



# EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT

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## Cults and New Religious Movements in the Former Soviet Union

Paul Carden

With the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, a flood of foreign religious groups sent missionaries, literature, and tons of humanitarian aid in hopes of making converts and establishing a long-term presence in one of the world's largest mission fields. *Glasnost* also enabled new indigenous movements to display their wares in an open religious marketplace.

Noted religion scholars Rodney Stark and Laurence Iannaccone, writing in the *Journal of Contemporary Religion* (May 1997), explain that "Other things being equal, new and unconventional religious organizations will prosper to the extent that they compete against weak, local conventional religious organizations within a relatively unregulated religious economy"—in this case, the Russian Orthodox Church in the former Soviet republics. "Put another way, new religious organizations will do best where conventional religious mobilization is low—at least to the degree that the state gives such groups a chance to exist. Thus, we ought to find that where conventional church membership and church attendance rates are low, the incidence of unconventional religious movements will be high."

Evangelistic media blitzes, stadium crusades, leaflet distribution, and unprecedented Bible dissemination exposed millions of curious citizens to the Christian message, but many would agree that few of those reached had corresponding opportunities for follow-up, discipleship, or integration into a Christian church. Some observers feel that this negligence is being exploited by a variety of pseudo-Christian and theologically aberrant movements, some of them quite aggressive and well organized. Among these would be Jehovah's Witnesses, the New Apostolic Church, the Local Church/Living Stream movement of Witness Lee, the International Churches of Christ (Boston Movement), and the Word of Life (Livets Ord) movement of Ulf Ekman—all of which are evidently experiencing significant growth.

Few cults and new religious movements (NRMs) regularly make membership statistics available to outsiders, and the notion of what constitutes a member varies considerably from one group to the next, so objective data can be difficult to obtain.

The following summarizes some of the most recent information available on the strength of several of the more noteworthy heterodox and controversial religions operating in the former Soviet republics.

### Jehovah's Witnesses

By far the most successful foreign cult in the former Soviet Union is the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, which first shipped its publications to Russia in 1887. The movement was actively persecuted by authorities throughout the Soviet era but obtained legal status in Russia in March 1991. Thanks to its comparatively deep roots in Eurasian soil and an enthusiastic lay proselytizing force, the Watchtower Society has achieved impressive growth. Witness congregations in St. Petersburg alone increased from one to 43 between 1990 and 1997.

In 1997 Jehovah's Witnesses in seven former Soviet states reached nearly 200,000 "publishers" (active, baptized members), who logged nearly 40 million hours going door to door and standing on street corners with the *Watchtower* message. A better indication of the actual number of people participating in the life of the cult (preparing for baptism, engaging in home studies) is the figure of those attending its annual "Memorial" observance—over half a million in the countries listed. But the Watchtower Society has stated that the total of its active members in all 15 former Soviet states—including Central Asian republics, where its operations are suppressed or banned—is over 225,000, and that last year's combined Memorial attendance surpassed 600,000 (*Awake!*, 22 February 1998).

Rapid growth has caused an acute shortage of worship facilities. As of August 1997 roughly 85 percent of the congregations under the Russian administrative branch were without permanent meeting places. To oversee this expanding flock, Jehovah's Witnesses built a lavish national headquarters office complex in Solnechnoe (some 40 km northwest of St. Petersburg), which was dedicated in June 1997 with extensive press coverage. At the time of its dedication, the center served 800 congregations

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**Scientology**

in Russia and nine other former Soviet republics. The Solnechnoe complex disseminates 90 tons of Witness literature per week in Russian and 20 additional languages, much of which is printed in Germany and Italy. The Society now publishes *The Watchtower* regularly in Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian and East Armenian, Estonian, Georgian, Kirghiz, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ossetian. Russian-language articles are available on the cult's official web site (<http://watchtower.org>).

Though no plans to produce a Russian version of its *New World Translation* have been disclosed, in January 1997 the Watchtower Society announced a program to distribute more than 300,000 copies of its new Russian-language Bible, *Holy Scriptures*, to universities, prisons, and other public institutions throughout the Russian Federation. This Bible combines a little-known translation of the Old Testament by nineteenth-century Russian Orthodox Archimandrite Makarios and the Synodal version of the New Testament. More seriously, these Bibles feature over 30 pages of deceptive "Bible Topics for Discussion" which deny such essential Christian doctrines as the Trinity and the deity and resurrection of Jesus Christ—along with reasons for refusing blood transfusions in medical emergencies.

