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Russian Molokans: Their Roots and Current Status

J. Eugene Clay

Spiritual Christians

Russian Spiritual Christianity first appeared in the historical record in the 1760s when a group of Russian Orthodox Christians in Tambov and Voronezh provinces broke away from the state church, rejecting its icons, fasts, church buildings, sacraments, clergy, and hierarchy. Following their understanding of the Slavonic Bible, these "spirituals" [*dukhovnye*] refused to kiss icons or bow before them; instead, they kissed and bowed to one another, for human beings—not painted boards—were the true image [*ikona, obraz*] of God. Church buildings were not necessary for those who worshiped God in spirit and truth, as Christ had taught. Likewise, they held that the sacraments should be understood in a spiritual, rather than a literal, sense. The Orthodox Eucharist was mere bread and wine and provided no salvation; the true Christian fed on spiritual bread, the Word of God. Rather than baptism in water, these early Spiritual Christians believed in baptism by the Holy Spirit. Marriage did not require a priest, but simply the mutual consent of the bride and groom. Spiritual Christians gathered for their religious meetings in private homes where they sang biblical psalms as well as hymns of their own composition. They refused to make the sign of the cross, rejecting both the three-fingered cross of the official state church and the two-fingered cross of the dissenting Old Believers. In obedience to the commands of Moses, Spiritual Christians also gave up pork.[1]

Dukhobors and Molokans

Within a generation, Spiritual Christianity had split into two major movements: Dukhobors, who came to place more emphasis on the direct leading of the Holy Spirit than on the Scriptures, and Molokans, who insisted on the authority of the Bible, the written Word of God. Orthodox detractors invented the names for both movements: Dukhobor (*dukhoborets,* spirit-wrestler) was a direct translation of the Greek *pneumatomakhoi* (those who struggle against the spirit), the fourth-century heresy that had denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and Molokan (*molokanin,* which came from *moloko*, milk) referred to anyone who consumed dairy products on fast days when milk was forbidden to Orthodox Christians. Semen Matveev Uklein, a state peasant from Tambov province who, according to oral tradition, worked as an itinerant tailor, emerged as an important Molokan leader. He traveled along the Volga River and throughout southern Russia spreading the Molokan faith and organizing congregations until his death in 1809.

Under Alexander I

Under the relatively tolerant reign of Alexander I (1801-25), Dukhobors and Molokans were allowed to move to Tauride province in Crimea, where they formed colonies along the Milky Waters in Melitopol' district. In their own manuscripts, Molokans preserve an imperial decree, issued in 1805 by Alexander I, that granted them limited recognition and protection from interference by Orthodox clergy.[2] In 1905, 1955, and 2005, Molokan congresses celebrated the centennial, sesquicentennial, and bicentennial anniversaries of the decree.[3] Under Alexander I, Molokans wrote several creeds and ritual manuals in an effort to standardize their belief and practices.[4] They cooperated with the Russian Bible Society, which existed from 1812 to 1826, and promoted the reading of the scriptures. With no central ecclesiastical authority, Molokans began to develop doctrinal and ritual innovations. For example, beginning in 1823, the Don Cossack Andrei Salamatin led some Crimean Molokans to reintroduce some sacraments, including infant baptism and a form of the Eucharist, while remaining independent of the Orthodox Church and its clergy. Although most Molokans strictly rejected all sacraments, Salamatin's sacramental followers came to be known as Molokans of the Don Persuasion [*molokane donskogo tolka*].[5]

Under Nicholas I

When Nicholas I (1825-55) ascended the throne he ended his brother's policy of relative religious toleration and instead turned to active persecution of Spiritual Christianity. Beginning in 1830, Molokans and Dukhobors were exiled to the Caucasian frontier in an effort to separate them from Orthodox peasants who might prove vulnerable to their proselytizing efforts. The authorities also hoped to help pacify the Caucasus by settling these ethnically Russian sectarians among the hostile indigenous population.[6]

The policy of persecution and forced deportation failed to eliminate Spiritual Christianity, but seemed rather to intensify Molokans' commitment to their faith. In the 1830s, many Molokans experienced a major revival in which the Holy Spirit manifested Himself through inspired prophecy, glossolalia, and ecstatic dance. Some Molokans predicted that the advent of Christ was near and, drawing on the popular writings of the German Pietist Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling (1740-1817) and the Baltic Baroness Juliane von Krüdener (1764-1824), began to preach that this blessed event would occur in 1836 at Mount Ararat. Excited by this eschatological vision, some Molokans voluntarily undertook the difficult trek to the Caucasus in the hope of meeting the returning Christ.

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Constant, Leaper, and Jumper Molokans

Not all Molokans accepted these new manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and the revival in the 1830s split the movement. The more conservative majority held to the traditions of Semen Uklein, who had emphasized the authority of the Bible and had established norms for congregational singing. These Ukleinites [*ukleintsy*] or Constant [*postoiannye*] Molokans predominated especially along the Volga. The more radical Leapers [*skakuny*] and Jumpers [*pryguny*] embraced the new prophecies and the ecstatic dancing, singing, and glossolalia that accompanied them. Calling themselves "Zion," after the sacred location of the Jewish temple, these Leapers and Jumpers followed new prophets, including Fedor Osipovich Bulgakov (1809-76) who took the messianic name of David, the son of Jesse, and Luk'ian Petrov Sokolov (1753?-1858), who encouraged his listeners to move to Ararat to build the New Jerusalem. As the more radically apocalyptic branch of the Molokans, Jumpers tended to go to the Caucasus, either voluntarily or by forced exile.

Followers of Rudometkin

By the 1850s, Molokan settlements in the Caucasus had become a cauldron of new spiritual movements. Some known as Communalists [*obshchie*] experimented with the reintroduction of the early apostolic practice of holding property in common. Others became followers of another radical millenarian prophet, the peasant wheelwright Maksim Gavriilovich Rudometkin (ca. 1832-77), who declared himself to be the King of Spirits. Arrested in 1858 for his radical prophecies, Rudometkin spent the rest of his life in monastic imprisonment. (Although most historians hold that he died in 1877, Rudometkin's most devout followers to this day believe that he is still alive and is waiting for the right moment to return to establish his terrestrial kingdom.)[7]

With his radical prophecies of a millennial kingdom that would be populated and enjoyed by his followers, Maksim Rudometkin split the Jumper community to create a third great branch (along with Constants and Jumpers) of Molokans that is active today—sometimes called Maksimists [*maksimisty*] by their detractors. In his prophecies, written in tiny notebooks that were smuggled to his followers from his monastic prison, Rudometkin bitterly attacked the Russian Orthodox Church and its tsar, comparing them to the apocalyptic beasts of Revelation. He broke with other Molokans by rejecting the Christian holidays that they shared with the Russian Orthodox Church, instead insisting that his followers observe the Old Testament feasts, including Trumpets, Passover, and Tabernacles. While many other Molokans, especially Ukleinites, sought accommodation with the imperial government, Maksim bitterly rejected such efforts and denounced the Russian state in apocalyptic terms.

Some sources suggest that Molokans in Russia numbered as many as 1.2 million at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Molokan-Baptist Connections

In the late 1860s, German Baptists began attracting many Molokan converts to their faith. The very first Russian convert to Baptist faith was the Molokan preceptor Nikita Isaevich Voronin (1840-1905). On 20 August 1867, Baptist preacher Martin Kalweit, a Baltic German living in the Caucasus, baptized Voronin in the Kura River near Tiflis, Georgia. Baptists and Molokans shared much in common. Both held a commitment to the supreme authority of the Bible. They also rejected the clergy, hierarchy, sacraments, and icons of the Orthodox Church. Molokans and Baptists were both led by lay elders, and they both believed in a form of congregational polity. The main division between the two movements lay in their conflicting understanding of baptism and communion. Baptists believed that Christ himself had ordained these specific rituals. Although baptism and the Lord's Supper were not sacraments that could convey saving grace, obedient believers had to perform these ordinances in accordance with the literal commands of Christ and his apostles. For Baptists, an adult believer who confessed faith in Christ was required to follow him in the ritual of holy water baptism. For Molokans, baptism and communion were spiritual realities, not physical rites. As a Molokan statement of faith from the 1890s put it, "We do not perform baptism by water on persons of any age. Our baptism consists in worship and in turning away from sin, in accordance with the testimony of the Gospel."[8]

Under Baptist influence however, some prominent Molokans adopted Baptist ideas or converted to Baptist faith altogether. In the 1860s, affected by a spiritual revival among German Mennonites, Molokan leader Zinovii Danilovich Zakharov (b. 1840) introduced believers' baptism among his co-religionist Molokans of the Don Persuasion, thus creating a new movement of evangelical Molokans. In addition, many early Russian Baptist and Evangelical Christian leaders were converts from Molokan faith. Dei Ivanovich Mazaev (1855-1922), one of the founders of the Baptist Union in 1884, was from a wealthy Molokan family in the Crimea. Born in a Molokan family in Vorontsovka, near Baku,Vasilii Gur'evich Pavlov (1854-1924) became a Baptist in 1871 and actively proselytized among former co-religionists in the Caucasus. Ivan Stepanovich Prokhanov (1869-1935), founder of the All-Russian Union of Evangelical Christians (1909), also came from a Molokan family, although his parents converted to Baptist faith while he was a child.[9]

Under Nicholas II

In the last years of the old regime, Molokans enjoyed greater freedom. Constant Molokans formed a wealthy community in Baku. With Tsar Nicholas II's decree of religious liberty in 1905, Molokans were able to legally publish their own journals (including *The Spiritual Christian, The Sectarian Herald, The Molokan,* and *The Molokan Herald*), hold congresses, develop national denominational structures, and create civic organizations. Some sources suggest that Molokans in Russia numbered as many 1.2 million at the beginning of the twentieth century.[10] An official 1912 government census, however, found only 133,935 Constant Molokans [*molokane-voskresniki*]

and 4,844 Jumpers [*pryguny*], which probably included Maksimists.[11] Despite the greater toleration they enjoyed, many of the more radical Molokans, especially Jumpers and Maksimists, began to emigrate to the United States beginning in 1904. In part, these emigrants sought to escape the burden of military service in the Russo-Japanese War. Approximately 5,000 Molokans (primarily Jumpers and Maksimists) moved to the U.S. before the outbreak of the First World War. ♦

Notes:

[1] Svetlana A. Inikova, "The Tambov Dukhobors in the 1760s," *Russian Studies in History* 46 (Winter 2007–08): 10–39.

