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New Restrictive Law on Religion in Russia

Mark Elliott

Key Provisions

President Yeltsin signed a new law on religion restricting the activity of non-Orthodox groups and missionaries on 26 September 1997. The language of the controversial legislation is somewhat revised, but not substantively different from the draft he rejected 23 July. On 19 September the Russian Duma approved the bill, "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations," by a vote of 358 to 6. And on 24 September the upper house of the Russian legislature, the Federation Council, voted its unanimous approval, 137 to 0.

If implemented and enforced as written it will establish a two-tier approach to state treatment of religious bodies. A privileged few "traditional" religions will be designated as "religious organizations." In contrast, less-favored "religious groups" will face major impediments to free exercise of religious rights. Fifteen years of state registration on good behavior is required before a "religious group" can aspire to become a "religious organization." The law, if enforced as written, will deny less-favored, second-tier "religious groups": 1) the right to operate educational institutions; 2) the right to publish or distribute literature; 3) the right to invite foreign guests to Russia; 4) the right of church access to Russian schools, hospitals, orphanages, and prisons; 5) the right to tax exemptions; and 6) the right of exemption from military service for clergy and clergy candidates.

Also troubling for non-Orthodox groups are the broad provisions for state prohibition of unwanted religious bodies. These grounds for banning, which are readily subject to arbitrary interpretation, include: a) "igniting social, racial, national, or religious dissension;" b) "the infliction of damage . . . on the mortality or health of citizens;" and c) "the performing of depraved or other disorderly actions."

The Russian Orthodox Church, Communists, and nationalists have pressed hard for this legislation, while Catholics, Protestants, Old Believers, and Orthodox not under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate have opposed it.

What Is the Forecast?

1. It was unclear at press time how seriously the expatriate missionary community would be affected. But in one strongly Communist provincial city a missionary was told by local officials just prior to the vote that if the law passed his family would have 24 hours to leave the country. If the new law is implemented and enforced as written it could lead to the largest expulsion of missionaries from a single country since China after 1949.
2. If implemented as written the new law will require an enormous enforcement bureaucracy and will make religion subject to Soviet-style regulation; in fact, religion could become the most regulated aspect of Russian life.
3. Since Russian administrative practice has always been more important than Russian law, enforcement will almost certainly be uneven—more repressive even than the new national legislation in some cases, and perhaps less repressive towards some Evangelical groups where pragmatic local officials may see a benefit in Protestant compassionate ministries. Also, long-standing arbitrariness in law enforcement will give local officials greater opportunities to demand bribes.
4. Basically 10 years of remarkable opportunities (1988-97) have created enough of an expanded Evangelical infrastructure that many Russian Protestants should be able to weather the coming storm. It is worth remembering that Christian growth in China soared after the missionary exodus.
5. If the new law is enforced as written, the 14 other former Soviet republics, with 25 million Russians, will probably assume greater importance: a) Western ministries may become more involved in reaching those 25 million; b) Western ministries may make use of some of the other 14 republics as forward bases for whatever short-term work can be done in Russia; and c) training Russians in the "near abroad" for service in Russia could become significant, assuming new Russian Protestant

(continued on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

Commentary on
Russian Religion Law
PAGES 3-5

What Percentage
of Russians Are
Practicing Christians?
PAGES 5-6

Practically Speaking
PAGE 6

Orthodox and
Eastern-Rite Catholic
Conflicts PAGES 7-9

Publishing Without
Perishing
PAGES 10-12

Resources PAGE 13

News Notes
PAGE 14

Calendar of Events
PAGE 15

Clinically Depressed
Nations PAGE 16

seminaries are closed or crippled.

6. If the new law is rigorously enforced, the political advantages enjoyed by Orthodoxy in the short run will most likely prove debilitating

in the long term because eliminating or radically curtailing non-Orthodox confessions will drastically reduce the possibility of Orthodox internal reform, which is sorely needed. (Throughout history, state-favored churches have consistently lost their spiritual vitality.) ♦

Mark Elliott is editor of the EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT.

Human Rights Lawyer Criticizes New Russian Religion Law

Lauren B. Homer

Despite President Boris Yeltsin's courageous veto of the original parliamentary legislation [on religion] adopted in July, he agreed on 4 September 1997 to a "compromise" that retained many points of concern. The version passed by the Duma and Federation Council on 19 and 24 September and signed by Yeltsin on 26 September is virtually identical to that passed in July—and in some ways, it is more restrictive. The law, which will take effect upon official Russian government publication in *Rossiskaya gazeta*, will validate the charters of currently registered religious organizations only to the extent that they comply with the new legislation. The new law raises grave concerns about the future of religious freedom in Russia.

Duma Secretiveness and Disregard for Procedure

The Duma Committee on Public Associations and Religious Organizations, which has been considering the legislation, met in great secrecy and canceled a public meeting scheduled for the morning of 17 September to allow religious leaders to comment on the legislation. However, late on 17 September, it met secretly and abruptly approved the current version. Appeals from the Vice Chair of the Committee, Valery Borshchov, to delay the vote so that deputies could review the text and address protests from religious leaders in Russia were disregarded. The reason for haste is obvious. On a daily basis, leaders of Russian religious organizations, some of whom had been misled into stating that they favored the legislation in early September, had denounced the law and asked for reconsideration. For example, Keston News Service reported earlier on 17 September that leaders of Roman Catholic, Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptist, Pentecostal, Adventist, and Muslim organizations in Russia had spoken out against the law, and even stated that their prior support for the compromise version had been a result of being misled about its contents. Also, adverse

international reaction was building to the latest version. Its proponents doubtless felt that their best chance of passage was an immediate vote before public opposition had an opportunity to crystallize further.

A Fuzzy Fifteen-Year Rule

The most controversial provision of the July version remains in the law—the "fifteen-year rule"—depriving religious organizations that have "existed" for less than 15 years of most rights. There remains some ambiguity about what is meant by proof of "existence" for 15 years. Some organizations have been privately assured that the fact that their faiths existed and owned church property prior to the 1917 Russian Revolution would be considered proof of existence for more than 15 years, even if they had no open churches 15 years ago. If "existence" only means having engaged in religious activity in Russia at any time prior to 1982, many historic Russian minority faiths will be able to exercise full legal rights. However, this optimistic interpretation is at odds with many public statements of draftsmen and the entire tenor of the legislation.

In a slight improvement over the July version, "newer" currently registered organizations can reregister. However, they must continue to reapply for registration on an annual basis until the 15-year time period has elapsed—an exercise guaranteed to exhaust the resources of most organizations. Foreigners and other noncitizens must recruit Russian founders of their organizations or form unregistered religious "groups". There has already been a threat from Ukraine to ban the Russian Orthodox Church, Moscow Patriarchate, if Ukrainian citizens living on the territory of Russia are denied the right to set up their own Ukrainian Orthodox churches.

Implementation and Implications

Our assessment is that, following the final adoption of the new Russian law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations," there

The law may drive many foreign missionaries and newer religious movements out of Russia, but it will not create greater respect for the Orthodox Church

will be swift implementation by local authorities, additional restrictive legislation in the tax and mass media areas, and extralegal actions by local police forces, eager to show their willingness to enforce these laws. It is staggering to imagine local governments or even the Russian Ministry of Justice attempting to deal with reregistration of over 14,000 religious organizations by 31 December 1999, with annual reregistration of most of the organizations.

Clearly, there are legal solutions to the crisis to be faced by many groups—creation of new umbrella organizations and denominations based on local and national churches that existed during the Soviet period. One recent legal challenge to a repressive local ordinance was successful (Udmyrtia), and it may be that the Russian courts are the best place to continue this fight.