Unlike Mormonism, L. Ron Hubbard's "applied religious technology" of Dianetics and Scientology has spread quickly across the former Soviet Union. In St. Petersburg Scientologists distribute the movement's leaflets and hawk copies of *Dianetics* at subway entrances, while on the busy Nevsky Prospekt passersby are offered bus rides to the Dianetics Center for free personality testing. In March 1997 the German news weekly *Stern* reported that the movement's offices were spread "from Minsk to the Kamchatka Peninsula," and *International Scientology News* (Issue 4, 1997) boasted that "the two fastest-growing areas in all of Scientology [are] Russia and Hungary. Russia currently has 54 missions, with staff in training to open another 50 missions." With 170 paid employees, the Moscow Dianetics Center is the largest such branch office in the world. In February 1998 the web site for Scientology Missions International (<http://www.scientology.org>) offered contact addresses for 38 centers in the Russian Federation, three in Kazakhstan, two in Ukraine, and one each in Belarus, Moldova, Latvia, and Lithuania. Such Scientology-based organizations as Criminon, Narcōnon, the Way to Happiness Foundation, and Hubbard College of Administration also operate with varying degrees of success—and controversy.

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**Mormonism**

Compared with the Watchtower Society, the wealthy and powerful Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) has seen only meager results from its proselytizing efforts since the first Mormon missionaries arrived in Leningrad in January 1990. According to its official web site (<http://www.lds.org>), the LDS church obtained official recognition from the Russian government in May 1991, and hopes ran high. One month later, "the world-renowned Mormon Tabernacle Choir received publicity 'beyond its wildest expectations' as it performed in the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow and in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). The choir recorded songs later broadcast to a potential audience of 339 million" ([http://www.lds.org/Pioneer/The\\_Church\\_In\\_Your\\_Area/089\\_Russia.html](http://www.lds.org/Pioneer/The_Church_In_Your_Area/089_Russia.html)). But in early 1998 the LDS church had only some 6,000 members in Russia (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 March 1998), some 2,000 in the Kyiv region (Gary Browning, *Russia and the Restored Gospel*, 341), and even fewer in neighboring countries. There are currently seven Mormon missions in Russia (two in Moscow and one each in St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Rostov na Donu, Samara, and Ekaterinburg), two in Ukraine (in Kyiv and Donetsk), one for the Baltic nations (in Vilnius), and modest proselytizing efforts in Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, and several other republics. An estimated 700-800 Mormon missionaries now work in the former Soviet Union. Translation work is progressing in Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, and Georgian, among other languages.

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**Unification Church**

Papers authored in 1997 by Galina A. Krylova, a Moscow attorney sympathetic to the Unification Church, state that the movement, led by self-styled Korean messiah Sun Myung Moon, has been active unofficially in Russia since the 1970s and received official registration in the Russian Federation in May 1992. It currently works in 55 cities in the former Soviet Union, including Moscow, Ekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, Kyiv, Minsk, Vilnius, Tallinn, and Almaty. An early strategy to gain influence was to conduct seminars for educators in resort areas. Orthodox countercult activist Dr. Alexander Dvorkin, in his 1998 article, "A Presentation on the Situation in Russia," *Spirituality in East and West*, no. 11, estimates that over 60,000 attended these events, adding that the Unification textbook, *My World and I*, is being used in over 2,000 Russian schools. Moon's university front group, known as CARP, has been the target of legal actions in St. Petersburg and Oryol. Dvorkin also reports that the cult has developed a new textbook, *The Inner World of the Soldier*, "designed as a basic moral and religious education tool to be used throughout the army." Moscow sociologist Sergei Filatov gives a figure of 5,000 Moonies for 1994 and less than 3,000 for 1997. ("New Religious Movements' and the Socioreligious Situation in Post-Soviet Russia," paper presented at a Keston Institute conference on proselytism, Oxford, England, May 1997.)