[2] A. Vysotskii, "K voprosu o polozhenii molokan v tsartsvovanie imperatora Aleksandra I. (Proshenie na vysochaishee imia molokan Tambovskoi i Voronezhskoi gubernii ot 22 iiunia 1805 g., s prilozhennym k nemu molokanskim obriadnikom)," *Izvestiia Tavricheskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii,* nos. 32-33 (1902):18-47. An English version of the decree can be found at http://www.molokane.org/molokan/History/Bi-centennial/1805_Petition.html.

[3] *Otchet o iubileinom s"ezde dukhovnykh khristian molokan, 1805-1905* (Tiflis: 1907); Nikolai Kastriulin, "Dukhovnye khristiane molokane v fotografiiakh," 8 August 2009, http://h.ua/story/217597/; Ivan Aleksandrov, "'Vozliubivshie slovesnoe moloko': Molokane otprazdnovali iubilei darovaniia svobody veroispovedaniia," *NG-Religii,* 5 October 2005.

[4] [Grigorii Pokrovskii], "Istoricheskie svedeniia o molokanskoi sekte," *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* (September 1858): 51-57.

[5] Vasilii M. Skvortsov, ed., *Deianiia 3-go Vserossiiskogo missionerskago s"ezda v Kazani po voprosam vnutrennei missii i raskolosektantstva,* 2nd ed., rev. (Kiev: I. I. Chokolov, 1898), 156-57; *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR* (Moscow: Izdanie Vsesoiuznogo soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov, 1989), 53-54.

[6] Nicholas Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia's Empire in the South Caucasus* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 1-83.

[7] Aleksandr Il'ich Klibanov, *Narodnaia sotsial'naia utopia v Rossii, XIX vek* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978): 140-210; Nikolai Aleksandrovich Dingelshtedt, *Zakavkazskie sektanty v ikh semeinom i religioznom bytu* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1885), 61-76; A.F. Wren, *True Believers; Prisoners for Conscience : A History of Molokan Conscientious Objectors in World War One; The Absolutists of Arizona : "You Shall Not Lose One Hair on Your Head"* ([Australia?]: A.F. Wren, 1991), 20; *Selections from the Book of Spirit and Life: Including the Book of Prayers and Songs*, ed. and trans. J.K Berokoff (Whittier, CA: Stockton Trade Press, 1966), 18.

[8] http://www.moscowseminary.org/sannikov/2tambovotolk.htm.

[9] Heather Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905-1929* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 15, 18, 30, 38.

[10] Dar'ia Okuneva "Poslednie iz molokan," *Novye izvestiia,* no. 220, 4 December 2007, p. 7.

[11] *Statisticheskie svedeniia o sektantakh (k 1 ianvaria 1912 g.)*, Izdanie Departamenta dukhovnykh del (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia MVD, 1912); cf. Aleksandr Il'ich Klibanov, *Istoriia religioznogo sektantstva v Rossii (60-e gody XIX v. – 1917 g.)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 181.

Editor's note: The concluding portion of this article will be published in the next issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report *20 (Summer 2012).*

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Responses to New Missionary Code of Conduct

Editor's note: The cover article of the previous issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report *20 (Winter 2012), 1-3, summarized and critiqued a path-breaking new code of conduct for missionaries developed by the World Evangelical Alliance, the World Council of Churches, and the Roman Catholic Church. Find below responses to the code of conduct article received from Russia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Austria, and the United States.*

Next Steps for the Code of Conduct

It is heartening that such diverse bodies as the Roman Catholic Pontifical Council, the World Council of Churches, and the World Evangelical Alliance have developed a new Code of Conduct for Christian Witness. The way we Christians proclaim God's Word and exhibit Christ's presence has always been essential as to whether the gospel will be heard and seen. Now, in our globalized, interactive, interdependent world, respect and civil conduct among Christians—or the lack thereof—becomes ever more apparent. Increasingly, religious conflicts are rising and reshaping the world. For us Christians to conduct ourselves in courteous, civil ways, consistent with our biblical beliefs, would probably be one of the most powerful ways to promote Christian witness.

The summary of the four pillars of the Code, and Mark Elliott's perspicuous commentary, not only provide general principles but also more specifically suggest how these may be lived out. The code recommendations for distinguishing appropriate acts of compassion from inappropriate allurements may prove to be especially challenging, as Christian confessions often have differing definitions of evangelism and proselytism. With the solid foundation that the Code provides, it will be important to promote widespread awareness of its existence and build on this foundation—especially encouraging ongoing dialogue within and among Christian confessions about specific issues that will arise with implementation of the Code. ♦

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Anita Deyneka, *Coordinator, Home for Every Orphan Partnership, Russian Ministries, Wheaton, Illinois*

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Responses to New Missionary Code of Conduct *(continued from page 3)*

The Benefit of Minority Christian Confessions

I applaud the delegates of the WEA, the WCC, and the RC Church for articulating agreed-on standards for relations between different Christian confessions, as well as between Christians and people of other faiths. It is noteworthy that these three groups were willing to do anything together, and the fact that they have agreed on a substantial code of conduct is both significant and heartening. Moreover, I stand in agreement with Mark Elliott's commentary on the joint declaration, "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct." I would like to comment further on one point, the call for tolerance and respect among different groups of Christians.

One thing that all Christians must recognize is that our mission and witness are designed to foster the building of God's kingdom, not the advance of one particular tradition or another. Yet far too often, we consciously or unconsciously assume that God is at work primarily (or even exclusively) through our tradition. Of course, theological differences dividing the different Christian traditions are significant, and we have every right to believe that God works in great ways through our tradition, fueled by our theology. But it is in no way true that he works *only* through one tradition or one Christian theology, to the exclusion of others. In fact, one could persuasively argue that in any region, the dominant version of Christianity will be the most comfortable, the most apathetic, the least vibrant. In any region, the dominant version of Christianity may well slide into the trap of caring more about its own hegemony than about the actual spiritual condition of its flock. Its leaders may be more concerned that people not leave the fold than they are that people actually follow Christ deeply and vibrantly. Such an attitude does little to advance God's kingdom, however good the theology of those who hold that attitude may be. And such an attitude is potentially present among leaders of the dominant version of Christianity in *any* region, whatever that dominant strand may be. Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians in the American South may be, and often are, just as spiritually apathetic as Orthodox in Russia or Roman Catholics in Italy, and their leaders may turn just as blind an eye to the spiritual state of their flock in all three places.

Because of the prevalence of this scenario, I suggest another reason for Christians of one stripe to be respectful of Christians from a different tradition. Not only should such respect be rooted in the dignity of every human being (and especially of every Christian), but such respect should also grow out of the recognition that in any given region, the majority Christian tradition *needs* the various minority Christian traditions. They bring an honesty, vibrancy, and earnestness to the Christian faith that can help to re-invigorate the majority Christian tradition. Orthodoxy in Russia needs evangelicalism to call it forth from its complacent nationalism to a more Christ-centered, vibrant Christianity among its own parishioners. But in precisely the same way, evangelicalism in America needs the excitement that the small Orthodox contingent in America (or the larger, but still minority, Roman Catholic contingent) brings, in order to spur it on to a more robust devotion to Christ.

There will come a day when all true believers will worship together around the throne of God and before the crucified and risen Lamb. We all know that this vast throng of believers will come from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. What we admit less often—but what is still true—is that the throng will come from various Christian traditions as well. If that day of worship is what we really long for and strive to foster, then we will necessarily respect people from other Christian traditions even though we disagree with them on significant points of doctrine, because differences aside, all true believers are working toward the same goal. ♦

The majority Christian tradition *needs* the various minority Christian traditions. They bring an honesty, vibrancy, and earnestness to the Christian faith that can help to re-invigorate the majority Christian tradition.

Donald Fairbairn, *Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina*

Freedom of Faith and the Great Commission

It would be a real and demonstrative act of Christian love and respect if the Orthodox Church would grant Protestants in Russia the same freedom to exercise their faith as the Orthodox Church is granted in the United States. The Orthodox Church may still claim that it has the majority since it considers all local residents as its *prikhozhani* (parishioners), but the fact is that after 70 years of atheistic, Soviet influence, much of the population is quite secular. Christ in the Great Commission exhorts His followers to reach out to them. Protestant Christians feel compelled to follow the biblical injunction to meet the physical, as well as the spiritual, needs of people (Isaiah 58: 6-9; Matthew 25: 34-49; Luke 10: 31-32). ♦

Andrew Semenchuk, *Slavic Gospel Association, Loves Park, Illinois*

The Value of a Code of Conduct for Protestant Relations with Protestants

For many Evangelicals I know in Ukraine (this is true in North America as well), a Christian testimony is considered effective if it is verbal, fast, and conclusive. To "witness" means to deliver the whole gospel and elicit a response. This document suggests a less defined and more principled approach, which I think is well worth discussing in seminary classrooms. I wonder what it might mean for relationships between some Ukrainian Baptists and Pentecostals. Other world religions and Christian confessions aside, these guidelines could be profitably applied to relationships among Baptist churches in Odessa, and even among individual Christians. ♦

Mary Raber, Mennonite Mission Network, Odessa, Ukraine.