During the last two months, the Moscow Patriarchate has reiterated its belief that Russia is its own “canonical territory” and that “proselytizing” by other Christian faiths must be stopped, while simultaneously claiming that the law is equal in its impact on all faiths. The law may drive many foreign missionaries and newer religious movements out of Russia, but it will not create greater respect for the Orthodox Church, provide moral or spiritual guidance for the masses who pursue self-interest rather than faith, or heal the incalculable damage caused by 75 years of state-imposed atheism. ♦

Lauren B. Homer is president of Law and Liberty Trust.

The 1997 Russian Law on Religion: A Timeline

10 July 1996	Duma voted approval of new law on religion, 376 to 3 (first reading)
6 June 1997	Much more restrictive draft approved by Duma religion committee in closed-door session
18 June	Duma approved restrictive law on religion, 337 to 5 (second reading)
23 June	Duma passed law, “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association,” 300 to 8 (third reading)
4 July	Federation Council approved new law, 112 to 4
22 July	President Yeltsin rejected new law and returned it to Duma for revision
4 September	President Yeltsin expressed approval for a revised draft law on religion negotiated by Duma and presidential staff. However, this “compromise” bill was substantively the same as the bill previously rejected by Yeltsin.
17 September	Duma religion committee met secretly to approve the “compromise” bill
19 September	Duma approved new law on religion, 358 to 6
24 September	Federation Council approved new law unanimously, 137 to 0
26 September	President Yeltsin signed new law, which superseded the October 1990 law on religion
1 October	New law published and took effect

Excerpted with permission from “Law and Liberty Alert: Duma Adopts Revised Legislation on Religious Freedom in Russia,” a 14-page critique available from Law and Liberty Trust, 333 Maple Ave. East, #1085, Vienna, VA 22180; tel: 703-319-3646; fax: 703-319-3625; e-mail: 75050.3251@compuserve.com. Donations are welcome.

Commentary on the New Russian Law on Religion

Favorable

We consider that the activity of foreign sects and false missions, who today have come to Rus, should be restricted. Why should people who influence the ideological consciousness and try to educate other people carry on their activity without accreditation? I consider that the adoption of this law will restrict the foreign false missionaries and destructive sects which have inundated Rus. They are something of an eastward expansion and you may perhaps draw parallels with NATO’s expansion in the East.

Patriarch Alexis II, ITAR-TASS/Pravoslavie v Rossii, 2 September 1997; Reuters, 23 June 1997

The legislation provides for an opportunity to bring order in the activity of many new religious trends unknown in Russia and of an enormous number of missionaries and persons coming from all parts of the world and claiming to be religious ministers. The notion of traditional religion exists in most countries whose commitment to democratic standards is doubtless. Such countries as Finland, Greece, Iceland, Egypt,

(continued on page 4)

Unfavorable

As an Orthodox priest and a friend to Evangelicals, please allow me to express my personal regret that the Orthodox Church in Russia has cooperated in the passage of a law which so threatens the many who have been the instruments of the Gospel in Russia. Although it is perhaps not an intended function of mainstream Evangelical missionaries in Russia, there are many young Orthodox who were introduced to the Gospel by Evangelicals, and who then returned to the Church of their forebears to live out and deepen their commitment to that Gospel. On their behalf, I thank you in Christ’s name.

I also fully support freedom of conscience and religious commitment on its own grounds. There have been many abuses of that freedom in Russia. Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and China [place] restrictions on missionaries even more severe than those Russia has enacted. These often less deplored restrictions, however, constitute no apology for this regrettable law. Abuses of freedom are no excuse for its willful elimination.

Fr. Anthony Ugolnik, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA, 21 September

(continued on page 4)

Favorable (continued from page 3)

[and] Denmark have state religions; Ireland recognizes a special place of the Catholic Church, while England, the Protestant Church of England. There are many such examples. In Italy the state has concluded a special agreement with the Roman Catholic Church. In the USA the activity of various religious structures is rigidly regulated by the taxation laws. In order to obtain privileges making it possible to carry out its everyday church work, it is necessary to go through serious state screening and fill in a special questionnaire. As a result of such screening, religious groups are granted different kinds of status.

Fr. Alexander Boulekov, Communication Director, Moscow Patriarchate Department of External Church Relations, Trud (Labor), 4 July

Why is not anyone upset that a number of countries declare themselves Catholic countries, but we are frightened that the law's preamble simply points out the historic role and value of Orthodoxy in Russia?

Metropolitan Kirill, Director, Moscow Patriarchate Department of External Church Relations, Nezavisimaia gazeta, 13 August

The law protects the traditional Russian religion, Orthodoxy, so we believe it undoubtedly must be adopted. It creates a barrier for totalitarian sects and limits the activity of foreign missionaries.

Viktor Zorkaltsev, Chairman, Duma Committee for Religion and Public Organizations, Associated Press, 19 September

The Kremlin considers that "Western critics" have no basis to speak out negatively regarding the new version of the draft law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations." Press secretary of the president of the Russian federation Sergei Yastrzhembsky declared: "Nevertheless, for us the chief matter is not the reaction of Western critics; for us it is more important to secure freedom of religious profession and the equality of confessions in accordance with the Russian constitution." In Yastrzhembsky's opinion, there always "were, are, and will be" critics, but that does not mean that "we should give attention to every peep from abroad."

ITAR-TASS/Pravoslavie v Rossii, 10 September

Jonathan Jennings, official representative of the synod of the state Anglican church of Great Britain, called the adoption of the law On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations "a triumph of the forces of democracy in Russia. For the Anglican church it constitutes great satisfaction to learn that believers of Russia will be able to possess the freedom to lift their prayers to the Lord each in his own way and in his personal spirit."

RIA-NOVOSTI/Pravoslavie v Rossii, 22 September

I actually don't have much problem with the law. If Mother Russia wants to preserve its Orthodox Christian heritage and not go the godless way of the West, this makes sense to me.

Dr. Ashley Woodiwiss, Department of Political Science, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL, 19 September

Unfavorable (continued from page 3)

As before, there are points which provide for the interference of the state in the affairs of religion and which contradict the Russian constitution. The Convention on Defense of Rights and Basic Freedoms of the Council of Europe has not been ratified, but soon will be delivered to the Duma for ratification. The ratification of this document is the prerequisite for Russia's membership in the Council of Europe. This September law [on religion] violates many provisions of this convention.

Galina Starovoitova, Russian Duma Deputy; Vice President, Russian Chamber on Human Rights, 18 September

"Yeltsin basically caved in" to pressures from the Orthodox Church, commented Diederik Lohman, director of the Moscow office of Human Rights Watch/Helsinki. The draft law is "grossly discriminating," he said, and is destined to be condemned by the Council of Europe. The council last year extended membership to Russia on the condition that it bring laws and practices on human rights issues into conformity with Western standards.

Carol J. Williams, Los Angeles Times, 20 September

The fundamental violations of the Constitution which you yourself pointed out in rejecting the [July] law have not been removed from the new bill. The new bill, like the previous one, still contains a series of discriminatory provisions which contradict the Constitution of the Russian Federation and generally accepted norms of international law. The new bill's differentiation of religious associations would establish by statute the inequality of religious associations before the law. We expressed our support of the work of the negotiating group after being assured that our proposals would be taken into account in the writing of the bill's final text. But that did not happen. You also were misled into supposing that the new amendments to the bill had been agreed to and approved by "the representatives of the various religious confessions."

Open Letter to President Yeltsin signed by Adventist, Catholic, and Pentecostal Leaders, 11 September

Xenophobia is once again rearing its ugly head in Russia: As in tsarist days, religion fuses with statehood and nationalism to thwart democracy and civil rights.

