the country. In the decade that followed, the Pentecostal Union multiplied its congregations to 500, with over 50,000 members and adherents. However, Ivan Ivanov, student pastor of the Pentecostal College in Sofia, indicated in a recent interview that membership in the Pentecostal Union may have experienced a decline since 2002.

Meanwhile, the Bulgarian Church of God has continued to grow, reporting over 32,000 members, with close to 400 congregations in 2001. Its work among Bulgaria's ethnic minorities has resulted in the emergence of large Roma congregations, such as the church in Samokov with 1,700 members, and the church in Razlog with 450 members.

Bulgarian Protestant Profile

It is reasonable to ask why Pentecostalism is so attractive in Bulgaria today: What has enabled it to respond so well to the need for faith in post-Communist Bulgarian society? Is Pentecostalism simply filling a spiritual gap, or is it successfully responding to postmodern thinking? The answers to the above questions may be found in Pentecostal theology. In a recent survey 100 randomly selected Bulgarian Protestants answered questions about their faith which are summarized in the accompanying table.

Book Review

Walter W. Sawatsky and Peter F. Penner, eds. *Mission in the Former Soviet Union.*
Schwarzenfeld, Germany: Neufeld Verlag, 2005. Reviewed by Matt Miller.

Mission in the Former Soviet Union is a collection of articles adapted from presentations made at a February 2003 conference hosted by the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague. A number of mission specialists and historians gathered to discuss a variety of topics, especially issues related to the previous fifteen years of interaction between Western missionaries and local churches in the regions previously known as the USSR. Six chapters written by the editors form the core of the book. Walter Sawatsky is a leading scholar on the history of Christianity in Russia and currently serves as professor of church history and mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, USA. Peter Penner has served for many years in the area of theological education and now is on the faculty of the International Baptist Theological Seminary. Sawatsky addresses the history of mission, evangelism, and inter-church relations, while Penner looks at these

Bulgarian Protestant Profile

	Percentages	
	YES	NO
Does a person have free will?	78	22
Can a person choose to be saved or not?	75	25
Must a person accept Jesus Christ as a personal Savior n order to be saved?	97	3
Can a person lose his/her salvation?	75	25
Is the use of alcohol sin?	60	40
Can a person be saved without being baptized in the Holy Spirit?	72	28
Are you baptized with the Holy Spirit?	63	37
Have the spiritual gifts described in the Bible ceased?	10	90
Are there apostles today?	64	36
Do you go to church each week?	73	27
Do you pray daily?	88	12
Do you read the Bible daily?	77	23
Do you fast more than once a week?	35	65

According to survey results, the profile of the average Bulgarian Protestant is as follows: 1) basically evangelical in doctrine; 2) more Arminian than Calvinist; 3) Pentecostal/Charismatic in experience; and 4) more theologically conservative than liberal. Bulgarian Protestants are in almost complete agreement on issues such as the person and work of Jesus Christ in salvation and the importance of the Holy Spirit in the mission of the church. Perhaps these are the points of agreement which future Bulgarian Protestants should use to build unity and construct strategies for the future development of the movement. Because these also serve as the cornerstone of Pentecostal doctrine and practice, a movement toward unity within the Bulgarian Protestant movement should be initiated by Bulgarian Pentecostals. ✦

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Notes:

[1]Klaus-Detlev Grothusen, ed., *Bulgarien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1990), 564.

[2] http://www.gospelcom.net/lcwe/LOP/lop19.htm.

[3]GCN - EP: Sofia, Bulgaria, 8 June 1994.

[4] Religia BG, 31 July 2004, http://www.religiabg.com/?p=oldnews&id=1514.

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topics from theological and practical viewpoints. The remaining four chapters discuss Russian evangelists of the past (Marina Sergeyevna Karetnikova), German churches in Central Asia (Johannes Dyck), current restrictions on missionary visas (Mark R. Elliott), and camping ministries (Viktor Artemov).