## Hare Krishna

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is one of the most active and visible of the imported new religious movements and is known for its noisy street processions, extensive literature work, and distribution of free vegetarian meals to the poor. According to attorney Krylova, "The first Krishna religious organization to be registered in Russia, the Moscow Society of Krishna Consciousness, was registered only in 1988, even though the Krishnas began their activities in Russia much earlier, and were persecuted for their religious beliefs under the Soviet regime. Their All-Russian organization was registered in 1992." Though exact membership figures are not available, Russian ISKCON representative Vaidyanatha Dasa claimed in the September/October 1997 issue of *Hare Krishna World* that "We are not less than 30,000 [in Russia]. In Moscow alone we have thousands of followers because of our active radio preaching." Moscow's Institute of Religion and Law, however, more conservatively estimates 10,000 Hare Krishna. The July/August 1998 issue of the Hare Krishna's *Back to Godhead* magazine lists 22 ISKCON centers in Russia, seven in Ukraine, two each in Georgia and Lithuania, and others in Estonia, Latvia, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzia, and Tajikistan.

## Children of God/The Family

This pernicious pseudoevangelical sect claims to have been active in Russia since the early 1980s and may be best known in the region for its brightly colored posters featuring apocalyptic messages and sexually suggestive imagery. While its membership is probably small, in 1997 the cult boasted of its expansion into Estonia, Lithuania, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Tatarstan, and Siberia. Of special concern to Christian nationals and missionaries is the cult's efforts to gain credibility by posing as evangelicals, working alongside them in humanitarian efforts, and infiltrating evangelical churches. A recent promotional magazine, *The Family—Making a Difference!*, describes Project Aid Siberia as "a relief organization spearheaded by Faith Berg, the daughter of The Family's founder," which "secured and shipped 300 tons of humanitarian aid from the U.S. to several struggling cities in Siberia." The same magazine describes donations of hospital equipment and supplies, as well as clothing and other items, to Latvia, Ukraine, and various Russian cities, adding that the cult has "projects" in "penal institutions and halfway houses" in Russia and Ukraine. The magazine indicates that "Family-produced children's videos" were broadcast on Russian and Ukrainian television. These videos are distributed under such titles as "Kiddie Viddie," "Treasure Attic," "New Worlds to Discover," and "Fantastic Friends." The group's music audio cassettes are distributed as "Songs of Life" and "Heaven's Magic."

(continued on page 4)

## Selected Cult Statistics for the Former Soviet Union

	1993	1998
Jehovah's Witnesses	66,211	225,000
Mormons	3,400	8,500
Unification Church (Moonies)	400	under 3000*
ISKCON (Hare Krishna)	15,000	10,000

\*5,000 in 1994

Sources: *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT* 1 (Fall 1993), 5; Paul Carden, Center for Apologetics Research; Sergei Filatov, "New Religious Movements' and the Socioreligious Situation in Post-Soviet Russia," unpublished paper; Associated Press, "Despite Pessimism, Mormons Achieve Legal Status," 15 May 1998.

## Members of Selected Cults in the Former Soviet Union

	Jehovah's Witnesses	Mormon	Others	Totals
Armenia	450	240		690
Azerbaijan				0
Belarus	5,270			5,270
Estonia	5,140	420		5,560
Georgia	580			580
Kazakhstan	4,570			4,570
Kyrgyzia	500			500
Latvia	1,150			1,150
Lithuania	1,700			1,700
Moldova				0
Russia	61,100	8,500*	70,000	139,600
Tajikistan	240			240
Turkmenistan	240			240
Ukraine	117,000	13,000		130,000
Uzbekistan	1,420			1,420
Totals	199,360	22,160	70,000	291,520

\*Brierley gives a figure of 30,000 Mormons in Russia, but this appears to be inaccurate. Mormons themselves put the 1998 figure at 8,500 (Associated Press, "Despite Pessimism, Mormons Achieve Legal Status," 15 May 1998).

Sources: Peter Brierley, *World Churches Handbook* (London: Christian Research, 1997). Figures are derived from the 1995 update of the database used by Patrick Johnstone in *Operation World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993).