Richard Pipes, Professor of History, Harvard University, IntellectualCapital.com, 7 August

This latest version [the September law] makes it unmistakably clear that religious bodies which were not willing to make the compromises necessary to receive state registration from the Soviet regime before the end of the Brezhnev era cannot enjoy full legal rights today. The utterly unacceptable, core concept of the July bill—its invidious distinction between first-class "religious organizations" and second-class "religious groups"—remains fully intact. It's so close to being identical that it's hard to believe the president who proposed this bill is the same man who wrote the veto message of July. Virtually every one of the objections Yeltsin made in July is still valid.

Lawrence A. Uzzell, Keston News Service, 4 September, and Washington Post, 20 September

There are some very strange games being played. People like Loginov [of President Yeltsin's staff] are like children

Unfavorable (continued from page 4)

telling one tale to one friend and an opposite one to another. Do they really think that we [in the West] are blind to what they are telling and promising their own countrymen when they tell our leaders that nothing will change as a result of the law?

Lauren B. Homer, Law and Liberty Trust, 22 September

If today the Russian Federation aspired to be recognized as a democratic state, it does not have the right to declare the priority of religious confession or even some religious organizations over others. The law itself is permeated by the idea that those religious organizations which have been left to us from the communist inheritance, be they Islamic or Christian, are unable in the current democratic conditions to compete with newly created organizations because of their own weakness and because of their dependence on the state structure.

Nafigulla Ashirov, President, Supreme Coordination Center of the Ecclesiastical Board of Muslims of Russia, 18 September

The Holy See unites with those who have regretted this step [the new law], which certainly does not represent progress on the path to religious coexistence in that great Nation [Russia].

Mgr. Mario Zenari, Permanent Representative of the Roman Catholic Church to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 25 September

The law is really not a law. It is a collection of contradictory paragraphs in which the aspirations of various forces can be identified. What depresses me most of all is that in our Duma there are 450 people, the flower of society, who are ready to surrender their own authority and to vote for a law which our children will ridicule.

Yury Sipko, Vice President, Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the Russian Federation, 18 September

What Percentage of Russians Are Practicing Christians?

Mark Elliott

Anatoly Rudenko, president of the Russian Bible Society, in an interview with the editor of the *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT*, 6 June 1997, maintained that the number of practicing Christians of all confessions in Russia today is no more than two percent, and probably closer to one percent. If this is the case, Russia has far fewer believers than is generally assumed. In contrast to Rudenko's estimate of 1.7 to 3.3 million practicing Christians, Russian Orthodoxy alone routinely claims 50 to 60 million faithful (33 to 40 percent of the population).

Mr. Rudenko's argument is based on Russian Bible Society market research and the following observations. The city of Moscow, by all accounts, has a more extensive church life than any other region of Russia. Yet, the Bible Society president calculates that the portion of the capital's population regularly in church is approximately one to one-and-one-half percent. He arrives at his estimate in the following way:

1. The city of Moscow has approximately 240 functioning Russian Orthodox churches, most with small congregations, with 20 to 50 people worshipping on a given Sunday. On the other hand, a very few parishes, such as the Church of Sts. Cosmos and Damian, led by Fr. Alexander Borisov, have active congregations of several thousand. To be generous, assuming an average of 400 attendance per parish, Moscow would have 90,000 active Russian Orthodox believers. The Ministry of the Interior reported a total of approximately 120,000 worshipers in Orthodox churches in Moscow for 1997 Easter services, down from

some 165,000 in 1996. These figures would be the maximum for any liturgy in the church calendar.

2. Moscow now has approximately 120 Protestant congregations, though no more than a handful own their own property. Their average attendance is 20 to 50 adults, with a few congregations numbering in the hundreds being the exceptions. Assuming 120 congregations with an average of 50 members each, would equal 6,000 adults in attendance weekly. Being especially generous in estimating children would produce, at most, a total of 20,000 Protestants regularly in worship in Moscow.
3. Only a few hundred faithful worship in the handful of Catholic churches in the capital on an average Sunday.
4. Moscow's official population is 10 million, but Rudenko estimates at least two to three million additional people reside in the capital illegally.
5. If Moscow, with a population of approximately 12 million, has 110,300 believers in worship in all churches on a given Sunday, and if regular church attendance is accepted as the measure for practicing Christians, then the practicing Christian population of the capital is nearly one percent.
6. If the definition for an active Christian population is expanded so as to define active Christians as those who attend worship at least 50 percent of the time, then the figure would increase to approximately two percent of Moscow's population.
7. Since other regions of Russia are considered to

In contrast to Rudenko's estimate of 1.7 to 3.3 million practicing Christians, Russian Orthodoxy alone routinely claims 50 to 60 million faithful (33 to 40 percent of the population).

(continued on page 6)

have, on average, a much less vibrant religious life than Moscow, two percent (3.3 million) would be a maximum estimate for the total practicing Christian population of the Russian Republic.

The disparity between Rudenko's estimate and the dramatically larger figures normally cited may be explained, in large part, by divergent understandings of what constitutes a believer.

For example, research by Dimitri Furman reported in *Izvestiia* revealed that 50 percent of Russians surveyed identified themselves as believers, but less than two percent of these respondents attended church regularly, prayed, or believed in God as a personality. Furthermore, six times more respondents said they attend church regularly than do in reality. ♦

More to the Point

1. "Whereas in Poland, 83 percent of those surveyed claim to attend divine liturgy or prayer services at least once a month, only 20 percent in Ukraine, and 7 percent in Russia claim to do so" (Liudyna i Svit, April 1997, quoted in *Ukrainian Weekly*, 24 August 1997, 5).
2. A March-April 1996 survey of 1664 Russians by Moscow's Institute of Social Research revealed that 49 percent of respondents believed in God, but only 6 to 7 percent attended church at least once a month (*Segodnia*, 22 May 1996).
3. A 1996 Russian Academy of Sciences survey conducted with the assistance of Finnish scholars revealed that positive attitudes towards religion are widespread among Russians (88 percent of those questioned). "Many say they believe in God. However, this faith in God has no contents." Only 20 percent of respondents who affirmed belief in God "believe in the resurrection of the dead," while 41 percent believe in astrology. "Only 7 percent attend church regularly (once a month) and even fewer pray regularly—only 4 percent" (Kimmo Kaariainen and Dmitry Furman, "Believers, Atheists, and Others (Evolution of Russian Religiosity)," *Voprosy filosofii* (no. 6, 1997), quoted in Oleg Kuriyazev, "Traditional Believers are Becoming Fewer," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 25 September 1997).
4. A June 1996 Russian pre-election poll indicated that believers (50 percent of respondents) were far more often nonobservant (37.3 percent) than observant (12.7 percent). And corporate worship was strikingly erratic even among self-described observant believers: 10 percent answered once a week; 13 percent answered once a month; and 55 percent of self-described observant believers answered on religious holidays and on family occasions. Of the 50 percent of respondents who identified themselves as believers, 83 percent considered themselves to be Orthodox (Susan Goodrich Lehmann, "Religious Revival in Russia: Significant or Superficial?," paper presented at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Washington DC, 21 October 1996).
5. Information derived from the author's recent visit to Volgograd (September 1997) and a missionary communication from Irkutsk (December 1996) suggest that well under one percent of the population of these cities is in any Christian church on an average Sunday.
6. Fr. Mikhail Makeyev, a priest of the Russian Orthodox Free Church, believes that "Russia has gone through an irreversible process. It's no longer an Orthodox country, only a small fraction of Russians are now consciously Orthodox" (Keston News Service, 26 June 1997). ♦

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

The Orthodox Church in America website (<http://www.oca.org>) includes material on Orthodoxy in East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, including the *OCA Newsletter*, *Syndesmos Orthodox Press Service*, and an OCA-produced summary of "Orthodox and Ecumenical News." The website also offers a directory of OCA parishes, institutions, and monasteries. Source: *The Orthodox Church* 33 (May/June 1997), 12.



