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Divisions in Eastern Orthodoxy Today

Janice Broun

Recent disputes and schisms in Eastern Orthodox churches often have their origin in historically rooted disputes over proper jurisdictional boundaries between the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the Patriarch of Moscow. Communist manipulation of churches has made matters worse. From the fifteenth century, with Constantinople and the Balkans under Ottoman Muslim domination, only Muscovy among major Orthodox lands, remained independent. Styling itself as the "Third Rome," Moscow assumed the role of protector of Orthodoxy. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Ottoman Empire fragmented, allowing Balkan Orthodox churches linked with the struggle for national independence to emerge and achieve autocephaly (self-governing status). However, following World War II, Soviet imperialism brought most East European Orthodox churches back under the aegis of the Moscow Patriarchate. Today several of these churches have reasserted their independence. At the same time they struggle with church establishments corrupted by Communist infiltration, in addition to more recent alliances with neo-Communists and nationalists.

Schisms in Orthodox churches today do not involve doctrine. Nevertheless, they cause deep distress to the faithful because they fracture the unity of the church based on common faith and worship, sacramental communion, and apostolic tradition. Paradoxically, Orthodox unity in Europe is exercised in plurality through 15 autocephalous, usually national, churches. Besides the four ancient patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, the autocephalous churches include Russia, Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria, headed by patriarchs; Greece, Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Poland, Albania, and Sinai, headed by either archbishops or metropolitans; and Georgia, led by a Catholicos-Patriarch. In addition, several "autonomous" churches are self-governing in most respects but not yet fully independent, plus ecclesiastical provinces dependent upon one of the autocephalous churches. Although the Ecumenical Patriarch

Bartolemaos is honored as *primus inter pares*, first among equals, he is not the equivalent of a Catholic pope in authority. He may offer advice, but he has no power to interfere in other churches' internal affairs.

ESTONIA

Predominantly Lutheran Estonia contains a minority of 50,000 Orthodox, 30,000 of whom are Russian. The Estonian Orthodox minority represents the fruit of Orthodox missionary work during tsarist rule. In 1923 after Estonia gained its independence from Russia, an autonomous Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church emerged which, against the wishes of Russian members, placed itself under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. After Soviet occupation in 1944, the Moscow Patriarchate reasserted control, though an emigre Orthodox remnant kept a separate Estonian church alive in Sweden. The Moscow Patriarchate and Soviet authorities discriminated in favor of the Russian element in Estonia's Orthodox Church, largely through the agency, ironically, of Tallin-born Patriarch Aleksii II, bishop in Estonia from 1961 until 1986. According to retired Estonian priest August Kaljukosk, in the postwar Soviet era 42 percent of the republic's Estonian-speaking, but only 22 percent of its Russian-speaking, Orthodox parishes were closed. Of 100 ordinations, 71 were Russian-speaking priests. Anti-Estonian discrimination actually intensified in the last half of the Soviet occupation, the period in which Aleksii was in control. Today in Estonia only 17 Orthodox priests are capable of conducting services in Estonian.

After Estonia regained its independence in 1991, Estonian Orthodox activists worked to wrest control of the church from the Moscow Patriarchate. On 20 January 1996, at their request, and with Estonian government approval, Bartolemaos, in what some critics regard as presumption, unilaterally reasserted direct jurisdiction over Orthodox in Estonia, installing

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Archbishop Johannes of Finland as head of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church (EAOC). Patriarch Aleksii, backed by the highest Russian civil authorities, retaliated by suspending formal ties with Constantinople.

In reality the dispute concerned property far more than canons. The Estonian government stipulated that institutions had to register to reclaim property. It registered the EAOC but placed obstacles to recognition in the path of the pro-Moscow Orthodox Church under Archbishop Kornily of Tallin. Although 54 of the 84 Orthodox congregations in Estonia expressed support for Constantinople, two-thirds of the members favored Moscow. Ultimately, the EAOC, to stave off more serious schism, assured Russian parishes they would not be evicted. On 16 May 1996 Patriarchs Bartolemaos and Aleksii agreed to restore relations, permitting each parish to choose between Constantinople or Moscow. A major concern of the Russian Orthodox Church throughout appears to have been its fear that a successful Estonian departure might create a precedent for other separatist claims.

GEORGIA

Fears of a Moscow takeover of parishes in Abkhazia, which has a substantial Russian community, were averted by frank discussions during Aleksii's visit in the spring of 1996. Again, ecclesiastical concerns paralleled the political as Abkhazian separatists broke from Georgian control with Russian military assistance.

MOLDOVA

Most of Moldova, under Ottoman control, and later, incorporated into Romania as the province of Bessarabia, came under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch until it was annexed by Russia in 1813. Due to the Russian Revolution (1917) and Civil War (1918-21) Romania regained control of Bessarabia, and Romanian Orthodoxy formally reestablished its jurisdiction over the region in 1924. The Soviet reannexation of Bessarabia following Red Army occupation in 1944 meant another shift of Moldovan Orthodox back to the fold of the Moscow Patriarchate. Despite Moldova's secession from the Soviet Union in 1991, pro-Moscow forces have opposed reunification with Romania. To forestall a reassertion of Romanian Orthodox jurisdiction, the Moscow Patriarchate granted the church its autonomy in 1992. Nevertheless, 48 parishes, 25 priests, and one-third of Orthodox faithful consider themselves members of a reconstituted Metropolitanate of Bessarabia under the protection of Bucharest Patriarch Teoctist. The Romanian Orthodox Church anticipates

Moldova's eventual ecclesiastical, as well as linguistic, cultural, and orthographic, reintegration into Romania. Romanian Orthodoxy currently educates 80 Moldovan students at its Iasi Seminary.

For its part, the predominately Communist government of Moldova denounces the Bessarabian Metropolitanate and discriminates against it. In 1995 a Moldovan monk, Anastasie Petru, died under suspicious circumstances after receiving threats because of his affiliation with the pro-Bucharest Metropolitanate. Moldovan President Mircea Snegur, however, tacitly recognizes the Metropolitanate, and fruitful meetings between the Moscow and Bucharest Patriarchates took place in the fall of 1996 and in February 1997. Austria will be the site of additional discussions in June 1997.

BELARUS

Many Orthodox in Belarus are uneasy about the subordination of their church to the Moscow Patriarchate. They dislike Russified leadership under Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and sermons in Russian. In the spring of 1996, in line with recent mass prodemocracy demonstrations against the trend toward reintegration of Belarus into Russia, 15 of 788 Orthodox parishes in Belarus transferred their allegiance from the Moscow Patriarchate to the U.S.-based Belarusian Autocephalous Church.

FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Macedonians and Montenegrins, traditionally part of the Serbian Orthodox Church, are increasingly asserting their distinct identities against Serbian hegemony. The Macedonian Orthodox Church unilaterally declared its autocephaly in 1967, an uncanonical procedure in Orthodox tradition. Nevertheless, it had the support of Yugoslavia's Communist leader, Josef Tito, who wished to buttress Macedonian cultural consciousness against Greek and Bulgarian ethnic and territorial claims to Macedonia. This church has never been recognized by other Orthodox churches. Eventually, in July 1995, the Serbian Orthodox Church declared the Macedonian Orthodox Church schismatic, though in 1996 Serbia did concede political recognition to Macedonia. Because the Macedonian government and church enjoy cordial relations with the Vatican, Serbian Orthodox accuse Macedonian Orthodox of having sold out to Catholicism. The Serbian Orthodox Church also refuses recognition of the tiny Montenegrin Orthodox Church, created in 1993.

A major concern of the Russian Orthodox Church throughout appears to have been its fear that a successful Estonian departure might create a precedent for other separatist claims.

BULGARIA

The schism which has rent the Bulgarian Orthodox Church since 1992 resulted from an ill-advised state intervention to replace Patriarch Maksim and the Holy Synod by a Provisional Synod under Metropolitan Pimen of Nevrokop. The Union of Free Democrats (UDF) government argued that Maksim's 1971 election under the Communists was invalid. A nucleus of priests, impatient with Maksim's delays in convening a Sobor (Council) to address church reform, supported the Provisional Synod. In addition, complicating matters, the UDF had the support of Orthodox bishops who had been just as compromised by Communism as Maksim. The 90-year-old Pimen, widely regarded as unprincipled, originally had been appointed a metropolitan in 1952 as a protégé of the ruthless Interior Minister Alexander Yugov, against the wishes of the Holy Synod.

