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# Down Syndrome Ministry

Cheryl Warner

Both Ukraine and Russia have made great strides in recent years in educating and caring for children born with Down Syndrome. The Soviet practice of hiding people with disabilities, who were kept in institutions and not seen in society, is changing. Before, people with Down Syndrome were not considered educable and were therefore unable to reach their full potential.

## Choosing Not to Institutionalize

In August 2003, Andrei and Arenda Vasylenko's second child, Peter, was born with Down Syndrome at a state clinic in Kyiv. His parents were urged to relinquish him to an institution that would care for him, rather than take him home. That has been standard practice in a country where little practical help was available for parents wishing to raise children with Down Syndrome at home. Despite opposition, the Vasylenkos did take Peter home, who now is one of their four children, ages 2 to 13. Arenda is from the Netherlands and is trained as an occupational therapist, and Andrei is the Ukrainian manager of a Dutch company.

## The Ukrainian Down Syndrome Organization

Active Christians, the Vasylenkos' faith has played a vital role in their efforts to help families bring home children who have the same condition as Peter and to provide them with special education. They have joined with other parents in founding the Ukrainian Down Syndrome Organization (UDSO), an affiliate of the European Down Syndrome Association. UDSO operates an Early Development Center that provides professional consulting and educational assistance to children with Down Syndrome from birth to age 8. Many member families are Christians. The mission of the UDSO is to improve the quality of life and to create a new future for people with Down Syndrome in Ukraine. Under the leadership of President Sergei Kurianov, the organization provides information, advice, and early intervention services to families throughout Ukraine. It also campaigns to improve public awareness of the condition.

The Early Development Center "Down Syndrome" opened in November 2010, funded by charitable donations from private individuals and legal entities. A team including intervention specialists, speech therapists, and psychologists staff many programs, including comprehensive diagnostics, group support for families of children from birth to 12 months, specialized groups for children to age 8, private lessons and consultations, psychological informational support for families, and a parents' club. Services are provided free of charge. (See the organization's website at http://downsyndrome.org.ua/en/.) Research shows early intervention is critical. "As soon as a child with Down Syndrome is born, a group of parents goes within 24 hours to visit the new parents," Arenda Vasylenko said. "When our child was born one or two of ten [Down Syndrome infants]were taken home. Now just one or two are *not* taken home."

Down Syndrome is a common genetic condition affecting approximately one in 700 infants worldwide, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic factors. In Ukraine, over 420 babies are born with Down Syndrome each year, and an estimated 15,000 people live with the condition in Ukraine.

## Prespectiva 21/3

The Vasylenkos now head a special project for UDSO called Perspectiva 21/3, named for the condition in which a person is born with three copies of chromosome 21 instead of two. Perspectiva 21/3 targets three important areas: education, job coaching, and independent living. Operating from a Christian framework, the project also aims to provide perspective on eternal life. "By providing an education based on biblical principles, a unique way is opened for being salt and light and in this way to fulfill Jesus' words in Matthew 25:40: 'Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me,'" the website explains. The Perspectiva 21/3 coordinator and teachers are Christians, and Bible lessons and prayer are integrated into the program.

A July 2010 law in Ukraine stipulates that all special needs children have the right to an appropriate education. However, the educational system was not prepared to teach these children. This is where the UDSO and its Perspectiva 21/3 Project are helping.

## A Special Needs Educational Experiment

Arenda Vasylenko describes the project as an educational experiment designed to produce methods and materials that are highly practical and useful in helping children with Down Syndrome learn and reach their potential. The Kyiv Pedagogical Institute "Hrenchenko" and the National Academic Institute on Special Pedagogies approved the inclusion of Down Syndrome children in classes with mild mentally disabled children as an official experiment, in fact the first such experiment in Ukraine. The first five-year stage, begun in 2010, called for Western educational programs and methods to be adapted and used in this special class, with applications for future use throughout Ukraine.

## Stage One: Classroom Education

"Our idea was to have only three classes from which to do these experiments, 10 children with Downs plus children with other mild handicaps,"

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## Down Syndrome Ministry *(continued from page 1)*

Vasylenko said. "The teachers all have regular pedagogical diplomas and also special education." They received further training in the Netherlands. The classroom experiments were designed to adapt the existing program for special needs children to the real abilities of the children. "In the fifth and sixth class there were children who couldn't even read any letter," Vasylenko said. She wanted to create a program that would really work.

Vasylenko brought in a methodologist who had previously worked with the Dutch and had taught in Christian schools in Ukraine. "For us it was very clear that God gave him to us for this project," Vasylenko said. "He is completely remodeling the program based on observations of the children. Programs that are written behind a desk don't work." For the first time different levels of instruction were introduced. Every child's development is recorded and a track is planned for each child to be able to progress. The team writes and prints books that are used in the program.

The team uses an internationally recognized course from the European Association for Behavior Analysis (EABA), focusing on observation of behavior. Team building and how to grow personally, which are not taught in Ukrainian universities, are also emphasized. "Our vision is that if you want to have good results with the children you have to have a strong team. We are aware that we have quite a high standard, and we maintain this standard." The team of 11 includes teachers, a speech therapist, and a psychologist. The project organizes seminars and workshops for team members from their school and for interested teachers from other schools.

According to Vasylenko the first year was difficult, while the program was still developing and trust was being built between the Perspectiva 21/3 staff and the schools. But support for the program has grown. Now the schools "are behind us and really lobbying for us in the ministry [of education] if it is needed," she said. The first five years of the experiment are nearly complete. The team is writing a book about what was accomplished in the first five years, showing scientific evidence that the program works when certain criteria are in place.

### A Growing Movement

In other places in Ukraine parents have started similar classes. In 2012 the Perspectiva 21/3 Project organized a conference, with 160 specialists attending from all over Ukraine. The team shared its results to that point. It was sponsored by the "MATRA Project," a charity program of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Representatives from the Kyiv city government, the National Scientific Institute on Special Pedagogues, and Hrenchenko University shared their positive impressions and the need for the project.

"Other classes in Kyiv are using our materials," Vasylenko said. Teachers who attended the conferences are using them with their students. Students from university classes sometimes come to observe in the classroom.

### Parental Involvement

Close cooperation with parents is necessary for the success of the program, and the project regularly organizes seminars and round table meetings with parents. Themes such as future dreams and reality, learning possibilities, and behavioral topics are discussed. Perspectiva 21/3 is grateful for the support of Dutch special education schools. Also, exchange programs allowing Ukrainians to visit Dutch schools have been of great value in understanding how best to proceed.

Oksana is one young person the project has helped. In addition to Down Syndrome, "she had a whole bouquet of diagnoses," Vasylenko said. "From a medical point of view she would never be able to speak because of the malformation of her mouth. But her parents were very positive people and open to advice. With speech therapy, this girl is reading and speaking--a very happy child. In the beginning her behavior was a problem. For me she is one of the best examples [of what can be achieved] if you do it systematically and with parents." Oksana came to the program at age 8, and now at age 11 she is near the top of the class. In the beginning her parents had a hard time accepting Oksana's condition, but now they understand that it is not something that can be taken away. "That is also what I like in this project," Vasylenko said, "that we help parents in their expectations. You have to live with it. We see that parents are also changing their minds."

### Stage Two: Job Preparation

The second stage of the project, targeting the development of special skills for job preparation, began in September 2015. Classrooms have been renovated and equipped, and the program has adapted Dutch ideas to Ukrainian reality, Vasylenko said. The vision is to take children outside the school to obtain specialized education for such jobs as hotel cleaning, laundry, kitchen staff, waiter, hostess, light office jobs, etc. The project is building a network of interested companies which are willing to hire graduates of the Perspectiva 21/3 Project. "We want to create a working place where they can have practical skills where they can live with supervision," she said. Andrei, Arenda's husband, as a Ukrainian businessman managing a Dutch company in Ukraine, is well positioned to help develop this aspect of the project. He is considering a bakery or lunch room or a hostel where people with special needs can work in the future, making that a pilot model for Ukraine.

### Support from Charitable Contributions

Shortly before Peter was born, Andrei was negotiating a job contract with a Dutch start-up company. "He wanted to show how you can work honestly," Arenda said. The stipulation was made that when the company became profitable, a certain percentage would be donated to charity. "They fixed it in the contract," she said. "They thought maybe in 10 years it would be profitable. But in the second year the company became profitable, and two weeks after he signed the contract, our son was born. Then we understood why it was."

This company supports the salaries for the ten staff employed by the Perspectiva 21/3 Project, and Arenda volunteers as the project manager. "The company also supports another group, providing specialists for handicapped, speech therapy, etc.," she said. "They pay, for example, for plane tickets for people to go

### What Is Down Syndrome?

Down Syndrome is a genetic disorder in which a person has three copies of chromosome 21 instead of two. It is named after the English doctor, John Langdon Down, who first categorized the common features of people with the condition. The cause is unknown.

Down Syndrome is the most frequently occurring chromosomal disorder and the leading cause of intellectual and developmental delay in the world. Its occurrence is not associated with race, nationality, socioeconomic status, or anything the parents did during pregnancy. Common features may include short stature, round face, and almond-shaped and up-slanting eyes. Such features are not medical conditions. Early intervention for infants is considered very important. Physical and speech therapies in the first five years can make a major difference in physical and intellectual development.

**Source:** Global Down Syndrome Foundation: http://www.globaldownsyndrome.org/about-down-syndrome/facts-about-down-syndrome/.

abroad to study. You can see that you can practically support families and children. There have been several moments in this project where we have clearly seen that this is really God's way for Ukraine."

The Kyiv Lions Club and a former ambassador also supported a project for the classroom. In addition, the Radisson Hotel has provided assistance, with a chef coming to the school to teach special needs children. The students also take excursions. "We see God provides what you need in your situation," Arenda said.

To raise public awareness, the project invited the Jostiband Orchestra, a Dutch orchestra composed of people with mental disabilities, to play in Kyiv. It was organized in cooperation with the Embassy of the Netherlands and created a lot of media attention in Ukraine, Vasylenko said. Two large concerts were given—one for diplomats and Dutch business interests with the Kyiv Philharmonic, and a second concert for 2,000 people in the October Palace of Ukraine, which was broadcast on Ukrainian television.