Missionary Aviation Fellowship provides technical support for "The Gathering," a computer-based information bulletin board for missionaries in Russia "to promote fellowship, communication, and networking among expatriate mission organizations working in Russia and Russian national churches." To send a message, write to gathering@xc.org.



The World Evangelical Fellowship Religious Liberty E-mail Conference is a closed and moderated conference sharing information on the state of religious liberty worldwide. The WEF Religious Liberty Commission website is: www.xc.org/wefintro/. For information on subscribing, contact Mr. Brian O'Connell at BrianOConnell@xc.org. Include address, agency affiliation (if any), phone, and fax.



Russia now requires permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to secure a business visa for Moscow or the Moscow region. This permission is obtained by the sponsor in Russia. When issued, it can be faxed to the individual who is applying for a business visa.

Source: *Perry International Newsletter*, April 1997.



Jurisdictional Conflicts Among Orthodox and Eastern-Rite Catholics in Russia and Ukraine

Janice Broun

Jurisdictions in Conflict with the Moscow Patriarchate

About 40 parishes in Russia and russified regions of Ukraine, dissatisfied with the Moscow Patriarchate, have joined the True Russian Orthodox Church (TROC), formally established in May 1990—in some cases entering the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA), which now has three diocesan bishops in Russia. ROCA, originally founded by emigres in Yugoslavia in 1923, has its headquarters in New York. It is implacably opposed to the Moscow Patriarchate, which, it alleges, sold out to Communism and is “weaponless in the war for men’s souls.” Church historian Sabrina Ramet, however, emphasizes that the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCA have much in common; both are characterized by extreme ecclesiastical nationalism and theological and liturgical conservatism. ROCA, which idolizes the prerevolutionary Orthodox Church and the autocratic tsars, canonized Tsar Nicholas II in 1982, a politically charged move, which, in the face of considerable internal pressure, the Moscow Patriarch managed to avoid in February 1997.

Despite the above, True Orthodox, led by Bishop Valentin of Suzdal, now consider the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad too ecumenical. Its members have emerged from the catacombs—bishops and priests, as well as simple lay people, such as the 40 families in Starya Tishanka village who have maintained their worship deprived of priests for 60 years. Because of their steadfast refusal to have anything to do with the government, to join collective farms, to pay taxes, to carry passports, or to answer questions under investigation, they suffered appallingly in Soviet labor camps and are still marginalized. True Orthodoxy, which now numbers some 100 parishes, presents itself as the only pure, untainted Orthodox Church and is often extremely nationalistic. Most members boycotted the 1996 presidential elections in protest over state partiality toward the Moscow Patriarchate.

Although in 1996 True Orthodox at long last received official recognition from the Ministry of Justice, it finds itself blocked by the Moscow Patriarchate, which appears to consider the True Orthodox a genuine threat to its authority. True Orthodox representative Father Alexander Sergiev maintains that the majority of its believers can hardly leave the catacombs: True Orthodox unsuccessfully petitioned Yeltsin and Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov for four churches or church sites in Moscow. Luzhkov even refused them two empty churches donated by Old

Believers. In desperation, clergy appealed in 1996 to join the jurisdictions of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Estonian Orthodox Apostolic Church, both of which were sympathetic.

Meanwhile, the Russian Ministry of the Interior in October 1996 branded True Orthodoxy as an antisocial group posing a danger to citizens’ moral, physical, and psychological health. Presumably because of its past ties with the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, it also is grouped with foreign religious sects. Russian security services regularly harass True Orthodox. TROC Bishop Amvrosi holds the security organs responsible for threats on his life and for the murder of three TROC bishops and five other members in recent years.

According to Dr. Larisa Skuratovskaya, 98 additional parishes have left the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate to form the Russian Orthodox Free Church (ROFC). The 1997 Law on Religion, which severely restricts religious groups which were not registered by the Soviet authorities in 1982, threatens the very existence of breakaway Orthodox churches. Fr. Mikhail Makeyev, a priest of the Russian Orthodox Free Church’s only Moscow parish, fears that he may lose the lease to a worship site and may be forced to meet in members’ flats.

Old Believers, who objected to changes in the liturgy accepted by a Russian Orthodox Church council and the tsar in 1666-67, also pose a challenge to the Moscow Patriarchate. Though they legitimately can claim to be more “Russian” and “traditional” than the Russian Orthodox Church, they nevertheless suffer discrimination at the hands of officials unwilling to risk antagonizing the Moscow Patriarchate. With perhaps 250 parishes in 43 provinces, Old Believers have opposed changes in the 1990 law on religion partly because, with a presence in less than half of Russian provinces, they stand to lose their “all-Russian” status under the 1997 law. In recent years the Moscow Patriarchate has taken custody of Old Believer icons and bells returned by the state, and the state sometimes refuses the return of Old Believer churches. In 1997 authorities interrogated German Lavrentiev, head of the Ostozhenskaya congregation, for hours, alleging that his church was a totalitarian sect.

Orthodox and Eastern-Rite Catholic Disputes in Ukraine

The original heartland of Eastern Slavic Orthodoxy lies in Ukraine. Kyiv was its center a thousand years ago, long before the Moscow

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In general, believers, particularly the intelligentsia, do not trust any of the hierarchies involved.

Patriarchate asserted control in 1686 and permitted the church to become an agent of state russification. Moscow appointees in Ukraine insisted on using Old Church Slavonic in the liturgy, not vernacular Ukrainian. A quarter of the Moscow Patriarchate's parishes and two-thirds of its clergy are Ukrainian, hence its reluctance to concede the autocephaly many Ukrainians looked for after independence in 1991. This dream has been rudely shattered by a schism which has had deleterious effects on the rehabilitation of religious life. At least two-thirds of Ukraine's 35 million declared believers are involved.

Ukrainians are most secure in their identity in the West, in Galicia, which was a province of Poland from 1919 to 1939. The population there belongs mainly to the Ukrainian Eastern-Rite Catholic Church. Eastwards, in more industrialized and russified regions, religious allegiance is lower. Between 1948 and 1989 the only surviving Orthodox Church in Ukraine was the Moscow Patriarchate, which suffered severe persecution as well. Communists abolished the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in 1930, and the Ukrainian Eastern-Rite Catholic Church in Galicia in 1946 and in Transcarpathia in 1948. The Autocephalous Church had been created uncanonically by priests and laity, not bishops, in a fleeting moment of Ukrainian independence in 1921. It has never been recognized by other Orthodox patriarchates. Both churches managed to survive through the Soviet era in the diaspora and underground—Eastern-Rite Catholics in a more active form—from which members emerged in 1989.

Protestants and new religious movements aside, at present, three Orthodox Churches and the Eastern-Rite Catholic Church (which uses an Orthodox liturgy) compete for the allegiance of Ukrainian believers, 72 percent of which identify themselves as Orthodox. In general, believers, particularly the intelligentsia, do not trust any of the hierarchies involved. Many church leaders were compromised and corrupted under Communism and now blacken the reputation of their churches through an unseemly jockeying for power.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP)

Despite defections, the UOC-MP remains the largest church in Ukraine, with the most resources, 34 bishops, and 6,500 parishes. To its advantage, it is the only Orthodox church in Ukraine recognized by the rest of the Orthodox world. The Moscow Patriarchate, bowing to demands, conceded Ukrainian Orthodox a semiautonomous status in 1991, but stopped short of granting autocephalous (self-ruling) status, which no one in Moscow, nor most of the bishops within the church, seems prepared to consider to this day. In 1992 the Moscow Patriarchate excommunicated Metropolitan Filaret

(Denysenko) of Kyiv, for many years the dominant personality in Ukrainian church life. He lost favor with Moscow ultimately because, after losing the Moscow Patriarch election to Alexei II, he appealed for the restoration of an independent Kyivan Patriarchate. Revelations of his KGB past, particularly in suppressing religious dissent, and his personal failure to maintain monastic celibacy—he had a mistress and family—made it easier to demote him, but did not cause his fall. His replacement as head of Ukrainian Orthodox faithful to Moscow, Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan, another ethnic Ukrainian, insists that the UOC-MP enjoys the prerogatives allowed to autocephalous churches, including control over its finances and the choosing of its bishops, its clergy, and its own council; it also now allows Ukrainian liturgies. He has repeatedly called for reconciliation with parishes which left the Moscow Patriarchate, but will have no dealings with Filaret.