## Editor's Notes:

- Scholar William Fletcher once referred to Ukraine as the "Bible Belt" of the Soviet Union. Its comparatively pronounced religious sentiment is reflected in the present cult figures as well: with less than a third of Russia's population, Ukraine has a comparable number of cult adherents (130,000 vs. 139,600 for Russia).
- Unquestionably, Jehovah's Witnesses, with between 200,000 and 225,000 members, is the largest and fastest-growing cult in the former Soviet Union.
- Paul Carden's article and the present chart suggest that apart from Jehovah's Witnesses, the extensive efforts of cults have produced surprisingly modest results. In contrast to the present estimate of slightly under 300,000 cult members in the former Soviet Union, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's newspaper has claimed three to five million cult members in Russia alone ("Net!"—Sektam v Rossii," *LDPR*, 29 January 1997, 4). It is the editor's impression that, paradoxically, many Western and Russian Evangelicals and many Russian opponents of Evangelicals tend to exaggerate the size and influence of cults in Russia.

### **International Church of Christ (Boston Movement)**

The International Church of Christ (Boston Movement), widely considered cultic because of its abusive authority practices, founded a fast-growing branch in Moscow in 1991. The group's *LA Story* magazine (January 1998) claims 22 churches in the former Soviet Union—six in Russia, four in Ukraine, and one in the capital of every other post-Soviet republic except Tajikistan, with a combined Sunday attendance of 8,736. The Moscow church is the largest at 2,571, followed by Kyiv with 2,245, and Novosibirsk with 949. (Other Churches of Christ, much more numerous in Russia and the West, should not be confused with the Boston Movement and should not be considered cultic.)

### **Local Church/Living Stream**

The first representatives of this controversial sect, founded by the late Witness Lee and registered in Russia as Church of Home Meetings, "came to the USSR in 1984 as students in Russian-language courses in Leningrad. With the help of local evangelists, ... [they] ... began to translate into Russian the tracts of Witness Lee, which then were printed in West Germany and distributed in the USSR" (*Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 5 September 1996). A February 1998 report on a Local Church-related web site (<http://members.aol.com/trainee95/ftta-grad/index.htm>) indicates that its efforts now extend to 169 cities in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Latvia, and Lithuania. "Rhema Inc.," as it is also known, has distributed seven million pieces of Local Church literature, including the sect's free *Stream* magazine. The sect's Biblical Book Depot is translating its *Recovery Version* of the Bible into Russian, Ukrainian, and Armenian. The group is laboring to bring Christians from "denominations" into its fold. Thus, the Local Church reports that its church in Dnepropetrovsk "had a pastor who brought the whole congregation into the way of the recovery."

The International Church of Christ (Boston Movement), widely considered cultic because of its abusive authority practices, claims 22 churches in the former Soviet Union.

### **Other Movements**

Various small cultic and fringe groups, though not sending significant numbers of missionaries, are extending their influence through translation efforts.

- ◆ Voice of God Recordings, one of several organizations promoting the teachings of false prophet William M. Branham, reports in its September 1997 *Catch the Vision* newsletter: "Hundreds of letters are coming in to our distribution office in St. Petersburg with the same request: 'Please, send us the Spiritual Food!' ... In January, over 145,000 copies of each book [were] required to supply the believers on the mailing list. ... 77 different books and tracts have been printed in the Russian language, bringing the total amount of books and tracts printed in Russian to nearly 2.5 million individual pieces of literature." Voice of God also reports printing 400,000 Lithuanian-language items, with more in preparation.
- ◆ Dawn Bible Students, a Jehovah's Witnesses splinter group, publishes a variety of books and booklets in Russian and Ukrainian.
- ◆ The efforts of Christian Science and New Thought movements, such as the Unity School of Christianity, are emphasizing Russian-language publication work and small study groups. Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* has been available in Russian since 1961, with revised reprints in 1971 and 1994.
- ◆ The *Urantia Book*, a massive volume of pseudo-Christian scripture produced via channeling, was published in Russian by the Urantia Foundation in March 1997; a competing Urantia group is reportedly at work on its own edition. According to the Foundation's web sites (<http://www.urantia.org> and <http://www.ubfellowship.org>), Lithuanian and Estonian translations are underway. Urantia adepts began proselytizing among Russian evangelicals in 1991.