### Downside Up

In Moscow, since 1997 the charity fund, Downside Up, has been "a leader in the field of early psycho-pedagogical and social assistance for children with Down Syndrome and their families in Russia," its website says (https://downsideup.org/ru/). The organization works with families, not just the children, and services are provided free of charge. Yulia Kolesnichenko, head of the press service of Downside Up, said that in Russia, in areas where foundations are working with parents to help them raise children with Down Syndrome, the number of children given up when they are born is much lower. Also, in Russia, actress and TV personality Evelina Bledans and her son, Semyon, born with Down Syndrome in 2012, are in the public eye in advertising campaigns and have helped raise awareness and acceptance of the condition.

### Up with Down Center

In Voronezh, Russia, children with Down Syndrome are being helped at the Up with Down Center, founded by Frank Baxter of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The center aims to teach children with Down Syndrome in a Christian school, introducing them to the Bible and how to have a personal relationship with God. "It is the goal of the center to foster an attitude of love and understanding towards these children," according to its website (http://www.upwithdownschool.org/).

### Ukrainian Church Involvement

How have churches in Ukraine been involved in assisting with disability ministries? "There are a few churches which are now working with the handicapped," according to Vasylenko. "They have special services adapted to them. But in the big picture it's not yet so common. Some churches were almost repenting, saying, 'We never thought about these people.'"

Misconceptions about the cause of the condition need to be addressed. "My husband went to churches to explain that it has nothing to do with punishment," she said. "When our son was born we knew in two weeks after tests it was definite. We told our church it was definite. But still some were praying it would change. That is the discussion people have to get used to."

In Ukraine acceptance of people with Down Syndrome is growing because now more families are keeping their Down Syndrome children and are bringing them to church. The Vasylenkos' church started a club for children with disabilities and their parents. Meeting once a month on Saturdays, club members are able to reach out especially to non-Christians. "These parents normally don't attend any church," she said. "But now they come. The church has a key role in society showing that we give care and serve others, not merely preaching to them, but we serve them with attention and love." ♦

The church has a key role in society showing that we give care and serve others, not merely preaching to them.

**Cheryl Warner,** *Wheaton, Illinois, is a missionary with Barnabas International. She previously served in Odessa, Ukraine, and Vienna, Austria.*

## Krasnoyarsk Opposition to Special Needs Education Center

Daria Litvinova

Residents of an apartment building in the southern Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk have refused to approve the opening of an educational center that would be able to accommodate children with special needs, the Takie Dela news website reported, citing local TV Channel Afontovo. An NGO called Pravo Na Schastye (Right to Happiness) won a government grant earlier in 2015 to open an educational center where pupils with special needs could study for free alongside children their own age who do not have special needs, the report said. The center was due to open on the first floor of a residential building, but its residents opposed the installation of a wheelchair ramp.

Current national housing legislation requires that two-thirds of the residents of a building approve a ramp's installation, and in this case less than 20 percent of the residents gave their consent, the report said. The others said they did not want to look at disabled children on a daily basis. "I don't want to look at children in wheelchairs. I can't help them, and I don't want to see them every day and cry myself to sleep every night. I have the right not to," one of the women living in the building told TV Channel NTV.

Some people were against installing the ramp because it would take up space and leave them less room in which to park their cars. "They can go to [another] school or kindergarten and study together there. You have to understand: We don't care how they are going to socialize," another woman told Afontovo. "Considering the lack of space we're dealing with here, we don't want these children – sick children. Look how many children of our own we've got," she added.

The head of Pravo Na Schastye, Nadezhda Bolsunovskaya, has filed complaints with the prosecutor's office and social services. In addition, the city administration has submitted a request with the State Duma asking for amendments to legislation that requires residents' approval to install ramps in residential buildings. ♦

*Reprinted with permission from Daria Litvinova, "Residents Protest Creation of Educational Center for Special Needs Kids,"* Moscow Times, *18 October 2015.*

"I don't want to look at children in wheelchairs."

**Daria Litvinova** *is a reporter for* **Moscow Times.**

# Russian Evangelical Compassionate Ministries, 1905-1929

Mary Raber

Compassionate ministry, defined as uncompensated service to people in need, was an organic part of Russian evangelical witness from the early days of the movement. It was an important way to proclaim and give evidence of a new life brought about by the gospel. Because of their relatively small numbers, comparative lack of wealth, numerous competing priorities, and minority status, Russian evangelicals never established large charitable institutions. Nor did their efforts to help people in need in the early 20th century last longer than a few years. Nevertheless, and in spite of active resistance on the part of Russian imperial and Soviet authorities, evangelicals sustained a consistent and coherent vision of compassionate ministry as part of their calling.

## The Pashkovites

In the 1870s, English evangelical Lord Radstock influenced Pashkovites (named for their leader Col. V. A. Pashkov) in the direction of compassionate involvement, although many of them were already active in various forms of charitable work.[1] Nevertheless, Radstock's contribution was to invest their existing service with evangelical urgency. Thus, their previous work in prison visitation, as sisters of mercy, or teaching literacy to peasants on their own estates continued, but became the platform for preaching repentance and conversion, which they were convinced was the way to lasting social transformation. In the same way, the next generation of Pashkovites, after Col. Pashkov's exile from Russia in 1884, also joined existing forms of compassionate ministry while filling them with evangelical content. Thus, Jenny de Mayer established a House of Industry on Sakhalin Island.[2] Likewise, at a time when "people's kindergartens" were fairly common, Iuliia Karpinskaia set up several in Kyiv with an evangelical emphasis.[3] Meanwhile, as members of the movement suffered imprisonment and exile for their faith, especially during the 1890s, it became the task of those in freedom to help them spiritually and financially. Pashkovites and their spiritual descendents maintained an interest in compassionate ministry as it was practiced abroad by such figures as Thomas Barnardo (philanthropist and founder of numerous orphanages) and George Mueller (orphanage founder and evangelist), and by organizations such as the Salvation Army.

Convinced that their witness should consist of good works as well as words, evangelicals cultivated an attitude of concern and personal involvement in the needs of others, following the example of Christ.

## The 1905 Act of Toleration

The situation of Russian evangelicals improved rather suddenly in April 1905 when religious toleration was declared. Until April 1929, when the law "On Religious Associations" put an end to all religiously based activity beyond actual worship, evangelicals remained relatively free, although they continued to suffer intermittent arrests, harassment, fines, and the closure of their prayer houses, especially during World War I. They began many ambitious projects after 1905, including publishing, church construction, theological education, and the sending of missionaries. Amid all this activity, compassionate ministry remained a strong commitment.

## Three Forms of Compassionate Ministry

It is possible to identify three major patterns of evangelical compassionate ministries during the period 1905-1929. First, evangelicals developed dedicated funds and institutions for the purpose of meeting the needs of their own community members, especially preachers and evangelists (1905-early 1920s); second, they carried on rescue ministry to transform the lives of the urban poor (about 1910- early 1920s); and third, they organized economic communities whose ultimate purpose was to eradicate poverty altogether (1919-late 1920s). Each of these basic trends is associated with different leaders of the movement. D. I. Mazaev, V. G. Pavlov, and V. V. Ivanov represent compassion practiced among evangelicals themselves; W. A. Fetler characterizes rescue ministry; and I. S. Prokhanov is distinguished by his vision for the potential of economic communities. The first two major streams of compassionate activity were separated from the third by the years 1914-1923, which were marked by war, revolution, and famine. During this time, evangelicals of necessity were called on to respond to human need on an unprecedented scale. They developed a new level of administrative sophistication to receive and channel a significant amount of famine aid sent from abroad.

## The Theological Basis for Compassionate Ministries

Throughout the entire period of the so-called evangelical Golden Age (1905-29), Russian evangelicals were undergirded by the same basic set of assumptions. They taught that preaching the gospel was their primary calling, while assuming at the same time that the gospel had the power to eradicate human suffering. Convinced that their witness should consist of good works as well as words, evangelicals cultivated an attitude of concern and personal involvement in the needs of others, following the example of Christ. They taught that compassion was a basic element of their common Christian witness and the concern of all members of the community, regardless of their economic status or age. Generosity and simple living were encouraged, and their publications devoted a good deal of teaching to the proper Christian attitude toward money and giving. Compassionate models from the West were actively sought, particularly in the case of urban rescue ministry, which closely followed the example of the Salvation Army. However, Russian evangelicals also drew on their indigenous sectarian roots, especially the Molokans (who left the Orthodox Church in the 16th century), for the development of ministries within their own community.

## Support for Needy Church Workers and Orphans

Except for W. A. Fetler, evangelical leaders of compassionate ministries were of Molokan background. To a certain extent, although they had intentionally separated themselves from certain aspects of that heritage, it may be said that leaders such as D. I. Mazaev, V. G. Pavlov, and V. V. Ivanov worked to instill a Molokan-type ethic of mutual support into the new Baptist community. Since the beginning of the evangelical movement, Stundists and others had routinely gathered funds dedicated for the

support of preachers and church members in need. In the post-1905 era it became possible to establish funds in a more formal way to provide aid within the community, and especially for preachers who were no longer capable of working, and their families. Another important element of post-1905 compassion was the organization of evangelical institutions to care for orphans and the elderly. In addition, as the movement grew, it was essential to teach newcomers the importance of good works and giving. While compassionate ministry within the believing community was important for survival in a rather hostile environment, it was also understood to be a means of outreach. If the gospel was the main source of hope for society, then it was essential first of all to support the people whose calling it was to preach.

### Urban Ministry

Many changes came to Russia as the country industrialized. In particular, the urban population grew during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, creating a number of serious social problems. Evangelicals, notably W. A. Fetler, were inspired to attempt to reach the urban poor with the gospel by means of methods learned in England, according to the example of British Baptist C. H. Spurgeon, the Welsh Revival, and the Salvation Army. Fetler arrived in St. Petersburg in 1907 and from about 1910 began to hold night meetings. For a few months in 1914, the Russian Baptist church in the capital, Dom Evangeliia, served as a half-way house for men who wished to live their lives on the streets. Fetler and others helped the Salvation Army gain a foothold in Russia. As early as 1892 William Booth's book, *In Darkest England and the Way Out,* appeared in Russian translation and made a strong impression.[4] In 1913, S.V. Bulgakov published a two-volume Orthodox work, *Nastol'naia kniga dlia sviashcheno-tserkovno-sluzhitelei [Handbook for Ministers of the Holy Church],* that included a respectful assessment of Salvation Army work with alcoholics.[5] Rescue ministry was considered an appropriate involvement for youth, who preached and sang in taverns and organized summer camps and events for slum children. Another aspect of rescue-type ministry was the involvement of evangelicals in the Russian temperance movement. Evangelicals approached alcoholism as a spiritual problem that could be overcome by surrendering one's life to Christ.