Inter-Church Cooperation—By Fits and Starts

I am not yet very sure how the New Code of Conduct will impact the local mission field in Romania and other post-Soviet states. I wonder if such a document will be translated, studied, understood, distributed to all areas, and, of course, applied practically and contextually.

While I was at Asbury Theological Seminary, I attended Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, Kentucky, and accompanied the church's missionary teams to Romania for several years. During one such trip we went to a local village in eastern Romania and met the local Orthodox priest. I told him I was a Romanian Baptist, my colleagues were American Baptists, and we came to tell locals about salvation through faith in Christ. I asked him to help us, but he was reluctant. He told me that a year prior other missionaries had come, and he had incited the locals against them and had driven them out. Next, he went to Bucharest to a national meeting of the Orthodox Church where the Patriarch instructed them to collaborate with evangelical missionaries if they ever came to their villages. Of course, the Patriarch had just come from a WCC meeting. The priest went back and when another missionary team came, he hosted them and called locals to listen to the gospel being preached. The villagers became violent, threatened the missionaries, and accused their own priest of collaborating with "sectarians and heretics." He almost lost his job.

Of course, this is one isolated incident, but it makes me believe that inter-church cooperation should be contextual, and it should begin with local churches and their leaders engaging in ministries of help and compassion toward the suffering and needy. This is how the code should be expanded, namely by encouraging Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant church leaders to work together in helping the poor and marginalized, praying together first.

This issue of ecumenical cooperation between local churches is too complex to be solved by one document which states some vague principles, but I believe church leaders at the national level could at least translate, explain, and distribute it to local priests and church leaders asking them to pray about it and try to contextualize it. On the other hand, it is encouraging that WCC, WEA, and the Catholic Church met for so long, addressed these real issues, and negotiated this code. I pray and hope their efforts will continue and will bear fruit. ♦

Paul Botica, *Senior Pastor, Cedarcrest Community Church, LaGrange, Georgia*

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Defining Proselytism

The biggest issue for me is the definition of proselytism and the issue of Christian ministry to those with various degrees of connection to an existing Christian denomination. In a Russian context the issue is evangelistic work by Evangelicals among those once baptized but with no formal connection to the Russian Orthodox Church. This is a major issue of controversy. This is not treated symmetrically, as Orthodox ecclesiology (one true church) justifies the Orthodox even targeting active members of Evangelical churches. Sometimes one feels that the Orthodox are projecting their own approach onto us, not realizing that we do not share this exclusive ecclesiology. I don't know a single Baptist who thinks that it is only Baptists who will be saved. While I support the Code of Conduct being proposed, I would like to see the commitment by conscientious Evangelicals to act within certain boundaries (which for the most part they are doing already) reciprocated by Orthodox.

On the issue of statistics I think it should be made very clear that the numbers prove only a greater or comparable number of Protestant churches/communities. Orthodox [in Siberia] still demographically represent a larger community in the number of adherents, even if we compare the lowest Orthodox figure (2 percent active church involvement) and the highest Evangelical/Protestant figure (1+ percent). ♦

Russell Phillips, *Pastor, Novosibirsk, Siberia*

Overcoming Our Mistakes

Over the last ten years more and more Christian ministries and religious bodies have adopted "best practices" policies. "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct" is a welcome addition. It provides a helpful paradigm for continued dialog and general accountability on the part of the major participants in Christian witness. While any adherence to the ideas set forth in this document is voluntary, there is now a common code and some standards and values to aim for.

Mark Elliott's analysis of this code of conduct in the context of church life in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe displays many helpful examples, both positive and negative. Those of us who have worked in Eastern Europe over the past two decades could probably add many of our own. Unfortunately, we sometimes spend so much time criticizing the mistakes of others that we fail to examine our own motives and experience. Pragmatically, we should have the power to control our own actions and words. However, if we're honest, we all make mistakes in mission ministry. We made mistakes when we first started in missions and we'll continue to make mistakes throughout our lives. Of course, we hope that we've matured and now make fewer faux-pas than previously.

The result of our self-awareness is to ask several important questions of ourselves: How do we rectify our mistakes such that broken relationships with other church traditions are healed? How do we learn so as not to repeat them? How can we teach others to avoid making the same mistakes we've made? How do we present positive examples of respecting each other without compromising our own theological and missiological beliefs? One way to accomplish these things is to show respect for Christian traditions other than our own by following the guidelines put forth in this important document. Imagine where an undivided Christian witness could take the Body of Christ in reaching the former Soviet Union with the Gospel and the kingdom of God. ♦

Charley Warner, *International Assistant, Euro-Asian Accrediting Association, Vienna, Austria*

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Responses to New Missionary Code of Conduct *(continued from page 5)*

Strains in Inter-Church Relations

[The Code of Conduct] is a two-way street, and religious freedom means both the freedom to stay with the majority or move to the minority. The role of the outsider in assisting the historical churches with care for the sick, poor, orphaned, and marginalized has been a touchy issue for many. How do the minority Christian groups care for the marginalized in areas that are controlled by a state church that is not being Christ to the marginalized? Typically it is done under cover of an NGO to avoid conflicts. But why do we have to do that? Why are they [state churches] protective of their turf even when it is clear to everyone that there is room for other Christians to help with the marginalized? They might be too proud to acknowledge their lack of resources, yet when resources are made available from minority Christian groups, they are either absorbed without thanks or pushed out of the country by local bureaucrats who want to please the state church. ♦

Gregory Nichols, *International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague*

The Need for Orthodox-Protestant Dialogue and Cooperation

I see this Code as an important step toward a more meaningful inter-denominational dialogue, although it contains only basic principles, without including all the issues that might stem from theological, canonical, and cultural differences. When it comes to discussion of interdenominational dialogue in Russia, one of the big factors is the lack of uniformity among Russian Protestants – and even within the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) itself. Russian Protestants include a wide spectrum of denominations which at times misunderstand and criticize each other. The ROC, with seeming unity in hierarchy and organization, also suffers from lack of unity. It has its own conservatives and its own liberals who range from radical to moderate with everything in between. Attitudes toward interdenominational dialogue and collaboration for both Protestants and Orthodox vary from open animosity to full cooperation. Therefore, a discussion of interdenominational dialogue in Russia – especially when it comes to facts, and not theories – sometimes sounds more like a series of case studies rather than a meaningful dialogue with clearly defined arguments.

For instance, the idea of the ROC receiving a great deal of government support and cooperation and the idea of the Russian government showing partiality is not unjustified; however, with over one thousand years of Orthodoxy in Russia and 71 percent of Russians identifying themselves as Orthodox Christians, this should not be surprising (Recent Levada Center poll, http://www.scribd.com/levadacenter/d/, p.66-). Yet the idea that this favoritism inevitably results in an "ever-increasing legislative discrimination against Christians outside of the Moscow Patriarchate" may be a bit far-fetched. Let us consider a 2011 attempt to make amendments to the 1997 law on religion intended to outlaw the so-called "religious group" status (not officially registered religious communities). This change could have affected both Protestants and Orthodox and was, therefore, firmly opposed by both religious bodies (Interview with V. Lebedev, head of the Orthodox Citizens' Union, http://www.scribd.com/levadacenter/d/). Partiality toward ROC – or lack thereof – most often comes from local officials and common people who are generally more open toward the ROC than any other religious group. And as for the Orthodox lobby – yes, it exists, but its main purpose is not to outlaw all other denominations; on the contrary, it promotes issues and concerns that may be shared by the Christian community at large, such as pro-life initiatives, chaplaincy, and educational programs.

However, the lack of unity is only part of the problem. I have been part of a Russian Protestant community since 1997, and I am painfully aware of the cultural insensitivity prevalent among Russian Protestants when it comes to adapting the message and church practices to an Orthodox context. As a professor of an interdenominational Evangelical seminary, I observe that nearly 100 percent of Protestant students (ages 17 to 40) are either totally ignorant of Orthodox Christianity or share a common biased view of Orthodoxy as a weird, dubious mix of paganism (icons, saints, and relics). Quite often I hear comments about "these Orthodox" who "have no clue what salvation by faith is all about" and who "do not want to recognize us, Protestants, as Christians." Quite often, when there is talk about the need for unity among Christians in Russia and the need for interdenominational dialogue, it implies only unity and dialogue among Protestant denominations. Serious attempts at meaningful and effective dialogue with the Orthodox Church are almost non-existent. While the ROC has already stated a clear theological position toward Protestants and Catholics and has made several attempts at dialogue, Protestant denominations are still struggling to accept and cooperate with each other, let alone cooperate with Orthodox or Catholics ("Basic Principles of Attitude to the Non-Orthodox," http://mospat.ru/en/documents/attitude-to-the-non-orthodox/; Reports of meetings of the ROC Department of External Church Relations with Protestants, 12 April 2005 and 10 May 2009; http://churchofgodportal.ru/content/view/121/2/; http://www.youtube.com/watch?y=ZzOksfTnVzc). In Protestant churches and schools discussion of Orthodox Christianity is non-existent or marginal. This omission is surprising when one considers the historical and cultural context in which these schools and churches operate and the growing influence of the ROC in Russian society. So far, the only serious and fair theological study has been Donald Fairbairn's *Eastern Orthodoxy Through Western Eyes*, only recently translated into Russian.