### **Indigenous New Religious Movements (NRMs)**

Eliot Borenstein, professor of Slavic and Russian studies at New York University, writes in the September 1997 *Religion Watch* that "despite the furor over the role of 'imported' religious groups, the 'problem' of NRMs in Russia would not be nearly so acute if it weren't for the tendency of people throughout Russia to create alternative belief systems of their own." Borenstein describes the esoteric Bazhov Academy of Secret Knowledge and two movements that consciously compete with the Russian Orthodox Church: the apocalyptic Great White Brotherhood of Maria Devi Khristos and Ioann Bereslavsky's Mother of God Center, which has attracted Protestants. (On the Great White Brotherhood see Eliot Borenstein, "Articles of Faith: The Media Response to Maria Devi Khristos," *Religion* 25 [July 1995]: 249-66.) A distinctively New Age group that has drawn harsh media attention centers on the self-styled prophet Vissarion, based in southern Siberia.

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## Organized Responses

Fears of mind control, family upheaval, cultural contamination, and other concerns have sparked grassroots efforts to resist the spread of controversial new religions. The first of several anticult groups organized by parents of NRM adherents is the Moscow-based Committee for the Defense of Youth from Pseudo-Religions, founded in 1992. Similar organizations have formed in St. Petersburg, Novgorod, Ekaterinburg, Irkutsk, Kyiv, and Minsk. The Russian Orthodox Church has organized anticult efforts of its own, beginning with the

St. Irinaeus of Lyon Information and Consultation Center at the Department of Religious Education and Catechism of the Moscow Patriarchate, established in 1992 by Dr. Alexander Dvorkin. The dioceses of Novosibirsk, Tver, Yaroslavl, and Minsk have since founded others. The dioceses of Karelia, Krasnodar, and Ekaterinburg conduct active anticult efforts without formal centers. The only established evangelical countercult outreach in the former Soviet Union is the Center for Apologetics Research in St. Petersburg, which works in cooperation with both secular and Orthodox groups. ♦

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## Christian Resources on Cults in Russian

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### Association for Spiritual Renewal

The Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow, distributes 12 books on cults by both Western and Russian authors. For more information, or to place an order, contact Nadya Pomazkova, ASR, 29-30 kv. Novye Cheryemushki, ul. Nametkina, korpus 5, Moscow 117420, Russia; tel: 095-719-7945; fax: 095-719-7890; e-mail: booksales@asr.ru; web site: <http://www.asr.ru>.

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### Center for Apologetics Research

The Center for Apologetics Research, St. Petersburg, offers 66 books, pamphlets, research papers, and tracts on cults and related issues. The Center also offers training for pastors and lay believers, and a free quarterly research update (*Vestnik*) specifically for pastors. For more information, contact: Sergei Gushchin, Center for Apologetics Research, Box 954, 194044 St. Petersburg, Russia; tel: 812-248-8153; e-mail: [dima@crir.spb.su](mailto:dima@crir.spb.su); web site: <http://members.tripod.com/~CFAR/>.

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### Good News Defenders

The 56-minute video *Witnesses of Jehovah* is available in PAL and NTSC from Good News Defenders, Box 8007, La Jolla, CA 92038. Price: \$22.00 each, including U.S. postage and handling. Quantity discounts available.

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### Gospel Truths Ministries

Gospel Truths Ministries offers four Russian-language tracts on Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses. Order from Gospel Truths Ministries, 1340 Monroe Ave., NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49505; tel: 616-451-4562; fax: 616-451-8907; e-mail: [bray@irr.org](mailto:bray@irr.org); web site: <http://www.irr.org>. Price: \$8.00 per 100, plus postage and handling.

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### InterVarsity Video/2100 Productions

The 26-minute video *The Search: New Age in a New Light* is available in PAL and NTSC from InterVarsity Video/2100 Productions, Box 7895, Madison, WI 53707-7895; tel: 800-828-2100 or 608-274-4823, ext. 456; fax: 608-274-7882; e-mail: [2100ord@ivcf.org](mailto:2100ord@ivcf.org); web site: <http://www.gospelcom.net/iv/mmcp/>. Price: \$19.95 each (item #V4000RUS), plus postage and handling.