The majority of believers deplore the uncanonical nature of the schism and support Maksim, who is recognized as legitimate by other patriarchates. However, the undignified scuffles over key church properties, including the Synod headquarters and the candle factory which still provides most of the church's income, discredited both sides. The Bulgarian Socialist Party (Communist) government, which succeeded the UDF at the end of 1992, reinstated Maksim and now poses as a defender of Orthodoxy. Most of the bishops have repented and have been reinstated by Maksim. However, in July 1996 Pimen convened a Sobor which elected him patriarch. He is acknowledged only by the dubious Patriarch Filaret and his self-constituted Ukrainian Orthodox Kyiv Patriarchate. Maksim has threatened to anathematize Pimen, irrevocably severing him from the church, if he does not retract his claim. The Holy Synod has blacklisted churches supporting Pimen and many lay people, terrified of excommunication, have stopped attending them. Meanwhile, January 1997 mass protests of disastrous Socialist economic policies included participation by supporters of both patriarchs, though Pimen's rebel Synod proved more outspoken.

One former Orthodox theology professor claims that until 1990 half of Sofia Theological Academy students were working for the security services. He argues that

the schism was initiated and is being kept going by people whose aim is to destabilize the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and to provoke conflict between it and the UDF. This makes it possible to forget the Communist Party's crimes against Orthodoxy and to create a false impression that those Orthodox who support Maksim oppose democracy. The Communists seem to be the main beneficiaries. Maksim has consolidated relationships with supportive

neighboring Orthodox churches, in particular, the Greek, Serbian, and Russian Orthodox. At the same time, an anti-Catholic, anti-Western, anti-Muslim, and anti-ecumenical contagion has rapidly spread within the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

Four of the fourteen present metropolitans are generally believed to be Communist agents and a significant proportion of Orthodox theological lecturers are not believers.

ROMANIA

The Lord's Army—Oastea Domnului

The Lord's Army arose in Transylvania as a lay-centered Romanian Orthodox revival movement which stressed Bible study, evangelical sermons, and active mission. Its founder, Fr. Iosif Trifa, was accused of Protestant tendencies and defrocked in 1935. Some members left and amalgamated with the Brethren. Nevertheless, most of its half million members remained faithful to their Orthodox mother church which, however, was not prepared to defend the Lord's Army against attempted destruction by the Communists. It survived underground under leaders like the deeply-respected late Traian Dors, providing an invaluable reservoir of committed Christians who were not afraid to use every opportunity to witness. Communists did their utmost to foment divisions within the leadership.

With the coming of freedom, rehabilitation of the Army was an urgent necessity. In 1991 the Holy Synod approved its statutes, stated its conviction that it would "regain its place for good in the bosom of the church after these long and difficult years of atheist dictatorships." It rehabilitated Trifa, recognizing that his faults had been disciplinary, not doctrinal, and that he was a "model of service and sacrifice to God and neighbor." Tensions still exist within the Army, and some sectors of the Orthodox church still regard it as sectarian. Some members have joined the Eastern Rite Catholic Church, now rehabilitated after forced absorption into the Orthodox Church under Communism.

Editor's note: In the next issue of the *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT*, Janice Broun will examine Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic divisions in Russia and Ukraine. ♦

Janice Broun is a freelance journalist from Atness, Scotland.

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Post-Soviet Soil: Harvesting or Sowing?

Al Akimoff

After all the stadium crusades, school and prison outreaches, and all the thousands of hands that were raised to accept Jesus, what is there to show for it?

Some time ago I sat in a large church in Kyiv, Ukraine, listening to a visiting evangelist from America share a testimony. He told how he had been walking through the capital's main square when he noticed a large political rally in progress. He walked up to the stage and asked if he as a visiting American could speak to the crowd. They gave him the microphone and he proceeded to preach the gospel to over 2,000 people for five minutes. He asked how many wanted to accept Jesus and 2,000 hands went up. "Isn't that wonderful," he asked the congregation. There was no response. He couldn't imagine why they could not see that this was one of the greatest evangelistic miracles of all time, happening right in their own city. They, in the meantime, were looking around trying to figure out where were the hundreds of new converts that should have been in their church that morning.

In contrast, I was in Albania just weeks after the country had opened up. Youth With A Mission (YWAM) was there along with a number of other missions to conduct a first-ever joint stadium crusade. It was agreed that we would work together and abide by some strict policies that were jointly drafted. First, we would use only the Book of John for all our preaching and teaching and this would be given to the people on the first night. Altar calls would not be made. Rather, seekers would be invited to the city park the next day for further instruction from the Book of John. This was the pattern every evening and every day. After a week, people were invited to respond and were then asked to join a special class which prepared them for baptism. Fifty people came on that Saturday to a lake in the middle of Tirana to profess their new-found faith in Jesus. Many more came the next day to the very first Sunday service to hear the new believers testify. Two new churches and a YWAM Discipleship School were planted out of that outreach.

We have all witnessed good and bad efforts at evangelism these past years. Since I work with thousands of young people who are very eager in their enthusiasm for winning the lost, I am used to criticism. I must say that we try in our training to teach responsible evangelism and I personally make a very big point of discouraging our workers from giving altar calls, especially in schools and street outreaches. I can't say that I have always been successful, and zeal sometimes still prevails over cultural sensitivity.

I really have been surprised recently at the kind of criticism leveled at almost all evangelistic efforts, from the church in the East and the church in the West, levelled at Billy Graham and

The CoMission, at many famous and not-so-famous evangelists. After all, who hasn't gone to Russia or the other former Communist lands in these last years? The questions indigenous churches ask are very valid and I have to say that I agree with some of what is being voiced. After all the stadium crusades, school and prison outreaches, and all the thousands of hands that were raised to accept Jesus, what is there to show for it? How many churches were started after some of these outreaches started meetings in theaters and culture centers with hundreds of people? A number of these meetings are now down to a handful of people. And these are the small percentage that actually came to church out of all those who heard and responded.

Now that the dust is beginning to settle, we can see a little more clearly. But as we look toward the future things don't look too hopeful and there are a lot of questions as to who should have gone and what should have been done. Many are now looking at these last few years as the golden years of evangelism that are now over or coming to an end. Is the harvest over?

My question is, was it really a harvest? Let's look at the ministry of Jesus which lasted only a few years and in many ways was similar to what we are experiencing now. Jesus had a tremendous following. Thousands crowded around him wherever he went. But how much did he harvest? At his death even his disciples were not sure where they stood. The problem was in their understanding of the gospel, or misunderstanding. It was not until Jesus stood before them after his resurrection that their understanding became clear. What he had told them about the temple being destroyed and in three days being restored was finally understood. He was talking about himself, not the temple. They had thought so much in the physical realm. They sought to make of him a political figure while all along he was sharing with them a gospel that they just did not comprehend. In Russia people have also followed our lead out of curiosity, or even out of economic interests. Some were intrigued by the politics. Partially it was our fault. We gave them a very limited view of the gospel. After all, how much of the gospel can you really give in a five-minute message, or even a half-hour one. That's revivalism, not evangelism.

So did we fail; should we not have gone at all? No, I don't believe our mistake was in going. It has been our misunderstanding of our task. If we consider this the harvest, then we did badly. Jesus talked a lot about this, and he gave us some good illustrations. The best was in the picture of the sower who went out to sow. He sowed seed that

fell on different kinds of ground: rocky ground, parched ground, and birds snatched up some seed. But some fell on good ground and that produced fruit a hundredfold.

I believe that these last years were not the time of harvest but of sowing. I think of all the seed that was sown in a variety of evangelistic activities, the thousands who went into schools, prisons, and stadiums. Think of all the literature that was distributed and the Scriptures that were translated for the first time in so many of the Slavic and non-Slavic languages. Also, the message of love went forth through tons of humanitarian aid that was sent. All of that was seed that was sown. Now we can stand and question the sowers like the disciples did when they asked Jesus to stop the people who were not part of their group. Or we can judge the harvest, about which Jesus said that the tares should not be separated from the wheat, but that God in the end would be the judge.