### Through World War, Revolution, and Civil War

In 1914, with the beginning of World War I, drastic changes overtook the entire country. At first evangelicals joined their fellow citizens in setting up field hospitals, tending the wounded, and caring for refugees, but by 1916 many prayer houses had been closed and church leaders sent into exile. Nevertheless, various compassionate services were still carried on by evangelical youth in several places. Following the February Revolution in 1917, evangelicals revived their support of existing compassionate institutions and made plans for new ones. A ministry among soldiers developed into the Tent Mission, which sent teams of missionaries throughout towns and villages in Ukraine evangelizing, but also tending the sick. After the end of the Civil War, the Tent Mission succeeded in operating a home for orphans for a brief time. Throughout the years of revolution and war, evangelical compassionate institutions continued to function, but were shut down by about 1922. New challenges were created by the 1921-1923 famine, which both threatened the lives of evangelicals and involved them in local and international aid programs. Evangelical churches gave generously to famine relief and also set up their own structures to distribute large amounts of help from abroad. Some plans were made to extend relief projects into long-term development programs, but by the mid-1920s these hopes were extinguished.

### Evangelical Communal Farms

The New Economic Policy (NEP) begun in 1921 signaled a pause in the Bolshevik Revolution when for a few years limited capitalism was tolerated. To rebuild agriculture, the government invited "sectarians," including evangelicals, to form communes and also permitted the organization of collective labor enterprises to provide goods and services. Evangelicals entered readily into these efforts; indeed, in many ways they understood themselves to have anticipated Soviet trends because of the "communal" way of life they had been accustomed to practice for many years. In several tracts on the subject of communal living, I. S. Prokhanov outlined practical steps for the formation of economic communities and gave them a theological basis.[6] His interest was in replicating the life of the Jerusalem church described in the Book of Acts, which owned goods in common and saw to it that none of its members experienced physical need. Prokhanov apparently anticipated that living according to the ideal of the early church would lead to the eradication of poverty altogether. In an era when other forms of compassionate ministry were being restricted by the state, the formation of communes and labor collectives served as a substitute, both as a way of sustaining the community and as a means of witness.

In several tracts on the subject of communal living, I. S. Prokhanov outlined practical steps for the formation of economic communities and gave them a theological basis.

Russian evangelicals actually established their first agricultural communes prior to the advent of NEP. Almost immediately after the February Revolution, an agricultural colony with a shelter for children and the elderly was organized on the property of F. S. Savel'ev (1863-1947) near Moscow.[7] In 1918 I.S. Prokhanov published a brochure, *Evangel'skoehristianstvo i sotsial'nyi vopros [Evangelical Christianity and the Social Question],* that outlined a pattern for the development of economic communities.[8] By 1919 evangelicals were discussing the formation of communes at regional congresses, and the Gefsimaniia [Gethsemane] community in the Tver' Region had already been organized.[9] It was headed by Ivan Pavlovich Beliaev, a peasant who had been forced underground in 1916 because of his evangelical beliefs. With the revolution he had become a member of the Council of Workers' Deputies in Reval (presently Talinn, Estonia).[10] Gefsimaniia took over a derelict estate directly from government authorities and quickly made significant improvements.[11] By 1924 this commune worked 50 *desiatiny* (roughly 124 acres) and kept work horses, cattle, and sheep. Gefsimaniia members built an artesian well, an electrical station, and a bathhouse, and shared their agricultural machinery with neighboring peasants. The community had its own metalwork and carpentry shops, a smithy, and tailoring and shoemaking shops.[12] On a visit to Gefsimaniia, Prokhanov observed the good spirit, noting that members were always singing

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while they worked, and before and after meals.[13] In fact, the community inspired Prokhanov, who wrote and translated hymns, to compose "Song of the First Christians."[14]

By 1921 when the People's Commissariat for Agriculture, abbreviated as Narkomzem, invited sectarians and Old Believers to settle on newly nationalized lands,[15] evangelicals responded with enthusiasm, although, as noted, they were already ahead of the program. Utrenniaia Zvezda [Morning Star], the second major Evangelical Christian commune, began in 1922 in the Tver' Region. O. Iu. Redkina notes that a critical, anti-religious article about the community's failure as a commune nevertheless admitted that Utrenniaia Zvezda worked 84 *desiatiny* (roughly 226 acres) and achieved better harvests than neighboring peasants.[16]

In 1923 five families (a total of 45 persons) from Gefsimaniia formed a third major commune, Vifaniia, also in the Tver' Region. By 1928 there were 108 members, 88 percent of whom were poor peasants and workers. An engineer, M. P. Shop-Mishich, described Vifaniia at length in a glowing 1928 report.[17] The community raised cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens, geese, and turkeys, and operated leatherwork, carpentry, and machine shops, a windmill, and an oil press. Vifianiia also hosted a grade school and a library with 500 volumes. The community sold cattle and seed to local peasants and rented out its agricultural equipment.[18]

O. Iu. Redkina has carried out an extensive assessment of the scores of agricultural communes and labor cooperatives that were set up across Soviet Russia by evangelicals during the 1920s. Hundreds more were organized by Old Believers, Tolstoyans, Orthodox, and other groups.[19] V. A. Popov states that by 1924 the Baptist Union alone had formed 25 agricultural communes, each composed of about 25 family groups in 12 different regions.[20]

Nevertheless, Stalin's consolidation of power and the demise of NEP and its tolerance for small-scale capitalism spelled the end for evangelical agricultural communes. Vifaniia was handed over to a Communist collective in 1929 and renamed in honor of a Civil War hero.[21] In September 1929 authorities forced Gefsimaniia to take in 11 additional poor families, assigned new leaders, and renamed the community.[22] Evangelicals also lost control of Utrenniaia Zvezda in 1929, but a few sectarian communes survived into the 1930s.[23] In self-preservation some communities migrated to Central Asia or Siberia, where the Soviet government was not yet in full control.[24]

Compassionate ministry highlights Russian evangelicals' expectation that inner change was the catalyst for greater, not less, involvement in human society.

### Evangelical Engagement with Society

Compassionate ministry highlights Russian evangelicals' expectation of change for the better. What is more, they anticipated that inner change was the catalyst for greater, not less, involvement in human society. Thus, their practice of compassionate ministry confirms the outward focus of their movement. Aleksei Sinichkin titled his book on Russian evangelicals *Vse radi missii [All for the Sake of Mission]*.[25] Prior to Stalin's consolidation of power in the late 1920s, Russian evangelicals did not suffer from anything like a "fortress mentality." They willingly entered into contact with the wider Russian society, as their involvement in the temperance movement, famine relief, and economic communities demonstrated. Moreover, at times they allowed seemingly important doctrinal points to be "trumped" by compassion. Thus, the Salvation Army was a valued ministry partner even though the Army did not administer sacraments (ordinances). In the same way, residents of the Dom Evangeliia halfway house in 1914 were not required to subscribe to a certain set of beliefs before they could benefit from the rehabilitation program. From the Pashkovite Movement until the end of the 1920s Russian evangelicals tended to emphasize engagement and action over theology.

### I. S. Prokhanov

In addition, through the lens of compassionate ministry we see that Russian evangelicals exhibited a basically positive attitude to the world. I. S. Prokhanov's autobiography is subtitled *The Life of an Optimist in the Land of Pessimism*.[26] Russian evangelicals expected inward transformation that would improve society. Their focus was not strictly on the joys of the world to come or on sustaining their own community, but on making everyday life worth living for everyone.

Prokhanov's lengthy 1928 article entitled "Chto nam delat'? [What Must We Do?]" underscores this evangelical emphasis. His title was drawn from John 6: 38 when the crowd asks Jesus, "What must we do (Russian: *Chto nam delat'?*) to do the works God requires?" However, it seems unlikely that anyone in the Soviet Union could have read the title without recalling V. I. Lenin's political tract of 1902 entitled *Chto delat'?* [*What Is to Be Done?*], which in turn was taken from the title of Nikolai Chernyshevskii's novel of the same name. In his article Prokhanov offered a series of answers for both unbelievers and believers to the question, "What are we to do?" For unbelievers the answer was to repent. For believers, as in *The New, or Evangelical Life,* Prokhanov again presented the answer to the question as found in the life of the Jerusalem church: devotion to the apostles' teaching, fellowship with God and fellow believers, prayer, and evangelism (Acts 2:42-47; 4:33). Prokhanov outlined each of these tasks and then indicated a fifth point of activity: "The restructuring of labor and social life…on a new basis."[27] Again he repeated Acts 4:34, "There were none in need among them," and Acts 4:32, "No one called anything his own; they owned everything in common." Prokhanov depicted the Jerusalem church as an "island" in a "sea of need and injustice" and exulted, "What a miracle that congregation must have seemed to those around it!" He continued: "The task of the evangelical church in Russia is exactly the same." No evangelical would deny that preaching was the essential task of the church, but according to Prokhanov's article, preaching alone was not enough; instead, "Evangelical Christians must bring the gospel to life in such a way that there would be no needy among them." Evangelical communities were to be "islands of well-being."[28] In short, economic communities were not to exist for self-aggrandizement, but as a witness by putting an end to need.

### Adaptability and Innovation in Outreach

Also worth noting is the organic, intuitive

nature of the compassionate activity of Russian evangelicalism. Pashkovites engaged in many forms of compassionate service by adapting existing ministries to evangelical purposes. It might be assumed that this was simply characteristic of upper-class people for whom charitable work was part of their lifestyle. Yet almost as soon as religious tolerance was declared in 1905, small offerings were spontaneously sent to the journal *Khristianin* by ordinary people who apparently expected that the new freedoms meant that evangelicals would now be starting compassionate institutions as a matter of course. Compassion was a natural part of their faith.