The contributors have all personally participated in various aspects of mission in this area, so their approaches are not detached. However, the general tone of the book is far from self-congratulatory. One theme that runs through the book is voiced by Penner: "The North American pragmatism ('whatever works') of the last decade or more in the former Soviet Union is not consistent with the missionary God of Scripture" (13). The book provides a general survey of developments and trends and summarizes findings of other recent studies. It is more of a survey than a collection of new research; the volume's footnotes point readers to a number of useful recent studies on mission in the former Soviet Union (FSU), including works by Russian sociologists.

The chapters touch on many of the most controversial aspects of mission in the Slavic world. Penner and Sawatsky both repeat criticisms of the CoMission project found in other publications, especially of the participants' perceived lack of understanding of Russian culture, language, and history. Penner addresses the complex issues of partnership and financial dependency. He also discusses a variety of issues related to the explosive growth in theological education in the FSU. Sawatsky's chapter on "Inter-Church Mission Dialogue" describes several facets of the relationship between Protestants and Orthodox in Russia. He closely examines the attitudes of the Moscow hierarchy on freedom of religion. The chapter also traces recent developments in the conflict between Rome and Moscow.

A number of fascinating stories appear in the text. For example, Sawatsky points out that the Orthodox Institute of Missiological Research in St. Petersburg translated and published *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today,* by evangelical scholar James Stamoolis, as a textbook. Later he summarizes recent research on the origin of the recurring conviction in Russia that non-Orthodox "sectarian" believers are psychologically ill. This is followed by a useful review of the history of the term "sect."

This reviewer was pleased to see the appearance of a volume which addresses so many significant questions. However, if a sequel appears, it would be strengthened by the inclusion of more specific evidence (both positive and negative) in discussions of controversial issues with fewer overly broad generalizations. Also welcome would be more studies which compare evangelical mission in the FSU to other parts of the world—many similarities exist, of course. Sawatsky points out a few parallels between the spread of the gospel in the Russian empire and on the continent of Africa during the same period. He also notes the vital roles played by ordinary, unnamed people during the first centuries of Christianity and its first decades in Ukraine and Russia. It would be useful to compare the development of short-term ministry projects in this area with those in other parts of the world, especially since 1990 marked both the rapid advance of work in the FSU and a surge in short-term projects around the world. These studies must include the wider context of the recent increase in the number of Western young people traveling, studying, and serving abroad. ✦

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EMMAUS WALK IN RUSSIA

Olga Batova

The Walk to Emmaus movement, a ministry of the United Methodist Church, is well known to many evangelical Christians in the West and worldwide. This unique, three-day spiritual retreat is held in a camp setting, far from the daily routine and business of life. It is a special time to refresh one's commitment to Christ and to experience God's love expressed through His people. It also is a time of meditation and reflection upon one's own spiritual journey and priorities in life.

Since the beginning of the Emmaus Walk in the 1970s, the movement has spread across the United States and to 32 countries worldwide, with nearly one million participants to date. Currently, eight European states have Emmaus Walk movements. In 1990 I was honored to be a part of the introduction of the Walk to Emmaus to Estonia. At that time I was on the faculty of the newly formed Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary, translating for Russian-speaking students from Estonia, Latvia, and Russia.

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Emmaus to Estonia

Wes Griffin, the first dean of the seminary, became convinced that the Emmaus Walk movement would be a blessing for Estonia. (A native of the U.S. state of Georgia and a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary, he currently is president of Leadership Institute, Carrollton, Georgia.) In 1995 Griffin contacted the Emmaus communities of North Georgia and Peoria, Illinois, which led to key leaders of the United Methodist Church in Estonia (Estonians, Russians, and one Latvian) and students and some faculty from the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary receiving invitations to participate in Emmaus retreats in the U.S. Five men and three women attended Peoria Walks 102 and 105 in February 1996, and eight men and nine women attended North Georgia Walks 49 and 58 in February-March 1996. (Participants refer to Emmaus retreats as "Walks.") I had the privilege of serving as translator in North Georgia. That Walk and others where I translated were "mountain top" experiences for all of us.

