



# EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT

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## POST-SOVIET CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING

### Aiming for Self-Sufficiency

Marsh Moyle, Gerry Davey, and Brenton Milne

Is it possible for Central and East Europeans to pay for their own publishing ministry, to lead, manage, and provide for themselves? Or must they forever be dependent on Western control and money? International Literature Associates (ILA), an informal association of evangelical publishing houses in Central and Eastern Europe, think independence is possible. They are working hard to publish and distribute quality books which contribute to the growth and maturity of the Church and are committed to a biblical world view which they intend to communicate to the world around them. They are assisted by Mission Literature Associates (MLA), which brings together the literature resources of three organizations: Eastern European Literature Advisory Committee, Stredoeurópska nadácia, also known as Central European Missionary Fellowship, and International Teams. The missions of MLA worked together under the old regime to help provide theological literature to churches. Then when radical changes occurred in 1989, because they already knew groups of people interested in publishing, they were well-positioned to take advantage of the changes. In 1989 they created a more formal relationship and structure, which led to the development of International Literature Associates.

- a model of Christian business practice; and
- a national staff and board able to make sound business and ethical decisions.

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#### *New Christian Publishers Supported by International Literature Associates*

##### **New Man—Bulgaria**

New Man was founded in October 1990. It was the second private publishing house registered in Bulgaria and one of the first nonprofit organizations. The courts did not have legislation to deal with such a phenomenon. Initially, there was a great demand for literature from the churches. This later led to difficulties as New Man overestimated the market for books, a situation from which it is just now recovering. New Man has published 84 titles to date.

##### **Návrat Domů—Czech Republic**

Návrat Domů is the second attempt to start a publishing house in what was then Czechoslovakia. The first attempt failed because of involvement with the wrong people on the wrong basis. Its idea has been to have an evangelical publishing house, based in the evangelical market, but eventually breaking into the secular market. After two years, 80 percent of sales were to the nonevangelical (Catholic and secular) market. Much more work needs to be done to attract the general lay reader. In evangelical circles, people are not used to reading good, solid books. On 17 October 1996, Návrat Domů released a Czech edition of the *New Bible Dictionary* by InterVarsity Press. This project was unique in many ways. Coordination of the work over four years and with a team of 16 people responsible for the various parts was a true learning experience. The response greatly exceeded expectations. The first two print runs, totaling 5,000 copies, were sold out weeks before they came off the press. A third print run of 3,000 copies in January 1997 finally enabled Návrat Domů to supply copies to bookshops throughout the Czech and Slovak Republics.

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#### *Mission Literature Associates Goals*

The primary goal of MLA is to assist national Christians from across Central and Eastern Europe to establish independent, nondenominational publishing houses. When the project is completed ILA hopes to see the following in each country:

- a thriving evangelical publishing ministry which has the dignity of being self-supporting and which is national in culture;
- a body of literature with which to educate the church and to explain and proclaim a biblical world view;
- a group of trained (and published) national writers;

(continued on page 2)

### **Návrat Domov—Slovakia**

Návrat Domů opened a distribution branch, Návrat Domov, in the Slovak Republic in July 1993. After the split of the Czech and Slovak Republics on 1 January 1993, and the creation of an official border, business between the republics became much more complicated. With great reluctance the board of Návrat in Prague decided that it had to recognize the reality of the unwanted and impractical split in what was Czechoslovakia. Because of the larger population in the Czech Republic, most books were available only in Czech. Due to the pent-up demand for good books many Slovaks accepted this. The situation is now changing and in order to meet the needs of the church, it is becoming increasingly important to publish books in Slovak. Because of this, ILA has helped establish a separate publishing house in Slovakia.

### **Harmat Kiado—Hungary**

Harmat began life in 1990 as the publishing arm of the student ministry MEKDSZ, a partner movement of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. In the beginning the office was spread over various people's homes, but in October 1992, Harmat moved into an apartment shared by the student ministry. In September 1996, due to a generous grant from a German mission, it was able to purchase its own office in a favorable location and with room for expansion. Harmat has published 56 titles, eight of which are by national authors. In February 1997, a new manager took over: Dr. Kornel Herjeczki, a medical doctor who knows the influence good books have had on his life. Harmat has been able to produce high-quality books from the start since printing standards and equipment in Hungary are advanced.

### **MIRT—Russia**

Russia presents one of the largest markets for Christian literature in the world. Even though the economy is a disaster and people had been under communism for 72 years, MLA partners believe the country is large enough to support its own publishing ministry. MIRT, founded in 1994, takes its name from the Russian word for *myrtle*, with its logo based on the Bible verse, "and instead of briars the myrtle will grow" (Isaiah 55:13). MIRT launched a reader's club in the spring of 1995 and now mails a newsletter to its 700-plus members at Easter and Christmas, featuring book reviews, a catalog, price list, and discounts on upcoming books. Members are spread throughout Russia and the former USSR. This is the only way many people in villages have access to books. Distribution is such a problem in this country, which spans 11 time zones, that local churches often band together and send someone to Moscow or St. Petersburg to buy a load of books. MIRT manager Roman Nosach has a national vision, creative ideas, and a desire to see solid Christian literature available which will change lives.

### **Areopag—Poland**

Areopag was founded in early 1991 as a response to opportunities made possible by post-communist liberalization. Now Areopag lives in a very competitive and somewhat crowded Christian market where few publishing houses are providing the type of literature that meets ILA goals.

### **Editura Logos—Romania**

Editura Logos began operations in 1990. Grants and loans from MLA helped underwrite the opening of this publishing house through the supply of equipment, an office, the purchase of royalties, production costs, software, and training.

MLA training, experience, and funds also have been used to help publishers in Kazan (Russia), Croatia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

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### **The Road to Financial Independence**

Our aim from the beginning has been to help each publishing house to become self-supporting as soon as possible. With the exception of MIRT in Russia, each has now been in operation for about five years and much valuable experience has been gained. Initially, the missions involved helped with direct financial provision for national worker support, equipment, and other setup costs. Following this, ILA supported publishers' initial production projects and funded specific titles. The profits from the sales of these books have gone back into the publishing houses to cover national administration costs and the production of additional new titles. Money granted in 1995-1996 has, to a great extent, been used to provide capital for growth, rather than subsidies for losses. Income from inside Central Europe has reached over \$1,100,000. Investment from the outside has been matched dollar for dollar by Central and East European income. This must be a unique achievement by ministries in this part of the world.

As the work has developed, the publishing houses have been able to take on more of the responsibility for their own books. They have gained experience in marketing, distribution, and administration. Over the coming years increasing competence in financial planning and management will facilitate the move toward greater self-support.

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### **From Grants to Loans**

While there will still be a definite need for continued funds for expansion and development, we now see the need to move from grant to loan-based funding. It is important to note that this shift is happening in the context of long-term relationships and trust built up over many years of working together. The goals of this phase include a transition to full support, more realistic financial management, a stronger sense of local ownership, greater incentive to develop commercial competency, and the redirection of funds to other mission fields which would otherwise be consumed in Central and Eastern Europe.

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The financial goal of the ILA loan fund is not to maximize capital return, but to cover any bad loans and inflation. We need to keep in mind that Christian publishing does not normally give a high return of investment, even in the most developed countries. It is not the business to get into if you are aiming to maximize capital return. Our primary aim is the development of sound theology, healthy churches, and dynamic outreach. Economics cannot completely dictate the content and direction of the ministry or we will not accomplish the transformation of church and society to which we believe we are called.

### Results

Western participants in the ILA project have been encouraged by the increasing personal initiative, sense of responsibility, and hard-won experience evident in the development of new East European Christian publishers.

- "The value of taking personal responsibility—that what I do or don't do really matters—this was not a lesson we learned under communism."
- "Forty percent of our sales are to non-Christians [in the Czech Republic]. There seems to be a unique opportunity to go into the secular market."
- "In the early years of publishing we encountered high levels of inventory, mainly through either older books published in the euphoria of change when higher sales were expected, or by slower selling theological books. Major goals since 1995 have been to get higher turnover of stock and more reasonable print runs. Lower print runs, however, mean higher unit costs. The aim now is to sell each print run within 18 months."
- "Growth of the work in Russia causes us concern that we may attract criminal attention as we reach out to non-Christian markets."