So in many respects the fact that "respect, tolerance, and interreligious dialogue are extremely rare commodities" in Russia is sad but true. However, it is not easy – nor useful – to point fingers and decide which side, Protestant or Orthodox, is to blame for the lack of dialogue and cooperation. A better, more detailed code of conduct for Russia will only be produced if and when both sides become more open and willing to listen and study each other's positions. Perhaps Protestants, who may have more flexibility and less hierarchy, could more easily take some steps toward making dialogue possible. ♦

It is not easy – nor useful – to point fingers and decide which side, Protestant or Orthodox, is to blame for the lack of dialogue and cooperation.

Sergei Koryakin, *Academic Dean, Moscow Evangelical Christian Theological Seminary*

Establishing Evangelical Credentials in a Russian Orthodox Context

Russell Phillips

Evangelicals in Russia live and minister in a predominantly Russian Orthodox culture. They live as Protestant Christians in a society that considers Russian Orthodoxy a component of Russian national identity. They also engage in evangelism among unchurched, nominally Russian Orthodox people, and, when possible, they enter into various forms of informal dialogue with Russian Orthodox believers.

Orthodox Allegiance Versus Practice

Surveys consistently place allegiance to the Russian Orthodox Church at just under 70 percent of the general population.[1] This statistic does not relate to church attendance or involvement in church life, which is estimated at approximately four percent.[2] Nor does the figure of 70 percent relate to lifestyle or ethics (as statistics on common-law marriage and alcohol abuse belie), but to religious identity, very closely related to national identity.

Orthodox Exclusivism

The Russian Orthodox Church understands itself to be the Body of Christ in an exclusive sense. This truth is held both spiritually (How could Christ have two bodies?) and patriotically (How could a true Russian countenance membership in another, foreign body?). In a similar vein, Russia, located precariously in the vast expanse that bridges Europe and Asia, has survived because its society has been unitary—ideologically united and uniform—rather than pluralistic—allowing for diversity of conviction and practice. Two of the most traumatic crises in Russian history came at moments of division: the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century and the Time of Troubles in the seventeenth century that witnessed multiple pretenders to the throne and a Polish invasion. During the Russian Revolutions at the beginning of the twentieth century it is said that the Bolsheviks' greatest enemy was not the tsar, nor the Provisional Government, nor even similar movements such as the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), but Mensheviks who were members of a different branch of the same political party with only a slightly different view on the timing of the Revolution.[3] How could there ever be two tsars or two vanguards of the revolution or two legitimate expressions of the Christian faith?

In this context a search for spiritual meaning is expressed not in the modernist "What is truth?" nor even the post-modernist "What is real?" but in a characteristically Russian question, "Who is right?" It is a question of identity, of finding one's place in the right camp, the legitimate community of faith which is the sole custodian of truth. As people seek God and salvation in Russia, this question is never far from the surface. Many seekers and converts will confess to struggling to make up their minds as to whether Evangelicals, from whom they have heard the gospel, are members of *a* true church, *the* true church, or a sect.

Marginalized Evangelicals

Today, Russian Evangelicals find themselves marginalized outside the social mainstream. While Baptists, Adventists, not to mention Lutherans, rightly claim a longstanding, indigenous presence in Russia, they are perceived as foreign and alien. Moreover, in a culture that places enormous stress upon legitimacy and official recognition, Evangelicals are considered to lack both. The media feed this bias against all Christians outside the Orthodox fold.

Orthodox exclusivism raises important questions both in terms of evangelistic endeavor and inter-church dialogue. Both these activities require an adequate answer to the basic question, "Who are you?" Those hearing the gospel and those engaged in dialogue with Evangelicals need to know with whom they are speaking. In robust Russian style, one has to establish one's credentials and win respect in order to gain a hearing.

"Who Are You?" – Three Evangelical Responses

In answering the question, "Who are you?," various options present themselves. Evangelicals may be inclined to deflect attention from this issue and instead focus on the message of the gospel. ("Don't worry about who I am, just listen to what God has to say to you in the Bible.") Russians usually do not receive this approach well because they consider it evasive, as if Evangelicals have something to hide and therefore will not reveal their identity.

Another option may be to try to focus on the common ground between Orthodox and Evangelical Christians, effectively saying, "We are the same in essentials." This argument, however, is not convincing theologically or sociologically. Much common ground does indeed exist between Orthodox and Evangelicals, as documented by such dialogues as that chaired by Spurgeon's College church historian Tim Grass in the United Kingdom.[4] It is conceivable that Evangelicals might well be able to communicate the gospel message in a Russian context along the lines of Orthodox theology. For example, they might explicate the fall and redemption using the analogy of sickness and health (the so-called iatric model of the incarnation and atonement), although a complete account of the gospel would be impossible without reference to our guilt before God, Christ's death as a judicial substitution, and justification by faith. However, as already intimated, it is not about the message. The bottom line is that Evangelicals are not Eastern Orthodox, that is to say, Evangelicals are not in sacramental communion with the Orthodox Church. Just as Evangelicals insist on the saving necessity of rebirth ("You must be born again"), so Orthodox insist on the saving necessity of fellowship within their church communion. While some Orthodox might concede that by God's exceptional grace one might be saved outside Orthodoxy, the question they might pose is: "Why take chances?"

A third option, potentially the most fruitful, is for Evangelicals to develop an apologetic for an Evangelical identity. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (II Corinthians 4:5). The Apostle Paul and his co-workers did not preach themselves as Lord, but they did preach themselves as servants. In other words, their own identity and status did have a place in their preaching, albeit subordinate, as witnessed by Paul's various defenses of his ministry in I and II Corinthians.

So how might this third option be accomplished? Evangelicals might begin by answering the question,

Just as Evangelicals insist on the saving necessity of rebirth, so Orthodox insist on the saving necessity of fellowship within their church communion.

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"Who are we?" according to the teachings of the Bible. However, that answer bypasses 2,000 years of Christian discipleship and tradition, as if Evangelicals received the Christian faith directly from the Apostles. What about all those faithful people in-between? Like it or not, Evangelicals are the recipients of a particular tradition, a succession of Christians who have heard and believed, lived out, and passed on their faith. What were their names? When did they live? How did they come to verbalize the content of their faith? How did they organize their spiritual life – individual and corporate? What did they live out in terms of Christian lifestyle, and what experience did they accumulate along the way? Beside direct succession, Evangelicals have an affinity with other believers whose values and concerns they share, even though not connected by direct lines of descent. While questions of origin may appear irrelevant in some Western cultural contexts where history is considered "bunk" and relevance is all about reinventing oneself, Russians still consider questions of heritage important. Biography and church history affirm legitimacy, win trust, gain a hearing, and form the basis for an identity which Evangelicals can own and others, if they so choose, can embrace.

While many Orthodox brothers and sisters are well-disposed toward Evangelicals, many other nominal, nationalistic, and ecclesiologically exclusivist Orthodox are quite belligerent toward Evangelicals.

Strigolniki, Non-Possessors, and Others

Evangelicals base their identity objectively in people and events, rather than any subjective exercise in pick-and-mix self-invention. In the Russian context, Evangelicals trace several lines of succession. While the Protestant Reformation was indeed a Western phenomenon, Russian church history includes memorable reform movements that functioned in or emerged from Russian Orthodoxy, such as the fourteenth-century Strigolniki (opposed to clerical abuses and church ceremony) and the fifteenth-century Non-Possessors (opposed to wealth, coercion, and close ties with the state). Maxim the Greek (d. 1533), while by no means a Protestant, shared with Evangelicals opposition to liturgical formalism and superstitions which he argued had infiltrated Orthodoxy. Also during the sixteenth century, representatives of all social strata, such as the noble Matvei Bashkin, the serf Feodosy Kosoy, and the writer Ivan Peresvetov, voiced opposition to the religious and social *status quo* and were condemned by church and state as a result.

The Protestant Reformation

Russia also came into direct contact with the Protestant Reformation itself, not only in the form of Lutheran and Reformed churches on Russian soil (St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Moscow dates back to 1576), but also as a result of Russian territorial expansion into Eastern Europe. The 1570 dispute between Russian Orthodox Tsar Ivan the Terrible and Polish-based Protestant pastor Jan Rokita, touching on major differences between the two confessions, is an example of such interaction.

Old Believers

The most far-reaching challenge to the authority and prestige of the Russian Orthodox Church, at least until the 19th century, came, ironically, from its most earnest defenders. When Patriarch Nikon instituted changes in Orthodox liturgy and practice, in accordance with ancient Byzantine precedents, especially conservative Orthodox refused to comply. The Old Believer Schism this produced, beginning in 1666-67, significantly undermined the strength of the Russian Orthodox Church and cost it the loyalty of a substantial number of its most devoted adherents. For centuries these *Raskolniki* [Schismatics] served as the most significant example of home-grown religious non-conformism in the Russian Empire.[5]

Non-Orthodox Immigrants and the Russian Bible Society

In 1721 Tsar Peter the Great introduced a Protestant-style church structure (the Holy Synod) to the Orthodox Church, abolishing the Patriarchate (only restored in 1917). Tsarina Catherine the Great (late eighteenth century) invited German Mennonites, Lutherans, and Catholics to settle recently conquered, sparsely populated lands. The nineteenth century witnessed increasing Protestant influences. Tsar Alexander I came under the influence of European continental pietism which stressed personal spiritual commitment to Christ and regular reading of Scripture. His personal patronage permitted the founding of the Russian Bible Society despite the reservations of some Orthodox hierarchs. Although short-lived (1812-25), this offspring of the basically Protestant British and Foreign Bible Society succeeded in publishing the first modern Russian New Testament (1824) and laid the groundwork for the later completion of the Synodal Version of the modern Russian Bible (1876).