In the end, it is the Lord of the harvest who gives the increase; we are the sowers and the waterers. The seed was sown and is still being sown. I personally believe that right now is a time to water the seed, and I admire those who have taken to this task by their long-term efforts—the church planters and those involved in training.

Years ago when it was very difficult to evangelize in the Soviet Union, we had teams working in a variety of places. One of those was Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. It was a large seaport with three or four Russian ships in port on any given day. The young Russian sailors were friendly and had nothing to do in port but shop and sit in the many cafes. We only had several days to reach out to them. Basically all we could do was share our testimonies and give them Bibles: sow the seed. Years later we got a letter from the son of a missionary in Las Palmas. He told how he had travelled to Russia and visited a church where he was asked to give greetings. He said he was from Las Palmas, at which the pastor stopped him and said, "Las Palmas! I was a young sailor and was in Las Palmas. A group of young people gave me a Bible and told me about Jesus. I read that Bible on my way back to Russia, I gave my heart to Jesus, and found a church. Today I am a pastor because of that incident in Las Palmas." This man was one of the good seeds and today he is producing a hundredfold.

In fact, as I consider the work of the last few years, what comes to my mind are the individuals that stand out. I think of the Nenets people who live in the far North, reindeer herders. There may be only three believers among them. Yet two of these have just been trained to go back as missionaries among their own people. That is good seed that will bring a hundredfold. I think of a young lady who came up to me after I spoke in a large church in Estonia. She was the daughter of a diplomat in the Kremlin. She told me how

she always wanted to sneak into a church but was afraid to. Finally, she managed to sneak in that night and came to find out how she could become a believer. Today she and her husband are studying for the ministry at a seminary. She has already produced wonderful fruit. But how much more is yet to come?

You see, the harvest has not yet happened. That is yet to come in Russia and Eastern Europe. We are yet to see the hundredfold. We often want to see our work grow by addition. God instead works by subtraction, then multiplication. Our work will be pruned, but the branches that remain will bring more fruit. Like an expectant farmer after a busy year of preparing the soil, tilling the ground, removing the rocks, and planting and watering the seed, I look forward to a season of harvest that will be unlike any other we have ever seen in history. ♦

Al Akimoff is director of Youth With A Mission Slavic Ministries, Salem, OR.

I believe that these last years were not the time of harvest but of sowing.

Religious Revival in Russia: Significant or Superficial?

Attitude Toward Religion Among Russians

observant believers	12.7%
believers (not observant)	37.3%
waverers	8.7%
indifferent	9.6%
atheists	31.8%

How often in the past 12 months have you attended church?

(Answers of self-described observant believers, 83% of whom are Russian Orthodox)

every day	3.0%
once a week	10.0%
once a month	13.0%
on religious holidays and family occasions	55.0%
hard to say	1.0%
never	18.0%

Religiosity of Russians by Gender

	men	women
observant believers	5.0%	18.0%
believers (not observant)	28.0%	44.0%
waverers	10.0%	8.0%
indifferent	14.0%	7.0%
atheists	44.0%	24.0%

Source: Susan Goodrich Lehmann, "Religious Revival in Russia: Significant or Superficial?," paper delivered at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Washington, DC, 21 October 1996. Dr. Lehmann is assistant professor of sociology, Columbia University, New York, NY. Data are derived from the June 1996 Russian Pre-Election Survey. ♦

Adventist Couple Murdered in Russian Caucasus

Mark Elliott, editor

Without any investigation or proof of guilt in committing a crime [the Gadzhiyevs were] cruelly killed and burned in the presence of a crowd.

Vigilantes in the Daghestan town of Buinaksk in the north Caucasus region of Russia beat and burned to death Gadgimurat Gadzhiyev (31) and his wife Tatiana (33) on 3-4 March 1997. Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) converts in this predominately Muslim region, they had been active members of a small church fellowship of eight.

Children have been disappearing in this region, with rumors widespread that they are being murdered for the purpose of selling their organs in the West. Twelve-year-old Shakhvazat Omarova disappeared on 25 February, and her body was discovered on 2 or 3 March. A relative of the murdered child accused the Gadzhiyevs of the murder, while local press and TV have carried the family's accusation that Adventists sacrifice children in their worship. Gadgimurat, an Afghan War veteran who converted to Adventism while serving a prison sentence, was on a police list of possible suspects. But on 3 March, before he could be questioned, the Gadzhiyevs (surname of Magomedov in some accounts) were apprehended by relatives of the slain girl, beaten, and tortured. On 4 March they were taken to the town square in Buinaksk where, before a crowd of 3,000, they were trampled and beaten. Reports differ as to whether or not the Gadzhiyevs were already dead when they were doused with gasoline and set on fire. Local TV recorded and broadcast the burning of their bodies and is reported to have aired the crowd's accusations that Adventists kidnap children. Daghestan Adventists, who insist on the innocence of the Gadzhiyevs, fear additional violence.

A number of official SDA responses in the West downplayed the idea that Adventists in Daghestan face religious persecution (9 and 14 March); and two such pronouncements puzzlingly were headed, "Daghestan Tragedy Not Linked to Church" (10 and 14 March). In contrast, Washington-based human rights lawyer Lauren Homer notes that anti-SDA statements accompanied the deaths of the Gadzhiyevs and that press and TV coverage, both locally and in other parts of Russia, included anti-SDA accusations. (E-mail from Lauren Homer to author, 24 March 1997.)

Before glasnost, Soviet authorities required officially-recognized Russian Orthodox, Evangelical Christian-Baptist, and Adventist churches to publicly disassociate themselves from their members who ran afoul of Soviet authorities. Traveling in the West, or in meetings with Western delegations, church leaders defended Soviet peace policy and denied state hostility towards religion. If believers found themselves in labor camps, their sentences were said to have been the result of their breaking the

law, not their faith. (See Kent Hill, *Soviet Union on the Brink*; Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church, A Contemporary History*; Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II*; and Marite Sapiets, *True Witness; the Story of Seventh Day Adventists in the Soviet Union*.)

Certain official Western SDA statements (9 and 10 March 1997) appear to have followed a similar, pre-glasnost pattern in downplaying the possibility that religion played a part in this case of two Adventists who ran afoul of a mob and a Muslim majority. However, other official SDA pronouncements and actions of late have identified more closely with the slain couple and have decried this gross miscarriage of justice. A 20 March bulletin from the Adventist World Headquarters approvingly noted the action of the Russian chapter of the SDA-affiliated International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA), which appealed to major Russian government leaders to insure that those guilty of the murder of the Gadzhiyevs would be brought to justice. It noted that "without any investigation or proof of guilt in committing a crime," the couple had been "cruelly killed and burned in the presence of a crowd," thereby "arousing . . . national and religious hatred and enmity." In addition, Dr. John Graz, general secretary of IRLA, in a letter to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, 1) objected to "this violation of basic human rights: the right to be judged according to the law;" 2) cautioned that state inaction might perpetuate "attitudes [which] can destroy the fundamentals of democracy, pluralism, and religious liberty;" and 3) called for a Russian Republic investigation of the murders. The Russian Duma has discussed the case and, according to *Moscow News*, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has asked the Russian Republic Prosecutor's Office to intervene in the case. However, the strong Caucasus traditions of clan loyalty and vigilante justice are hampering investigators who fear additional violence if arrests are made for the murder of the Gadzhiyevs.

In summary, it would appear to be a mistake to view the Daghestan murders exclusively as a violation of religious liberty; and it would appear to be equally a mistake to exclude religious hostility towards converts from Islam among the motivations of the mob. At present, Daghestan is considering its own law on religion which, if enacted, would contradict Russian Republic legislation by providing preferential treatment for Russian Orthodoxy and Islam.