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### Orthodox Institute on Missiology, Ecumenism, and New Religious Movements (PIMEN)

Part of the Russian Christian Humanitarian Institute, St. Petersburg, the Institute publishes brochures and leaflets on the development of new religious movements. For more information, contact Archpriest Vladimir Fedorov, PIMEN, Voznesensky pr. 34 "B," 190068 St. Petersburg, Russia; tel: 812-315-3817; fax: 812-315-3917; e-mail: [pimen@mail.nevalink.ru](mailto:pimen@mail.nevalink.ru); web site: <http://www.rchgi.spb.ru/pimen.html>.

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### Personal Freedom Outreach

The 53-minute video *Mormonism: The Christian View* is available in PAL and NTSC from Personal Freedom Outreach, Box 26062, St. Louis, MO 63136-0062; tel: 314-388-2648; fax: 314-388-0064; e-mail: [info@pfo.org](mailto:info@pfo.org); web site: <http://www.pfo.org>. Price: \$21.50 each, including U.S. postage and handling.

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### Russian Literature Ministries

As well as other relevant literature, Russian Literature Ministries offers the 536-page paperback *Krizis sovesti [Crisis of Conscience]*, by Raymond Franz. The author, a former member of the Governing Board of the Watchtower Society, reveals the inner-workings of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Contact Russian Literature Ministries, Box 851, Corvallis, OR 97339-0851, USA; tel: 541-745-7934; fax: 541-745-5152; e-mail: [sales@rlm.org](mailto:sales@rlm.org); or Moscow Second Baptist Church - "Triada", Varshavskoe shosse 12a, 113105 Moscow, Russia; tel/fax: 095-952-2173; web site: <http://www.rlm.org/>.

**Editor's Note:** For additional literature on cults, consult the EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT 1 (Fall 1993), 5.

# Missions in the Post-Communist Context

## Hampered by the Handicapped Child Mentality

*An Anonymous Contribution from Eastern Europe*

Ever since the fall of the Soviet Empire in the late 1980s, American Christians have been fascinated by the new mission field in Central and Eastern Europe. These countries have experienced spiritual revival, yet the needs there are noticeable and many. The response of our American brothers and sisters has been to reach out and lend a helping hand in any way possible. Since almost ten years have passed, it is time to evaluate these efforts, presenting some of the assets and liabilities of American approaches to supporting its family in Christ in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

### **Two Models for East-West Ministry Relations**

This article will present a very limited scope of issues involved in foreign support in one church in one country in Eastern Europe. It is likely a similar case can be made for other countries which are struggling to find their way in the post-Soviet era. Generally, missionaries and foreign supporters follow one or the other of the following models. In the first model, local leadership is not considered trustworthy. Foreigners bring their own resources, their own people, and pretty much do their own thing with little or no cooperation with the local church. This type of colonialism certainly is unhealthy and proves unfruitful in the long run. In the second model, a healthy relationship exists between the supporter and the supported. East-West partners discuss and evaluate plans together in a spirit of mutual respect and great sensitivity. A well-functioning accountability system helps make the ministry effective. This model of partnership has proven to be the most helpful and fruitful option available in the long run.

### **And a Third Model**

Yet there is more. A third model I have observed is based on reverence for survivors of Soviet persecution to such a degree that Western support becomes almost indiscriminate. Americans want to do everything possible to make our long-buried dreams come true. Unfortunately, little or no accountability can lead to inefficient use and even misappropriation of funds. Nevertheless, financial supporters prefer to stand by rather than interfere in any way. While noninterference is a noble idea, beautiful ideals do not always match painful realities. This uncritical approach to support is the subject of this article.

European people have a rich cultural heritage which can become grounds for national pride, self-sufficiency, and confidence that can easily lead to arrogance. We think we have all the answers; the only

problem seems to be the missing financial resources. With the growing materialism of secular culture, the ultimate solution seems to be more resources and bigger churches, in order to impress the world around us. Since that is the "vision" of the "faithful," nobody dares object, though some building projects seem too ambitious and fanciful, hardly compatible with the small number of worshippers and their ineffective ministry. Perhaps the greatest needs in our context are fresh vision from God and hearts prepared to follow His leading.