Five monks from Pochaev Monastery in West Ukraine threatened self immolation if their premises were removed from UOC-MP jurisdiction by local authorities. In response to massive believers' demonstrations in the fall of 1996, protesting the use of part of Kyiv's Monastery of the Caves for a foreign embassy and commercial firms, President Leonid Kuchma decreed its transfer from state control to the UOC-MP. The UOC-MP, like most of the competing jurisdictions, is scattered irregularly throughout Ukraine, but is strongest in the west and south.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate (UOC-KP)

The UOC-KP, the second largest Orthodox church with 1300 parishes and 1600 priests, is rooted in the eastern and central Ukraine and in the region of Volhynia. Enjoying considerable popular support, it emerged in 1992 when the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) joined a breakaway faction of the Moscow Patriarch Church under recently ousted Metropolitan Filaret. (Overnight he metamorphosed from an anti-Ukrainian, Soviet church bureaucrat into a militant nationalist, following the vote of 90 percent of Ukrainians for independence.) Church historian Bohdan Bociurkiw terms the UOC-KP "a quasi-state church." Staunchly patriotic in its use of Ukrainian and in its unequivocal support of independent Ukrainian statehood, it was actively protected by Filaret's political ally, former President Leonid Kravchuk.

From the start the UOC-KP has been riddled by scandal. Its first two Patriarchs, aged Mstyslav (Skrypnyk) of the U.S. UAOC diaspora, who died in 1993, and Volodymyr, formerly Vasyl Romanyuk, who had spent 19 years in prison as a religious dissident, were both deeply disillusioned by Filaret's shortcomings. Filaret has failed to

obtain coveted canonical recognition, and he has developed ties with dubious ultranationalist elements, such as the Ukrainian National Self-Defense Organization (UNSO), set on exploiting the church for political ends. As a result, five UOC-KP bishops reestablished the UAOC in 1993, and five more UOC-KP bishops returned to the UOC-MP fold in 1994.

When Patriarch Volodymyr tried to dismiss Filaret for insubordination and for his involvement in the disappearance of three million rubles from diocesan coffers, Filaret threatened his titular superior. Before the issue could be resolved, Patriarch Volodymyr died on 14 July 1995, apparently of a heart attack. Police and UNSO members in military uniforms intervened in his funeral on 18 July, injuring 70 participants and suffering two fatalities in a clash over his final resting place (St. Sophia Cathedral ultimately, or under a nearby sidewalk just outside the cathedral wall where the body presently is interred?). When Filaret was elected, unopposed, as Volodymyr's successor in October 1995, five more bishops and 20 lay electors revolted and joined the UAOC. Filaret's latest strategy has been to seek reapproachment with the Ukrainian Eastern-Rite Catholic Church. He was the only Orthodox hierarch present at the consecration of the new head of that church, Exarch Lubomir Husar of Kyiv, on 3 June 1996. Ukrainian Catholics have come under criticism for welcoming him, given his rabidly hostile attitude towards Catholics in Communist days.

The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church

In the last decade Communist officials still powerful in West Ukraine have promoted the strongly ethnic Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church to prevent the revival of the equally nationalistic Ukrainian Catholics. The UAOC, which has no canonical recognition in the Orthodox world, claims some 1,200 parishes and many defections from the UOC-KP, but other sources estimate 550 parishes and 220 priests. Under Patriarch Dymitri Jarema of Lviv it has entered into discussions with the UOC-MP and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartolemaos of Constantinople. However, Jarema insists the UOC-MP must leave the Moscow Patriarchate for there to be reconciliation between the two Ukrainian churches. In 1996 the UAOC split into two factions, the breakaway portion being led by Metropolitan Vasili Bodnarshchuk. Factors behind the schism include the likelihood of security police plants within the hierarchy bent upon destabilization, disputes over finances and the reclamation of church property from the state, personality clashes among leaders, and simply too many bishops for the number of UAOC faithful. Ukrainian authorities still refuse Bodnarshchuk's faction legal recognition.

In November 1996 UAOC bishops dismissed Patriarch Dymitri on fraud and embezzlement charges. His successor, Bishop John (Boichuk), subsequently transferred his allegiance to the Ukrainian Orthodox-Kyiv Patriarchate, taking UAOC archives with him. In March 1997 UOC-KP seminarians used force to remove Dymitri and five other people from the UAOC chancery. Armed militia had to be brought in to restore order. Of the four liturgical churches in Ukraine, the UAOC may have the most difficulty surviving because of its much smaller popular support and its internal schisms.

The Ukrainian Eastern-Rite Catholic Church

Ukrainian Catholicism reemerged from the catacombs in 1989-91, and now accounts for 17.5 percent of Ukrainians who identify themselves as believers. It includes approximately five million members in some 3,000 parishes served by 1,700 priests. Its primary concern is restructuring its institutional and spiritual life. In 1990-91 the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet permitted churches to choose the confession preferred by the majority in a given parish. As a result, hundreds of parishes found themselves plunged into bitter disputes over the issue of original ownership. The UAOC and UOC-KP currently assert that anti-Russian local authorities in Western Ukraine wrongly accuse them of being Russian and simultaneously favor Ukrainian Catholic claims in property disputes. In 1997 Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholics made serious efforts to settle outstanding property issues.

Tensions also exist between former catacomb priests and priests trained in Russian Orthodox seminaries who returned to their traditional Eastern-Rite Catholic faith for reasons of conscience, and between indigenous and incoming diaspora priests who occupy leading administrative positions. But Ukrainian Eastern-Rite Catholic morale, and pastoral and spiritual standards, are higher than among Orthodox clergy. Due to long-standing national antagonisms, relations with the smaller Western Rite (largely Polish) Catholic Church in Ukraine (650 parishes) leave a lot to be desired.

Nineteen ninety-six marked the 400th anniversary of the Union of Brest when the Kyiv Patriarchate united with Rome. However, although Pope John Paul II created an Eastern-Rite Exarchate of Galicia, Transcarpathia, and Kyiv in 1996, he still refuses to grant Patriarchal status to the head of this church, for fear of further damage to relations with the Moscow Patriarchate.

Meanwhile, UOC-KP Patriarch Volodymyr's remains still lie in a grave under sidewalk pavement until President Kuchma considers the time is right for them to be laid to rest in Saint Sophia Cathedral. That could be a long wait. ♦

Ukrainian Catholicism includes approximately five million members in some 3,000 parishes served by 1,700 priests.

Janice Broun is a free-lance writer from Allness, Scotland.

Publishing Without Perishing

Despite tremendous odds, Christian magazines are making their mark.

Sharon Mumper

Not a single hand went up when I asked the 36 staff members of 18 Romanian Christian magazines how many were working in publishing before 1990. Once again, I was struck by the courage of dedicated men and women who, without training, experience, or resources, had set out to do the impossible—publish magazines.

Within five years of the Marxist collapse, at least 100 Christian magazines were founded.

Daunting Barriers

At the start of this decade, in the wake of the storm that blasted the gates off the Communist empires of Eastern Europe, the church suddenly found itself free to publicly express itself. Although the political restraints were largely gone, other daunting barriers remained. Only a few Christian magazines had been permitted to exist during the Communist years, their frequency, circulation, and content strictly regulated. For this reason, hardly any Christians had ever written an article; only a handful in all of Eastern Europe had ever edited a magazine. No Christians had received journalistic training.