Sources: "Slay Suspects Burn in Russia," Associated Press, 6 March 1997; "Crowd Burns Couple in Daghestan," *OMRI Daily Digest*,

12 March 1997; e-mail circular from SDA pastor, Rostov-on-Don, "Death of Seventh Day Adventists," 6 March 1997; "An Adventist Couple Lynched," French Adventist Press Service, 7 March 1997; Adventist News Network Release, 9 March 1997; Robert S. Folkenberg, "Daghestan Tragedy Not Linked to Church," SDA Forum, 10 March 1997; "Daghestan Tragedy

Not Linked to Church," *ANN Bulletin*, 14 March 1997; *ANN Bulletin* press release, 20 March 1997; Mikhail Shevelev, "Vsego: troe ubitykh [Total: Three People Killed]," *Moskovskii novosti*, 30 March - 6 April 1997, 4; e-mail from Ray Dabrowski, SDA World Headquarters communication director, to Mark Elliott, 25 April 1997; confidential communications to author. ♦

Nine Baptists Beaten by Orthodox in Romania

Otniel Bunaciu

In the village of Ruginoasa in the northeastern part of Romania called Moldova (not to be confused with the Republic of Moldova), a group of Baptist believers were meeting in a room which they had rented. Most of the Baptist believers came from a neighboring town. Local Orthodox priests Pavel, Novac, [and] Doroftei started to mention the Baptist danger in their sermons. On Sunday [30 March 1992], 700 people from the village surrounded the house used by the Baptist believers for worship. Another 150 persons came from the neighboring village carrying crosses, icons, and towels. When the nine Baptists came out from the worship service the crowd started to beat them. Among the group were women [and] a 14 year-old girl. The Orthodox Christians beat the Baptists and kicked them with their feet. Local police did not interfere. Orthodox priests did not call on their Christian believers to stop the beating. When asked by the national TV news crew, nobody in the village had seen anything, although they had heard that there was a fight.

Such events are not singular in that part of Romania although the scale of the beating is exceptional. Romania is very keen to be accepted in NATO and in the European Union. The Baptists in Romania support their country in the effort, as we think that we belong to the European family. At the same time I think that respect for human rights should be part of the standards which Romanians must accept. It is a sad comment that Orthodox believers expressed their allegiance to their faith in a celebration of violence and not of life.

How The Orthodox See It

Gynella Parfenie, writing in the Iasi, Romania, newspaper, *Monitorul*, notes that

The official viewpoint of the [Romanian Orthodox] Metropolitan Diocese is that both the Orthodox community [in Ruginoasa] and the Orthodox clergy are not guilty of what

happened there. The guilty ones are those who came in the midst of an entirely Orthodox community—there is no Baptist there—and aggressed them spiritually in their own home. They disobeyed the Constitution and trespassed common sense as well as social and Christian morality by coming and trying to proselytize.

According to Vasile Andreica, an administrative counselor at the Metropolitan Diocese,

The people have been provoked, and after that, they couldn't be mastered. They reacted violently because all other methods had been exhausted. I believe that in the given situation the attitude of the three priests was very welcome and in the spirit of Christian teaching which compels us to defend our faith. We don't see ourselves responsible, because it wasn't we who aggressed them, but they came and aggressed the community. They received an appropriate response. I don't think that the priests were intolerant, but they only exercised their obligation as spiritual shepherds. The flock has to be guarded against wolves, no matter where they come from.

To date, Metropolitan Daniel of Moldova, who has been active in the World Council of Churches and who travels frequently in the West, has given no public statement concerning the controversy.

Sources: E-mail open letter from Otniel Bunaciu, professor at the Institutul Teologic Baptist Bucuresti, 5 April 1997, shared with the Institute for East-West Christian Studies by Radu Gheorghita, Tyndale House, Cambridge University, 8 April 1997; "Official Response from the Orthodox Church," World Evangelical Fellowship Religious Liberty E-mail Conference (religious-liberty@xc.org), 10 April 1997. ♦

As the Baptists see it —

It is a sad comment that Orthodox believers expressed their allegiance to their faith in a celebration of violence and not of life.

As the Orthodox see it—

I don't think that the priests were intolerant, but they only exercised their obligation as spiritual shepherds. The flock has to be guarded against wolves, no matter where they come from.

Why is There No Russian Protestant Theology in Russia? A Personal Outcry

Alexander Negrov

In the early days of freedom, many people came to church.... Some received salvation but did not grow. There was no one to show them how to continue.

To our shame, the Russian Protestant Church remains very separate from contemporary life in our country today. We seem to care very little about politics, the economy, and even the needs of people. We are very certain that our theology is "basic and correct." But we shrink from even recognizing the role of the gospel in society. I am not saying that the final goal of the gospel is the explanation of deep theological issues or the creating of systematic theology. I think that the final goal of the gospel in Russia is to convert our people to a Christlike life. This transformation is possible only on the basis of teaching from God's Word. However, because we have not systematically organized what we believe and what we should hold as true, people who accept the good news know little about the wonderful riches of fullness of life in Christ.

A Lack of Systematic Teaching

This leads me to an overview of hindrances that impede the development of Russian Protestant theology. I will speak of four. First, there is the lack of systematic teaching in the Church. In the six or seven years since the end of outright persecution under the Communists, we have had the freedom to preach, to write, and to educate. But we have not been developing our theology. Our focus has been on the birthing of spiritual babies. In the early days of freedom, many people came to church, some with sincere interest, others out of curiosity. They came looking for answers to perplexing questions. Some received salvation, but did not grow. There was no one to show them how to continue. They were not systematically taught who God is, what He wants from us, how we can relate to Him, and what it means to be a part of the body of Christ. Many are already leaving the church today. We have never offered them solid teaching on doctrines and how to apply them in daily life. If we are to see the development of Protestant theology, we must teach our people systematically.

A Concentration on Forms, Not Beliefs

Second, we Protestants today are concentrating on forms, not on beliefs. When I discuss the development of theology in Russia, my mind immediately turns to the need for the development of sources, materials, and approaches to working with people so as to feed them efficiently. [However,] rather than proclaiming what we believe, we use what we

know to fight with each other. Unfortunately, the fight is not over the content of theology, but merely over forms of Christian expression, forms of worship, and forms of Christian service. The most important discussions we engage in tend to revolve around issues such as how we should sing, pray, or preach in the church. This is a serious problem rooted in our lack of a developed theology.

Peace at Any Price

Third, Protestants attempt to keep peace and unity at any cost. While some churches experience disunity over forms, there are churches which seem to be at peace, living without any problems. But often underneath the supposed calm is a pastor's commitment to "peace at any cost." Too often theological error is not confronted, not because the Truth is not known, but because of a fear to confront. In one church, during a night of prayer, I heard a lady who stood up to speak actually defending Universalism. She blatantly proclaimed that because God is so merciful, everyone would be saved. Rather than directly and publicly addressing her error, the pastor's public response gave his listeners the impression that he agreed with her. She was a new Christian and did not know the Truth. For the sake of "peace" and a fear of offense, error was not confronted.

The Rule of the Pastor

A fourth hindrance is a little-recognized one, rooted in our ecclesiology. In the Protestant Church in Russia today, the rule of the pastor continues to be a more decisive factor than theology. The pastor's authority is not questioned. In the Orthodox Church, on the other hand, tradition is the decisive rule. That is to say, while the Russian Orthodox Church depends upon the theology of former leaders, the Russian Protestant Church depends upon the theology of a single leader. This actually means that today's Protestant leadership in Russia has a great opportunity to influence people because within this subculture, there is deep respect for pastors. Their word is heard. But the question remains, where are the writers of our theology?

Spontaneous Versus Systematic Development

In Russia, our approach to development in any realm has always been spontaneous. It is difficult for us to think of developing something

systematic, even a systematic theology. We know so little about planning in our country. It is not part of our culture. It is reflected in our way of teaching people from the pulpit. On one Sunday there will be a message on one subject, on the next Sunday, a message on another. In another church, within one service there may be three messages which have absolutely no relationship to each other. And yet we acknowledge that our congregations need and want systematic feeding. In general, our thinking is not logically derived, as we perceive Western thought to be. We think more symbolically. Our theology is a theology of poetry and of story-telling. We neglect suggesting a theological point of view on many societal, ethical, and moral matters.