Dukhobors and Molokans

Around this same time various indigenous movements, such as the Dukhobors and Molokans, were rejecting the form and ceremony of Russian Orthodoxy in their search for spiritual answers. In turn, many members of these same groups joined the Russian Evangelical movement as it emerged in the mid- to late-1800s. Key influential Russian Evangelical leaders included Vasilii Pavlov (Russian Baptist), Colonel Vasilii Pashkov (aristocrat and disciple of Lord Radstock), and Ivan Prokhanov (dynamic leader of the Evangelical Christians). Lord Radstock, who in the 1870s preached Christ to St. Petersburg aristocracy, encouraged converts, possibly naively, not to leave Russian Orthodoxy – something which became impossible as opposition to his work and followers grew in official church circles.

Evangelicals in Soviet and Post-Soviet Times

In more recent times Russian Evangelicals managed to survive severe Soviet repression beginning in the late 1920s. In 1929, on the eve of this assault, Evangelicals represented a significant segment of society, between one and two million members and adherents.[6] In Siberia at one point the combined strength of the Evangelical Christian and Baptist church youth movements (*Evsomol* and *Bapsomol*) exceeded that of the Communist *Komsomol* youth movement – a sore point subsequently "remedied" by state-sponsored persecution. In his semi-autobiographical *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn referred to a fellow *gulag* inmate, a Baptist, in favorable terms. Later, during the Cold War, Evangelicals became a pawn in super-power politics as the West pressed the case for Soviet compliance with international human rights accords Moscow had signed.

While many Orthodox brothers and sisters

are well-disposed toward Evangelicals, many other nominal, nationalistic, and ecclesiologically exclusivist Orthodox are quite belligerent toward Evangelicals. In such cases, an Evangelical *apologia* may well be met initially with incredulity and/or scorn. However, I would suggest it would be well for Russian Evangelicals to persevere, recognizing that in their understanding of the gospel they have a distinct contribution to make in spreading the gospel in Russia. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "We commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (II Corinthians 4:2).What is at stake is a full hearing for the gospel as lived out by Christians of diverse traditions. ♦

Notes:

[1] 66.9 percent, *Operation World,* 2009.

[2] Fond "Obshchestvennoe Mnenie," January-February 2010.

[3] I owe this particular insight to Andrey Chernyak of the Orthodox Parish of SS. Cosma and Damian, Moscow.

[4] Evangelical Alliance (UK), *Evangelicalism and the Orthodox Church* (Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 2001).

[5] Russian television recently broadcast a several-part drama on this subject entitled "Schism."

[6] Mark R. Elliott, "Persecution of Christians in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet and Post-Soviet Union" in *Sorrow and Blood: Christian Mission in Contexts of Suffering, Persecution and Martyrdom,* ed. by William Taylor *et al.* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2012).

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Persecution of Christians in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet and Post-Soviet Union

Mark R. Elliott

Eastern-Rite Catholics

At the beginning of the 20th century, tsarist Russia banned or restricted all expressions of Christianity other than Russian Orthodoxy, the privileged state church. Among the Christian communions with no legal existence was Eastern-Rite Catholicism (worshipping according to the Orthodox liturgy and served by a married priesthood, while submitting to the authority of the pope in Rome). Pejoratively called the Uniate Church by Russians, it had been suppressed throughout most of the empire in 1839 and as well in the former Austrian Kholm District in 1875 (Elliott 1985: 212).

Protestants

Tsarist Russia also denied a legal existence to Stundists—Slavic Evangelicals hailing originally from Ukraine, who were named for the prayer hour (*stunde*) they borrowed from their German Mennonite mentors. Authorities came to label as Stundists any Protestants they chose to harass or arrest. Other Evangelicals facing concerted state and Orthodox opposition included Slavic converts to Baptist faith (originating in the Caucasus and Ukraine), followers of Protestant convert Colonel Vasilii Pashkov, known as Pashkovites, and later, as Evangelical Christians (originating in St. Petersburg), Methodists, and Seventh-day Adventists (Sawatsky 1981: 34).

Roman Catholics

In 1900 Latin-Rite Roman Catholics, predominantly Poles, Belorussians, and Lithuanians in Russia's western borderlands, had a legal existence but were being subjected to heavy-handed state policies of russification. In the 19th century thousands of Poles who had opposed tsarist rule had been deported to Siberia, giving Catholicism an unintended presence east of the Urals (Chaplitskii and Osipova 2000: lxi).

Old Believers

Working in tandem, the Russian state and its state church imposed numerous restrictions on another Christian community, the Old Believers. Also known as *Raskolniki* (Schismatics), they had rejected changes in the Orthodox liturgy and in the rendering of icons imposed by Patriarch Nikon in the late 17th century. By 1900 state executions, imprisonments, and harsh discriminatory taxation, countered by Old Believer flight, self-immolations, and predictions of the Apocalypse, had long since given way to a patchwork of bureaucratic carrots and sticks that nevertheless failed to cow this intransigent and increasingly prosperous religious opposition (Beeson 1982: 91; Robson 1995: 14-40).

German Protestants

As of 1900 German Baptists, German Mennonite colonists, and Lutherans, also mostly German in origin, came the closest to tolerated, non-Orthodox churches. However, they, as well, were subject to various bureaucratic impediments, and the latter were legally confined to the Baltic region and certain larger cities of the empire. In every case, non-Orthodox churches were legally proscribed from accepting converts from Russian Orthodoxy.

Orthodox and State Opposition to Religious Pluralism

An ideological amalgam of xenophobia, nationalism, and Orthodox triumphalism served as the justification for the wide array of measures taken by the Russian state against non-Orthodox Christians—and other faiths as well. Nicholas II, the last Russian tsar (1896-1917), and his reactionary advisor, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, Oberprokurator of the Russian Orthodox Holy Synod (1880-1905), personified the ingrained intolerance of the Russian state and its state church. Both men were passionately ethnocentric and anti-Semitic, fearing that non-Orthodox expressions of faith would undermine the viability of the Russian realm. Difficulties faced by Evangelicals under the procuracy of Pobedonostsev included discrimination in employment, disruption of worship, inability to buy or lease land for prayer houses, fines, beatings, prejudicial passport identification as "Stundist," lack of state recognition of "stundist" marriages, deprivation of parental rights, exile abroad, and arrest and deportation to the Transcaucasus and Siberia (Brandenburg 1974: 123 and 125; Hefly 1979: 227; Sawatsky 1981: 35-36).

In 1884, Alexander III had personally ordered

An ideological amalgam of xenophobia, nationalism, and Orthodox triumphalism served as the justification for the wide array of measures taken by the Russian state against non-Orthodox.

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the banishment abroad of Colonel Pashkov. Another prominent Evangelical in the capital, Ivan Prokhanov, eluded Russian police by fleeing abroad in 1895. Prior to 1917 Baptist preacher Feodor Kostronin spent nine years in prison and 16 years in exile, while Vasili Ivanov-Klyshnikov (later, secretary of the Baptist Union) was arrested 31 times and exiled twice (Brandenburg 1974: 130).

From Peter the Great to Nicholas II the state church languished in velvet chains imposed upon it by a Holy Synod that was forced to function as a branch of government.

The Edict of Toleration

The 1905 Russian Revolution brought a momentary reprieve to non-Orthodox via Nicholas II's Edict of Toleration (April 1905). For the first time in Russian history all citizens of the empire were granted freedom of conscience, including the legal right to leave the Orthodox fold for another church. However, once the immediate threat to his throne passed, Nicholas II gradually reneged on his own 1905 October Manifesto with its provisions for representative government and civil liberties, including freedom of religion. Evangelicals suffered increasing harassment and discrimination, including censorship, limitations on youth work, and a requirement for police permission for Protestant meetings (frequently denied). An anti-Protestant climate fostered by the state, the state church, and the state-influenced press led to extra-legal repression, namely, mob actions, sometimes fomented by priests, leading to injuries and deaths (Brandendburg 1974:152; Sawatsky 1981: 36). Only the inefficiencies of an inept bureaucracy spread over 11 time zones saved Evangelicals and other non-Orthodox believers from more systematic persecution.

World War I

The coming of World War I brought new trials to Evangelicals who were correctly accused of pacifist leanings but incorrectly accused of pro-German sympathies. Wartime authorities subjected evangelical services to police surveillance, closed meeting houses, and arrested and deported pastors. The president of the Baptist Union went into hiding in Central Asia while Evangelical Christian leader Ivan Prokhanov faced trial in 1916, but was acquitted. Russian German Baptist pastors Walter Jack and Karl Fullbrandt were exiled to Siberia and northern European Russia, while William Fetler was deported abroad (Brandenburg 1974: 150, 157-58, 173).

On the eve of the revolutionary upheavals of 1917, it should be noted as well that the favored Russian Orthodox Church also suffered its own crippling disabilities. From Peter the Great to Nicholas II the state church languished in velvet chains imposed upon it by a Holy Synod that was forced to function as a branch of government. Its civilian oberprokurators—even including military generals—thwarted all attempts at internal church reform and renewal.

Communist victories in the October 1917 Revolution and the Russian Civil War (1918-21) brought to power a determinedly atheist regime that would be responsible for the most comprehensive and deadliest persecution of Christianity — and of all religions — in history to that date.