The first years of the ILA project have been years of intense learning for everyone involved. We have been humbled and encouraged by the way God has used our mistakes and our successes.

**Editor's note:** Ironically, one of the greatest obstacles faced by Christian publishers in East Central Europe in overcoming Western dependency is competition from free literature donated by Western ministries. In the world economy, the marketing of goods under cost is called "dumping" and sometimes leads to legal action and international trade wars. But in Christian circles this well-intentioned but short-sighted practice is mistakenly thought to be commendable charity. Gifts of literature are in order in certain instances, but when they constitute routine practice in Christian outreach, they seriously undermine the possibility of independent, indigenous Christian publishing. Many ministries might do well to rethink their approach to literature distribution based on the discerning counsel and long-term strategy of sustainability offered by Marsh Moyle, Gerry Davey, and Brenton Milne. ♦

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Edited and adapted with permission from the authors' *International Literature Associates* (Bratislava, Slovakia: Stredoeurópska nadácia, 1997). The full 24-page report is available without charge; donation requested.

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## NEWS NOTES

The Ukrainian government's Committee for Religious Affairs approved the registration of

**Donetsk Christian University (DCU)** in April 1997. In 1996 Ukrainian legislation disallowed the possibility of religious institutions not formally affiliated with a church. DCU subsequently secured formal affiliation with both the Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and Ukraine's Autonomous Evangelical Christians-Baptists. Also, in December 1997, the Moscow-based **Russian-American Christian University (RACU)** received its formal license. This step beyond registration is a significant accomplishment, especially in light

of the fact that RACU is the first Evangelical Christian liberal arts institution in Russia to secure formal license status. **Sources:** E-mail from Ray Prigodich, 28 April 1997; e-mail from John Bernbaum, 10 December 1997.

♦ ♦ ♦

In November 1997 the Evangelical Lutheran Church hosted a **conference in Omsk, Russia, addressing aid to refugees.** Participants included representatives of Evangelical Lutheran, Russian Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical Christian-Baptist churches from Omsk, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Ekaterinburg, and Moscow. **Source:** Yuri Kolesnikov, "Refugee Aid Conference in Omsk," Radiotserkov, 19 November 1997.

♦ ♦ ♦

## What Is the Fallout for Evangelicals

Mark Elliott

Most Russian Evangelicals appear to be taking the new law in stride. The attitude often is: "The Bible tells Christians to expect persecution; we have endured it from the government before; we can do it again; we have experience in survival; and the law might not be all that bad if it blocks the cults." Also, rightly or wrongly, many Evangelical Christian-Baptist leaders, representing a group registered more than 15 years, feel protected from the law's severities. The Western concepts of religious rights for all and the championing of equality before the law are not nearly so deeply felt as is the old Russian saying: "For every law, there is a way around it."

Western ministries appear to be much more exercised by the new law than are Russian Evangelicals, which is understandable. Missions from abroad have a keener sense of human rights, they appear to be more vulnerable, and they definitely bear the brunt of Communist/nationalist anti-Western chauvinism. Under the circumstances, Western ministries naturally are scrambling to determine what the law will mean in practice. Christian lawyers are signing on many new clients. Various position papers are being drafted and innumerable strategy sessions are being held to consider alternatives.

### Protest

The options appear to be three: protest, accommodate, or leave. A public protest of the law held at the entrance to Gorki Park in Moscow on 7 October 1997 drew a decidedly modest crowd (perhaps 500, judging from the two sets of photos I saw). U.S. congressional action garnered more attention, but seemed to be positively welcomed by Communists, nationalists, and the law's other supporters as concrete evidence of Western interference in Russian domestic affairs. Western public protest does appear to have helped scuttle restrictive legislation on religion in 1993. Now, it is debatable whether or not this approach is effective. Programs to instruct post-Soviet populations in religious rights as part and parcel of man's God-given dignity might be a better, long-term approach. However, in the short run, highlighting specific instances of discrimination and arbitrariness, as in the Khakassia and Mari El cases (see accompanying chart), does still seem to be advisable and productive.

Another form of public protest involves challenging the new law before the Russian Constitutional Court. Would this court defy Yeltsin who signed the law? It would be uncharacteristic for it to do so. Regardless, a court case would provide the opportunity to underscore the law's glaring violation of the Russian Constitution and various

international treaties to which Russia is a signator. But will enough Duma representatives support a challenge before the Court? Ninety are needed and, given the huge margin of victory for the religion law, that may be more Duma members than can be convinced to sponsor a court challenge.

### Accommodation

More ministries appear inclined to accommodate than to protest too openly. To date, proceeding as usual has been the rule for most, albeit with a lower profile. While the law, on paper, makes life extremely difficult, if not impossible, for many Western groups, life goes on, and the difference between the letter of the law and the present lack of widespread enforcement just underscores again the contradictions and complexity of Russian life. Most groups, however, do expect the law to grow teeth sooner or later, and, consequently, are considering various forms of accommodation. Some are seeking, or will seek, shelter under the Evangelical Christian-Baptist (ECB) umbrella. As a group that passes the law's 15-year-rule for favored status, aligning with the ECB very likely will give some legal protection to some groups in some locations, but probably not uniformly. Even the ECB itself was recently challenged in Mari El under the new law (see chart on p. 6), so enforcement may be stricter than required, as well as more lenient than required, depending on the whim of local authorities.

Accommodation in the form of quiet submission to bribery likely will accentuate the unevenness of enforcement across 11 time zones. If one doubts the probability of missions succumbing to bribery, read or reread *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT* articles on the subject: 5 (Winter 1997) 8-11. Missionary payments to officials to expedite all manner of transactions and permissions appear to have been fairly commonplace before the new law. Is there any reason to expect that it will not increase with over 70 pages of implementing regulations? For better or worse, it is life in Russia—and at least it can be stated that missionaries appear to resort to paid influence far less systematically and far less routinely than do Russians, including Russian believers.

Ministry efforts may become more difficult in strongly Communist "Red Belt" regions such as Orel, Kursk, and Volgograd, while missions may become even more concentrated in such relatively democratic centers as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhni Novgorod, Ekaterinburg, and Samara. Reregistration as a humanitarian or educational organization, with personnel using student, educational, and business visas, will be the route some Christian ministries will

Western ministries are scrambling to determine what the law will mean in practice. The options appear to be three: protest, accommodate, or leave.

take. Some likely will be successful in these shifts and others will not be, based on infinitely varied local circumstances and relationships. In any case, almost everything depends on relationships in Russia, no matter what the law.

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### **Loopholes?**

Finally, some Russian Christian attorneys are arguing that the law was so poorly written that it contains unintended loopholes, the largest being the apparent exemption from the under-15-year-rule restrictions for groups that can prove affiliation with a central religious association. Only time will tell how successful this tactic will be, but there is no denying that many groups have been convinced, or have convinced themselves, that this stratagem will work. Frankly, I fear, if it does work well in the short run, it will simply increase the likelihood that the Duma will consider even more restrictive measures, which could very well happen. Metropolitan Kyril, for one, has already expressed deep disappointment with the present legislation, showing his disdain for non-Orthodox believers by stating that even Arctic [sic] penguins could secure religious registration under the September 1997 law.

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### **Departure**

Those Western missionaries who do not stay to protest, and who do not accommodate as best they can, will leave. Surprisingly, I know of no public announcements of church or parachurch departures so far, but I believe some groups probably will exit Russia rather than abide some of the requirements

of accommodation. Some groups likely will redeploy to less-restrictive republics with sizable Russian populations, including Ukraine, Moldova, Latvia, Estonia, and Kazakhstan, using them as bases for short-term ministry into Russia and as training locations for Russian citizens. Other groups may depart the former Soviet Union altogether, a shift that would accelerate, regardless of Russian circumstances, if China became more amenable to a Western missionary presence.