Preaching That Will Make a Difference

The challenge for theological schools which are developing in our country is to teach Russians

to preach theological messages in a systematic manner. Graduates of these schools must be prepared to revitalize doctrinal issues for Russian Christians in modern society. In Russian churches the sermon is still the most acceptable way of teaching. Few churches have adult Sunday-school classes. Therefore, the sermon is the primary vehicle for communicating Truth. Today it is still the pastor's responsibility to feed his people. If our students were taught to preach theological sermons in our churches and contextualize them for contemporary life in our country, people would not go away hungry and unsatisfied.

Excerpted from a paper that will be published in full in Religion in Eastern Europe, edited by Paul Mojzes. ♦

Alexander I. Negrov is Professor of New Testament and Exegesis at St. Petersburg Christian University, St. Petersburg, Russia.

A Success Story in Orthodox-Evangelical Relations

Report from a Western Ministry in Russia

The Lord has helped us to develop good relations with Russian Orthodox Church authorities. We have had repeated consultations with members of the bishop's cabinet, meetings held with the bishop's blessing. These have resulted in good mutual understanding and offers of cooperation at some levels. For example, we provided flannelgraph materials and training for Orthodox priests to engage in child evangelism. The bishop provided Orthodox priests as trainers to help orient our career missionaries and short-term missionaries in understanding what the Russian Orthodox Church stands for and is doing in Russia. Orthodox have also participated in a limited way in our youth programs and have offered us some of their air time on the government radio station.

How has our small, evangelical ministry developed a good relationship with the Orthodox Church and the government? In a number of ways. Perhaps most important, we have always taken the initiative to meet with the Orthodox to show respect and appreciation for the good things they are doing and to express our interest in learning from them and being cooperative. Some, perhaps many, leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church are skeptical and hostile toward foreign Protestant groups because of their fear of what we may be doing. That fear is sometimes validated by the insensitive activities of some groups and the presence of cults which lead people away from biblical truth. Our philosophy has been that what we are actually doing would be reassuring to the Orthodox, compared to what they fear we might do if they had no direct knowledge of our

activities. Therefore, we meet with them and communicate with them in person and in writing about our history, our doctrines, our current activities, and our proposed activities. We show them respect as our elder brothers in Russia by asking them for advice about Bible translations, cultural issues, and how to avoid activities which would be needlessly offensive. And we avoid proselytizing Russian Orthodox Christians, directing our ministries instead toward the vast majority of practical atheists. We do our best to stress our common ground, without compromising biblical imperatives. Secondly, every Christian ministry should make full legal registration a matter of high priority, both at the federal level with the Ministry of Justice in Moscow, and at local levels as needed. This full legal compliance can open many doors, such as property ownership, visas, and partnerships with government agencies, such as youth and education departments.

Source: letter to Mark Elliott, 7 January 1997. ♦

Russian Public Opinion Reveals More Religious Sympathy Than Religious Practice

A March–April 1996 survey of 1664 Russians by Moscow's Institute of Social Research revealed the following:

- 49% believe in God (34% in 1991)
- 6–7% attend church at least once a month
- 88% have a positive opinion of the Russian Orthodox Church
- 40% believe in magic
- 38% believe in astrology

Source: *Segodnia*, 22 May 1996.

Updated Statistics on the Protestant Missionary Presence in the Former Soviet Union

Mark Elliott

1. Since 1993 the Institute for East-West Christian Studies has identified 296 Western and Korean agencies working in the former Soviet Union and East Central Europe which were not included among the 691 groups listed in *The East-West Christian Organizations Directory*, edited by Sharon Linzey et al. (Evanston, IL: Berry Publishing, 1993). This gives a total of 987 groups in 1997.
2. **Approximately 561 ministries from abroad currently work in the former Soviet Union.** This estimate is based on 377 of the 691 groups in the 1993 *Directory* known to be working in the former Soviet Union, plus 148 (half of the 296 groups identified since 1993), plus 36 South Korean groups (9 church and 27 parachurch).¹ Roughly 90 percent of the agencies are Protestant and the remaining 10 percent are Orthodox and Catholic.
3. **Approximately 4,390 Western missionaries worked in the former Soviet Union in 1995.**²
4. **Approximately 5,049 Western missionaries worked in the former Soviet Union in 1996.**³
5. **Adding 557 South Korean missionaries gives a 1996 total of 5,606 foreign missionaries in the former Soviet Union.**⁴
6. Based on a career-to-short-term ratio of 35/65, which was the case in an Institute survey of the 25 largest sending agencies, **approximately 1,962 career missionaries from abroad currently serve in the former Soviet Union.**
7. **If the 15 republics of the former Soviet Union formed one nation today, the 5,606 Protestant missionaries working there at present would constitute the largest Protestant missionary contingent in a single country worldwide.** (No up-to-date breakdown by republics is available.) On the other hand, given a population of approximately 287 million, the present missionary presence in the former Soviet Union, per capita, is less than that in the five countries with the largest Protestant missionary contingents:

Mark Elliott, editor of the EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT, is professor of history and director of the Institute for East-West Christian Studies, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL.

Country	Protestant Missionaries ⁵	Population	Population per Missionary
Former Soviet Union	5,606	287,000,000	51,195
Brazil	3,397	146,200,000	43,038
Japan	3,015	124,760,000	41,380
Philippines	2,958	65,650,000	22,194
Kenya	2,322	29,300,000	12,618
Papua New Guinea	2,278	3,850,000	1,690

Source: Mark Elliott with Sharyl Corrado, "The Protestant Missionary Presence in the Former Soviet Union," paper prepared for the Keston Institute Conference on Proselytism and Religious Liberty, Oxford, England, 12-16 May 1997.

Notes

1. E-mail from David Lee, Global Missionary Training Center, Seoul, Korea, to Sharyl Corrado, 3 December 1996.
2. The total of 4,390 Western missionaries in the former Soviet Union in 1995 is based on 3,190 from the 25 largest agencies. SEE EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT 3 (Spring 1995), 10; 3 (Fall 1995), 3, plus 1,200 (from 300 agencies with an average of 4 each). Among the hundreds of smaller ministries, several hundred, which are engaged in such support services as publishing, broadcasting, and relief work, have either no missionaries, or no career missionaries stationed in the region. At the same time, hundreds of other smaller agencies would appear to be sponsoring an average of four missionaries each at present. The author wishes to thank Peter and Anita Deyneka of Russian Ministries for their help in arriving at this estimate.
3. In late 1996 Institute for East-West Christian Studies survey researcher Sharyl Corrado documented a 31 percent one-year increase in the number of Western denominational missionaries in the former Soviet Union, as opposed to parachurch groups, from 471 to 680 in 12 denominations (Assemblies of God, Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical Free Church, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Salvation Army, Southern Baptist Convention, United Methodist Church, and The Wesleyan Church). Since it appears that denominational momentum is just now reaching a crescendo, in comparison with parachurch groups which mobilized more quickly and may have peaked earlier, a more likely overall estimate for a 1995-96 increase in the Western missionary force in the former Soviet Union might be 15 percent, which would yield a total of 5,049 (4,390 plus 659).
4. E-mail from David Lee, Global Missionary Training Center, Seoul, Korea, to Sharyl Corrado, 3 December 1996.
5. Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 644-49; Brian Hunter, ed., *Statesman's Yearbook*, 132nd ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1996). Both the EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT survey and Johnstone's statistics used in this comparison include short-term missionaries. However, the figures are not completely comparable because the total for the former Soviet Union includes short-termers serving 3 to 24 months, whereas Johnstone includes short-termers serving 12 months or more. For a statistical table by country based on *Operation World*, see "Non-Indigenous Protestant Missionaries in Former Communist States of Eurasia," EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT 2 (Winter 1994), 5. ♦

Religion and Reconciliation in the Balkans

In June 1994 Dr. Earl A. Pope, Professor Emeritus of Lafayette College and Senior Fulbright Professor at the University of Bucharest (1992-94), organized a seminar entitled "Encounter of Religions in the Black Sea Area" at the Black Sea University, Mangalia, Romania. The seminars, initiated at the request of Dr. Mircea Malitza, former Romanian ambassador to the United States, continued in 1995 and 1996, and a 1997 session is scheduled for 6-12 July.