After meeting with Cheri Jones, who was then International Director of the Walk to Emmaus, our whole group had a vision to start the Emmaus Walk movement in Estonia. The first set of two Walks – men and women participate separately –was held in Estonia in the summer of 1996. The team from America helped us a great deal in launching the Emmaus movement in Estonia, and we continued on our own. In 1997 I translated all Emmaus materials into Russian, and we started to translate them into Estonian as well. I was honored to serve as the first lay director for the Estonian Emmaus Community, which is now known as "Eesti Emmause Kogudus." Because of the lack of facilities, the Walks are conducted in the summertime in Estonia. (The camp where the Walks are held, Camp Gideon, cannot be used in the winter since it has no heating system.)

By 2006, the tenth anniversary of the Emmaus Movement in Estonia, the number of participants in Emmaus Walks had reached more than 500 people. Over the years the Walk to Emmaus has proven to be an excellent tool to unite Christians in Estonia. The outpouring of God's love at the Walks has helped people to become "nationality" blind. Not only ethnic barriers, but also denominational barriers have been lowered through the Emmaus Walk movement.

From Estonia to Russia

I want to use the experience and help of the Estonian Emmaus community to launch the Emmaus Walk movement in Russia. The longstanding close ties between Estonian and Russian Methodists should help in this process. Methodism began in Estonia with the preaching of Vassili Täht in 1907, a missionary from St. Petersburg, Russia. The Methodist movement survived in Estonia during Soviet times even though all Methodist churches were closed in Russia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the first Methodist Church opened in Russia in the city of Samara in 1992. The pastor, Vladislav Spektorov, was a convert to Christ (and Methodism) in Tallinn, Estonia, at the Estonian Methodist Church in its Russian congregation. In 1997, Stas and Maria Ossipov from Tallinn, Estonia, joined a mission group to Satka (in the Chelyabinsk Region of the Urals). In 1998 the Satka United Methodist Church opened with Stas Ossipov as pastor. Another group from Tallinn, Estonia, visited Satka in the winter of 1999 and three people from Estonia joined an American group on a mission trip to Satka in 2005. Fortunately, Rev. Olga Kotsuba, District Superintendent of the United Methodist Church in the Ural District of Russia, is a veteran of a 1995 Emmaus retreat in Nashville, Tennessee.

Future Plans

Let me share my vision for launching the Emmaus movement in Russia. With the help of the Upper Room ministry, a number of practical steps need to be taken in order to realize this vision.

1. Eesti Emmause Kogudus and Gulf Breeze United Methodist Church have invited key leaders from Satka and Ekaterinburg United Methodist Churches to participate in the Walk to Emmaus in Estonia in August 2007. (The Estonian Emmaus Community is multilingual and all talks are simultaneously translated into Russian. In addition, all printed Emmaus materials will be published in Russian by 2007.)
2. In August 2007 Emmaus Walk veterans from the U.S. will assist with the Walks in Estonia and will meet with the new pilgrims from Russia after their retreats to discuss the launching of Walks in Russia.
3. Bishop of Eurasia Hans Vaxby and Victor Perez, International Director of Emmaus (Nashville, Tennessee), will attend the Walks in Estonia in 2007.
4. In Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 invitations to Emmaus Walk retreats will be sent to believers in the Ural District of the United Methodist Church.
5. An Emmaus Walk team from the U.S. and from Estonia will lead Walks in Satka in 2008.
6. In 2009 three teams will conduct the first Walks in Yekaterinburg and arrange a second set of Walks for Satka.

The Upper Room Emmaus Movement has a great future in Russia, but it will take vision and hard work to realize that dream. Emmaus Walk retreats, which help deepen Christian commitment for life, are well worth the effort. ✦

Editor's note: Readers of any denomination or Christian confession are welcome to contact the Emmaus Walk office (www.emmaus.com) to explore the possibility of participation in Emmaus Walk retreats.

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A WALK TO EMMAUS: OVERVIEW

Stephen D. Bryant

The Program

The Walk to Emmaus is a spiritual renewal program intended to strengthen the local church through the development of Christian disciples and leaders. The program's approach seriously considers the model of Christ's servanthood and encourages Christ's disciples to act in ways appropriate to being "a servant of all." The Walk to Emmaus experience begins with a 72-hour short course in Christianity, comprised of 15 talks by lay and clergy on the themes of God's grace, disciplines of Christian discipleship, and what it means to be the church. The course is wrapped in prayer and meditation, special times of worship, and daily celebration of Holy Communion. Emmaus follow-up groups strengthen and renew Christian people as disciples of Jesus Christ and as active members of the body of Christ in mission to the world.