### **The Handicapped Child Mentality**

Western supporters sometimes succumb to the temptation of providing formerly persecuted churches with funds the way some parents tend to indulge a handicapped child. Oftentimes, children who suffer from a physical defect grow up socially handicapped as well, just because their parents love them...too much! If one child is suffering or has suffered more than others, surely that child should get the best presents and the most expensive toys. And parents are willing to do whatever it takes to make this child the happiest person in the world. Often, however, the parents' efforts just lead to bigger and better toys, which never completely satisfy the child. In many ways, that is what seems to have happened to some churches, with foreigners doing their best to support the local leadership.

### **Fostering Integrity or Perpetuating Paternalism**

The word *accountability* has already been mentioned in connection with the partnership model. In drawing the fine line between accountability that fosters integrity, and control that perpetuates paternalism, much depends on the context and the level of maturity of those giving and those receiving. Sometimes a lack of accountability can lead to becoming socially handicapped. Decades of Soviet rule have left us with the heritage of doing business the Soviet way. I remember feeling shocked years ago in a Western school where I had to pay for every single sheet of paper—why? Office supplies had always been "free." Likewise, it didn't hurt to bring something home from your factory because everything was "shared." Similarly, working on the job was not essential; the main thing was to be present. Furtively, the same attitudes have permeated the church unnoticed. For example, the church often tolerates a lax attitude towards finances: "Oh well, the main thing is that people get helped." Or, "As long as it is done in love with good intentions, it does not really matter that a few rules are bent here and there." Ironically, the secular world around us has dealt with

Western supporters sometimes succumb to the temptation of providing formerly persecuted churches with funds the way some parents tend to indulge a handicapped child.

these "legacies," naming them for what they are. Yet some churches still stand as bad examples of the "old ways."

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### "Money Trees"

The church in Eastern Europe still seems to view the Western world, and especially America, as the "dreamland come true." It seems to be a place where money grows on trees, where people do not quite know what to do with their wealth. The daily struggles of average Americans, much less Americans living in poverty, just do not make sense to us. It is not surprising, however, for the only homes many of us usually see as church visitors from overseas are the fancier ones—with swimming pools in the backyard, computers everywhere, you name it! It seems so easy for such people to give. Probably, in the back of our minds there is the consolation: If I can ever get THAT rich, I will start giving as well. An appalling discovery was recently made by a fellow countryman. Visiting the not-so-rich people in a church in another country who had given a million dollars, he realized: If we could ever get our people who are financially on the same level to give in the same way, the sky is the limit!

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### Reading and Misreading Another's Faith

Closely connected is the delicate issue of praise and admiration of our American friends. Americans

come and admire our faith and commitment and trust in the Lord. Sometimes, however, this trust is little more than a refusal to take responsibility. Thus, saying "God will take care of everything" can cover up inadequate planning and initiative, rather than reflect deep conviction. At the same time, Americans downplay their own faith and commitment, which in a free society may be an even greater challenge to maintain. Unfortunately, our people tend to take these comments at face value, failing to recognize the deep spiritual ways of many American Christians. It is impressive how well many American churches are organized and administered, and how much time and effort is devoted to seeking God's leading. By sharing these skills and experiences, the church in America could help us, thus providing the fishing rod rather than the fish.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our American brothers and sisters for their unconditional love and commitment to us. I am deeply humbled to realize that sometimes our little "innocent" games and unconscious schemes are seen through, yet the commitment continues. I would only like to encourage our Western supporters, on the one hand, to trust local leadership to make responsible choices, yet, on the other hand, to provide leadership and accountability systems with great sensitivity and respect. In doing so they will be acting as responsible parents so that the once-handicapped children will finally be able to get up and walk on their own. ♦

Saying "God will take care of everything" can cover up inadequate planning and initiative, rather than reflect deep conviction.

## Evangelical Denominations in Post-Communist Romania

Danut Manastireanu

**Editor's note:** *The first half of this article appeared in the previous issue of the EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT.*

Although Romanian Evangelical communities were waiting and praying for freedom, in fact they were not ready for it. Benjamin Faragau, one of the most important Evangelical Bible teachers in Romania, made the following statement some time ago: "Those who did something significant before the Revolution have adapted quickly, continuing their ministry in a way relevant for the new conditions, while the others are still puzzled and don't know what to choose from the multitude of opportunities offered to them. Now we can see a number of important initiatives beginning to take shape." For examples, see the Romanian Protestant Christian Page web site (<http://private.fuller.edu/~ematei/>).