The objectives of the courses have included initiating dialogue among young people representing a variety of ethnic and religious communities, shattering ancient and deeply embedded caricatures of different religious traditions, developing mutual respect and trust among religious communities, and discovering new forms of cooperation, coexistence, tolerance, and understanding. Another goal of the seminar has been to develop a network of concerned religious leaders and scholars who will continue to engage in dialogue, exchange ideas, and become agents of reconciliation within their respective societies. The July 1997 seminar will focus on the religious dimensions of human rights, conflict resolution, and the critical role that churches can play as models for national ethnic reconciliation.

In 1996 there were more than 170 applicants for 80 places in the seminar. Among those accepted were university professors, doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows, social-science researchers, journalists, government officials (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and social workers, as well as clergy, religious leaders, and theological students. Participants came from Albania, Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia. On the one hand, 1996 participants agreed that the churches had tremendous potential and opportunities to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation within their respective societies. On the other hand, they were also conscious of the fact that there remained a pressing, indeed compelling, need for authentic and continuing dialogue whereby they could overcome their misunderstandings and prejudices, respect one another as equals, discover the common assumptions which they share, and be fully supportive of one another in their respective ministries. This would involve their recognition of the full meaning of human rights in a culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse society, including the sacred right of religious freedom.

Besides giving lectures and participating in panels and discussions on the peacemaking theme, participants worked together to provide food and school supplies to more than fifty of the

neediest families in Mangalia, most of whom were from the Roma (Gypsy) community living in deplorable conditions. Religious traditions represented in one or more of the seminars since 1994 have included Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Greek-Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, Muslim, Old Believer, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Reformed, and Roman Catholic.

A manifesto produced in the 1996 seminar closed with these words:

This is a kairos movement in human history. The dramatic political and social upheavals which have taken place in our countries cry out for the quality of moral leadership and guidance which the religious communities can provide in the complex and difficult process of creating transformed civil societies which promote peace and justice throughout the Black Sea Region. We are convinced that these goals cannot be achieved solely through political decisions and military power. Such objectives desperately need the united support and vision of the various faith communities with their recognition of the full meaning of human rights—including the sacred right of religious freedom.

We call upon all of our communities to respond to this urgent challenge by clearly and unmistakably demonstrating their love for God and neighbor, by being reconciled with one another, by respecting one another, and by working together in this new era with all of its perils and opportunities.

For information concerning the 1997 seminar, contact Dr. Earl A. Pope,
Department of Religion, Lafayette College
Easton, PA 18042
Tel: 610-258-2249; fax: 610-252-0370
E-mail: Popee@lafuax.lafayette.edu;

or Dr. Thomas H. Yorty
College Hill Presbyterian Church
Easton, PA 18042
Tel: 610-253-4792; fax: 610-253-5240
E-mail: CtId726@aol.com. ♦

The dramatic political and social upheavals which have taken place in our countries cry out for the quality of moral leadership and guidance which the religious communities can provide.

Violations of Religious Liberty in Uzbekistan

Mark Elliott, editor

The Uzbek government currently is in violation not only of the Helsinki agreements, but of its own law on religion.

Uzbekistan is among the 11 countries with the worst records of discrimination and persecution against Christians worldwide, according to research by Nina Shea of Freedom House (*New York Times*, 11 February 1997 editorial). While the 1992 Uzbek law on religion forbids missionary activity (Article 3, Part 1), it does grant citizens and religious organizations the right "to acquire and use religious literature in their own language" (Article 21, Part 1); "to produce, export, import, and use religious literature" (Article 21, Part 3); and "to confess any religion or to confess none" (Article 3, Part 1). Nevertheless, Uzbek authorities are increasingly violating provisions of the current Uzbek law on religion.

- ◆ After assisting tens of thousands of people, Mission of Mercy, a Christian relief agency, was forced to suspend its activities in December 1995 because of government pressure. The U.S. Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe reports Uzbek officials have threatened director Olga Avetisova with her life if she persists in her religious and charitable work.
- ◆ In June 1994 Uzbek authorities canceled the registration of the Word of Faith Church in Tashkent, one of the largest Protestant congregations in the country. Police arrested Pastor Dennis Podorozhny on 25 September 1996. For "teaching religious beliefs without a government permit," this Uzbek citizen was fined three months' salary. Continuing harassment of worshipers culminated in a second arrest of Podorozhny and the arrest of 63 other members of his congregation on 18 November 1996. All were released the same night except Podorozhny and his assistant, Lev Folkovich, who were imprisoned for 12 and 10 days each. *Compass Direct* (6 December 1996) reported that "Secret police officials in Tashkent have summoned other Christian workers in the city for interrogation, threatening them with fines, imprisonment, and even death for trying to do missionary work among the Uzbek population, who are traditional, if nominal, Muslims."
- ◆ On 25 January 1997 the Bible Society of Uzbekistan, officially registered in September 1994, received a shipment of 25,000 Uzbek New Testaments from the Russian Bible Society (the publisher) and the Turkish Bible Society (the printer). Uzbek customs officials detained, and then on 28 February, confiscated the shipment, based on a decision of the Uzbek Council of Religious Affairs that the delivery constituted missionary activity. Several unconfirmed reports have reached the *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT* that the government plans to destroy the Bibles.
- ◆ Tashkent police and KGB broke up an unregistered Full Gospel Church service on Budyonnogo Street on 2 March 1997; a second indigenous Uzbek Full Gospel congregation has also been forcibly disbanded; and a Slavic Evangelical Christian-Baptist church in Sergeli has been threatened with deregistration for permitting unregistered Korean believers use of their building.
- ◆ The trial of 20-year-old Rashid Turibayev was under way in April 1997 in the Uzbek city of Nuksus, Karakalpak region, south of the Aral Sea, for leading an "unsanctioned" Full Gospel congregation. Authorities denied the church's application for registration in December 1995, and a year later Turibayev endured a month's confinement in a psychiatric hospital. Local minister of justice F. F. Pizanov is reported to have vowed, "not a single Karakalpak church will ever get registered." Serious harassment of Protestants also is reported in the Karakalpak cities of Kungrad, Kegeili, and Karauzyak.
- ◆ Uzbekistan is a party to the Helsinki Accords, which requires signatory states to guarantee their citizens freedom of assembly and worship. The Uzbek government currently is in violation not only of the Helsinki agreements, but of its own law on religion. Two open appeals to President Islam Karimov by Uzbek Christian leaders in June 1994 and November 1996 have gone unanswered.
- ◆ Letters of concern may be faxed to Tashkent to the office of the president of Uzbekistan at 3712-39-53-04 and to the Uzbek Ministry of Justice at 3712-33-64-42.

Sources: Karen Lord, "Commission Urges Uzbekistan to Protect Religious Liberty," *CSCE Digest* 19 (December 1996), 9; Barbara G. Baker, "Imprisoned Christians Released in Uzbekistan," *Compass Direct*, 6 December 1996; E-mail from Sergei Mitin, executive director of the Uzbek Bible Society, to friends, 13 March 1997; Updates from Internet missions news group (brigada-peoples-uzbek@xc.org), 6 December 1996 and 14 April 1997; E-mail information bulletins from Christians in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1 April and 9 April 1997. ◆

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In Response to Three Views on Bribery

Dear Editor,

Having lived in Moscow and traveled within the NIS for about five years, and having been peripherally or intimately acquainted with the real-life habits of ministries here, including two represented by those interviewed [on bribery: *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT* 5 (Winter 1997), 8-11], I feel qualified to tell you that things are often not as they are presented.

Biblical proof texts aside, some things will simply not happen without someone breaking or bending the law (to the point of mutilation) in Russia. I am sometimes offended by ministries who proudly and judgmentally proclaim obedience to Caesar while hiring, encouraging, or allowing others to break the law on their behalf. What am I talking about, you may ask? Many Westerners hire services to find them quarters and make payments. Since the vast majority of landlords will only accept dollars in cash or foreign accounts, or require some sort of payment under the table, and since these monies are almost always hidden from the tax man, many God-fearing folks would be without a roof over their heads or office space if they didn't hire mercenaries to take care of the problem for them. Shame does not seem to prevent some of them from proclaiming their obedience to income tax laws while paying under the table for their apartment in obvious violation of Russian laws.