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### **Ripple Effect?**

East Central Europe is another region that is bound to feel the impact of the Russian law, especially as Orthodox churches are emboldened to follow the Russian—and Greek—example in discriminating against non-Orthodox. In July 1997, Macedonia passed legislation favoring Orthodox, Muslim, and Catholic believers over other religious groups. In Bulgaria the Orthodox Church is pressuring the parliament to follow the example of Russia and Macedonia. Washington human rights attorney Lauren Homer, in a 5 December 1997 U.S. Helsinki Commission hearing, reported that “virtually all of the former Soviet republics and Eastern European countries are considering similar legislation.” Nick Nedelchev, executive director of the Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance, put it quite succinctly in a 5 November 1997 letter: “All people need to know that what happened in Russia very easily can happen in all other Eastern Orthodox countries, including Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia. It’s already happened in Macedonia.” ♦

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

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## **Monitoring the Impact of the New Russian Law on Religion**

The World Evangelical Fellowship Religious Liberty E-Mail Conference (Religious-Liberty@xc.org) posted a communication on 8 December 1997 from Julia Doxat-Purser of the European Evangelical Alliance, Brussels, Belgium, requesting information on infringements of religious liberty in Russia. On 12 November she “spent an hour with the president of the European Parliament’s Russia Delegation, discussing the Russian religion law” and “conveyed the message that religious groups in Russia were afraid that the implementation of the law will be far more severe when

the West is no longer watching.” In response, the European Parliament has agreed to “a long-term commitment to monitor the religious liberty situation, clearly showing concern when necessary.” Julia Doxat-Purser (e-mail: 101475.3210@compuserve.com) is prepared to forward information, which should include a contact address. “Information about the implementation of the law, both positive and negative, must be accurate, with a way of confirming it.”

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### **Other Groups Requesting Information on Infringements of Religious Liberty Based on the Russian Law of September 1997**

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# The Impact of the 1997 Russian Law on Religion

Mark Elliott, compiler

DATE	LOCATION	AFFILIATION	INCIDENT	SOURCE
Aug.	Semnadsat (25 miles [40 km] west of Moscow)	Pentecostal	Authorities banned Pentecostal rental of local school for Sunday worship. Officials "cited both the new federal legislation, which at that point was still more than four months away from final passage, and complaints by a local Orthodox priest."	Keston News Service (KNS), 15 Oct. 1997
28 Sept.	St. Petersburg	Salvation Army	Rental contracts for worship space in two locations were canceled based on the new law. One hospital director familiar with Salvation Army work with AIDS patients said, "We want them to stay, and if necessary, we will fight for them."	John Varoli, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 30 Oct. 1997; KNS, 15 Oct. 1997
29 Sept.	Noginsk (30 miles [50 km] NW of Moscow)	Ukrainian Orthodox	Police transferred control of Epiphany Cathedral from Ukrainian Orthodox to Moscow Patriarchate, following a court ruling.	<i>Moscow Times</i> , 11 Oct. 1997, 1-2; Reuters, 7 Oct. 1997
29 Sept.	Moscow	Hare Krishna	Increased police harassment of Hare Krishna since Yeltsin signed new religion law, including authorities preventing activists from selling religious literature.	BBC World Service, 29 Sept., cited in <i>CSCE Bulletin</i> , 20 (Oct. 1997), 107
30 Sept. - 27 Nov.	Tuim (Khakassia Region, 300 miles [480 km] east of Novosibirsk, Siberia)	Lutheran	30 Sept.—Local authorities sent letter to Evangelical Lutheran church canceling its registration, based on new religion law; Khakassia Ministry of Justice reversed this decision on 10 Oct., following Western protests and calls from Moscow from Prime Minister Chernomyrdin's office; 27 Nov.—Local officials announced decision to seek annulment of Lutheran registration through the courts.	Vsevolod Lytkin, Radiotserkov, 18 Sept. and 13 Oct. 1997. KNS 1, 7, and 10 Oct. and 1 and 3 Dec 1997
First week of October	Gatchina (just south of St. Petersburg)	Pentecostal	Local Communists seek to ban Pentecostals from renting public facilities. Mayor has defended Pentecostals for their charitable work.	Igor Nikitin, "Communists Fail to Close Church in Gatchina," forwarded by Ray Prigodich, 27 Oct. 1997
Oct.	Syktvykar (capital of Komi Autonomous Republic, 600 miles [1000 km] NE of Moscow)	Evangelical Christian-Baptist (ECB)	The new, modern, centrally located ECB church and four-story building with seminary and rehabilitation center for paraplegics disturb local Orthodox and Patriarch Alexis II. Local officials intimidate pastor Pavel Kobzar with allegations of an improper building permit and tax issues. He fears officials will "attempt to use the new law to close the church and possibly arrest him."	E-mail report from Beverly Nickels, 15 Oct. 1997
Oct.	Moscow	Eastern European Outreach (EEO)	The Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs informed Jeff Thompson, EEO executive director, that it will not renew its agreement with EEO for work in prisons in 1998.	Letter from Jeff Thompson, 27 Oct. 1997
8 Oct.	Moscow	Evangelical Christian-Baptist (ECB)	ECB leader Yuri Sipko noted increased discrimination by local authorities denying Protestants the right to rent public facilities for worship.	KNS, 15 Oct. 1997
15 Oct.	Briansk	Jewish	Rejection of registration application	KNS, 29 Oct. 1997
16 Oct.	Riazan (120 miles [200 km] SE of Moscow)	Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA)	Local court decision displaced ROCA congregation in favor of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Church of the Epiphany. Case is under appeal.	KNS, 3 Dec. 1997; ITAR-TASS, 30 Oct. 1997
19 Oct. and 2 Nov.	Iskitim, Novosibirsk Region, Siberia	Protestant	Six Orthodox believers broke up a service; twelve young men interrupted worship of 150, shouting, "Do not believe the foreign sect."	Yury Koslesnikov, Radiotserkov, 20 Nov. 1997
30 Oct.	Reutov, Moscow Region	Presbyterian	Rejection of registration application	KNS, 26 Nov. 1997
Nov.	Rostov-on-Don	Hare Krishna	Two Orthodox priests and a group of Cossacks violently interrupted worship; eleven Krishnaites were hospitalized.	Yury Koslesnikov, Radiotserkov, 20 Nov. 1997
13 Nov.	Siberia	Catholic	Many foreign priests serving in Siberia are experiencing difficulties with their visas. Catholics also face steep arbitrary rent increases.	KNS, 24 Nov. 1997
18 Nov.	Buzuluk, Orenburg Region, Urals (620 miles [1000 km] SE of Moscow)	Adventist	Citing the new law on religion, city officials canceled evangelistic services a few days before meetings were to begin. Regional authorities had granted permits. Buzuluk mayor refused to turn on fax machine in order not to receive notice from Moscow that Adventists, in Russia 110 years, should be allowed to hold meetings. Services were moved to Orenburg.	Adventist News Agency, 25 Nov. 1997; Adventist Dept. of Communications phone communication with East-West Institute, 17 Dec. 1997
19 Nov.	Saransk, Mordovia (340 miles [550 km] SE of Moscow)	Protestant	Evangelical pastor Anatoly Bogatov facing vandalism, threats of physical violence, and eviction.	E-mail appeal distributed by Anatoly Bogatov
22 Nov.	Staryi Oskol (200 miles [320 km] south of Moscow)	Pentecostal	Pastor Sergei Matiukh wrote a letter to the Helsinki Group summarizing harassment: mayor tearing church sign from building; police intimidation; local press claiming American missionaries are secret intelligence agents.	Igor Alenin, Radiotserkov, 22 Nov. 1997
29 Nov. - 7 Dec.	Ioshkar-Ola, capital of Mari El Republic (450 miles [725 km] east of Moscow)	Evangelical Christian-Baptist (ECB)	On 29 November, Mari El Republic President Viacheslav Kilitsyn withdrew permission for a local ECB church to host preaching in the Lenin Palace of Culture by Billy Graham Evangelistic Association evangelist Viktor Hamm, scheduled for 10-14 December. Kilitsyn reversed his decision on 7 December and the meetings were held.	E-mails from Robert Hoskens, 29 Nov. and 2, 4, 5, 7 Dec.; KNS, 5 Dec. 1997

## Orthodox Church in America Calls for Moderation in Applying Russia's New Religion Law

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**The Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America recently issued a response to the controversial new law regulating churches and religious bodies in Russia.**

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"Since the liberation of Russia from oppressive antireligious policies of communist rule, numerous mission efforts, both Christian and non-Christian, have often been high-profile [and] well-financed, bringing messages new to Russian society. In a country which was a closed, totalitarian society less than ten years ago, these missionary programs and 'new religious movements' have naturally caused tensions and anxieties in Russian society. These tensions and anxieties are exacerbated by the absence of habits, legal precedent, customs, and traditions of religious pluralism and democratic freedom.