The Name

The Walk to Emmaus gets its name from the story in Luke 24:13-35. Luke tells the story of that first Easter afternoon when the risen Christ appeared to the two disciples who were walking together along the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The risen Christ "came near and went with them," opening the disciples' eyes to his presence and lighting the fire of God's love in their hearts. As they walked to Emmaus, Jesus explained to them the meaning of all the Scriptures concerning himself. When they arrived in Emmaus, Jesus "took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them," and their eyes were opened. They recognized him as Jesus, the risen Lord, and they remembered how their hearts had burned within them as they talked with him on the road.

The History

The Walk to Emmaus is an adaptation of the Roman Catholic Cursillo Movement, which originated in Spain in 1949. Cursillo de Cristianidad means "little course in Christianity." During the 1960s and 1970s, Episcopalians and Lutherans, along with several nondenominational groups, such as Tres Dias, began to offer Cursillo. In 1978, The Upper Room of the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church adapted the program for a primarily Protestant audience and began to offer it under the name The Upper Room Cursillo. In 1981, The Upper Room made further adaptations and changed the name of the program to The Upper Room Walk to Emmaus. In 1984, the Upper Room developed a youth expression of Emmaus called Chrysalis. ✦

For additional information, contact: The Upper Room Walk to Emmaus, Box 340004, Nashville, TN 37203; tel:877-899-2780; fax: 615-340-7257; e-mail: Emmaus@upperroom.org; Web site: www.emmaus.com.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Stephen D. Bryant, What Is Emmaus? *(Nashville, TN: The Upper Room, 1995).*

The Walk to Emmaus is a spiritual renewal program intended to strengthen the local church through the development of Christian disciples and leaders.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom in Armenia

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definition is the attempt "to persuade someone to change his/her religious identity by the offer of money or other material benefit or by dishonest representation of religious beliefs." In an effort to stop evangelistic efforts that are legitimate, people may accuse some Christians of proselytizing. But Armenia has obligations as a new member of the European community to uphold its citizens' right to proclaim, as well as hold, their religious beliefs. When Armenia becam full member of the Council of Europe in January 2001, it obligated itself to uphold Article 9 of the law of the European Council for Human Rights (ECHR) which states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship."[10]

Evangelical Christians-Baptists are grateful for this affirmation of religious rights. They regard it as important to be recognized as a traditional group. But regardless of state action, the church's goal is to continue its historic mission to make new disciples for Christ, train them, and send them out as witnesses. Evangelical Christians-Baptists thank God for the level of freedom they enjoy and pray that they will be able to continue planting churches in Armenia in this new era.

The Evangelical Christian-Baptist Church of Armenia is placing great hope in the results of the national referendum of 27 November 2005. Reforms approved in this case by majority vote should lead to a more democratic law governing religious organizations. As a result, the Evangelical Christian-Baptist Church should be recognized as a traditional Christian faith.✦

Notes:
[1]http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/arm/index.html.
[2] Paul Marshall (gen. ed.), *Religious Freedom in the World, Country Profiles* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2000), 59; *European Baptist Federation Directory* (2005), 16.
[3] *Ibid*., 60.
[4] Police Department Directive No. 551-A, in effect from 1 January 2003.
[5] Amendment to the Constitution on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations, Preamble, Paragraph 2, signed by the President of the Republic of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, 27 September 1997, Article 5.
[6] Felix Corley, "Armenia: Secret Order Banishes Religious Minorities from Police," Forum 18 News Service, 25 April 2003
[7] "Buzzard Attends Law and Christianity Conference in Armenia," in **The Campbell Prospect 31* (February 2001), 22.
[8] *European Baptist Federation Directory* (2005), 16.
[9] Amendment to the Constitution on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations, Article 8.
[10] Malcolm D. Evans, *Religious Liberty and International Law in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 272.

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Asatur L. Naphapetyan *is general secretary of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Armenia.*

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Restrictions on Religious Freedom in Armenia

Asatur L. Naphapetyan

Editor's Note: The author sometimes shortens his denomination's official name, Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, to Baptist Union or Baptist.