Compassion also showed the essential adaptability of the movement. Challenging situations required challenging measures, and Russian evangelicals appeared to have accepted and even embraced innovations such as night meetings, halfway houses, agricultural communities, and famine committees—each appropriate to different circumstances—without question or complaint. Evangelicals also developed new organizational and administrative skills, willingly studying and appropriating foreign models.

In this way, compassion highlights evangelicals' worldwide connections for which they were sometimes punished as "foreign elements." At the same time, it also points to their self-reliance. Evangelicals admired and identified with the compassionate work of their counterparts abroad, although they never enjoyed the social leverage, financial support, or respectability to attempt ministries such as that of George Mueller, Thomas Barnardo, or German humanitarian Friedrich von Bodelschwingh. However, the difficulty of their situation did not stop Russian evangelicals from engaging in compassionate ministry. Nor did they wait for foreigners to do the work. Russians intervened to bring the Salvation Army into their country, but they also carried out their own rescue ministries. They sought famine aid from abroad, but they also gathered their own resources to help their own people.

Compassion was part of the mechanism that helped evangelicals develop and retain a sense of community even as their numbers grew. Through journal articles, reports, and editorials, especially in *Baptist,* mutual responsibility and concern were systematically cultivated. Evangelicals also used compassion to reinforce their legitimacy in the eyes of the state. During the early days of World War I, they transformed prayer houses into hospitals for the wounded in part because they wished to underline their loyalty. During the 1920s they formed agricultural communes and labor cooperatives for their own support, but also to demonstrate their usefulness as citizens.

In summary, viewing Russian evangelicals through the lens of compassionate ministry allows us to see their complexity as outward-looking, adaptable evangelists who absorbed multiple influences and were also struggling for survival and legitimacy. Their activities were necessarily shaped by the relatively hostile context in which they lived. Perhaps they could be described as "evangelicals under stress," who never attained the respectability and influence of their fellow believers abroad. At the same time, compassion was always a consistent and organic part of their outreach.

Important changes took place among Russian evangelicals during the Soviet period. It was not possible to practice compassion in the same way that it had been done earlier. However, the natural gravitation of evangelicals toward compassionate ministry in post-Soviet times suggests that the movement's basically missionary orientation was never lost.

### *Perestroika* and the Reemergence of Compassionate Ministries

The wave of compassionate activity that was ushered in with Gorbachev's *perestroika* is striking. With little or no organic connection to compassionate ministries of the past, what were the motivating factors that inspired post-Soviet evangelicals to undertake ambitious projects such as setting up rehabilitation centers for alcoholics or shelters for street children?

The following story is typical. During the early 1990s in Makiivka, a city in the Donetsk Region of Ukraine, a group of women gathered weekly for Bible study and prayer in a church-sponsored library near the central market. Often a little girl from the streets turned up at their meeting, one of the thousands of Ukrainian children whose families had become a casualty of the economic collapse that accompanied independence. The child, named Natasha, made a living for herself and her alcoholic mother by begging. Although she was at least eight years old, she had never learned her numbers sufficiently to be able to count the money she collected. She would ask the women at the Bible study to help her. Over time it occurred to them that something had to be done for this girl and others like her. The women prayed for about two years, and with the help of many volunteers from a number of churches and some assistance from abroad, established the Good Shepherd Shelter in 1996. For some years it functioned as the children's shelter for Makiivka. Good Shepherd is now the name of a charitable fund made up of several compassionate projects. As of this writing, 30 children from the Good Shepherd Social Rehabilitation Center, "Our Home," have moved to the Kyiv suburbs out of the way of military action in the Donetsk Region.

The spontaneous, yet thoughtful response of the women and the churches they represent has been replicated scores of times in the countries of the former Soviet Union as evangelicals have attempted to help children, the elderly, the disabled, and people suffering from addictions. Many of their efforts have proved unsustainable, but some have survived. Like their spiritual ancestors, they continue to see compassion as an integral part of proclaiming the gospel. ♦

Evangelicals continue to see compassion as an integral part of proclaiming the gospel.

**Notes:**

[1] For detailed treatments of the Pashkovite Movement, several excellent English-language sources are Sharyl Corrado, "The Philosophy of Ministry of Colonel Vasiliy Pashkov," M.A. thesis (Wheaton Graduate School, 2000); Edmund Heier, *Religious Schism in the Russian Aristocracy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970); and Mark McCarthy, "Religious Conflict and Social Order," Ph.D. diss. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University, 2004).

[2] Jenny E. de Mayer, *Adventures with God in Freedom and in Bond* (Toronto: Evangelical Publishers, 1948), 167-78.

[3] S. E. Golovashchenko, comp., *Istoriia evangel'sko-baptistskogo dvizheniia v Ukraine, Materialy i dokumenty* [History of the Evangelical-Baptist

*(continued on page 8)*

Movement in Ukraine, Materials and Documents] (Odessa: Bogomyslie, 1998), 121-22.

[4] E. V. Ivanova and Zh. E. Ivanova, *Zarubezhnyi opyt sotsial'noi raboty v ramkakh rossiyskoi blagotvoritel'nosti* [Foreign Experience of Social Work in the Framework of Russian Charity] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnaia Akademiia Informatizatsii, 2001), 62.

[5] (Moscow: Moscow Patriarchate, 1993; first printed 1913), Vol. 2, 1598-1600.

[6] A good example is I. S. Prokhanov, "Novaia, ili evangel'skaia zhizn' [The New, or Evangelical Life]" in V. Popov, comp., *Novaia ili evangel'skaia zhizn'* (Moscow: Khristianskii tsentr "Logos," 2009), 96-124.

[7] O. Iu. Redkina, *Sel'skokhoziaistvennye religioznye trudovye kollektivy v 1917-i-1930-e gody na materialakh evropeiskoi chasti RSFSR* [Agricultural Religious Labor Collectives from 1917 to the 1930s, Based on Materials from the European Part of the RSFSR] (Volgograd: Izdatel'stvo Volgogradskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2004), 83, 143-144, 161, 639; V. M. Khorev, "Istoriia Krasnovorotskogo dvizheniia: 1923-1951 [The History of the Krasnovorotskii Movement]," report presented 14 April 2013 in Tsaritsyno, Russia; http://rusbaptist.livejournal.com/64796.html.

[8] Quoted extensively by V. A. Popov, "Evangel'skie trudovye arteli [Evangelical Labor Artels]," *Bratskii vestnik,* No. 2 (1990), 26-32.

[9] VSEKH-B, *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR* [History of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR] (Moscow: VSEKh-B, 1989), 190.

[10] Tat'iana Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm i gosudarstvennaia vlast' v 1905-1991 godakh* [Russian Protestantism and State Power, 1905-1991] (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii Universitet, 2009), 70.

[11] Redkina, *Sel'skokhoziaistvennye religionznye trudovye kolletivy,* 165.

[12] *Ibid*., 377; Heather Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905-1929* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 174-75.

[13] Prokhanov, "Novaia, ili evangel'skaia zhizn'," 104.

[14] I.S.P., "Pesnia pervo-khristian [Song of the First Christians]," *Utrenniaia zvezda,* Nos. 3-4-5 (March-April-May): 4. Concerning Prokhanov's musical interest see I. S. Prokhanoff, *In the Cauldron of Russia, 1869-1933* (New York: All-Russian Evangelical Christian Union, 1933), 144-48.

[15] GARF, f. 1235, op. 58, d. 50, l. 235-236, "K sektantam i staroobriadtsam, zhivushchim v Rossii i za granitsei [To the Sectarians and Old Believers Living in Russia and Abroad]", quoted by Iu. S. Grachev, *Studencheskie gody: Povest' o studencheskom khristianskom dvizhenii v Rossii* [Student Years: A Story about the Student Christian Movement in Russia] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 1997), 50.

[16] A. Nemkov, "Ne sumeli v svoiikh rukakh uderzhat' [They Couldn't Keep It in Their Own Hands]," *Kollektivist*, No. 3 (1928), 36-38, quoted by Redkina, *Sel'skokhoziaistvennye religioznye trudovye kollektivy*, 380.

[17] M. P. Shop-Mishich, "Vifaniia" [Bethany]," *Khristianin,* No. 7 (1928), 28-33.

[18] Redkina, *Sel'skokhoziaistvennye religioznye trudovye kollektivy* , 378-79.

[19] Redkina provides extensive lists of labor collectives, their founders, geographical location, and sources of information in the several appendices of *Sel'skokhoziaistvennye religioznye trudovye kollektivy.*

[20] V. A. Popov, "Khristianskie kommuny I. S. Prokhanova i gorod Solntsa [Christian Communes of I. S. Prokhanov and the City of the Sun]" in *105 let legalizatsii russkogo baptizma. Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii 5-7 aprelia 2011 goda,* ed. N. A. Beliakova and A. V. Sinichkin (Moscow: RSEKh-B, 2011), 136.

[21] Coleman, *Russian Baptists,* 217.

[22] Redkina, *Sel'skokhoziaistvennye religioznye trudovye kollektivy,* 572.

[23] Anatolii Arsen'evich Berezhnoi, "Byt' souchastnikom Evangeliia, vospominaniia sluzhitelia evangelsko-baptistskogo bratstva [To Be a Participant in the Gospel, Recollections of a Minister of the Evangelical-Baptist Brotherhood]," *Gost',* 6 (39) (2009), 6; Redkina, *Sel'skokhoziastvennye religioznye trudovye kolektivy,* 574.

[24] Redkina, *Sel'skokhoziastvennye religioznye trudovye kolektivy,* 575, 584.

[25] Irpen', Ukraine: Assotsiatsiia "Dukhovnoe vozrozhdeniie," 2011.

[26] *In the Cauldron of Russia, 1869-1933* (New York: All-Russian Evangelical Christian Union, 1933).

[27] I. S. Prokhanov, "Chto nam delat'? [What Must We Do?]," *Khristianin,* No. 1 (January 1928), 12.

[28] *Ibid*.