"The reaction of Russian society, as expressed in the new legislation on religion, is understandable, given the present situation. It may well be that steps

should be taken to bring some order into the chaos of the post-Soviet, post-Communist public arena in Russia. Yet, as American Orthodox Christians, we are concerned that the legislation clearly gives opportunities for over-reaction by Russian society and the Russian state and carries within it the possibility of new suppression of religious liberty in various parts of Russia.

"The Orthodox Church in America sees two dangers in the present situation in Russia. The first is the risk of chaos and deep divisions provoked by insensitive and aggressive methods of religious mission and proselytism. The second is the temptation of suppressive policies on the part of the state and society, which in the long run would have a negative impact also on the mission of the Russian Orthodox Church. We hope that in Russia both of these extremes will be avoided by wise and restrained implementation of the new legislation, in compliance with the Russian Constitution and its principles of religious liberty." ♦

*Excerpt reprinted with permission from The Orthodox Church 33 (November 1997): 11.*

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## Will We Survive Western Missionaries?

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Reflections of a Czech Pastor

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Dan Drápal

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### *Flooded by Missionaries*

Already in the first half of 1990 we were flooded by missionaries. This influx lasted for nearly two years. I believe that in 1990 and 1991 I had one visit a day on average. Of course, there were days when no one came, but there were also days when I had three or four visitors. Since I will write many critical remarks, I want to make it plain that occasionally there were some real jewels among them. Sometimes we were visited by people with excellent teaching, with humble attitudes, and with viable proposals. We still cooperate with some of them. On the other hand, we had some very, very bad experiences.

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### *Tremendous Waste of Money*

From my perspective much of God's financial blessing was mismanaged by the people who visited us. Let me estimate conservatively that we were visited by 750 people in one year. Some of them came from Europe, some of them from Australia,

most of them from North America. Let us estimate that they stayed for only two days in the country. Czechoslovak prices were (and now, Czech prices still are) moderate by Western standards. So let us estimate that the two days here cost \$100 (U.S.) per person. And let us suppose that each visitor spent \$500 for airfare and ground transportation. One visit by one person would cost \$700. So the total price tag of these "fact-finding missions" and other trips (real ministry trips not included!) would be \$525,000 in one year. My salary at that time was about \$130 per month, that is about \$1,560 a year. You can easily calculate that the money spent on visits to Czechoslovakia in one year would cover salaries for 336 pastors in that year. I suppose that those \$525,000 (in reality, it was probably much more) was either directly paid by churches or, more probably, collected from individual sponsors. Of course, there were some who invested their own money. **In any case, it was God's money.** Was this wise stewardship of God's money?

Why so much waste? There are probably many

Nearly everyone wanted to do his own thing. If we have the best doctrine, if we have the most powerful anointing, why bother about coordination with others!

different reasons. But one of them is obvious. There was a complete lack of coordination. Those who sincerely believed that "God now opened the door" most probably did not even try to contact the people who already were working here in the Communist years. Nearly everyone wanted to do his own thing on pretext of fulfilling the Great Commandment. If we have the best doctrine, if we have the most powerful anointing, why bother about coordination with others! Let's go! I do not believe we were flooded by God's army. The waste of means, the waste of time and energy (not only theirs, but also ours) was horrendous. In many cases, no ministry for the Lord was accomplished. It was a costly way to get a feeling that one does something for the Lord. It was not God's army, but a bunch of free-lancers.

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### *Bad Conscience*

Many visitors (not all of them) were of course aware of the difference in the standard of living. They were aware, or became conscious of the fact, that they live in far better conditions than the vast majority of people here, and especially better than the Christians, who usually did not belong to the local upper class. And they looked for a way to address this. Many "richer" Christians who came to Czechoslovakia were motivated by genuine love. Thank God for all the help they have brought! Yet, I am afraid that some were motivated by a bad conscience about being more affluent. Some sincerely tried to do something about the financial disparity. The obvious thing to do was to bring some gifts to the pastor. But the obvious is not always the best.

The reasoning, in many cases, perhaps subconscious, might have been as follows: "My standard of living is shamefully high in comparison with these people. I should share the gifts God gave me. I cannot help all; let me at least help the pastor. He is entitled to some help. And he will share with the others." It sounds logical, doesn't it? And in many cases this obvious solution probably was the right one. But the visitors were not always conscious of the possible traps. Some Christians from poorer countries are masters in asking and not asking for

help at the same time. I know a Czech pastor who can very passionately explain to visitors how much more he could do "for the Lord" if he would have a better car, a stronger computer, a higher salary. A direct request is never made. Unsolicited hints are plentiful.

There is a European country where there is only one pastor who is paid by local money as far as I know. Most of the pastors have sponsors in the West and their income is four to five times higher than the average salary in the country. To keep their sponsors, they have to spend a few weeks, in some cases even up to two months, traveling in the West and speaking about "the mighty things the Lord is doing in their church." You can imagine the pressure to make things look better than they really are. And who would muster the courage to tell the sponsors the harsh truth in case things don't go well at all? But who would refuse to help when he is able to help? How many times must the story of Naaman and Gehazi be repeated (II Kings 5). In that case, the story of Gehazi seemed quite trustworthy. It does not surprise me that many churches in our part of the world are contaminated by spiritual leprosy.

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### *Vanity*

It was obvious from talks with some of the people that they would like to be important. I remember a conversation with one of these visitors:

"How big is your church?"

"Well, about five hundred adults."

"And how big is the largest church in Prague?"

"I presume we are the largest."

"So would you be considered one of the leaders in your nation?"

"I suppose I would."

"Oh, we speak to an important leader!" said the female visitor, turning to her companion. From the tone of the voice and from the whole conversation it was obvious that "talking to a leader" is the important thing. I know perfectly well that from God's point of view I am not necessarily that important at all. Perhaps some unknown intercessor is. God looks to the heart, not to what the world honors.

It was very common that some people coming from the West wanted to perform some drama or hold a meeting. They turned to us to arrange it. We were supposed to organize all the permits, rent a hall, arrange and distribute the leaflets. They generously paid for it, performed their act, and went back home. Then we received their newsletter about how they "did a mission campaign" in Eastern Europe. They did not bother to consider if their activity was really worthwhile, what its real impact was, if it was really the thing we needed, and if we would not have been able to do the same thing better if we had the money. Well, we learned our lesson. Now we are very, very careful in what we do and with whom. We do not believe that God only wants us to help someone have his photograph in his newsletter, embracing us and saying how they "helped" or "instructed" us. ♦

Dan Drápal is a pastor in the Brethren Church, Prague, Czech Republic. His article is excerpted from a 36-page booklet of the same title, reprinted with permission. To be continued in the next issue of the EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT.

# Rebirth and Renewal in the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Juris Rubenis

The phrase "rebirth and renewal" relates particularly to the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church's situation and recent history. Ten years ago, on 14 June 1987, the pastors' movement, called Rebirth and Renewal, was founded. Seventeen Lutheran ministers united and vowed to strive to create new opportunities in the life of the church. It should be noted that the concept of "rebirth and renewal" is primarily a theological one. In the New Testament letter to Titus (3:5), Paul speaks of the salvation Christ procures by "the washing of rebirth and renewal in the Holy Spirit."

With the democratization of the former Soviet Union, new social processes emerged in Latvia. After almost 50 years of ideological oppression following the Soviet occupation of Latvia in 1940, people joined in the struggle for a truly dynamic, independent, and free religious life.

## Sorting Out Church-State Accommodation and Confrontation

It was very inspiring when, after many long years of oppression, the church could suddenly release its own publications, prepare television and radio broadcasts, organize Sunday schools for children, reclaim abandoned sanctuaries, and hold services in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, and military bases. Eventually, however, it became clear that these opportunities required qualifications that not all church workers possessed.