I ask the "innocents" who haven't yet had any problems needing to be solved to spare me their wisdom, and the self-righteous not to give me any silliness about innocence if someone else has acted as a mercenary on their behalf.

Russian society does not share (by and large) legalistic notions or pharasaical purity considered sacred in the West, particularly not when a good cause is in jeopardy. It judges more on the desire to do a good work and an effort to save funds for

future good work.

The best analysis, biblically and practically speaking, was that of Gregory Nichols. Your report maybe did him a disservice in highlighting his position as "A Case For Bribery," given its loaded meaning in U.S. society and the vague-to-the-point-of-irrelevance sense of the word *post-Soviet*. There ought to be 50 terms for bribery here to cover the myriad phenomena which range from indirect charity to gifts to criminal malfeasance. Theoretically speaking, is a nonrestrictive, unsupervised gift of \$15,000 to an orphanage administration via a board member, and made with the knowledge and tacit agreement of the executive, an "event unrelated to official policy"? That which we do in love to proclaim the Gospel and which is expedient toward this end is love. If Holt [International Children's Services] loved the children in Russia, no price would be too great for their rescue, whether helping them here or taking them to adoptive parents in the U.S. Harry Holt died while fulfilling God's law in Christian opposition to the U.S. government and many other petty government hacks on both sides of the Pacific. That was the legacy of the Holt family.

For ministries in Russia no law of man or God stands ahead or in the way of the salvation of his little ones of any age, in any place, at any time. I want the Church to base its actions on true love and not this artificial and damnable legalism. I want businesses to admit that they're businesses and ministries to live up to their name. I want the West to understand that the world isn't fair and there isn't a "right answer" for methodology in Russia; there's only wisdom and love for the individuals that make up this people.

Jeff Willis, administrator for an indigenous Christian print and media ministry in Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan

NEWS NOTES

Actions of the Russian Orthodox Church Council, 18-22 February 1997

- Delayed a decision on the question of the canonization of Nicholas II, executed along

with his family by the Communists in July 1918. The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad canonized Nicholas II, his wife, Alexandra, and their five children in 1981.

- Excommunicated former Metropolitan Filaret (Denisenko). Defrocked in 1992, he now is patriarch of the breakaway Ukrainian Orthodox Church—Kyiv Patriarchate. Filaret, widely known for longstanding ties to the KGB and for a morally compromised lifestyle, was a leading but unsuccessful candidate for the Moscow Patriarchate, which was filled instead by Metropolitan Alexei of Leningrad in 1991.

- Excommunicated Father Gleb Yakunin, former Soviet prisoner of conscience, human rights activist, ex-Duma deputy, and head of the Committee to Defend Freedom of Conscience. *Open Media* reported Yakunin's conviction that the move is

"revenge for his charge that senior Orthodox priests cooperated with the KGB during the Soviet era." The excommunication may also be in part a response to Yakunin's pending suit against Alexander Dvorkin and the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of Education for slander against religious cults. Yakunin has been a priest of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church—Kyiv Patriarchate since 1994.

Sources: OMRI, no. 37, 21 February 1997; *Express-Khronika*, 24 February 1997; Jim Vail, "Religious Cults Demand Day in Court," *Moscow Times*, 15 January 1997, 1-2.

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According to the recently published report, "Kui kristlik on Eestimaa?" ("How Christian is Estonia?," available in Estonian and English), Estonia, the northernmost Baltic nation, has 1,476,031 inhabitants and only 491 Christian churches.

Church attendance in the country is stagnant or declining.

Sources: *DAWN Europe* and MissionNet, a ministry of Resources International, 1 April 1997.

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RESOURCES

Ken Westerman of McAllen, TX, is to be heartily commended for producing a valuable directory of Christian videos in the languages of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, available at no

charge via e-mail. The main alphabetical listing of 98 titles in this *East European and CIS Video and Film Directory* includes category designations such as "Bible stories," "Biography," or "Easter," followed by a brief description, length, and the language(s) for each entry. A second listing groups titles by language, with acronym codes for producers. Not counting 92 entries in German and Greek, this section contains 324 multiple-language entries, including 96 in Russian, 45 in Romanian, 42 in Czech, 34 in Polish, and 1 to 18 entries each in 18 other East European languages. In addition, the directory gives information on 57 producers and distributors: 29 in the U.S., 14 in Western Europe, and 14 in East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Distributor entries usually include most of the following: name of agency; contact person; postal, web, and e-mail addresses; telephone; and fax.

Users may contact producers for catalogs with fuller video descriptions and order information. Descriptions of many videos also may be accessed at two web sites: Crown Videos (<http://www.connect.ab.ca/~crownvid/club/topten.htm>) and New Life Network (<http://www.nlnnet.com/catalog.html>). New Life Network is especially helpful because it specializes in distributing Christian videos in the languages of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. While U.S. producers of English titles typically distribute East European translations only from European locations, some do carry both PAL (used in East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union) and NTSC (used in the U.S. and Canada).

To obtain the video directory contact Mr. Ken Westerman
2200 S. 10th St., McAllen, TX 78503
Fax: 210-682-6087; e-mail: KennethWes@aol.com.
E-mail is free and a printed copy by postal mail is \$3.

Editor's note: Wil Triggs discussed the use of feature films in East European ministry in "A Picture Window on Russian and East European Life," *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT* 4 (Fall 1996), 11-12.



The global prayer guide, *Operation World*, by Patrick Johnstone, is now available in Russian for the ruble equivalent of \$8.

Contact: Pavel Damian, Bibles For Everyone,
a/ya 257, Shpalernaya ul. 60/1
196733 St. Petersburg, Russia
Tel/fax: 007-812-271-9102 and 541-8688
E-mail: bible@bible.spb.su.



The Russian Orthodox Church has launched a Russian- and English-language Internet web site (<http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru>.) The Orthodox Church in America, the New York Diocese of the Episcopal Church, and Archer Daniels Midland Company provided technical and financial support for this new information service. According to Deacon Alexander Boulekov, director of communications of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Relations, this Orthodox web site may help counter "a wave of often unobjective and deteriorated media coverage of church activities." (The role of the Russian Orthodox Church, and in particular, that of Metropolitan Kirill, head of the Department of External Relations, in large, tax-free imports of alcohol and tobacco has been under close press scrutiny in recent months. See *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT* 3 (Winter 1995), 7.) The site includes an historical essay, recent decisions of the Holy Synod, Patriarch Alexei II's schedule, church news, and extensive coverage of external church contacts. Sites for the church calendar and Orthodox Internet resources are under construction.

Sources: *REPORT* staff browsing of the site; and Andrei Zolotov, "Russian Orthodox Church Goes Online With Web Site," *St. Petersburg Times*, 31 March—6 April 1997.

Editor's note: The level of detail on current activities and the comprehensiveness of the coverage should make this a much-used site by students of religion in Russia, even recognizing that only official church positions are carried. *The St. Petersburg Times* reports that Patriarch Alexei has blessed all users of the "official server."



A 1995 dissertation from Trinity International University, Deerfield, IL, by John William McNeill examines "Western Saints in Holy Russia: Perceptions of Conversion and of Westerners Among Western Influenced Converts, Russian Church Converts, and Members of the Public in the Former USSR." The research is based on a 1994 survey of urban Russians.