*Editor's Note: See also Mary Raber, "Visible and Invisible: Observations on Social Service Ministries among Evangelicals in Ukraine since Independence" in* Eastern European Baptist History: New Perspectives*, ed. by Sharyl Corrado and Toivo Pilli. Prague: International Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007.*

**Mary Raber,** *a native of St. Louis, Missouri, has spent 21 years in the former Soviet Union. Presently she is a service worker with Mennonite Mission Network based in Odessa, Ukraine, teaching church history and other subjects at Odessa Seminary and other theological schools in Ukraine, Russia, and Armenia.*

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# The Politics of Orthodox Churches in Emigration

Kristina Stoeckl

One set of challenges which Orthodox churches face with regard to international migration concerns the nature of the Orthodox communities abroad. Are these communities simply an extension of the mother churches, located at the periphery but with a strong link to the center, or are they developing a new form of transnational Orthodoxy, independent from national ties?

## National versus Transnational Models

Each Orthodox Church relates to its émigré believers through the establishment of dedicated parishes abroad. These parishes keep canonical ties with the mother churches and function as linguistically and culturally homogenous outposts, where Orthodox believers from one and the same country or from one and the same patriarchal jurisdiction gather. This is the model of the diaspora, of which the Russian, Greek, and Serbian diasporas in Western Europe and in the United States are primary examples. This diaspora model is opposed by a transnational model of religious community, according to which national and linguistic divisions are less important than shared faith. In contemporary Orthodoxy, we find that the two models are in competition.

## Rising above Ethnic Identities

The model of an Orthodox Christian diaspora separated along national and linguistic lines has been challenged by members of the diaspora itself. In his book *The Orthodox Church: Its Past and Its Role in the World Today*, first published in 1981, Russian-American Orthodox theologian John Meyendorff (1926-91) discussed the overcoming of national divisions among Orthodox emigrants: "All national groups in the United States, with the exception of the Greeks, are gradually adopting English more and more as the liturgical language, a factor which will help the process toward unification."[1] Orthodox communities, he writes, should rise above their ethnic and nationalist limitations. Sergei Hackel (1931-2005), a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church in Great Britain, wrote: "The diaspora takes on a new identity and ceases to be a mere extension of its parent body."[2] Both statements express the desire for a new form of Orthodox community, independent of national and linguistic separations and open to newcomers. Meyendorff even speaks about the emergence of a "Western Orthodoxy" made up of converts and of second- and third-generation "Orthodox youth who had adopted the language, culture, and customs of the countries where they were born, and are to all intents and purposes as Western as their Latin brothers."[3]

## Russian Opposition to Diaspora Independence

The emergence of a Western or cosmopolitan Orthodoxy is perceived as a threat by some Orthodox mother churches because it may result in a relative "loss" of believers. The Russian Orthodox Church is the primary example of an Orthodox Church that seeks to avoid this risk and therefore tries to intensify its links with the diaspora. In a speech to Russian emigrants, Patriarch Kirill expressed his concern about the weakening of faith, patriotism, and language competence in the Russian diaspora, blaming in particular the post-1991 generation of emigrants for losing their roots.[4] The Russian Orthodox Church is actively seeking to regain control over those Russian Orthodox communities abroad which developed a largely independent and Western character during the 70 years of Soviet rule. In 2006, a controversy between the Moscow Patriarchate and the local diaspora community caused a split in the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Great Britain and Ireland Sourozh. The incident made clear that the Russian Orthodox Church is seeking to increase its control over Russian Orthodox communities in the West and that it meets with suspicion English-speaking Orthodoxy that developed in the West during the Cold War.[5]

The model of an Orthodox Christian diaspora separated along national and linguistic lines has been challenged by members of the diaspora itself.

## A Fear of Losing Influence

One explanation for the reluctance of the Russian Orthodox Church vis-à-vis the emergence of a transnational Orthodox community abroad could be its desire to maintain a high level of political influence. A severance of the ties between the Church and its émigré believers could eventually lead to the decline of political influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, both in the home country and in its external relations. Patriarch Kirill, who frequently meets heads of states of Western countries, regularly presents his church as a representative institution for Russians living abroad.[6] The Russian Orthodox Church has adopted recommendations to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, proposing to build a systematic cooperation between the ministry, the Department of External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Federal Agency for Compatriots, and Russian Orthodox dioceses and parishes abroad in order to protect the rights of Russians living abroad regarding their religious, linguistic, and cultural identity and to create a "united information space of the Russian World."[7] The strong position of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russian external relations would be relatively weakened if Orthodoxy in the West became transnational.

The other critical aspect of transnational Orthodoxy regards questions of jurisdiction. If Orthodox believers abroad no longer organize themselves in neatly separated diasporas, but in the form of a transnational faith community, ecclesiastical jurisdictions and loyalties are no longer automatic.[8] Historical precedence, such as the Archdiocese of Great Britain (founded in 1922) or the Metropolis of France (founded in 1963), suggest that the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is the most likely home for such a transnational Orthodoxy.

A severance of the ties between the Church and its émigré believers could eventually lead to the decline of political influence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

## Additional Reservations about Transnational Orthodoxy

Further explanation for the reservations about transnational Orthodoxy may be found in doctrinal issues. In her study of the reception of an icon of the Tsar-Martyr Nicholas, which entered Russia in the 1990s from the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, Nina Schmit shows how religious practices that have matured abroad may return to the home country and challenge the Church's teaching there. The case of the icon demonstrated that doctrinal developments in the diaspora (the canonization of Tsar Nicholas) can create an unwelcome precedence for

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the Church in the home country. The Russian Orthodox Church only canonized Tsar Nicholas in 2000, after the practice of venerating him had already become established thanks to influence from abroad.[9] Another example is given by a recent study of the globalization of the Orthodox prayer practice of hesychasm (incessant prayer), which shows how new forms of communication (online discussion forums, blogs) create multiple interpretations of traditional practices, which may even disregard established theological teaching.[10]

These examples demonstrate that Orthodoxy today is as much a global religious movement from below as it is in the hands of its representative institutions. The challenge for Orthodox churches in the 21st century will lie in finding a balance between the traditional model of national religious diasporas and new claims for a transnational community of Orthodox believers. ♦

Orthodoxy today is as much a global religious movement from below as it is in the hands of its representative institutions.

**Notes:**

[1] John Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church: Its Past and its Role in the World Today*, 4th rev. ed. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996).

[2] Sergei Hackel, "Diaspora Problems of Russian Emigration" in Michael Angold, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, Vol. 5, *Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 539-57.

[3] Meyendorff, *Orthodox Church*.

[4] Russian Orthodox Church, "Patriarchate Kirill's Address to the Third Congress of Compatriots," Official Website of the Department for External Church Relations, 2 December 2009; http://www.mospat.ru/en/2009/12/02/news9586/.

[5] The controversy surrounding Great Britain's Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh is emblematic of the problems that may emerge between an Orthodox mother church and its diaspora community in the West. See Maria Hammerli and Edmund Mucha, "Innovation in the Russian Orthodox Church: The Crisis in the Diocese of Sourozh in Britain" in *Orthodox Identities in Western Europe*, ed. by Maria Hammerli and Jean-Francois Mayer (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

[6] These meetings are duly documented on the website of the Department for External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church (www.mospat.ru/).

[7] Russian Orthodox Church, "Third World Congress of Compatriots Section Meeting on 'The Role of the ROC and Other Traditional Confessions in Consolidation of United Space of the Russian World,'" Official Website of the Department for External Church Relations (www.mospat.ru), 2 December 2009; http://www.mospat.ru/en/2009/12/02/news9603/.

[8] Hackel, "Diaspora Problems," 541.

[9] The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia canonized Tsar Nicholas II in 1981. Nina Schmit, "A Transnational Religious Community Gathers around an Icon: The Return of the Tsar" in Victor Roudometof, Alexander Agadjanian, and Jerry G. Pankhurst, eds., *Eastern Orthodoxy in a Global Age: Tradition Faces the Twenty-First Century* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005), 210-23, describes how the Russian color photocopy reproduction of an icon of Tsar-Martyr Nicholas produced in the United States becomes miraculous (myrrh-streaming) in Russia. The gatherings of Orthodox believers around this icon are seen with suspicion by the Patriarchate in Moscow, which had, at that time, not yet canonized the Tsar. A documentary film about the events was produced for U.S. Orthodox believers.

[10] Christopher D.L. Johnson, *The Globalization of Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer: Contesting Contemplation* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010).

**Kristina Stoeckl** *is a fellow of the Austrian Academy of Sciences at the University of Vienna, Austria, and author of* The Russian Orthodox Church and Human Rights *(2014).*

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## Response to Kristina Stoeckl, "The Politics of Orthodox Churches in Emigration"

Erich Lippman

### Two Competing Concepts of "National" Churches

Kristina Stoeckl's suggestion that Orthodox communities in emigration might be moving in a transnational direction reflects perhaps the perspective of some Orthodox intellectuals in Western Europe, but is far from the lived reality of most Orthodox believers living in countries where Orthodoxy is not the national faith. Rather than suggest that Orthodoxy is splitting between the "diaspora" model and the "transnational" model, I would suggest that we have two competing concepts of "national" churches.

Certainly, the diaspora model can represent a sort of nationalism, linking Orthodox churches with the national identity of their jurisdictions. However, when John Meyendorff wrote of moving beyond the "national divisions" of the Orthodox Church in America and moving toward "unification," he was not, as Stoeckl implies, arguing for a movement toward transnationalism, but rather toward the creation of a new *national* church—an American Orthodox church. This is not to suggest that Meyendorff was advocating an American nationalism as opposed to the Russian or Greek versions, but rather that many Orthodox thinkers (Meyendorff included) see as scandalous and uncanonical a situation in which multiple, overlapping *national* jurisdictions exist within the same country. They should rather be tied together under the umbrella of an Orthodox church *of* that country, as has been the case historically. So perhaps rather than introduce a category like transnationalism, it would be best to differentiate between indigenous and nationalist diasporas.

Many Orthodox thinkers (Meyendorff included) see as scandalous and uncanonical a situation in which multiple, overlapping *national* jurisdictions exist within the same country. They should rather be tied together under the umbrella of an Orthodox church *of* that country.