During the last few decades, two very contradictory principles shaped church life in Eastern Europe. One was the principle of self-sacrifice, which governed the life of the heroic martyr. The other was the principle of survival. Alongside self-sacrificing, fearless witnesses to Christ stood collaborators who rationalized their collaboration as the only way for the church to survive the Communist regime. After the fall of Communism, no church in a post-Communist nation has managed to avoid a period of complicated internal struggles. Many East European churches have split apart, e.g., in Croatia, Slovakia, Bulgaria. These conflicts were exacerbated by people who had lived through the Communist years and wanted swift, moral compensation for their suffering. In the heat of the "battle," many church-going Christians had a very difficult time adhering to Christian principles while trying to settle their own personal conflicts.

In response to these struggles the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church convened a synod in April 1989 and unseated its former archbishop, a man who belonged to the collaborationist school of thought. In his place the church elected a new head

and a completely new consistory, or governing body, effecting a 100 percent turnover in church leadership. One of the church's objectives became the formation of a qualitatively superior system of theological education. But here the church confronted an even more complex set of problems and questions. In the beginning, just after the fall of the Iron Curtain, all East European churches were prepared to believe in and learn from West European churches. As communication continued, serious concerns arose between the two. The

East European churches and their people had been theologically isolated for 50 years. The circumstances of their existence had challenged them to develop a dynamic, living faith outside the framework of formal church membership. Gradually, the dialogue between West and East European churches made it clear that the two were not based on the same theological paradigm. Even more important, East European church representatives increasingly felt that Westerners did not understand their experience but looked upon them as somewhat immature children who could eliminate their deficiencies and meet their needs only by completely adopting the theology and practices of West European churches. East European church representatives often concluded that their West European counterparts weighed organizational objectives more strongly than the more subjective and spiritual elements of faith and church life.

As mentioned before, East European churches had suffered and been persecuted, yet had also experienced the faithfulness of their martyrs. At the same time, the churches had been deformed by totalitarianism because they existed within a deformed society. Survival was bought at a very high price. Every church had its compromised clergy, some of whom were in positions of leadership. The church could not urge society toward spiritual life and truth if it had not yet resolved the burdens inherited from the past. The process of clarification and cleansing was very complicated and, at times, unrealizable. One of the most essential questions for East European churches remains: how to retain the positive

## Church Membership in Latvia

Evangelical Lutheran	c 300,000
Roman Catholic	c 300,000
Orthodox	c 100,000
Old Believer	c 70,000
Baptist	c 5,000

Source: Rev. Juris Rubenis

**Editor's note:** In a 1996 poll 39 percent of Latvians, or approximately one million, identified themselves as Lutherans. Rev. Rubenis notes, however, that far more Latvians identify themselves as Lutherans in surveys than practice their faith.

Christian elements and knowledge gained in the last few decades while freeing themselves from the stamp of a totalitarian regime.

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### *The Church's Renewed Dialogue with Society*

As soon as the church had the chance to begin speaking, it suddenly became interesting to society. After long years of totalitarian oppression, society longed to find fast and easy answers. To many it seemed that the church could fill the now empty ideological chair, an impression based on erroneous conceptions about the church. The church knew that it needed to influence the public life of the nation, yet it did not quite understand how to go about it. In the first years after the fall of the Iron Curtain several ministers ran for office and were elected to parliament, but their work did not always resonate positively in the church, nor were they always able to get their parties interested in Christian issues. It is interesting to note that even in the sector of society that supported the church, clergy participation in politics was looked upon very critically. Church people did not want their clergy to be bound to party programs.

It became clear that the realization of Christian values within society was not to be achieved through the clericalization of politics, but by the actualization of Christ's teachings, the Gospel, without the church trying to duplicate social and political institutions. However, Westernization of society in East Europe is occurring more rapidly than changes in the church. And democracy in the East most often means rapidly adopting the worst experiences of Western nations, accepting the consumerist philosophy, proclaiming one's own egotistical interests as the highest Credo.

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### *The Outlook*

My sketch shows fairly clearly that the processes of rebirth and renewal in East European churches have not flowed as smoothly as many would like. The processes are painful, as are all processes of birth. Only confidence in one's foundation grants security in the world. Indeed, the roots of intolerance are often found in feelings of insecurity. It is no secret that theology in Western Europe is experiencing a serious crisis. Theoretically, it is finely developed and well articulated, but it is spiritually uninteresting and lifeless.

East European churches have much to learn from the mistakes of West European churches. We in the Baltic countries are pleased with our well-attended worship services and do not covet the empty churches of Germany and Sweden. We do not want a theology that proclaims the practice of Christian faith unnecessary or dubious. We want a theology

that helps people attain spiritual experience and knowledge. The church must do something other than speak tediously about God, often in language which people do not understand; it must help people meet God. Only the experience of God's reality makes the church necessary and meaningful. Without it the church, with all of its developed systems of social service, will become a peripheral and unnecessary relic of the past—a harmless, rather unnecessary social institution.

A great spiritual thirst dwells within the peoples of Eastern Europe. Public opinion polls in Latvia reveal fantastic statistics. At the end of 1996 a survey was conducted jointly by the universities of Upsala and Riga concerning high school religiosity. It was ascertained that 80 percent of Latvian students believe in God. In a December 1996 survey of Latvian society it was found that 55.4 percent of the population trust the church and consider it the nation's most credible institution. In comparison, television rated at 46.8 percent, the press at 30.4 percent, Latvia's parliament at only 13.9 percent. This means that the church in Latvia has great potential, for only a small percentage of those who trust in it are registered church members. In public life the church can help to lessen intolerance and hate. For East European churches this entails finding the proper tone in accomplishing their national tasks. The question is how the churches can help small, formerly oppressed nations, such as the Baltic states, recover their self-confidence and spiritual identity without the churches themselves degenerating into nationalistic institutions that proclaim one nation's superiority over others (as is happening, unfortunately, in church life in Russia and the former Yugoslavia).

One more problem which the church can help to unravel in social life is the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressors of the past. How do we go about smoothing relations between the two groups? It is, indeed, a question to be solved through confession of sin and absolution. What should be done with the politically compromised? Should only "clean," uncompromised candidates be considered for public office, even though they are most likely tainted with other faults? It is impossible to find anyone without some negative "baggage" in his or her past, not just in Eastern Europe, but in the world. To look for totally unspotted people is illusory. The real question is how to help compromised and erring people to change.

As we look back on the experiences of the last ten years, I believe it has grown clearer that we East Europeans are not just needy and immature orphans, but people gifted with a rich history and experience. We are a people who must learn to make decisions and take responsibility for our own spiritual lives. Above all, our experience has taught us that if the spiritual, vertical imperative in our relationship with God is lost by relegating it to the margin of church life, in truth, the church loses everything. Relationship with God must always be the church's most vital concern. ♦

East European churches have much to learn from the mistakes of West European churches. We in the Baltic countries are pleased with our well-attended worship services and do not covet the empty churches of Germany and Sweden.

*The Rev. Juris Rubenis, Doctor of Theology, is senior pastor of Martin Luther Church, Riga, Latvia. His paper is excerpted with permission from a presentation given at the Seminar on Religion and World Civilization, Butler University, Indianapolis, IN, 8 April 1997. The website for Butler University is <http://www.butler.edu/www/philrel/seminar.html>.*

## RESOURCES

The editor highly recommends Keston News Service (KNS) and the Keston quarterly academic journal, *Religion, State and Society (RSS)*.

Keston's Moscow correspondent

Lawrence Uzzell deserves high praise and, I would argue, a Pulitzer Prize for his summer and fall 1997 coverage of new Russian legislation on religion. Donations in the U.S. may be mailed to Keston USA, Box 4532, Wheaton, IL 60189, with checks made out to "Keston USA." Checks for U.S. subscriptions should read "Keston Subscriptions," and should be mailed c/o Robert Morrison, 801 G St. NW, Washington, DC 20001. Donations and subscriptions by credit card or in pounds sterling should be forwarded to Keston Institute, 4 Park Town, Oxford OX2 6SH, England; tel: 44-1865-311-022; fax: 44-1865-311-280; e-mail: keston.institute@keston.org. KNS subscriptions run \$50/person, \$160/organization (with hard copy, but not electronic reproduction rights). RSS is \$53/year. Lawrence Uzzell may be contacted by phone (7-095-290-0327) or e-mail (9133.g23@g23.relcom.ru).