Communist victories in the October 1917 Revolution and the Russian Civil War (1918-21) brought to power a determinedly atheist regime that would be responsible for the most comprehensive and deadliest persecution of Christianity—and of all religions—in history to that date. Dwarfing in size, intensity, and thoroughness the intermittent persecutions of the Roman Empire, the Soviet anti-religious campaign of 1917-1989 appears to have been surpassed in lethal consequences by only one other, that of Communist China from 1949.

The Soviet Assault on Orthodoxy

The Russian Orthodox Church, perceived by the new Marxist state to be a major source of opposition, was subjected to an especially unrelenting assault during the first two decades of Soviet power. The 54,147 Orthodox churches and 25,593 chapels as of 1914 were reduced to between 100 and 300 by August 1939 (Beglov 2008: 68; Davis 2003: 12-13; Ellis 1986: 4 and 14; Emel'ianov 2004: 3; Hefly 1979: 270; Newton 1990: 83; Pospielovsky 1988: 66; Tsypin 1994: 107). By 1939 Moscow had only 15 to 20 functioning parishes from over 600; Leningrad, five from 401; Tambov, two from 110; and the Kiev Diocese, two from 1,600 (Davis 2003: 12-13; Pospielovsky 1988: 66; Tsypin 1994: 107).

Of 1,025 Orthodox monasteries and nunneries functioning in 1914, with some 95,000 monks, nuns, and novices, not a single one remained open in 1929 (Beeson 1982: 58; Davis 2003: 164 and 166; Emel'ianov 2004: 3; Shkarovskii 1999: 67; Stroyen 1962: 9). Likewise, from 1914 to 1939, all 57 Orthodox seminaries and four theological academies were suppressed (Beeson 1982: 58; Shkarovskii 1999: 67). In addition, by 1939 Soviet authorities had closed or nationalized 37,528 Orthodox parochial schools, all 1,131 of its homes for the aged, and all 291 of its hospitals (Beeson 1982: 58).

Of roughly 300 Orthodox bishops in 1914, less than 20 were alive by 1943. Only four bishops enjoyed some degree of liberty, while living in fear of imminent arrest or worse (Davis 2003: 11 and 64; Hefly 1979: 27; Zugger 2001: 247). Of some 51,000 priests in 1914, no more than 300 to 400 were still serving parishes in 1939 (Beeson 1982: 58; Davis, 2003: 129). Of the 1,000 plus priests in the vicinity of St. Petersburg in 1917, only 15 were free to conduct services in the renamed Leningrad Region in 1937. German forces advancing through Ukraine in 1941 found only two remaining Orthodox priests in two open churches in the Kiev Diocese, down from 1,435 priests in 1917 (Davis 2003: 11 and13).

Orthodoxy's staggering institutional and human losses must also, of necessity, be calculated in terms of arrests, executions, and forced labor terms, with mortality rates in confinement as high as 85 percent (Pospielovsky 1984: 177). Patriarch Aleksei II estimated that by the late 1930s Russia's Communist government was responsible for the deaths of some 80,000 Orthodox clergy, monks, and nuns (Davis 2003: 11; Hefly 1979: 270). Executions of priests in 1918-19 and 1930-31 alone have been estimated at over 15,000 and 5,000 respectively, not counting deaths in prisons and labor camps (Emel'ianov 2004: 2-3). In addition, the number of Orthodox parishioners who perished for their faith in the interwar decades must have run at least into the hundreds of thousands (Shkarovskii 1999: 93).

The Soviet Assault on Catholicism

Before World War I the population of tsarist Russia included over five million Roman Catholics, with the heaviest concentrations in western Ukraine, partitioned Poland, Belorussia, Lithuania, and Latvia (Chaplitskii and Osipova 2000: xxii; Zugger 2001: 21-22, 36, 42, 45, and 264). Wartime territorial

losses saw Russia shorn of sizeable portions of its western frontier with its large Catholic populations, such that by 1917 the new Soviet state was home to a much-reduced 1.4 million Catholics. Unwavering Kremlin hostility toward the Vatican and fear of fifth columnists in its vulnerable western borderlands led to the nearly complete institutional demise of Catholicism on Soviet territory in two decades. Communist repression reduced the number of functioning Catholic churches from 980 in 1917 to two showcase parishes in Moscow and Leningrad in 1939 (Beeson 1982: 23; Solchanyk and Hvat 1990: 53). Likewise, the number of priests fell drastically from 912 in 1917 to two in August 1939. By 1934, Soviet Russia had not a single serving Catholic bishop, from 21 in 1917, not a single functioning parochial school or social institution, from 300 to 500 in 1917, and no functioning seminaries, of the four previously in operation (Beeson 1982: 123; Hefly 1979: 232). ♦

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The Roma (Gypsy) Pentecostal Movement in Bulgaria

Mirovlav Atanasov Atanasov

Editor's note: The following article is based in part upon interviews with Bulgarian Roma (Gypsy) pastors, laity, and Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal outside observers. The Association of Roma Pastors, Churches, and Fellowships helped to coordinate the research. For reasons of space, Atanasov's brief but complimentary treatment of Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist outreach and church planting among Bulgarian Roma (pp. 122-27; 252; 303-04; 327; 333) has not been included.

Religious Receptivity in Times of Upheaval

A substantial turning of Roma in Bulgaria to Pentecostal Christianity took place in the years after the fall of Communism. Most Roma churches were started in the 1990s: "They were being planted and grew everywhere, like mushrooms."[1] An important reason for this explosive growth was the total political, economic, and cultural transition in the country—from one-party totalitarian rule and socialist economics to democratic pluralism

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The Roma (Gypsy) Pentecostal Movement in Bulgaria *(continued from page 11)*

and an open market. During such times of major worldview shifts, people undergo great stress and their receptivity toward religious influences is very high. "Major economic changes, such as unemployment, underemployment, runaway inflation…and plant closings have all shaken people's false securities and opened them to the gospel."[2] These changes affected everyone, but especially Roma, as their marginal status and economic insecurity intensified greatly. Another important factor in Pentecostal growth among Roma in the 1990s was the new freedom which allowed mass evangelism to take place. Bulgarians were hungry to fill the spiritual void created by years of Marxist atheism.

Roma Pentecostal Numbers

Estimating the exact number of Roma Pentecostal believers and churches in Bulgaria is a difficult task. The approximate number of Roma churches of all denominations in Bulgaria is between 700 and 800. The majority are Pentecostal in worship and beliefs, while no more than 100 are spread among the Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, and Seventh-day Adventist denominations. The number of Roma Pentecostal preachers, ordained elders, and deacons is over 600.

Roma Pentecostal believers in Bulgaria number approximately 50,000. The Roma Christian movement has become a significant force in Bulgaria, even to the point of political parties becoming interested in courting its leaders for votes.

Three Pentecostal Denominations

Roma Pentecostals, accounting for the majority of Roma Evangelicals in Bulgaria, belong primarily to three denominations: the Union of Evangelical Pentecostal Churches (Pentecostal Union), the Bulgarian Church of God, and the United Churches of God. Smaller Pentecostal fellowships include the Christian Church Zion and independent and unregistered groups that have a high Roma constituency. The Presbyterian Union of Bulgaria, founded more recently, also counts in its ranks Roma who are mostly Pentecostal in worship. Roma Pentecostal churches exist in most Roma communities throughout Bulgaria. It is hard to find a city or a village *mahala* (ghetto) without Roma believers.

The Bulgarian Church of God has been especially successful in reaching Roma for several reasons. First, its visionary leader, Pavel Ignatov, made Roma ministry a denominational priority. Second, the Church of God, having just recently come out of persecution, lacked stringent structural limitations. That made it more flexible and effective in accommodating the growing Roma movement in its fold. The Pentecostal Union, which was officially established in 1928, has had more organizational impediments, including a limit on the number of churches in one vicinity, and a more complicated process of pastoral ordination. As a result, a great number of newer Roma churches joined either the Bulgarian Church of God or its spinoff, the United Churches of God, which gave great autonomy to local congregations. In both of these denominations Roma are now in the majority.

Still, it should be noted that the largest Protestant denomination in Bulgaria, the Pentecostal Union, has also had a powerful ministry among Roma. Chairman of the Union Rev. Victor Virchev explains:

> With their hospitality and emotionalism… [Roma] bring freshness to evangelical churches. Before 1990 we had mostly mixed churches: there were some Roma churches, but they were not officially registered. After the changes in the country, Roma desired to start their own churches in the *mahali*. One third of the churches in the Pentecostal Union are Roma, which have about 7-8 thousand members. We also have thousands of Roma in mixed churches led by ethnic Bulgarian pastors.[3]

Strength of the Roma Christian Movement

Rare is the Roma who is not aware of Christian faith. The Association of Roma Pastors estimates that Roma Pentecostal believers in Bulgaria number approximately 50,000. This is a conservative estimate which most likely refers to regular Roma churchgoers. The number of Roma who self-identify as Protestants is several times higher. The Roma Christian movement has become a significant force in Bulgaria, even to the point of political parties becoming interested in courting its leaders for votes.

In her research Milena Benovska-Sabkova interviewed 22 Roma who were:

> active, even inveterate churchgoers. It would have been simplistic and untrue if we had presented the massive attendance at Protestant churches as a sort of "fad." Religious values have seriously been accepted by about half of those converted to Protestantism….The devotion for Protestant churches has gained great momentum and has become impressively widespread among Roma. According to sociological surveys of 1994, the share of Roma affected by the activities of Protestant churches ranged between 12 and 15 percent.[4] The fact that out of 22 persons interviewed, only three have not been affected by the conversion [process] testifies that in 2002 it has been much more sweeping than in 1992-1994.[5]

The Roma Move from Orthodoxy to Pentecostalism

Roma have lost their interest in the Orthodox Church because they do not experience it as their own church. Several reasons for this movement of Roma from Orthodoxy to Pentecostalism may be given.

1. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church, with its liturgical conservatism and nationalistic attitude, has largely neglected or rejected Roma. Orthodox priests have often been unwilling to offer Gypsies spiritual services, while criticizing Evangelicals for doing so. Orthodox have often accused evangelical churches of luring people into their ranks through humanitarian aid and other enticements. I have two questions in response: Why has the Orthodox Church not been active in delivering aid to poor Roma communities? Is it not the mission of the Christian Church to help the poor and needy in this world?
2. The Orthodox liturgy is difficult for Roma to understand. They may observe and enjoy the rituals and ceremonies, but they experience greater freedom to express their emotions in Pentecostal churches.[6]
3. The massive conversion of Roma to Pentecostal Christianity in Bulgaria has caused many to lose interest in Orthodoxy. Pentecostal Roma churches are located in the *mahali*, Roma pastors preach there, and believers sing Roma worship songs. Roma pastors visit people who are in the hospital,

fellowship with alcoholics and the hurting, and care and pray for them in a personal way.

Roma Pentecostal worship involves indigenous cultural expressions which help to contextualize Christian faith in the *mahali*. At the same time, given the low rate of literacy among Roma, oral teaching is critical in discipleship. A cliché often heard in Bulgarian evangelical circles is that "Roma are easily set on fire, but their fire is also easily extinguished." Therefore, Roma need to become not just converts, but also disciples. Pentecostals overcome the hurdle that literacy poses to discipleship by means of music, simple preaching involving illustrations and storytelling, and close personal relationships among believers.

More Reasons for Roma Pentecostal Growth

A variety of other factors help explain the growth of Pentecostalism among Roma in Bulgaria. Dire economic and social circumstances certainly play a role. Marginalized groups in a society are often the earliest converts of a religious movement.[7] They are more open because they seek belonging and a way to escape from the harsh realities of life. The flourishing of the Roma Pentecostal movement gives evidence to this fact.

Roma Pastor Salcho Salchev from Preushtitsa explains:

> God loves us more because we are poorer, yet joyful. We are victims of injustices. From our youth we have had low self-esteem, feeling defenseless and rejected by society. Many of our Roma people are poor, but find refuge and a haven in the church. God gives them strength to keep struggling.[8]

Roma are the most marginal group, the outcastes, the social lepers, of Bulgarian society, much as they are all over Europe. This low social position makes Roma feel inferior as a group. Yet from its beginning during the days of the Roman Empire, Christianity has appealed to many because it removes barriers of race, gender, age, and social status. This gospel of emancipation is a primary reason for Pentecostal growth among Roma in Bulgaria. ♦

Notes:

[1] Salcho Salchev interview, 30 July 2006.
[2] George Hunter III, *To Spread the Power* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987), 80.
[3] Victor Virchev interview, 2006.
[4] Ilona Tomova, *The Gypsies in the Transition Period* (Sofia: IMIR Press, 1995), 341.
[5] Milena Benovska-Sabkova, "I Am a Pure Gypsy: The Roma Individuality in the Distorted Mirror of Group Stereotypes" in *The Ethnobarometer Working Paper Series,* 2003, pp. 81-83, www.ethnobarometer.org.
[6] Lom Church Sinai Church Journal, 2006.
[7] Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 33-36; 80.
[8] Salchev interview.

Editor's note: The concluding portion of this article will be published in the next issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report *20 (Summer 2012).*

Edited excerpt published with permission from Miroslav Atanasov Atanasov, Gypsy Pentecostals: The Growth of the Pentecostal Movement among the Roma in Bulgaria and Its Revitalization of Their Communities *(Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2010).*

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New Strategies for Church Planting in Romania

Vasile A. Talos

Editor's note: The first portion of this article was published in the previous issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report *20 (Winter 2012): 11-13.*

Emanuel Pentecostal Church of Galati

In 1994, Mihai Dumitrascu, senior pastor of Temple Pentecostal Church in Galati, decided to plant a new church in the center of Galati, a city with almost 400,000 people but very few evangelical Christians. In 1996, Pastor Dumitrascu visited Trinity Christian Centre in Singapore where he was exposed to a cell-church vision. In August 1998, he wrote a vision statement, a strategy, and a whole philosophy for a new type of church. He was heavily influenced by the theological training he received through Bible Education by Extension (BEE) and by the cell-church approach discovered in Singapore. (Jodie Dillow, a Ph.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary, founded BEE to provide training for church leaders in Eastern Europe through clandestine, non-formal instruction.) Not long after Pastor Dumitrascu shared his vision with his church of about 600 members and a Sunday regular attendance of about 1,000 people, the assistant pastor took the responsibility of the mother church and became its senior minister. Unfortunately, the idea of starting a new Pentecostal church in Galati was perceived as an attempt to split the existing church.

Pastor Dumitrascu's first step was to start several BEE small group Bible studies within the mother church. A core of 40 people from Temple Pentecostal Church followed Dumitrascu in his endeavor to plant a new church with a totally different philosophy of ministry. Thus, on 14 March 1999, Emanuel Church held its first worship service in the Athenaeum Hall in "Casa de Cultura a Sindicatelor."

During the next six months Pastor Dumitrascu welcomed other members from Temple Pentecostal Church who embraced the new vision. About 120 people transferred from the mother church to Emanuel. Today Emanuel has its own church building and facilities for children, youth, women, and other ministries. In 2004 the church had 220 members and averaged 350 in Sunday morning worship.

> Mihai Dumitrascu wrote a vision statement for a new type of church, influenced by Bible Education by Extension and by the cell-church approach discovered in Singapore.

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Vision

Pastor Dumitrascu and other church leaders envision Emanuel Church as a biblical training center for discipleship. Their goal is "to evangelize the downtown area of the city using relevant methods, to help Christians mature within small groups, and to equip them to minister and plant new churches in the city, county, and throughout the southeastern part of Romania."

Discipleship Strategy

Pastor Dumitrascu and Emanuel's leadership team concentrate on helping people grow in character, knowledge, and abilities. They follow a BEE model of training built around Jesus' four imperatives:

1. Come and See! (John 1:39-4:46)
2. Come and Follow Me! (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20)
3. Come and Be With Me! (Mark 3:13-14; Luke 6:13)
4. Abide in Me, Go and Make Disciples! (Matthew 28:19-20)

Ecclesiastical Structures

Emanuel Church functions through two types of small groups: open and closed. An open small group usually has four to fourteen persons including the leader, one apprentice, at least one spiritual parent, believers, new converts, and unsaved people. Open small groups, which meet every Sunday night in homes, focus on evangelism, shepherding and feeding people, and teaching the basics of Christianity. When the open small group is first established, people are free to enter or leave at any time. When the group reaches 14 persons, the group divides into two.

The first stage involves open small groups in Sunday morning and Wednesday night worship services and in children's Sunday school. It also includes weekly youth meetings and special events. Children and youth meetings function as micro churches employing seeker-sensitive worship based on contemporary Christian music, drama, and relevant preaching. On a regular basis the church emphasizes personal evangelism, small group evangelism, and special evangelistic events.

The second stage takes place in closed small groups that offer a proper environment for genuine discipleship. Once a closed group starts, no additional persons are accepted. Each member of a closed small group signs a specific covenant. Closed small groups place high expectations on their members including time devoted to prayer, Bible study, evangelism, and accountability to the group. Usually 60 to 70 percent of church members are involved in closed small groups.

Leadership

The third stage of Emanuel's strategy includes the selection of believers who demonstrate godly character, faithfulness, and spiritual gifts. It relies heavily upon BEE courses designed to develop disciple makers. Emanuel Church leaders want at least one third of their church members to be involved in this demanding level of discipleship.

The fourth stage represents the highest level of training for those who are called to be ministers in Emanuel Church. At this stage, people participate in BEE's Advanced Theological Studies as well as in closed small groups.

In conclusion, Emanuel Church attempts to contextualize the gospel and to apply the strategy and vision of BEE. Thus, this church has characteristics of two forms of congregational life: the school-type church and the cell church. It is unusual for a Romanian Pentecostal church to focus on teaching and discipling people.

Vox Domini Church of Timisoara

Vox Domini Church emerged from the evangelical student movement of the 1980s in the city of Timisoara, the city where the Romanian Revolution began on 15 December 1989. The slogan of those days was: "Today in Timisoara; tomorrow throughout the country!"

Para-Church Background

Vox Domini Church leaders' vision was for their church model to be multiplied across Romania through the ministry of the students trained in the University of Timisoara. Gelu-Paul Faina was an important leader of the evangelical student movement in Timisoara. After he completed his theological studies in the United States, his goal was to establish a training center church, mainly for students.

For several years, Gelu-Paul and other evangelical student leaders followed Campus Crusade strategies and methods. Later, they attended a leadership program conducted by BEE which convinced them of the importance of the local church. As a result, Gelu-Paul and his colleagues became more involved in serving Bethel Baptist Church. After the 1989 Revolution, in order to evangelize and disciple university students, they followed a three-step strategy. First, they employed Campus Crusade methods by organizing evangelistic small group meetings on the university campus. Second, they invited seeker students to attend the mid-week youth worship service at Bethel Church. These were seeker-friendly worship services with contemporary Christian music and relevant preaching. Third, they tried to attract student converts to Bethel's Sunday worship services. However, the difference between the two worship services and some leadership issues led Gelu-Paul and his team to start a new church. Thus, Gelu-Paul and about 30 other people launched Vox Domini Church on 21 November 1998. Soon this new church became known as the students' church. In addition to Campus Crusade and BEE, Vox Domini has had close ties with other Western groups including the Willow Creek Association, North Point Community Church (Atlanta, GA), and Ambassadors for Christ International.