### The Rivalry between Moscow and Constantinople

History is actually a significant part of the problem of Stoeckl's analysis—specifically the long rivalry between the second and third Romes. Moscow and Constantinople (Istanbul) have long been at odds over which should hold the rightful place of primacy in the Orthodox world. The relationships of these national centers to their religious peripheries often say much more about the complexities of that competition than can be reduced to easy dichotomies. Stoeckl claims that the Ecumenical Patriarchate is more amenable to transnational Orthodoxy, selectively citing the examples of the Archdiocese of Great Britain and the Metropolis of France, while the Russian Orthodox Church is the primary opponent because "a severance of ties between the Church and its émigré believers could eventually lead to the decline of the political influence of the Russian Orthodox Church both in the home country and in its external relations." However, it was precisely that same Moscow Patriarchate that, in 1973, granted autocephaly (self-leadership) to its jurisdiction in the United States, allowing it to become the Orthodox Church of America, with its leader in Washington and its services in English.

On the other hand, if an Orthodox Christian were to travel to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, that person would have no choice but to experience the Divine Liturgy in Greek because the only Orthodox parish there belongs to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Indeed, it has long been the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese that has doggedly supported the nationalist model, offering its services in Greek and offering Greek classes alongside Sunday school. When the Greek Archbishop Iakovos supported the proclamations of the Ligonier Meeting in 1994, which produced consensus documents opposing the diaspora model in the US, he quickly lost his job. After all, the severance of ties may represent a loss of political capital for Moscow, but it would represent a much greater loss of financial capital for Constantinople.

The American picture is quite complex, and an observer's experience is likely to differ radically from one parish to the next, often regardless of jurisdiction. One can find Greek churches that use as much English as possible in their liturgies as easily as one can find OCA churches in the OCA heartland of western Pennsylvania that still sprinkle Church Slavonic throughout their liturgies, despite being a hundred years removed from the Slavic immigrants who formed those churches.

### The Orthodox Schism in Great Britain

I would also contend that the 2006 Sourozh schism was a much more complicated affair than Stoeckl presents and leaves little, if any, clarity that "the Russian Orthodox Church is [or was at that time] seeking to increase its control over Russian Orthodox communities in the West." Rather, the Sourozh tragedy reflected the growing pains of a slowly recovering Russian Orthodox Church trying to reconnect with a diocese it had long left to its own devices. One nuance Stoeckl leaves out in the sweep of her generalization is that Patriarch Aleksei II and Patriarch Kirill have not followed the same path. Kirill's articulation of a doctrine of "russkii mir," cited by Stoeckl, is indeed problematic and signals a return to imperial pretensions and a cozy "symphonia" with Putin's government on the part of the Moscow Patriarchate. However, this direction is new and has much more to do with Kirill and the idea's chief architect—Hilarion Alfeyev (who not coincidentally played a significant role in the Orthodox schism in Great Britain)—than it does with long-standing patriarchal politics. It would be too simplistic to see Aleksei's handling of the Sourozh problem through that lens.

### Competing Notions of the Role of the Local Church

There is little doubt to any astute observer of Orthodoxy that in countries where Orthodoxy is not the majority or official religion, tension between the center (mother Church) and periphery (local church) exists. However, the tension is not between a diaspora mentality and transnationalism, but between competing notions of the role of the local church. Is it a haven for the often increasing numbers of Orthodox believers from the mother country? Or is it a "light unto the Gentiles" of whatever country it inhabits (in other words, a church culturally appropriate to that nation)? It seemingly cannot be both, although both mentalities have strong claims on the constituencies of those churches. To look beyond this tension to see Orthodoxy in emigration moving toward a Catholic or even Protestant-style transnationalism would be to ignore too much of the history, identity, and theology of the Orthodox Church over the last thousand years. After all, Orthodox believers already have a strong sense of being part of something that transcends nations, but is always grounded in a particular culture. The question for émigré churches is: In which culture should they be grounded? ♦

**Erich Lippman** *is assistant professor of history at St. Mary's University, Winona, Minnesota.*

Moscow and Constantinople (Istanbul) have long been at odds over which should hold the rightful place of primacy in the Orthodox world.

## Polish Protestants in a Catholic Context

Wojciech Kowalewski

Some of Poland's Roman Catholic theologians look back today at the Communist era with a certain nostalgia. Fr. Stanislaw Musial, a Jesuit, suggests, "Maybe it was easier for the Church under Communism....At least things were considerably clearer: the line between Good and Evil was sharp. Now it is more difficult for the Church which, moreover, runs the danger of seeming to block people's maturity."[1] One of the major sociological studies of Roman Catholicism in Poland in the post-Communist era addressed the great range of difficult issues confronting Polish Catholicism after 1989: abortion, unemployment, liberties of democracy, consumerism, liberalism, and postmodernism.[2] The important issue at stake here is what kind of competence does the church have in the development of a post-Communist culture? This question concerns not only the Catholic Church, but Poland's evangelical churches as well.

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### "Historical" and "Free Church" Protestantism

Although the historical roots undoubtedly point to the Roman Catholic Church as the major influence on the national identity of Poland, Protestantism cannot be discounted. Indeed, some elements of Protestant teaching have had a significant impact on the nation and contributed to the support of national culture. Reflecting on the historical and theological identity of Polish Protestantism, Tadeusz J. Zielinski asks a significant question in the title of his article, "One or Two Polish Protestantisms? Who Is Who in Polish Protestantism?" While all Protestants identify themselves with Reformation, a distinction exists between: "historical Protestantism" (including Lutherans and Reformed Churches which came to Poland as early as in 16th century) and "Free Church Protestantism" (including Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Free Christians, and Evangelical Christians who emerged in Poland from the beginning of the 19th century).[3]

To this day, historical and free church traditions remain in some ways antagonistic to each other. Historical Protestants are often branded as theologically liberal and morally indifferent to spiritual needs of the people, while free churches are accused of proselytism, "fishing in the neighbor's pond." On the other hand, free church Protestantism has historically been charged with fundamentalist and separatist attitudes expressed both theologically and socially. Thus widely respected Lutheran scholar Professor Karol Karski points to some historical roots of what he refers to as "Baptist-type communities" among which he includes Baptists, Churches of Christ, Free Christians [historically connected with Plymouth Brethren], Evangelical Christians, Quakers, Methodists, Adventists, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Karski asserts that all of these communities share two characteristics: They came to Poland in the late 19th or 20th centuries, and they emphasize the importance of religious freedom and tolerance.[4]

Activism is a traditionally strong feature of evangelical Christians in Poland. Virtually all Protestant communities emphasize the importance of the practical application of *sola scriptura* to life.

### "Traditionalist" and "Volunteerist" Protestants

In response to this article Tadeusz J. Zielinski objects to Karski's chronological, historical categories in reference to Protestant communities and clearly disassociates the Protestant free church tradition from Jehovah's Witnesses and Quakers.[5] More importantly, as already mentioned, he emphasizes the importance of a shared theological inheritance of the Protestant churches that all embrace basic Reformation teachings. As an alternative, Zielinski suggests two other possible classifications of Evangelical churches in Poland. The first differentiates between "traditionalist" churches in which infant baptism is the basis for membership and "volunteerist" churches in which adult baptism by conscious choice is the basis for membership. Zielinski bases a second differentiation among Protestants between conservative and liberal/modernist approaches to Christian doctrine that are not just limited to Polish theological circles.[6] However, this classification is not as easy to identify in the case of Protestant churches in Poland, since it is not always clear what is meant by conservative and liberal. However, in general, conservative refers to faithfulness to a certain doctrinal heritage and forms of piety in the light of Scripture, while liberal is associated with those who question traditional approaches to Scripture and who seek new theological expressions in dialogue with culture. Whereas for many Roman Catholics in Poland the dividing line between conservative and liberal lies in one's approach to Vatican II, for many Protestants the often-mentioned dividing line relates to the authority of Scripture. Although relations among Protestants of differing traditions have improved over the last five decades due to the work of the Ecumenical Council and the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, some differences and tensions between so-called "historical churches" and "free churches" still affect their relations.

### Protestant Activism

First, it is crucial to recognize that activism is a traditionally strong feature of evangelical Christians in Poland. Virtually all Protestant communities emphasize the importance of the practical application of *sola scriptura* to life which in principle implies close integration of Word and life. Thus Baptist theologian Konstanty Wiazowski devotes two chapters of his *Foundations of Our Faith* to the Word of God as the source of God's revelation that needs to find its practical expression in Christian life. He asserts that it is a responsibility of every believer to study God's Word and points to various critical approaches to exegesis of the text that should also become the foundation of the whole church.[7] As already noted, this is not just a Baptist emphasis, but a generally shared conviction that Protestant religious experience is closely associated with conscious intention to interpret the Scripture in a dynamic way in relation to existing and changing reality.

### Evangelical Ethics

Thus, an identification of Scripture as the central authority among Protestants finds practical expression in a certain approach to matters of spirituality, doctrine, and ethics. This is clearly expressed in a very influential study by Methodist theologian Professor Witold Benedyktowicz (1974/1993) of the Christian Theological Academy who in his study of evangelical theological ethics clearly emphasizes that his main concern is not philosophical, but rather practical in the light of the principle *sola fide*.[8] Benedyktowicz stresses practical applications of evangelical ethics as they relate to the world, the environment, life, family issues, work and leisure, culture, patriotism, and attitudes toward authority, to name but a few.[9] It is interesting to note that these reflections are very much praxis-minded and grow out of particular experiences of Polish Protestantism.