Since the peoples of Southeastern Europe feel the pains of centuries-old grievances as if they occurred yesterday, it is important for an understanding of this region's present hostilities to keep in mind not only the myriad nationalities and faiths, but the origins of various ethnic and religious conflicts. Two conferences organized by Dr. Theofanis G. Stavrou, University of Minnesota, and Dr. John R. Lampe, Director of East European Studies of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, which addressed these issues, resulted in an East European Studies Occasional Paper entitled *Christianity and Islam in Southeastern Europe* (Number 47). Charles Frazee writes on "Balkan Christian Communities in the Early Ottoman Empire"; Eve Levin writes on "Slavic Orthodox Attitudes Toward Other Religions"; and Drago Roksandic writes on "Religious Tolerance and Division in the Krajina." Professor Levin briefly summarizes the value of this study: "The reemergence of religion as a motive for violence, despite half a century of Communist rule, speaks to its vitality in popular consciousness. Consequently, an examination of what the various religious traditions of the Balkans have taught about other faiths can offer some insight into the reasons for conflict." For a free copy, contact: The Woodrow Wilson Center East European Studies Program, 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW., #704, Washington, DC 20024-2518; tel: 202-287-3000, ext. 222; fax: 202-287-3772; e-mail: ees-wwc@erols.com.



Gateway Films is the distributor for a **three-part video on "The History of Orthodox Christianity,"** produced by Greek Orthodox Communications. Released in 1994, each 29-minute video includes extensive filming on location, with art and architecture used to good effect. The information conveyed by an off-camera narrator is well-formulated and fairly balanced, whereas most short interviews with various Orthodox hierarchs are less successful, either because of heavy accents or wooden presentations. Too many clerics read from a script, or sound like they are reading from a script, and they rarely speak directly to the camera. The exception is Bishop Kallistos Ware, who not only is articulate, but addresses substantive issues with some candor, for example, in noting that too often Orthodoxy has been a source of ethnic more than spiritual identification.

Part One ("The Beginnings") covers the first two centuries of the Christian era in a manner that does not exclusively stress Eastern Orthodox distinctives. Part Two ("Byzantium") covers the Edict of Milan, which legalized Christianity (313 A.D.), to the fall of Constantinople to the Turks (1453 A.D.). This video ably summarizes the Seven Ecumenical Councils, the Iconoclast controversy, and the growing rivalry between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Part Three ("A Hidden Treasure") briefly identifies the historic patriarchates and then honestly admits to overlapping and conflicting Orthodox jurisdictions in North America. An excellent 29-page study guide accompanies the series. Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon, an Orthodox parish priest and professor of philosophy, is the author of this well-written aid, which is well worth reading in its own right. Helpful minute totals are given for each subsection. This reviewer has not seen an accompanying four-part series entitled "The Sacraments of Orthodox Christianity." Cost: \$29.95/tape or \$79.95/set. To order, contact: Gateway Films/Vision Video, Box 540, Worcester, PA 19490; tel: 800-523-0226; 610-584-1893; fax: 610-584-4610; e-mail: visionvide@aol.com.



**The Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality publishes *Lumina Lina/Gracious Light*.**

Most articles, poetry, reviews, and news appear in Romanian. The Institute has also published "Divine Creation and Human Responsibility in the Context of Contemporary Ecological Preoccupations" in English in *Symposia 3* (number 1, 1996), 96 pp. Contact: Theodor Damian, Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality, 30-18 50th St., Woodside, NY 11377; tel/fax: 718-626-6013. The cost for *Lumina Lina/Gracious Light* is \$5 and there is a suggested donation of \$3 for "Divine Creation and Human Responsibility in the Context of Contemporary Ecological Preoccupations." The postage and handling charge is \$2.50 for each.



Leo Tolstoy's spiritually powerful story, *How Much Land Does a Man Need*, summarized in the *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT 5* (Winter 1997), 16, is available for \$10 in a collection of short stories published by Penguin and separately for \$5, with a forward by Os Guinness, from the Trinity Forum. Other materials on Russia from Trinity include Tolstoy, *Two Old Men*; Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Grand Inquisitor*; Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Oak and the Calf* (excerpt); and Solzhenitsyn, *One Word of Truth*. \$5 each or five for \$20. Contact: Trinity Forum, 5210 Lyngate Court, Suite B, Burke, VA 22015-1631; tel: 800-585-1070 and 703-764-1070; fax: 703-764-0993; e-mail: MAIL@TTF.org.



**Joseph Ton (pronounced Tson), president of the Romanian Missionary Society, has published his 1996 doctoral dissertation** from the Evangelical Faculty of Theology, Heverlee, Belgium, **under the title *Suffering Martyrdom, and Rewards in Heaven*** (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), 516 pp. Dr. Peter Beyerhaus, Tübingen University, Germany, describes the volume as "a penetrating investigation into the biblical and historical theology of martyrdom, unique in this century." Dr. Ton, a Baptist pastor and lecturer who studied theology at Oxford University, was exiled from Romania in 1981 after harassment, house arrest, and repeated interrogations by Ceausescu's security police. The cost is \$48.50 by check or money

order (plus \$6.50 for shipping and handling). Contact: RMS, Box 527, Wheaton, IL 60189; tel: 630-665-6503; fax: 630-665-6538; e-mail: RMSda@aol.com.



The second edition of *The Russian World: Life and Language*, by Genevra Gerhart (Fort Worth, TX, and London: Harcourt Brace, 1995), 419 pp, includes Russian language terminology with English descriptive material on the Easter season, other Orthodox feast days and saints' days, fasts, church architecture, the iconostasis, icons, the cross, church bells, various aspects of Orthodox worship, including the Divine Liturgy, the clergy, and the sacraments. Contact: Harcourt Brace and Company, 6277 Sea Harbor Dr., Orlando, FL 32887-6777; tel: 800-782-4479 or 407-345-3800 (international); fax: 800-874-6418 or 407-345-4060 (international); e-mail: hbintl@harcourtbrace.com. The cost is \$44.



The Washington-based Center for Communications, Health, and the Environment (CECHE) produces a quarterly *NIS Health Promotion Bulletin*, distributed via the Internet. Its purpose is "to assist the newly established democracies of Central Europe and the former Soviet Union by assessing, initiating, implementing,

and supporting programs to improve health and alleviate the adverse effects of environmental pollution in the region." The Spring 1997 issue included articles on tobacco, alcohol, and drug use by Slovak youth; a list of web sites with international medical and health information; sources for Russian-language documents on such subjects as breast-feeding and detecting breast cancer; occupational health hazards in Cluj, Romania; and a University of Rochester medical education project in Russia and Ukraine. For a gratis e-mail subscription, contact: Nina Halper, editor, CECHE, 3333 K St., NW, Suite 110, Washington, DC 20007; tel: 202-965-5990; fax: 202-965-5996; e-mail: spalmer.ceche.dc@worldnet.att.net.



CECHE (see above) also publishes the *Central European Health and Environmental Monitor*, reported in the *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT 2* (Winter 1994), 13. The Spring/Summer 1996 issue of Vol. 5 treats maternity care in Ukraine; diarrheal and respiratory diseases in Central Asia; troublesome demographic trends in Central and Eastern Europe; and means to decrease infant mortality in post-Soviet societies. The *Monitor* is available free of charge by mail. Back issues are posted on the CECHE web site: [www.igc.apc.org/ceche](http://www.igc.apc.org/ceche).



## PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

### The Boeing Relief Program

In early 1992 an Evangelical Christian employee of Boeing Manufacturing had the vision of developing a ministry of shipping humanitarian aid on new Boeing aircraft being delivered to countries all over the world. He wrote a proposal and presented it to his superior. It eventually ended up at the President's office. The President approved the proposal.

During five years some of the organizations involved in the establishment of this ministry have been Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, World Concern, Friends in the West, the Red Cross, Northwest Medical Teams, and World Vision. During these five years these groups have moved over one million pounds of airfreight free of charge. The program has included aid flights to Russia and Finland, and three to Russia are scheduled for January-April 1998.

The Boeing Relief Committee, consisting of company and relief organization representatives, meets approximately three to four times a year in Seattle, WA. The major purpose is to review together upcoming flights, to look at possible joint ventures, and to work toward using as many flights as possible. When an organization identifies a flight it wishes to use, a Boeing representative contacts the airline receiving the airplane, asking for its approval for that relief organization to ship humanitarian aid on its flight. If the airline approves, the Boeing staff begins to work with the relief organization in planning the delivery of the relief goods to Boeing. Boeing cannot store humanitarian aid for longer than three to seven days before the flight is scheduled to depart. Three organizations in the Portland-Seattle area can assist in short-term storing and delivering humanitarian aid to Seattle: Friends in the West and World Concern, both located in Seattle;

and Northwest Medical Teams, located in Portland.