In the years immediately after the fall of Communism, East European economies went into severe shock; inflation raged at monthly double-digit rates. It was the worst time to start a risky venture. Yet within five years of the Marxist collapse, at least 100 Christian magazines were founded. Although some have gone under, most struggle on, painfully negotiating a difficult obstacle course. Probably the most significant is the uncertainty and sense of inadequacy of the inexperienced and untrained staff members. Because of lack of finances, most are volunteers, usually with full-time jobs elsewhere. In addition, hardly any magazines begin with the required amount of start-up capital. Most new publishers naively expect proceeds from magazine sales to cover all start-up costs. This rarely happens, and unless a denomination or outside organization underwrites the publication, the struggle is long and hard, and, in some cases, futile.

In fact, most magazines in Eastern Europe are published by denominations. Those who try to go it alone in an effort to attract a general Christian or non-Christian audience face nearly insurmountable hurdles. Few can survive without considerable outside help. Yet, in small countries like those of Eastern Europe, only magazines that can reach beyond denominational boundaries can attain substantial circulation. Therefore, until the problems faced by nondenominational magazines

are solved, Eastern Europe cannot produce self-supporting magazines that can attract the advertising revenues needed to generate steady income, stability, and ultimately, significant influence in society.

Distribution Problems

Distribution is one of the knottiest problems confronting magazine publishing in Eastern Europe. Most magazines reach their audience through denominational networks and churches. Distribution is particularly hard for those magazines that try to reach audiences beyond denominational boundaries. Subscriptions are still virtually unknown in Eastern Europe. Most secular magazines are sold on newsstands. Potential buyers balk when presented with the risky and strange concept of paying in advance for issues of a magazine that may never come. Yet, by and large, it is not easy for Christian magazines to use the newsstands as outlets. First, in most countries newsstands are still controlled by the state. Second, newsstand operators are not willing to take magazines for which a very small market exists. Street hawking is also a limited option because governments usually require special licenses and charge high fees.

A few publishers have found ways of getting their magazines into other venues. The editors of *Zmo*, a magazine for children, have been able to convince stores throughout Slovenia to sell the periodical on commission. The Romanian-language *Lydia*, a women's magazine with international headquarters in Germany, has set up a distributorship program with individuals, denominations, and organizations which sell single copies on commission. But the program is still in the experimental stage and is not without problems.

Creative Solutions

However, some innovative magazine editors and publishers are finding creative solutions to other vexing riddles. When Tatiana Hydzik decided to publish a magazine for Polish women in 1989, she asked her denomination for help. Church leaders were sympathetic but unable to offer financial sponsorship. Tatiana was not deterred. With the denomination's permission, Tatiana traveled throughout the country, sharing her vision for a magazine for women. To the surprise of church leaders, women rallied behind the concept and donated whatever they could—sometimes as little

as a dollar per month. Tatiana launched the magazine and it continues to this day with little financial difficulty. However, despite efforts to reach a general Christian audience, the magazine's circulation is still largely denominational.

In Romania, Ionaton Piroasca, former editor of the Baptist *Mesaj* magazine, has launched a nondenominational publication with a creative approach to solving the financial dilemma. Without a church or an outside organization to finance the start-up, Piroasca is attempting to subsidize the magazine with proceeds from a crossword-puzzle magazine, which he is beginning at the same time.

These have become very popular in Romania in the last couple of years and they sell well. For a year or so before launching his publications, Piroasca supplied Christian periodicals with "Christian" crossword puzzles. Editors reported that their sales increased when they began to carry these puzzles in their magazines.

Finding and Training Writers

The lack of trained or experienced Christian writers has also plagued magazines. In many countries, the Evangelical population is small and scattered. In 1990, soon after the revolutions that brought down Communism and released the church, it was virtually impossible to find skilled Christian writers. As a result, editors often turned to foreign-language publications for articles to translate. While it was prudent and necessary in that environment to use translated articles, many editors have recognized the need to develop local writers. Although translated articles still occupy key slots in many Christian magazines, an increasing number of locally written articles now appear in most magazines.

Editors who want to boost the proportion of indigenous material in their magazines have to take deliberate steps to find and train prospective magazine writers. Teodore Dronca, pastor and editor of the Romanian magazine *Flacara Rusaliilor*, uses contests and workshops to identify and train potential writers. *Mustarmag*, a Hungarian-language youth magazine, offers writing camps for promising teenagers, combining course material and writing practice with fun outings. Virtually all of the magazine's articles are original. Dozens of potential writers have gone through a correspondence writing course adapted by Jeni Rosian, editor of a Romanian children's magazine. Practical course assignments have yielded scores of good articles for the magazine. Some 20 teenagers from throughout Croatia participated in a writing seminar sponsored by *Tarax* youth magazine in cooperation with other Croatian-language magazines. Editor Ksenija Magda has held periodic follow-up refresher workshops and works individually with writers. Nevertheless, it has been a struggle to get quality articles written by teenagers.

New Challenges

Many of the challenges faced by Christian magazines today are different from those confronted five years ago. For example, there are now more Christian writers. In some countries, fledgling free-lance writing communities are developing, though denominational badges often hinder the free movement of writers among magazines. Nevertheless, in countries such as Romania, where perhaps 25 Christian periodicals serve an Evangelical population numbering in the hundreds of thousands, a sense of professionalism has developed. Christian publishers are now more willing to exchange advertisements, articles, information, and encouragement across denominational boundaries.

However, the increasing professionalism of Christian writers introduces a new problem for the magazines: the demand for payment for services rendered. This can be a strain on the resources of a struggling magazine.

Another challenge for the magazines is volunteer fatigue. Publishers are finding that as the years go by, the initial enthusiasm of volunteers tends to wane. The lack of equipment and the constant financial pressure wears out the staff. Disillusionment and discouragement often set in. The once exciting task of putting out a magazine begins to feel like a humdrum chore that demands large chunks of time with little reward.

Staying in Business

Despite these problems, Christian magazines in Eastern Europe are holding their own. According to many estimates, over 50 percent of start-up magazines in the United States fail within the first two years. It is therefore remarkable that most of the Christian magazines launched five years ago when Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe are still in business. Magazine publishers are pressing on with dogged determination, taking advantage of whatever training opportunities are available to them, trying to improve the editorial quality of their magazines and slowly building their circulation. Many of these editors and publishers do not consider themselves particularly courageous. In fact, in retrospect, they would be more likely to characterize their initial plunge into publishing as foolhardy. Yet it is the brash courage of that initial leap of faith and the determination to persevere against all odds that has enabled them to keep publishing without perishing. ♦

Revised by Sharon Mumper and reprinted with permission of Cook Communications Ministries International, Colorado Springs, CO 80918, from InterLit 33 (September 1996): 8-10.

Sharon Mumper is director of the Austrian-based Eastern European Magazine Training Institute, which offers training to Christian magazine publishers throughout East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Contact: EEMTI, Postfach 33, 2502 Baden-Leesdorf, Austria; 43-2236-540760; fax: 43-2236-52390; e-mail: 101567.2064@compuserve.com.

Over 50 percent of start-up magazines in the United States fail within the first two years. It is therefore remarkable that most of the Christian magazines launched five years ago when Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe are still in business.