### The Influence of Pietism

This activist approach to spirituality clearly points to the strong influence of pietism which puts great emphasis upon personal faith and "holy living." There are four emphases that are historically associated with pietism: its experiential character, its biblical focus, its perfectionist bent, and its reforming interest.[10] All of these elements are seen as important components of Christian evangelical identity, with special emphasis on the importance of personal transformation through

faith in Jesus *(sola fide)*. In fact, it is this "experiential" element of faith that is often emphasized more than theory. Therefore, this "spiritual" emphasis on personal reading of the Scripture has had a deep impact on the perception of the relationship between "piety" and "theology". The problem is that this emphasis on activism was not always paired with deeper theological reflection (like that expressed in Benedyktowicz' theological ethics). In other words, the great emphasis on "spiritual" activism was often associated with "a lower view of scholarship among church members,"[11] especially among Protestants of free church tradition. Baptist theologian Wiazowski, reflecting on the tasks of theology, expresses and comments on some of the objections often mentioned by some evangelicals when discussing theology.[12] The main concern is that too much theology can result in the loss of "simple evangelical faith," which was often put forward in such a way: "Faith yes, but what do we need theology for?" For those accepting this view it implied that engaging with any serious theological or philosophical issues was deemed "suspicious," "unnecessary," and in the light of focus on individual spirituality, even as "a useless intellectualism, leading one to confusion."[13] However, as Wiazowski, an experienced pastor and for many years president of the Polish Baptist Union, argues, Christian living should be informed by theology in at least three practical areas: "in defense against any false teaching," "in clarifying the teaching of the church," and in "biblical exegesis." Furthermore, in response to the concern raised above, according to him the sole purpose of any theological reflection is to strengthen and not weaken the Christian faith, and when faith is excluded from theological reflection then it becomes nothing more than empty dogmatism.[14]

In some cases the strong Polish Protestant emphasis upon personal piety and experience of faith resulted in very limited theological understanding of the "world," resulting in a division between the "spiritual" and the "secular," which was further entrenched by the fact that most Protestant churches in Poland are small. A minority complex entrenched the tendency towards a certain type of uniformity whereby strong group loyalty and isolation from the outside world predominated.[15] The isolationist and fundamentalist tendencies of some Polish Protestant communities led to a sharp division and the drawing of strong lines between the church and the "world." Marsh Moyle, director of SEN, Slovakia, in "Shadows of the Past: The Lingering Effects of the Communist Mindset in the Church and Society," notes the problem of lack of responsibility, broken trust, and a "public/private schism" as significant features of Central and Eastern European evangelicalism.[16] This division between the "spiritual" and the "worldly" significantly limited the scope of Christian witness.[17]

## Suffering and Survival

Polish evangelicals during the Communist era faced the challenge of remaining committed to their biblical faith while obeying the laws of the ruling government. In response, some evangelicals became apolitical, focusing strictly on their spiritual ministry of preaching the gospel, avoiding any involvement in politics. Others collaborated with the government, making favorable pronouncements in return for government favors. Still others demonstrated their loyalty to the government in areas where conscience permitted them to do so, but voiced criticism in other areas, such as violations of human rights.[18] It seems that many Polish Protestants embraced the first option of withdrawal. General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation, Karl Heinz Walter, when asked about theology in Central and Eastern Europe, noted: "If there has ever been theology in the Second World, it is the theology of survival. East European Baptists have clung firmly to doctrines of salvation, the deity of Christ, and the uniqueness of Scripture against 'the world,' especially in the Communist years. Their churches have been more places of refuge than bases of social action."[19] While in some ways correct, Walter did not take into consideration the experiential aspects of theology developed by those living under Communist regimes. Many Protestants had to suffer because of their faith. Particular images of a theology of sacrifice, a theology of the cross, or a theology of suffering were not even considered in Walter's statement. In this context it is worth quoting Peter Kuzmic at some length: Evangelical Christians "had a depth of commitment and a spirit of sacrifice going far beyond…superficial and self-centered… 'cheap grace' and its pseudo-Pentecostal variables such as 'health and wealth,' 'name it and claim it,' or the 'prosperity gospel,' all popular in some segments of Western culture…. Their faith and suffering have taught them that external pressures, legal restrictions, social discrimination, and even physical persecutions serve the noble purpose of purifying and strengthening the church."[20]

Quoting Kuzmic is not meant to be a condemnation of Western Christianity, which has enjoyed religious freedom for much longer than the countries of Eastern Europe. Nor do his comments amount to an attack against the Catholic majority in Poland, which also has many great testimonies of brave obedience to Christ in the fight against Communism. Rather, Kuzmic underscores a feature of Polish (and East European) evangelicalism, and the reasons behind its theological fundamentalism and conservatism. Furthermore, Polish theological literature reflects full awareness of social problems which is to be found, for example, in Benedyktowicz's "theological ethics" or Wiazowski's critical study of "social sin."

## East-West Protestant Contrasts

Daryl Cosden and Donald Fairbairn, reflecting on contextual theological education among post-Soviet Protestants, point to some problems of interaction between different groups of Christians that are particularly evident in the relationship between conservative Western Protestants and Protestants in post-Communist lands. Although both groups confess a firm commitment to Scripture and the importance of proclaiming the gospel, they often tend to perceive their own theology as absolute and universal without considering the degree to which their context has shaped their theology. To illustrate this problem Cosden and Fairbairn quote a prominent Ukrainian Christian leader who commented on the difference between conservative Western Protestantism and Slavic Protestantism by saying: "The problem is that our pastors write poetry; theirs write systematic theologies." This again points to a different emphasis in the way of thinking. It seems that for a conservative

A prominent Ukrainian Christian leader commented on the difference between conservative Western Protestantism and Slavic Protestantism by saying: "The problem is that our pastors write poetry; theirs write systematic theologies."

*(continued on page 14)*

Western Protestant theologian, Scripture is often seen as a book of universal propositions which must be uncovered (through scientifically devised principles of exegesis). Thus, the task of theology is to uncover these propositions and arrange them in an orderly, logical form. Such a method finds its roots in a post-Reformation Protestant scholasticism further strengthened by the fundamentalist-modernist controversy in North America which led many conservative Protestants to embrace a theology that was extremely "cognitive in orientation" and focused on the defense of what they considered "objective universals." On the other hand, when the Ukrainian Christian leader quoted above said that Slavic pastors write poetry, he was referring to a substantially different way of thinking. Therefore, Cosden and Faibairn assert that for Slavs, "Thinking and knowing involve much more than logic." Slavs "understand reality in a way which is more complex than straightforward propositional terms can indicate."[21]

Christoph Klein, Bishop of the Evangelical Church in Sibiu, Romania, captured the significance of the post-Communist transformation very well: "For Central and Eastern Europe, the historical events of the year 1989 marked a 'turning,' a change which Christians regard as God's turning to us in a caring way. God freed peoples from terror and dictatorship, God opened closed borders, God released countless numbers of people from bondage and political-ideological oppression, God made it possible for Christians of all churches and confessions to practice their religion without interference. Overnight a completely new situation arose in these European countries."[22]

John Paul II often warned against the problem of uncritical acceptance of individualized freedom. "It is not wrong to want to live better: what is wrong is a style of life which wants to have more, not in order to be more, but to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself."

### Addressing Abortion

In the early 1990s one of Poland's most controversial church-state polemics concerned abortion. The Catholic Church defended the basic right to life, whereas those defending abortion supported the right of freedom of choice.[23] Abortion was also widely discussed in the Protestant press, mainly in moral terms, decrying the changes taking place in Polish society and criticizing the wide gap between Catholic moral proclamation and actual practice. While in Poland the family is still perceived as one of the highest values, the quality of family relations is becoming weaker and the divorce rate is growing. Andrzej Seweryn, president of the Polish Baptist Union and an experienced minister, argues that the family relationship is "the most difficult test of Christian living" in contemporary society. He notes that "Family is the first and most important church! If there is no God there, how will our children find him?"[24]

### Combating Consumerism

Another pastoral concern resulting from new social and economic freedoms is the striving for material possessions with all its consequences. The so-called Western Dream conceptualizes a better future in terms of ever-increasing levels of economic prosperity and personal consumption. One Western commentator, discussing this phenomenon in Eastern and Central Europe, noted: "Tragically, the unquestioned commitment to modernization and the unrestrained quest of the Western Dream seem as pronounced among those who identify with the church as those outside it."[25] As a result, in Poland as elsewhere in former socialist states, new freedoms generate new ethical issues that pastors must address. "*Być bogatym – ale jak?* [To Be Rich – But How?]" is the title of an article opening an issue of the Baptist monthly *Slowo Prawdy* which explores the question of "being" and "having" from a biblical perspective. After reflecting on various qualities of godliness and Christian understanding of riches and poverty, the author concludes with words of challenge: "Let us not live by desires to have more or envying others who already have more....Let us, rather, learn to be grateful for all we have; it is better than the bitterness of unfulfilled expectations."[26] Similarly, Adam Cenian observes how a "consumerist mentality" pervades the whole of Polish culture and how from a biblical perspective those blessed with riches and the church as a whole bear special responsibility to care for one another and especially for those who are in need.[27] Needless to say, consumer-driven individualism, stoked by advertising, can undermine Christian values.

John Paul II often warned against the problem of uncritical acceptance of individualized freedom. He admonished people gathered in Wloclawek, Poland, on 7 June 1991: "It is not wrong to want to live better: what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards 'having' rather than 'being,' and which wants to have more, not in order to be more, but to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself."[28] ♦

### Notes:

[1] D. O'Grady, *The Turned Card: Christianity before and after the Wall* (Gracewing: Leominster, 1995), 117.

[2] Pawel Zalecki, *Między triumfalizmem a poczuciem zagrożenia. Kościół rzymskokatolicki w Polsce współczesnej w oczach swych przedstawicieli* [Between Triumphalism and Fear; The Roman Catholic Church in the Views of Its Members] (Kraków: Nomos, 2001).

[3] Tadeusz J. Zieliński,"Jeden cźy dwa polskie protestantyzmy? Pytanie o możliwość wspólnego świadectwa" [One or Two Polish Protestantisms? Question of Joint Witness]," *Myśl Protestancka*, No. 1 (1999), 8-19.

[4] Karol Karski, "Protestanckie wspólnoty wolnokościelne" [Protestant Free Church Communities], *Studia i Dokumenty Ekumeniczne*, No.1 (1995), 37-53.

[5] Tadeusz J. Zieliński, "Jak klasyfikować Kościoły protestanckie? [How to Classify Protestant Churches?]," *Studia i Dokumenty Ekumeniczne*, No.2 (1996), 62.

[6] Zieliński, "Jak klasyfikować," 65-66.

[7] Konstanty Wiazowski, *Podstawy naszej wiary* [*Foundations of Our Faith*] (Warsaw: Słowo Prawdy, 1987).

[8] Witold Benedyktowicz, *Co powinniśmy czynić. Zarys ewangelickiej etyki teologicznej [What We Shall Do. An Outline of Evangelical Theological Ethics]* (Warsaw: ChAT, 1993), 5.