The relief staff and Boeing work together on developing needed shipping documents to assist in clearing customs at the final destination. It is important that field staff in the country receiving the shipment work with the airline in making the arrangements for receiving the shipment and clearing customs. Some of the airlines are also willing to provide one-way transportation for relief personnel and volunteers on the plane delivering the aid.

The merger of Boeing and McDonald Douglass opens up more flights to more countries. Also, Boeing staff have made arrangements with Northwest Airlines to ship humanitarian aid free of charge on a space-available basis. For assistance in arranging contacts with the Boeing Relief Program, contact Harold F. Frye, executive director, Nazarene Health Care Fellowship, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131; tel: 913-764-1797; fax: 816-333-2948; e-mail: [hfrye@nazarene.org](mailto:hfrye@nazarene.org).



On 7-8 November 1997 the Institute for East-West Christian Studies (IEWCS) sponsored a "Consultation on Christian Medical, Dental, and Health Ministries in the Former Soviet Union and East Central Europe" at the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL. Topics included networking and partnership; the new Russian law on religion; clearing customs with medical and relief supplies; medical education; and church-based medical clinics. To request a full listing of available audio tapes, use the contact information for the Institute for East-West Christian Studies on page 16.

At the medical consultation William Clancy, project coordinator for the St. Nicholas Christian Medical Center, St. Petersburg, gave a workshop addressing "On Line Medical Resources." While that session was not taped, Mr. Clancy has taken the initiative to establish an e-mail conference on "FSU-Eastern-Central-Europe-Medical-Missions." The purpose is to

provide a clearinghouse for information and ideas. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to Hub@XC.org. After typing the following message: "subscribe fsu-eastern-central-europe-medical-missions," subscribers will receive a general introduction and guidelines for posting messages. To contact Mr. Clancy directly, send an e-mail message to clancy@infopro.spb.su.



#### Russian Christian Satellite Radio Network Proposed

As of November 1997, only a few Christian radio stations were operational in Russia, including NEW LIFE RADIO (Magadan), FEBC (Khabarovsk/Vladivostok), HCJB partner stations (Ufa, Kazan, Cheboksary, Vladikavkaz) and RADIO TEOS (St. Petersburg/Moscow). This status leaves the bulk of the country without access to full-time Christian broadcasting. While Christian programming appears sporadically on state and independent television and radio, as well as on Radio Russia (primarily Russian Orthodox features), access is controlled.

HCJB World Radio and the Evangelical Covenant Church have established a consortium of Christian ministries involved in radio evangelism to Russia and the other CIS nations. The immediate goal is to create a production center and satellite uplink facility in St. Petersburg, which will provide 24-hour-per-day Christian radio service across the Russian Federation. Programming for this network will feature materials produced by existing Christian stations in Russia (at roughly 16 hours per day), with the remaining eight hours to be offered to consortium members (or interested Christian radio producers) on a paid basis.

For additional information contact:

Daniel Johnson, General Manager

New Life Radio (Magadan, Russia)

4 Moskovskoe shosse, kv. 180, St. Petersburg 196158, Russia

Tel/fax: 011-7-812-127-3529; e-mail: DJ@infopro.spb.su

David Kealy, Regional Director

HCJB World Radio Euro-Asia

Box N 89, 253002 Kyiv 2, Ukraine

E-mail: dkealy@radio.com.ua

Byron Amundsen,

Department of World Mission, Evangelical Covenant Church

5101 N. Francisco Ave., Chicago, IL 60625

Tel: 773-784-3000; fax: 773-784-4336

E-mail: fowm@compuserve.com

Source: E-mail from Daniel Johnson to editor, 4 December 1997.



**Focus on the Family offers gratis subscriptions to its children and youth magazines to missionary families:** *Clubhouse Jr.* (ages 4-8); *Clubhouse* (ages 8-12); *Brio* (teen girls); and *Breakaway* (teen boys). Missionary families must personally submit requests by mail or fax. Magazines are mailed without wrapping, so overt Christian references are visible. Requests should include the child's name, gender, birth date, address, and fax, if available. Write: "I do not wish to receive additional complimentary materials," if that is preferred. Contact: Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO 80995; fax: 719-531-3424.



A "Missions Coalition Joint Meeting" on 9 October 1997 in Budapest, Hungary, established a new Evangelical networking organization. "In partnership with the Church in Hungary," its purpose is "to obey the Great Commission by making disciples, strengthening churches, and serving as a resource to Hungarian church-planting movements." While the goal of Magyar Mission

Link is "to share information and build relationships inside the missionary community" (see the *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT* 4 [Summer 1996], 13), the new organization, while having a similar purpose, plans to "be more task oriented toward ministry to Hungarians and minorities within Hungary." As an example, the Coalition is organizing a four-week "missionary training school" for September 1998 under the direction of Bob Martin, Alliance for Saturation Church Planting, BobMartin@compuserve.com. Future meetings in Budapest are scheduled for 27 January and 24 March 1998. For additional information contact: The Missions Coalition, ERD 2030, Bajuszfu, U. 15, Hungary; tel: 36-23-375-975; fax: 36-23-375-976; e-mail MCH@h.om.org. Source: E-mail transmission of "Minutes of Missions Coalition Joint Meeting," 9 October 1997, from Donald Johnson, World Gospel Mission, Budapest, Hungary.

**Editor's note:** The Coalition may want to reconsider its provision that new members are to be admitted based on "unanimous approval by present agencies." This arrangement in effect extends an absolute veto power over membership to each charter agency. It can be questioned whether this hurtful blackballing provision is the healthiest approach to membership. Abuses of this mechanism range from the seventeenth century Polish Parliament (the liberum veto) to present-day U.S. fraternity and sorority membership.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thank you, Mark, for that sane, reasoned and historic perspective on the "New Law." The prayer panic over the imagined debilitation of God's work seemed to leave his sovereignty in question. Formerly a missionary and now a businessman, I have slowly grown weary of many of my former colleagues who see themselves the center of God's rescue operation for one culture or another. It is too easy to let pass unrecognized some of the "nonmissionaries" who changed the world most before becoming a missionary became a cultural subcult. I think of Abraham the landowner, Daniel the statesman, Peter the fisherman, Paul the tentmaker. I smiled inwardly at the prediction that now Russians would be forced into creative ways of going to the "near-overseas" for training, and that the growth of the evangelical church would rest on their shoulders, not ours (us "missionaries"). Maybe instead of the artificial role marked by collar and pith helmet, we might find businessmen, professionals, entrepreneurs, relief/social workers rushing into the "marketplace of the Gospel" in natural ways readily accepted by and sometimes underwritten by governments that feel edgy over so much uncontrolled religion amplifying the chaos of Russian society.

Gary W. Taylor



We Protestant missionaries need to listen to, learn from, and breathe the air of Orthodoxy if we are to recover something of our own tradition. At the same time, the story of Russia's evangelical churches, for example, is a repeatedly sad one of initial growth snuffed out by Orthodox reprisal. May we all learn from the Russian Orthodox Christian and martyr Alexander Men, murdered in 1990: "Our walls do not reach as high as heaven."

a missionary in Russia



## NEWS NOTES

Russia's Committee for Rescuing Youth From False Religions consists of relatives and former members of religious groups the Committee deems destructive. The sects it

considers most dangerous are: the Unification Church (Moonies), Scientology, Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Christ [Boston Movement], Hare Krishna, Aum Shinrikyo, Mormons, Church of the Final Covenant (Vissarion), Mother of God Center, "The Family" (also known as Children of God), the Union of Independent Christian Missionary Society, the White Brotherhood, followers of Witness Lee, and the Spiritual Center of Satora. *Source: Argumenty i fakty*, 4 December 1997.