Christian Magazines in the Post-Soviet Era

Selected Promising Titles

COUNTRY	CITY	MAGAZINE	TEL/FAX
Albania	Tirana	Mrekullia (Miracle)	355-42-23746
Belarus	Kobrin	Krinitsa Zhitsia (Source of Life)	375-172-538249/1642-27522
	Minsk	Ne ot Mira Sego (Not of This World)	375-172-615493
Bulgaria	Sofia	Priyateli (Friends)	359-2-517-198
Croatia	Osijek	Izvori (Streams)	385-31-556-466
	Osijek	Latica (Petal)	385-31-556-466
	Osijek	Radost (Joy)	385-31-556-466
	Zagreb	Glas Evandjela (The Voice of the Gospel)	385-1-428-559
	Zagreb	Zrcalo (Mirror)	385-1-193-128
Czech Republic	Cesky Tesin	KAM (KAM)	420-659-566-56
	Prague	Zivot Viry (Life of Faith)	420-2-683-3505/3507
Germany	Asslar	Lydia (Lydia)—Hungarian and Romanian	49-6443-3011/1707
Moldova	Kishinev	Maria (Mary)	373-2-62-2525
Poland	Katowice	mGr (mGr)	48-32-068-617/586-446 (T/FX)
	Malbork	Pryscylla (Priscilla)	48-55-3286/2426
	Ustron	Inspiracje (Inspirations)	48-335-44522/4373
	Ustron	3/4 (3/4)	48-335-44330(T/FX)
	Warsaw	Chrzescijanin (The Christian)	48-22-248575/204073
	Warsaw	Samarytanka (The Samaritan Woman)	48-335-32417(T/FX)
	Warsaw	Slowo I Zycie (Word of Truth)	48-12-440625/48-22-441600
	Warsaw	Znaki Czasu (Signs of the Times)	48-826-2506/48-827-8519
Romania	Arad	Descoperirea Comorii (The Finding of the Treasure)	40-572-50670/59272
	Arad	Farul Crestin (Christian Beacon)	40-572-31634/89200
	Arad	Oastea Domnului (God's Army)	
	Bucharest	Buletin Informativ (Information Bulletin)	40-1-311-0326
	Bucharest	Crestinul Azi (The Christian Today)	40-1-222-9319/6361
	Bucharest	Cuvantul Adevarului (Word of Truth)	40-1-638-4425
	Medias	Prietenui Copiilor (Children's Friend)	40-698-21707
	Oradea	David si Goliat (David and Goliath)	40-591-132778 (FX)
	Oradea	Mesaj Evanghelic (Evangelical Message)	40-591-36841/32778
	Oradea Bihor	Mustarmag (Mustard Seed)	40-591-15424 (T/FX)
	Timisoara	Jurnalul Meu (My Journal)	40-56-214-487/56-126-861
	Sebis	Flacara Rusaliilor (Pentecostal Flame)	40-574-21082/20734
Russia	Nizhnii Novgorod	Shans (Chance)	7-831-234-3164
	St. Petersburg	Der Bote (The Message)—German and Russian	7-812-2183635
	St. Petersburg	Khristianstvo Segodnya (Christianity Today)	7-812-5265427/352-2015
Slovakia	Kosice	Spravodaj (News)	421-95-20096/95-6223114
Slovenia	Lyublyana	Zrno (Wheat Seed)	386-61-125-2156
Ukraine	Kyiv	Blagovestnik (The Evangelist)	3830-444345644/4626042
	Rovno	Svet Evangeliya (Light of the Gospel)	0362-228314, 228379/ 266932
	Rovno	Noya Kovcheg (Noah's Ark)	0362-228314, 228379/ 266932

RESOURCES

Multi-Language Media; Foreign Language Christian Resources identifies print and audio-visual materials in 19 languages of East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Descriptions and order information are provided for books, Scriptures (print and online CD-Rom), tracts, music tapes, the "Jesus" video (in more than 19 languages of the region), resource materials for teaching English, cassettes, and videos. Authors include Kay Arthur, John Bunyan, Charles Colson, Mrs. Charles Cowman, Billy Graham, Michael Green, C. S. Lewis, Josh McDowell, Alexander Men, J. I. Packer, C. H. Spurgeon, John Stott, Joni Eareckson Tada, Kenneth Taylor, Corrie Ten Boom, and Warren Wiersbe. To request a free 1997 *Resource Catalog* contact

Multi-Language Media, Box 301, Ephrata, PA 17522
Tel/fax: 717-738-0582; e-mail: mlminfo@multilanguage.com
Internet: www.multilanguage.com.



Audiocassettes are available from the **4-5 October 1996 meeting of the Society for the Study of Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism** featuring Dr. Thomas Oden and Fr. Stanley Harakas.

◆ "Doing Theology: An Historical Overview of Orthodox and Evangelical Approaches" (\$8). Fr. Harakas describes the Orthodox theological method as a mosaic of different resources: the Scriptures, the liturgy, the theological affirmations, etc: "No one image can tell the whole story."

Dr. Oden develops some of his thoughts on the "consensual approach to truth" that is built on the Fathers of the early centuries of the church.

◆ "Theological Method in the 1990s" (\$8). Dr. Oden feels that a recovery of the texts of early Christianity as a shared tradition is crucial to theological method and dialogue. He describes some of his efforts to publish a series of ancient Christian commentaries on the Scriptures. Fr. Harakas describes the recovery of a genuinely Orthodox theological method that has taken place through the work of scholars like Fr. Georges Florovsky and Fr. John Romanides. Above all, he argues, the recovery of a holistic approach is necessary, as opposed to the reductionism of those who try to extract one part of the "grand mosaic" and consider it to be the core.

◆ "Orthodox and Evangelical Methods in Dialogue" (\$8).

◆ Dr. Bradley Nassif, "A Global Perspective on Orthodox-Evangelical Relations" (\$4). Dr. Nassif provides an overview of organizations and individuals that are helping Orthodox and Evangelicals understand each other, including a report on his trip to Cairo, Egypt, for a World Council of Churches consultation on Orthodoxy and Western proselytism.

◆ Complete set (\$25).

Contact: Julie Vassilatos

The Society for the Study of Eastern Orthodoxy
and Evangelicalism

5454 S. Shore, Chicago, IL 60615

Tel: 773-702-4560; e-mail: krut@midway.uchicago.edu.

Make checks payable to All Saints Orthodox Church.



The Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, an academic center for Eastern-Rite Catholic studies, announces the availability of new videos:

◆ "The Catholic Church in Ukraine: A Documentary for School Children," narrated by Fr. Peter Galadza, provides "an introduction to the martyrdom and resurrection of the Greco-Catholics of the Church of Kyiv" (17 minutes, NTSC, \$12).

◆ "The Iconography of Sts. Volodymyr and Olha Church in Chicago" offers "a theological commentary by Fr. Andriy Chirovsky on the iconographic program of a properly decorated Byzantine Church." Available in English and Ukrainian (45 minutes, NTSC, \$25).

◆ For a description of the Institute's six-hour video, "To Write an Icon" (\$100), see the *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT 2* (Summer 1994), 14.

Contact: The Sheptytsky Institute, St. Paul University
223 Main St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 1C4, Canada
Tel: 613-782-3031; fax: 613-782-3026

E-mail: lmgus@spu.stpaul.uottawa.ca.

Canadian and U.S. orders add 10 percent for shipping and handling; other countries add 15 percent. Ontario residents add 8 percent tax; other Canadians add 7 percent.



New titles in East European languages published by Operation Mobilization's Greater Europe team based in Austria include Larry Burkett, *How to Manage Your Money* (Bulgarian); Tony Evans, *Guiding Your Family in a Misguided World* (Russian; Ukrainian forthcoming); Tony Evans, *Gambling and the Lottery* (forthcoming in Russian and Bulgarian); Doris Van Stone, *Dorie, the Girl Nobody Loved* (Romanian and Ukrainian; forthcoming in Russian and Czech); Neil Anderson, *Victory Over the Darkness* (Romanian and Bulgarian); Josh McDowell, *The Deceivers* (Albanian and Russian; forthcoming in Ukrainian); Navigators, *How to Lead Small Group Bible Studies* (Albanian, Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian); and Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (Russian).