Contact: UMI Dissertation Services,
300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106
Tel: 313-761-4700 or 800-521-0600
[www:http://www.umi.com](http://www.umi.com). Order #9533059.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

29-31 May 1997
Inter-Missions Women's Conference, Odessa, Ukraine
 Contact: Deborah Nichols
 A/YA 360
 Glovpachtant
 Odessa 27000, Ukraine
 Tel/fax: 011-380-482-21-88-22
 E-mail: fivecents@paco.odessa.ua

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10-13 June 1997
New Tidings in Missions, Budapest, Hungary,
 Dr. Andrew Walls, Lecturer
 Contact: Dr. Anne-Marie Kool
 Protestant Institute for Mission Studies
 Calvin tr 7. IL.
 1461 Budapest, Box 150
 Hungary
 Tel/fax: 011-36-1-216-20-54
 E-mail: 100301.301@compuserve.com

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16 June-8 August 1997
Russian Language Institute, Columbia International University, Columbia, SC
 Contact: Mr. Marc Canner
 Russian Language Ministries
 Box 213026
 Columbia, SC 29221-3026
 Tel: 803-799-0074
 Fax: 803-799-1121
 E-mail: 73354-304@compuserve.com

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30 June-2 July 1997
Religion in the Balkans, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London, England
 Contact: Nicola Mooney
 School of Slavonic and East European Studies
 University of London
 Senate House, Malet St.
 London WC1E 7HU
 England
 Tel: 0171-637-4934/38
 Fax: 0171-436-8916
 E-mail: n.mooney@ssees.ac.uk

◆◆◆

3-5 July 1997
Desktop Publishing for Magazines, Oradea, Romania
 Contact: Sharon Mumper, Director
 Eastern European Magazine Training Institute
 Postfach 33
 2502 Baden-Leesdorf
 Austria
 Tel: 43-2236-540760
 Fax: 43-2236-52390
 E-mail: 101567.2064@compuserve.com

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14-18 July 1997
Lectures on the Church in Russia, All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland. Contact: Canon Dr. Michael Bourdeaux
 Keston Institute
 4 Park Town
 Oxford OX2 6SH
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 Tel: 44-01865-311022
 Fax: 44-01865-311280
 E-mail: keston_institute@cin.co.uk

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14-25 July 1997
Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism in Dialogue, J.I. Packer and Bradley Nassif, Regent College, Vancouver, Canada.
 Contact: Coci Benson
 Admissions Office
 Regent College
 5800 University Blvd.
 Vancouver, BC V6T 2E4
 Canada

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17-20 July 1997
The CoMission Celebration, Kankakee, IL.
 Contact: Lisa Borden
 The CoMission
 1900 Rexford Rd., Suite 104
 Charlotte, NC 28211
 Tel: 704-364-8886, ext. 14
 Fax: 704-364-8538
 E-mail: 102515.2153@compuserve.com

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28 July-August 1 1997
Evangelism Explosion Training, Odessa, Ukraine
 Contact: James Stewart
 1390 N. State St.
 Jackson, MS 39202
 Tel: 601-973-9111
 Fax: 601-973-9119
 E-mail: 75213.2227@compuserve.com

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4-8 August 1997
Evangelism Explosion Training, Belgorod, Ukraine
 Contact: James Stewart
 (See above.)

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25-29 August 1997 and 3-9 September 1997
Russian Church History, Mark Elliott, Moscow
 Contact: Chuck Sunberg
 Church of the Nazarene
 Box 53
 Moscow 113452, Russia
 Tel/fax: 7095-138-4839
 E-mail: yaksun@aol.com

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29 August-3 September 1997
Training Writers for Your Publication, Osijek, Croatia
 Contact: Sharon Mumper, Director
 Eastern European Magazine Training Institute
 Postfach 33
 2502 Baden-Leesdorf
 Austria
 Tel: 43-2236-540760
 Fax: 43-2236-52390
 E-mail: 101567.2064@compuserve.com

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4-6 September 1997
Magazine Design Workshop, Osijek, Croatia. Contact: Sharon Mumper (See above.)

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17-18 October 1997
Society for the Study of Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary, Brookline, MA
 Speakers: Dr. J. I. Packer and Fr. George Dragas. Contact: Dr. Bradley Nassif
 2701 Ridgeland
 Waukegan, IL 60085
 Tel: 847-249-8350

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7-8 November 1997
Consultation on Christian Medical, Dental, and Health Ministries in the Former Soviet Union and East Central Europe, Wheaton, IL
 Contact: Sharyl Corrado
 Institute for East-West Christian Studies
 Billy Graham Center
 Wheaton College
 Wheaton, IL 60187
 Tel: 630-752-5917
 Fax: 630-752-5916
 E-mail: sharyl.m.corrado@wheaton.edu

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16 November 1997
International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, Contact: Mr. Steve Haas, U. S. Coordinator
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 Wheaton, IL 60189
 Tel: 630-668-1754
 Tel. for ordering resource material: 1-888-538-7772
 Fax: 630-668-0498
 E-mail: stevehaas@xc.org

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20-23 November 1997
National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Seattle, WA
 Contact: Wendy Walker, Convention Coordinator
 American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies
 8 Story St.
 Cambridge, MA 02138
 Tel: 617-495-0677
 Fax: 617-495-0680
 E-mail: aaass@hcs.harvard.edu

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30 June-3 July 1998
Evolving Conceptions of a Role for Lay Believers in the Christian East and West, University of Leeds, England
 Contact: Dr. Jonathan Sutton
 Centre for Russian, Eurasian and Central European Studies
 University of Leeds
 Leeds LS2 9JT, England
 Tel: 113-233-3293
 Fax: 113-233-3287
 E-mail: trsjfs@arts-01.novell.leeds.ac.uk

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Albania's Crisis: More Spiritual Than Economic

Frederica Mathewes-Green

"Madness," writes the Rev. Luke Veronis in one of his daily e-mail messages from his besieged apartment in Tirana, Albania. "It is as if the entire country has gone crazy. I want to think that things are slowly getting back to normal, but I am fooling myself." Veronis, an Orthodox priest, grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, but since his ordination he and his wife Faith have served as missionaries in the ravaged country of Albania. Forty-five years of Communism have left their mark, and some of the madness he sees predates the unrest of the last few weeks.

"We walk into a decrepit military hospital," he writes. "Dirt lies everywhere. Plaster falling from the walls. Windows and doors broken. Beds rusty. Mattresses with half the foam in them. Medical attendants, doctors, nurses, and visitors smoking everywhere. Surgeons even smoke in the operating room."

Into this setting are brought people with the most senseless of injuries—bullets that had been fired into the air and came down to land in flesh. "Eda, a seven-year-old girl, has a bullet in her stomach. Six days ago she was playing in the garden outside her home, and a bullet that had been shot up in the air came down and hit her. She has been with the bullet inside for six days, and only today are they going to operate." In nearby beds are Valbona, 16, with a bullet in her back; Figeri, 35, with a bullet in his side; Shpend, 54, bullet in his shoulder. The list goes on. "Most of the people we visited were injured by chance, for no reason at all. Madness everywhere!"

Not all of the damage has been unintentional, though it is still senseless. The second-largest

library in the country, at the University of Agriculture, was burned, and the laboratories and computer rooms were destroyed. The orphanage at Korca was raided and "bandits stole everything, including the beds, and then ransacked the place." Machine guns could be bought on the street for \$20 or exchanged for food. Most of the country's jails have been destroyed and the prisoners have escaped. Most courthouses have been damaged and judicial files burned.

Albanian [Orthodox] Archbishop Anastasios recently appeared on local TV news broadcasts to deliver an appeal. He spoke to those who plunder orphanages and churches, who hurt the elderly and the innocent. "Enough! This hysteria must stop!" he said. "It is unheard of for someone to protest against an injustice that was done to him by some in power, by doing injustice to others who are even weaker than he." Unfortunately, though it is terribly wrong, it is not unheard of. Meaningless violence and unfocused revenge are all too familiar elements of human cruelty.

The present troubles in Albania have deep roots. Archbishop Anastasios believes 45 years of Communism "destroyed private initiative and cultivated hypocrisy and opportunism." And then, during the brief democratic era after the fall of Communism, the deceptive lure of making easy money spread throughout the populace. "Now that the people see the fraud, they are waking up from their sleep and they are driven to the other extreme: a destructive rage presented as protest," says Archbishop Anastasios.

It's not just a monetary or civil crisis, however, but a spiritual one. "It is within us," Veronis writes. "Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn once said that the [dividing] line of good and evil does not run between countries or ethnicities, but through the heart of each person. Thus, the answer here is not simply the change of a political system, but a radical change of people's hearts."

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Frederica Mathewes-Green is a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church. She is the author of Facing East: A Pilgrim's Journey into the Mysteries of Orthodoxy (Harper Collins) and a frequent contributor to Christianity Today.

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