[9] Benedyktowicz, *Co powinniśmy czynić*, 127, 150ff., 179ff, and 194ff.

[10] Mark A. Noll and Ronald F. Thiemann, eds., *Where*

*Shall My Wond'ring Soul Begin? The Landscape of Evangelical Piety and Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 855f.
[11] Juraj Kusnierik and Eileen Milan, "Shadows of the Past: The Impact of Communism on the Way People Think in Post-Communist Society," (Bratislava, Slovakia: unpublished SEN research paper, 1997).
[12] Wiazowski, *Podstawy naszej wiary*, 7f.
[13] Kusnierik and Moyle,"Trends," 17.
[14] Konstanty Wiazowski, *Podstawowe zasady wiary chrześcijańskiej [Basic Principles of Christian Faith]* (Warsaw: WBST, 2000), 11-12.
[15] Kusnierik and Moyle,"Trends," 13.
[16] Marsh Moyle, "Shadows of the Past: The Lingering Effects of the Communist Mindset in the Church and Society," *Transformation* 16 (No. 1, 1999), 18.
[17] Juraj Kusnierik, "Evangelicals in Central Europe," (Bratislava, Slovakia: unpublished SEN research paper, 1999), 22.
[18] Sabrina P. Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 72.
[19] Michael I. Bochenski, *Theology from Three Worlds. Liberation and Evangelization for The New Europe* (Oxford: Smith & Helwys, 1997), xi.
[20] Peter Kuzmic, "The Communist Impact on the Church in Eastern Europe," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 20 (No. 1, 1996), 70.
[21] Darrell Cosden and Donald Fairbairn, "Contextual Theological Education among Post-Soviet Protestants," *Transformation* 18 (No. 2, 2001), 125-26.
[22] Christoph Klein, "Turning to God for Renewal in Mission in Central and Eastern Europe," *International Review of Mission* 87 (No. 347, 1998), 473.
[23] Jarosław Gowin, *Kosciół w czasach wolności 1989-1999* [*The Church in Times of Freedom 1989-1999*] (Kraków: Znak, 1999), 150ff.
[24] Andrzej Seweryn, "Kościół otwartych drzwi [Church with Open Doors]," *Słowo Prawdy* No. 4 (2000), 14.
[25] Tom Sine, *Wild Hope. A Wake-up Call to the Challenges and Opportunities of the 21st Century* (Tunbridge Wells: Monarch, 1992), 207.
[26] Wlodek Tasak, "Być bogatym—ale jak? [To Be Rich—But How?]," *Slowo Prawdy* (2000), 4.
[27] Adam Cenian, "Bogactwo i ubóstwo—nasze wyzwania [Wealth and Poverty—Our Challenges]," *Słowo Prawdy* No. 5 (2000), 5-7.
[28] Nathalie Gagnere, "The Return of God and the Challenge of Democracy: The Catholic Church in Central Eastern Europe," *Journal of Church and State* 35 (No. 4, 1993), 863.

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**Wojciech Kowalewski,** *Ph.D., University of Wales, is director of Pastors2Pastors, a leadership development ministry based in Wroclaw, Poland.*

*Editor's Note: The second half of this article will be published in the next issue of the* East-West Church and Ministry Report *24 (Spring 2016).*

## Letter to the Editor

Thank you very much for this valuable material [on the impact of the Ukrainian conflict on church life: *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 23 (Summer 2015): 1-11]. I do think more effort should be made to define "harassment" of Moscow Patriarch churches in western and central Ukraine. Since congregations have the right to church buildings in Ukraine and a large exodus of believers from the Moscow Patriarchate to the Kyiv Patriarchate is underway in these regions, believers are exercising their right to religious freedom and freedom of conscience in transferring their parishes. Hence, items such as that of 5 February 2015 in which "Patriarch Kirill recounted the seizure of 18 UOMP churches in multiple regions" must be examined carefully. Generally the Moscow Patriarchate labels all transfers of its parishes [in Ukraine] as "seizures." We need to know if congregations had followed proper legal proceedings and if pro-Moscow believers and priests had refused to turn over buildings or permit joint use. Sawing off locks on a building that has legally been transferred would not be harassment, or could be viewed as the Moscow Patriarchate refusing to abide by legal transfers. Still I do not condone acts or harassment of believers and priests of the Moscow Patriarchate of violence against them. It is likely that more parishes will seek to transfer in the future, and it is very important to have a full picture of who is harassing whom and whose freedom of religion is affected. Clearly, the rights of Moscow Patriarchate believers who in many villages in Western Ukraine are now minorities must be defended. But, for example, as far as I know the Turka Church congregation had legally transferred and the resistance of the Moscow Patriarchate priest and his followers could be seen as seizure and harassment. At any rate, these data must be examined carefully and each case individually. Conflict is likely to occur because of the identification of village communities with "their" churches (and the legal situation) at a time when the Moscow Patriarchate is losing support in western and central Ukraine.

It is very important to have a full picture of who is harassing whom and whose freedom of religion is affected.

**Frank Sysyn, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Toronto**

## Obituary of Alexander Kozynko *(continued from page 16)*

oversaw the purchase of an abandoned kindergarten building which needed extensive renovation. It was a glorious occasion, 1 September 2002, when some 300 guests from around the world gathered for the dedication of the newly renovated seminary building.

Dr. Kozynko is survived by his wife, Vera, his sons Peter and Andrey, a daughter Tatiana, and their spouses and grandchildren who mourn his passing deeply. The words of Hebrews 13:7 speak eloquently of his life: "Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." So we remember our brother, Alexander Kozynko.

**Dr. Ian Chapman,** *Russian Leadership Ministries*

# Obituary – Alexei M. Bychkov (1928-2015)

Alexei M. Bychkov, who died 10 July 2015, served for two decades as general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB), the second-longest tenure of any leader in that post. With weakened voice and body following a stroke in 2011 (soon after his memoir* was published), in his final week he and his wife Zoya sang familiar hymns. His last whispered words were "Slava Bogu" (Praise God).

His life encompassed the years of state hostility to religion (1929-1989) and two challenging post-Soviet decades. Born in an Evangelical Christian Church family, converted in 1949, baptized in 1954, he was an active layman while working as a building engineer for 20 years. Having studied English, he translated material for his denomination's Bible correspondence course when it was allowed, and wrote the theology lectures.

As general secretary of the AUCECB from 1970 to 1990 Bychkov had the unenviable task of steering between state pressure on the one hand and on the other hand breakaway dissidents in the Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists who opposed denominational compromises conceded in the early 1960s. Despite being the target of criticism by unregistered dissident Baptists, Bychkov's role nevertheless gradually gained him respect, even from his opponents. In that context several eulogists' remarks were apt: Pentecostal Bishop S.V. Riakhovsky called him a "magnificent spiritual diplomat who exuded peace," and his Belarusian colleague, Alexander I. Firisiuk, summed up the Bychkov he knew as living according to two commandments of Christ – love God with everything you have, and your neighbor as yourself. The Bychkov I came to know manifested the skills of an administrator, negotiating the tricky terrain (as state persecution was gradually easing) to reach acceptable compromises.

After AUCECB restructuring in 1990 into republic-level unions under the umbrella of a Euro-Asiatic Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, with a younger Ukrainian (Grigorii Komendant) elected executive president, Bychkov remained one of three vice-presidents for several years. Even when he had been set aside, and newer leaders struggled within the constraints of smaller, impoverished national unions, he did not show disappointment or personal hurt.

For many years Bychkov held various posts with the European Baptist Federation, the Baptist World Alliance, and the World Council of Churches. He also served 16 years as vice-president of the Russian Bible Society and president (1994-2007) and chair of the board (2007-2015) of the OMS-founded Moscow Evangelical Christian Seminary.

During the years 1977-1993, as coordinator of the Russian Bible Commentary Project, I met with Bychkov and his Ukrainian colleague, the late Jakob Dukhonchenko, whenever we could. On one occasion I recall handing over a 250-page typed manuscript late in the evening after they spent all day in meetings. At breakfast the next morning before the next marathon, both men had clearly read every word and had used their blue pencils freely as we set about negotiating how best to stay true to the original texts, yet find more apt words and phrases. Their care for pastoral training, for the health of their churches was obvious.

At Bychkov's funeral, Pentecostal Bishop Riakhovsky's eulogy made reference to his union's completion of a documentary film on the life of Alexei Bychkov stressing his faith in God.

**Editor's note: The citation for the memoir is: A. M. Bychkov,* Moi zhiznennyi put'. *Moscow: Otrazhenie, 2009. 662 pp. ISBN: 978-88983-277-9.*

**Walter Sawatsky**, *emeritus professor, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

# Obituary-Alexander Kozynko (1956-2015)

Dr. Alexander Kozynko, former president of Moscow Theological Seminary of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, went to be with the Lord on 6 August 2015. He was leading a Bible study outside Moscow for the Christian Medical Association of Russia when he suffered a massive, fatal heart attack.

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Asbury University
One Macklem Drive
Wilmore, KY 40390
Tel: 859-858-2427
E-mail: emark936@gmail.com
Website: www.eastwestreport.org
Mark R. Elliott, Editor
Ray Prigodich, Book Review Editor



Dr. Kozynko's accomplishments were many. He received a master of divinity degree from the Baptist Seminary in Buckow, East Germany, and an honorary doctorate from Northern Seminary, Lombard, Illinois, USA. He worked with the Evangelical Christian-Baptist Bible Correspondence Courses, the German-based Bibel Mission, the Russian Evangelical Christian-Baptist Union, and the denomination's Central Baptist Church in Moscow. He also was a board member of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague and vice-chair of the Christian Ethics Commission of the Baptist World Alliance.

He was best known, however, as the founding president of the Evangelical Christian-Baptist's Moscow Theological Seminary, a position he held for 13 years (1993-2006). His task was daunting. The seminary, which began with 17 students meeting in the headquarters of the Russian Evangelical Christian-Baptist Union, struggled with limited resources, financial pressures, and ever-pressing faculty and library needs. Lesser leaders might have succumbed under these challenges. Dr. Kozynko, however, was a strong leader blessed with a robust faith who was determined to create as strong an evangelical seminary as myriad challenges would allow. In the late 1990s, he

 *(continued on page 15)*