New Freedoms

Even before Armenia proclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union on 21 September 1991, its Parliament set about revising laws in force during the Soviet era.[1] The Law of the Republic of Armenia on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations (17 June 1991) provided for genuine freedom of religion. However, Armenia's Baptist leaders were uncertain how best to respond to the new freedoms. The beloved pastor of the Yerevan Central Baptist Church, Yuri Avanesyan, then in his 40s, did not have young, well-trained leadership around him. Nor did he have a vision for church planting and mission outreach. He was a good pastor and a likeable person whom people loved. But because of the lack of vision, time was lost in seizing new possibilities.

Nevertheless, during the first years of the post-Soviet period, Baptists were able to engage in mission work without hindrance. In summer it was easy to gather a crowd in a village. Evangelistic efforts were organized using a van equipped with loudspeakers, microphones, and music synthesizers. Loudspeakers announced the showing of the "Jesus" film. Outdoor meetings were held and sometimes auditoria were rented. Because of these efforts, new churches were registered without government restrictions.

On 22 December 1993 President Levon Ter-Petrosyan signed legislation that discriminated against Evangelicals and other religious groups in favor of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

New Restrictions

However, on 22 December 1993 President Levon Ter-Petrosyan signed legislation that discriminated against Evangelicals and other religious groups in favor of the traditional faith, the Armenian Apostolic Church, which claims the allegiance of perhaps 90 percent of the population.[2] This late-1993 law required that a new church seeking registration have a minimum of 50 members, instead of 20 as was previously required. As a result, in 1994 Baptists were able to register only three new churches.

Arrests and Protests

In April 1995, several government officials organized an attack on churches that were not Armenian Apostolic. Soldiers sent by these officials arrested Rev. David Torosyan, a member of the Central Baptist Church in Yerevan, for leading a home-based service. He was imprisoned for eight days. After a Sunday service on 16 April 1995, soldiers also entered the Central Baptist Church and interrogated Pastor Avanesyan in his office. They confiscated the church van and transported approximately 20 young men from the church to the other side of Yerevan, perhaps originally intending to imprison them. Soldiers released the young men the same day but kept the van for two additional days.[3]

In defense of new freedom, leaders of the Baptist World Alliance and the European Baptist Federation sent letters of protest to the government. The police and a representative from the president's office issued apologies, but not the government officials responsible for the harassment.

Increasing Restrictions

On 9 June 1997 the National Assembly of Armenia passed a new law on religion that stated: "Only the Armenian Apostolic Church is acknowledged as the National Church for Armenians for their spiritual life [and] national identity."[4] As a result, other churches faced additional state discrimination, such as the requirement that Protestant congregations now have 200 baptized members in order to obtain legal registration. Increasingly since 1997 Armenian authorities have excluded Evangelical Christians-Baptists from active participation in public life, considering the denomination in the same category as such non-Christian sects as Jehovah's Witnesses and Hare Krishna.[6]

In a positive development, Gagik Harutyunyan, President of the Constitutional Court of Armenia, invited Campbell University law professor Lynn Buzzard to participate in a conference on "Law and Religion," held 4-5 October 2000. The meeting took place in Mother Church Holy Echmiadzin, the See of the Armenian Apostolic Church, under the sponsorship of Catholicos Garegin II. The lectures of this respected U.S. Baptist professor on the benefits of legal safeguards in church-state legislation were an encouragement to Armenian Baptists.[7]

Growth in Spite of Limitations

Even though the 1993 and 1997 laws place limits on activities, the Baptist Union has seen great increase since 1998. Whereas in 1991 Baptists could count only two registered churches in Armenia, by 1998 the Baptist Union had five registered churches and 33 mission centers, and by 2004 it had eight registered churches and 92 worship centers.[8] The church's mission goal is to receive official registration from the government for all these worship centers. However, at present, it is almost impossible to register additional churches because of the increase in membership requirements from 20 to 200. Nevertheless, as a religious organization, certain rights are assured according to the law, including the right to carry on theological education.

Defining Proselytism

Another issue that causes concern is Article 8 of the 1993 law which expressly forbids proselytizing.[9] How is this term to be defined? A good working

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