Jerzy Buzek, sworn in as prime minister of Poland on 31 October 1997, is the first Lutheran in the post in the country's history. (Marshall Jozef Pilsudski, Poland's interwar leader, turned Protestant in order to remarry.) Poland, with a population of 39 million, has 92,000 Lutherans. Buzek heads a coalition of pro-Solidarity parties replacing the Democratic Left Alliance, a left coalition including communists, which led the country for four years. The Catholic news agency, KAI, reports, "Paradoxically, one political event has had more effect than all previous work by Protestant circles by showing Polish society isn't a denominational monolith and making known the role of Protestants in our national heritage." *Source: Jonathan Luxmore, "Poland's Protestant Premier Pledges to Abide by Catholic Teaching," Ecumenical News International Bulletin 22* (12 November 1997), 20.



Boris Arapovich, founding director of the Swedish-based Institute for Bible Translation (IBT), has resigned in order to return to his homeland to devote full-time efforts to relief work in Croatia and Bosnia. He remains a member of the IBT board. *Source: Christianity Today 41* (17 November 1997), 76.



The EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT has a correction and an addition to a previous report on violence against Romanian Baptists: 5 (Spring 1997), 7. Ten, rather than nine, Evangelicals were beaten in the village of Ruginoasa in Moldova in northeast Romania in March 1997. Word has been received that in the month following the incident, 14 people from Ruginoasa underwent conversion experiences and applied for membership in the Baptist church: four members of two different families, two women, three young men, and a young married gypsy man. The 14 applied for membership in the Baptist church in nearby Pascani since there is not yet a legally registered Baptist church in Ruginoasa. *Source: E-mail from Mircea Mitrofan, Iasi, Romania, to Malcolm Walker, Keston Institute librarian, copied to Mark Elliott, 27 July 1997.*



Authorities banned the showing of the Campus Crusade Jesus film in several Serbian towns in the summer of 1997, following press allegations that the film promoted Satanism. Evangelical pastor Simo Ralevic, who sought to show the film, faces continued opposition from the Orthodox Church, Serbian officials, and the press, which have attempted to link him to a number of suicides and suicide attempts, based on Evangelical literature alleged to have been found in the rooms of victims. Simo Ralevic and his brother, Cedo, are pastors in the Evangelical Baptist Church of Yugoslavia. *Source: Willy Fautre, "Serbian Pastor, Jesus Film Accused of Promoting Satanism," Compass Direct*, 21 November 1997.



Armed gunmen abducted four Christian relief workers in the north Caucasus in two separate incidents in September-October 1997. On 20 September 10 to 15 masked assailants abducted Dimitri Penkovsky and Dimitri Petrov, in Ingushetia, two kilometers from this autonomous Russian republic's border with Chechnya. Penkovsky, 47, and his wife, Galina, live in Vladikavkaz and have one son. Petrov, 33, and his wife, Lena, live in Moscow and have one daughter. These two Russian citizens are employed by International Orthodox Christian Charities, which has received funding from Action of Churches Together, a Christian humanitarian network sponsored by the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II has written appeals for help to Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov.

On 23 October two armed gunmen abducted two Hungarian aid workers, Gabor Dynaijsky and Istvan Olah, in Grozny, capital of Chechnya, in the offices of Action of Churches Together. Dynaijsky, 44, is unmarried. Olah, 47, has a wife and five children in Hungary. The two relief workers serve in the north Caucasus under the auspices of Hungarian Interchurch Aid, in cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church and Action of Churches Together. Moscow correspondent Andrei Zolotov reports, "Since the armed conflict in Chechnya ended last year, the republic has been hit by a wave of abductions which are believed a major source of income—in the form of ransoms—not only for local warlords, but also for high-ranking Chechen government officials. Journalists and international aid workers have been prime targets." Christophe André, a French aid worker with Médecins Sans Frontières held hostage in Chechnya for three months, reportedly escaped his captors in October 1997. *Sources: Andrei Zolotov, "Two More Church Aid Workers Abducted in Chechnya," Ecumenical News International Bulletin 21* (29 October 1997), 14-15; Leonid Kishkovsky, *The Orthodox Church 33* (November 1997), 2.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**27 January 1998**  
**Hungarian Missions**  
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**2-4 March 1998**  
**Cell Church Training**  
Seminar, St. Petersburg,  
Russia  
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Network  
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E-mail: by.mail.nevalink.ru;  
Web page: www.cellcm.org  
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Church  
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Cincinnati, OH 45211  
Tel: 513-661-2428  
Fax: 513-661-2773  
(call first, then fax)  
E-mail: csqueri@eclink.com



**15-18 March 1998**  
**Conference on Religions,**  
**Rights, and Public Policy:**  
**European and North**  
**American Perspectives,**  
Kraków, Poland  
Contact: Dr. Elizabeth Cole  
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**24 March 1998**  
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**24-27 March 1998**  
**Christian Conference for**  
**Professional School**  
**Teachers, Kyiv, Ukraine**  
Contact: Vasily Zhuribeda  
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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  
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**24-27 September 1998**  
**American Association for**  
**the Advancement of Slavic**  
**Studies Convention,**  
Boca Raton, FL  
Contact: Wendy Walker  
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of Slavic Studies  
8 Story St.  
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Fax: 617-495-0680  
E-mail: aaass@  
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**28 September—**  
**2 October 1998**  
**LITT-WORLD '98,**  
**Publishing Priorities in a**  
**Fragile World, High Leigh**  
Conference Centre,  
Hoddesdon, England  
Contact: Sharyl Sieh  
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**18-21 November 1999**  
**American Association for**  
**the Advancement of Slavic**  
**Studies Convention,**  
St. Louis, MO  
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## EDITORIAL

# The New Russian Law on Religion: Will E-mail Undermine Draconian Enforcement?

Mark Elliott

E-mail may make it difficult, if not impossible, for local Russian authorities to engage in religious repression without word reaching the whole country and the West in record time.

Given the size of the Russian Republic, it is unlikely that the *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT* has been able to identify every instance of state infringement of religious liberty based on the September 1997 Russian law on religion. (See chart on page 6.) On the other hand, reported instances to date are relatively few, compared to what could be expected, considering the stringency of the language of the law. (See *EAST-WEST CHURCH AND MINISTRY REPORT* 5 [Summer 1997], 1-5.) This may change now that Russian authorities have released 70-plus pages of implementing regulations (ITAR-TASS, 9 December 1997). Or, "the most severe wave" of crackdowns against disfavored minorities," to use the language of legal scholar Lev Semkin, may be delayed until after the December 1999 deadline for religious groups to reregister (Keston News Service, 15 October 1997).

The fall of 1997 witnessed regional attempts at strict enforcement, followed by concerted indigenous and international protest, and in some instances, at least temporarily, reversals of decisions. For example, Moscow appears to have prevailed upon local officials to the benefit of Lutherans in Khakassia, Siberia, and to the benefit of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and other Protestants in the Mari El Republic. (See chart.)

Since the pattern of enforcement to date is mixed and inconclusive, it would appear that Anatoli Krasikov of the International Religious Liberty Association was correct when he expressed

the conviction "that 'serious repression' would not begin until the issue had faded from the forefront of Western diplomatic and media attention" (KNS, 15 October 1997).

In Moscow in 1991 e-mail played a novel role in helping spread the truth during critical, early days of the Communists' abortive coup attempt. Similarly, this editor wonders if e-mail may make it difficult, if not impossible, for local Russian authorities to engage in religious repression without word reaching the whole country and the West in record time. This burgeoning form of computer-based communication may have played a pivotal role in the case of the Mari El Republic: at the end of November 1997, President Viacheslav Kilitsyn banned a previously approved evangelistic campaign, but then quickly reversed his decision, following a blizzard of e-mail reports and e-mail appeals for readers to phone or fax the president requesting reconsideration.

Certainly the new law did not inaugurate arbitrary treatment of non-Orthodox religions. Approximately one-quarter of Russian provinces already had enacted restrictive and discriminatory legislation on religion prior to September 1997. And apart from any legal consideration, local authorities, prior to the new legislation, often deferring to Orthodox wishes, frequently denied Evangelicals rental rights to public facilities and made it very difficult to purchase land or secure building permits. Discriminatory practice against non-Orthodox would be the case with or without the September 1997 law. What the new law does do is to legitimize and dramatically increase the probability of pervasive state interference in religious life in ways that undermine the Russian Constitution's guarantee of equal protection before the law. ♦

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

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