To order, contact Operation Mobilization

Box 444, Tyrone, GA 30290-0444

Tel: 770-631-0432, ext. 232; fax: 770-631-0439

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Operation Mobilization, Greater Europe Team

Postfach 25, A-2104 Spillern, Austria

Tel: 011-43-2266-80867; fax: 011-43-2266-808671

E-mail: postmaster@ge.om.org.

Source: *OM In Deed* (Summer 1997), 1.



On 20 May 1997 the Holy Synod of the **Georgian Orthodox Church** voted to **withdraw its membership from the World Council of Churches**. Four monastic leaders had threatened to split the church if WCC membership continued. General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches Jean Fischer blamed the move upon "fundamentalist forces" within Georgian Orthodoxy. Other churches in the former Soviet Union which left the WCC in 1997 are the Armenian Apostolic Church and Russia's Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. In recent years WCC membership has also been the subject of heated debate within the Russian Orthodox Church and the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Source: RFE/RL Newline, 21 May 1997; Ecumenical News International Bulletin, no. 13 (9 July 1997), 14 and 30.



The Prague-based Open Media Research Institute (OMRI), funded by the Soros Foundation, was created in 1995 to provide information and news reports from Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Beginning 1 April 1997 it drastically reduced its operations. As a result, many OMRI employees left and OMRI ceased publishing the *Daily Digest*, an electronically distributed summary of news reports from the region. **Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty**, which had published a daily report until OMRI took over the task, **returned to daily electronic publishing on 1 April with RFE/RL Newline**. OMRI's biweekly magazine, *Transition*, published its last issue on 6 April. It is scheduled to be relaunched as a monthly after undergoing changes.

Source: ICFJ Clearinghouse on the Central and East European Press, No. 27 (May, 1997), 424.



An Orthodox group in Moldova has prepared a dramatic production, "The Gatherer of Stones," based on the life of the Apostle Paul. For further information, contact Ion Drutse, President, The House of the Apostle Paul, ul. 31 Avgusta, 123-20, Kishinev, Moldova; tel: 7-095-930-11-96 (in Moscow); fax: 373 2 23-33-91 (in Kishinev); e-mail: 100547.3412@compuserve.com.



On 25 March 1997 the Romanian Minister of Cults circulated a letter to the country's mayors with a list of 15 recognized religions authorized to build houses of worship. In addition to Eastern religions and cults, churches not permitted to build include Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and the Salvation Army. Orthodox beatings of nine Baptists in Ruginoasa in March and acts of violence against Eastern-Rite Catholics by Orthodox militia this year make it clear that even churches theoretically permitted to build lack basic protection from the authorities. **"Human Rights Without Frontiers and the Romanian Helsinki Committee share the opinion that Romania cannot be accepted as a member of the European Union as long as its religious legislation contravenes the European Convention** and if a programme of education to religious tolerance and equality is not quickly implemented by the authorities."

Source: Press release, Human Rights Without Frontiers [April 1997].



What exactly is the status of freedom of religion in Bulgaria?

It is a mixed bag. Adherents of certain faiths may run full force into suppression by the state. Evangelical believers are apt to encounter resistance and inconvenience, but not the direct physical confrontation of the old days. But the Orthodox faithful can go about business as usual. Attention must still be paid to this issue in Bulgaria, even though there is a ray of hope in the avowed intentions of the newly elected government. Most Bulgarians can practice their religion—and the speech that comes with it—without fear, but Bulgaria still has a way to go before one can confidently say they protect freedom of religion in keeping with Helsinki Principles.

Source: Chadwick R. Gore, "Bulgaria and Freedom of Religion," CSCE Digest 20 (May 1997), 51.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

20-24 October 1997

Cell Church Training Seminar, St. Petersburg, Russia. Contact: Chuck Squeri

Cell Church Resource Network
Biblical View Russian
Box 94
191025 St. Petersburg
Russia
Tel: 011-7-812-272-5453
Fax: 011-7-812-553-4938
E-mail: bv.mail.nevalink.ru;
web page: www.cellcrn.org
U.S. address:
3707 Edgewood Dr.
Cincinnati, OH 45211
Tel: 513-598-1982



1 November 1997

Open Day (with Lawrence A. Uzzell and Timothy Garton Ash), Keston Institute

Contact: Erika Cuneo
4 Park Town
Oxford, OX2 6SH
England
Tel: 011-44-865-311-022
Fax: 011-44-865-311-280
E-mail: Keston_Institute@CIN.co.uk



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: medical.conference@wheaton.edu



16 November 1997

International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church

Contact: Mr. Steve Haas,
U. S. Coordinator
Box WEF
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



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



12-15 December 1997

Church-State Relationships in Central and Eastern Europe, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland

Contact: Dr. Irene Borowik
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Religion
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011-48-12-21-06-69
E-mail: uzborowi@cyf-kr.edu.pl



2-4 March 1998

Cell Church Training Seminar, St. Petersburg, Russia. Contact: Chuck Squeri

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Evolving Conceptions of a Role for Lay Believers in the Christian East and West,

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EDITORIAL

Clinically Depressed Nations and the Misuse of Memory

Mark Elliott

Nations remember and even cultivate the memory of their mistreatment at the hands of others, but not their mistreatment of others.

In June 1997 at a women's conference in Moscow, a Christian psychologist argued that the widespread abuse of Russian women by alcoholic husbands amounts to an ongoing national disaster. She went on to say that, in fact, all women—and men—in the former Soviet Union show signs of abuse. In sweeping fashion she maintained that everyone was psychologically traumatized by Communism. In addition, increasingly, a significant portion of the population emerging from the yoke of Communism is becoming economically marginalized. No wonder there are signs that whole nations might be rightly diagnosed as being clinically depressed.

Today, post-Communist peoples typically evidence a sense of powerlessness; economic, political, and marital insecurity; a loss of identity; and scapegoating on a massive scale (the other is always at fault, not me). Communism certainly accentuated this penchant for placing blame elsewhere, but it did not invent it. The theme of victimization in East European and Russian history has been a prominent motif for centuries. Look at the cultivation of historical memory. Russians speak of the trauma of invasions by Mongols, Poles, Swedes, and Germans. Poles fixate on the three 18th century partitions and the 20th century Nazi-Soviet Pact; for Hungary, it is the devastating post-World War I Treaty of Trianon which is equated with dismemberment. Czechs dwell on the symmetry of their twentieth century disasters: 1938 (Munich), 1948 (the

Communist coup), and 1968 (the Brezhnev invasion). For the Baltic states the culprit has been occupation by tsarist and Soviet Russia. Serbs memorialize and even cherish the memory of their defeat to the Turks at Kosova (1389). Indeed, for all the Balkan states there have been three sources of national woe, besides 20th century Communism: the Ottoman Turks, the Ottoman Turks, and the Ottoman Turks.

Historical interpretation is shaped in good measure by the selection of facts. And as a rule, nations remember and even cultivate the memory of their mistreatment at the hands of others, but not their mistreatment of others. The peoples of East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union have suffered extraordinary reverses in history. I truly believe this is the case. It was one of the first powerful realizations I had as a graduate student studying in detail the seemingly unending litany of national disasters. But for mental health and national and spiritual recovery, dwelling on reverses will not help. What is needed, it seems to me, rather than further cultivation of victimization, is forgiveness. The theme of pokayanie (repentance) was one of the centerpieces of glasnost. And we need this in the church, East and West, if we are ever to be winsome witnesses to nonbelievers. Can we expect the lost to come to faith unless, as the Bible says, they will know us by our love, rather than by our hate? ♦

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Correction

The date for the incident reported in Otniel Bunaciu, "Nine Baptists Beaten by Orthodox in Romania," **EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT** 5 (Spring 1997), 7, should have been 30 March 1997. ♦