Vision

The name of Vox Domini Church (the Lord's Voice) symbolizes the congregation's determination to listen only to the Lord's teaching and not to Baptist tradition. They envisioned the church as a dynamic, relevant community of mature Christians able to communicate God's word through "a warmer, closer, gentler, and more thoughtful approach." Vox

The name of Vox Domini Church (the Lord's Voice) symbolizes the congregation's determination to listen only to the Lord's teaching and not to Baptist tradition.

Domini Church's mission is to make disciples and leaders among the young middle class generation in Timisoara and all the way to the ends of the earth. Its goal is to glorify God and expand His kingdom through evangelism, discipleship, worship, leadership formation, counseling, and social and political involvement of church members according to their calling and spiritual gifts (http://www.voxdomini.ro/site/home page).

Church Structures

Vox Domini Church worships together every other Sunday. On alternate Sundays members meet in homes in small congregations of about 40 people each in order to learn how to apply the previous sermon in an interactive way. The church follows an inductive Bible study approach in its preaching, studying one book of the Bible at a time. During the week people meet in small groups of three to fifteen people for discipleship or leadership training. They follow a topical Bible study approach related to participants' specific needs and interests. Usually people are encouraged to move from Christian life basics to deeper understanding and knowledge.

In 2005, Vox Domini Church had 227 baptized members. Together with regular attendees they averaged more than 350 people in worship services held every other Sunday. Today they have two Sunday worship services on alternating Sundays. Once a month they celebrate the Lord's Supper on Sunday afternoon. During this time people share their testimonies and participate in celebration according to their abilities and spiritual gifts.

Local Mission

Vox Domini Church organizes special events throughout the year. In summer they have picnics, retreats, camps, and other such activities. The church is also involved in several social and evangelistic ministries in Timisoara. Approximately 90 percent of new converts come through student retreats and camps. Vox Domini also organizes nationwide conferences on topics such as marriage, child rearing, family issues, church growth, and leadership.

Vox Domini Church resembles a Ric Warren-style purpose-driven church. The church philosophy, ministries, programs, Bible studies, preaching, or any other activities must follow a certain purpose. The most-asked question is: Why? If they do not have a proper answer to that question, they quit investing their time, efforts, and resources. In their view, the traditional way of preaching three times a week alienates people. People are constantly told what to do, but they do not know why, nor how to do it. For this reason pastors preach once every other Sunday with the congregation reflecting on practical applications of the message.

Second, Vox Domini is a highly demanding church. Half its members do volunteer work at least 10 hours a week besides attending a small group, house church, and worship service. Leaders are expected to volunteer at least 15 hours a week. Their principle is that members should not only attend church but should be involved in its ministries. The main aim of the church is to enable every member to become a leader.

Third, Vox Domini tends to be a highly entrepreneurial and closely managed institution. The church is highly structured with five departments (worship, discipleship and leadership training, evangelism and missions, pastoral care and counseling, and administration and finances) and nine age-related categories. At the same time, the church functions in small groups, in home congregations, as well as through its Sunday worship services. A continuous and complex evaluation related to church life, mission, and ministries takes place within and between each department.

Fourth, Vox Domini embodies a composite of many church growth principles from flourishing North American and West European congregations. The church's leaders have departed from traditional Romanian Baptist churches and from Campus Crusade parachurch strategy. However, they attempt to apply in their local church several Campus Crusade principles and methods. While Vox Domini represents an innovative and relevant church for students, its approach might not have a strong appeal to the majority of Romanian people and churches.

In short, each of these three churches may be characterized as follows: Braila Baptist Church focuses on reaching lost people mainly through ministering at a felt needs level and developing social care programs. Otherwise, the church is still very traditional in worship and structures. Emanuel Church in Galati focuses on discipling people through an elaborate program of small group discipleship. The church functions as a school-type church. Finally,Vox Domini Church in Timisoara focuses mainly on training Christian student leaders. It is a highly entrepreneurial and closely managed church.

Edited excerpts published with permission from Vasile Alexandru Talos, "Church in the Apostolic Spirit: A Strategy for Building Indigenous Apostolic Congregations in the Cultural Context of Eastern Orthodox and Post-Communist Romania," Doctor of Missiology dissertation, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2008.

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Overcoming Fundamentalism *(continued from page 16)*

[2] See the collection of articles, "A Trap Set by 'Renewed Orthodoxy'" [V seichas obnovlenchestva] (Moscow: Russkiy Vestnik, 1995).

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Vladimir Fedorov, "Ecumenical Missionary Needs and Perspectives in Eastern and Central Europe Today: Theological Education with an Accent on Mission as a First Priority in Our Religious Rebirth," International Review of Mission *92 (January 2003): 66-83.*

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Overcoming Fundamentalism

Vladimir Fedorov

Remaining faithful to the tradition of the church means being successful in avoiding unmeasured liberalism, modernism, and globalism on the one hand, and fundamentalism, Pharisaism, and triumphalism on the other. Conflicts between Christians do not arise because of denominational motives but out of a clash between two types of mentality: fundamentalist and creative.

A fundamentalist position implies attitudes of exclusivity, sectarianism, and, sometimes, even aggressiveness. Research into this phenomenon seems most urgent because the future of Christianity depends to a large extent on its capacity to overcome the disease of fundamentalism. According to Jürgen Moltmann and Hans Küng:

> Individuals, groups, and peoples will not be able to live in peace if those who have commandeered the "fundamentals" for themselves believe that they can deny others the right to exist, or, if non-fundamentalists, do all they can to exclude fundamentalists, or in intellectual arrogance simply pass them by. There will be no peace without a readiness for understanding on both sides.[1]

A characteristic manifestation of Orthodox fundamentalism in Russia is the search for an enemy.

The Russian Orthodox Version of Fundamentalism

Russian Orthodoxy observes the Holy Scriptures and holy tradition faithfully, but the Orthodox approach to Holy Scripture does not insist on adhering strictly to the letter, which would indicate a lack of respect for exegetics and hermeneutics. In addition, adhering strictly to the letter would suggest a lack of concern about the necessity to have the holy texts translated into modern languages from an ancient language that is treated as sacred. On the other hand, the Orthodox approach tends to be accompanied by other strict rules. These include the refusal to compromise any principle, absolute asceticism, nationalistic fervor (trimmed with anti-Semitism, but seldom openly so), closeness, anti-ecumenism, triumphalism (exultation due to the triumph of Orthodoxy), obscurantism to culture, anti-democratic positions, support of monarchism, and Pharisaism. All of these are frequently combined with a sympathy for Soviet and Communist demagogy. The weakest point of the position thus briefly described is a lack of love our Savior spoke of when he said, "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

A characteristic manifestation of Orthodox fundamentalism in Russia (in particular, at the post-Soviet stage) is the search for an enemy. In other words, there is the necessity to create an enemy complex: It is our enemies who are to be blamed for our misfortunes; we must find them, expose them, and suppress them.[2]

State Church Aspirations

Fundamentalism also manifests itself very often in the form of the aspiration to be a state church (this may be declared openly or cherished secretly), and by attempts to cut off all contacts with the rest of the world and to have church publications censored. Sectarianism is an essential feature of fundamentalism. This carries with it a strongly negative attitude toward other Christian traditions and denominations and a particularly negative criticism of other religions. Such sectarianism is combined with a hostile view of Judaism and deep-seated anti-Semitism.

Usually, it is fundamentalism that makes many people in Russia remain outside the church, either just outside its door or far off. I refer to people for whom the values of a democratic society are essential. Their number is not insignificant in today's Russia.

Overcoming Fundamentalism

Overcoming fundamentalism will serve the interests of society at large as a way toward creating stronger unity and life without distrust, nationalism, pseudo-patriotism, and obscurantism. Overcoming fundamentalism is a spiritual task for which churches need to use all available resources, especially theological education. Today, the problem of fundamentalism has a new implication. For now, the danger of terrorism that resorts to religious fanaticism for ideological support does not seem to exist in Orthodoxy. However, many Orthodox enthusiasts use the slogan—Orthodoxy or Death!—to advocate the use of force in inculcating piety in Russians. Of the same strident, doctrinaire approach is the former St. Petersburg newspaper and ongoing popular website, Orthodox Russia (Rus' pravoslavnaya), http://www.rusprav.org. These are some of the trends that oblige us to take very seriously any manifestation of fundamentalism.

It is usual to regard fundamentalism as a reaction to humanism, secularism, liberalism, and modernism, but missiology urges us to attend to the reverse mechanism. Here, secularism, liberalism, and modernism are seen as a reaction to clericalism, fundamentalism, magic, and obscurantism.

Notes:

[1] Jürgen Moltmann and Hans Küng, eds. *Fundamentalism as an Ecumenical Challenge* (London: SCM Press 1996), p. vii.

(continued on page 15)

The quarterly ***East-West Church & Ministry Report*** examines all aspects of church life and mission outreach in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe as a service to both church and academia. Letters to the editor are welcomed. Annual subscription rates are $49.95 (individuals, U.S. and Canada); $59.95 (individuals, international); $53.95 (libraries, U.S. and Canada); $63.95 (libraries, international); and $22.95 (e-mail). Reprint and photocopy policy: 1) Quantity photocopies or reprints of up to three articles from a single issue may be distributed or reprinted at no charge.
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