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### Compromised Leaders

Most Evangelical communities in Romania have not undertaken serious evaluation of the sometimes

overt cooperation by some leaders with communist authorities. It is true that some churches and denominations have replaced compromised leaders. However, is this enough? Without an honest evaluation and a true repentance for the mistakes of the past, we risk repeating them endlessly.

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### Brick and Mortar

Although the majority of Evangelicals are convinced that change is a necessity, it appears the solutions proposed often only touch the surface, rather than the spiritual core of the problems. One of the most concrete manifestations of this tendency is the fact that in Evangelical circles a lot of effort is currently directed towards building new church buildings. Such a concentration on "brick and mortar" is easy to understand since for decades communists prevented the building of necessary facilities, except with great difficulty and at the price of many compromises. However, the size of the buildings constructed today often exceeds the present  
*(continued on page 8)*

and even the foreseeable needs of the congregations. At the same time, most of the funds for these projects come from the West. This is understandable in Romania's present economic condition, but it creates an unhealthy financial dependence and it affects the feeling of ownership and responsibility that the believers should have for their churches.

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### Western Aid

Along the same line is the issue of Western Christian material help, such as food and clothing, received in Romania immediately after 1989. It was really impressive and a genuine manifestation of mercy and concern. At the same time, we have to be honest and admit that the help was not always distributed wisely and this created a lot of problems in churches. The blame has to be shared. On one side, some Westerners just unloaded gifts and left with a happy heart and a clear conscience, with no attention to the effectiveness of the distribution. On the Romanian side, the help gave rise to greed and injustice. Not a small number of Christian leaders in our country failed this test after the 1989 Revolution. Some took advantage of the generosity of Westerners and became really rich, leading to many divisions in churches. In some cases the material help became the means of starting new denominations in Romania, or just increasing the number of members in existing ones. These totally unacceptable manipulative missionary methods have attracted the justified criticism of Orthodox authorities.

Romania still needs help from the West. Many times, however, Western help is driven not so much by the consciousness of the need, but by what is lately in the media. Like state help for developing countries, Christian help can become an easy way of clearing a guilty conscience. The kind of help we need these days does not create dependence, but stimulates local initiatives, helping Romanians to help themselves. Again, we have seen some excellent initiatives and we hope they will motivate others in the same direction.

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### The Megachurch Model

In some places the temptation of the "megachurch" model is raising its head. This does not seem to fit the European spirit, and even less the quiet and reserved Christian spirit of the Eastern part of the continent. On the other side, following so closely after a time of dictatorship, which has left deep marks in all of us, the Romanian "megachurch" phenomenon runs the risk of becoming a search for power that is dangerous and contrary to the way of the Cross and the humble spirit of Jesus Christ.

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### Western Dependency

Romanian Evangelicals currently experience an almost exclusive theological dependence upon the

West, especially the United States. Undoubtedly, in the present conditions, when we can hardly talk about an articulate Romanian Evangelical theology, it is absolutely vital for us to learn from those who are ahead of us theologically. We are confronted, however, with a sort of theological aggressiveness, even with a form of theological "imperialism," which can have very serious negative consequences for the future relevance of Evangelical theology in a cultural environment totally different from the American Evangelical context.

First of all, American Evangelical theology is still, and may continue to be for a long time, under the influence of the Enlightenment and rationalism, while for our culture it was just a marginal phenomenon. The effect of this undeniable reality on the two worldviews is absolutely decisive. In the words of a West European friend who studied in the United States and ministered as a missionary in Eastern Europe, "For Americans, reality is simple and structured; for East Europeans, it is complex and unstructured." You can hardly imagine two more polarized perspectives on the world. In addition, the obvious pragmatic bent of American Evangelical theology and missionary practice, although commendable in many respects, and responsible for many valuable accomplishments, does not fit in any way the more relaxed and reflective attitude of Romanians towards life in general. The incessant search for immediate results and for impressive reports that will satisfy donors does not leave space for contextualization and for the incarnation of theological concepts in our cultural context. It is a known fact that if we add the different reports of mass evangelists and missionaries who have preached in Eastern Europe in the last six years, we will get a number of "converts" which exceeds by two or three times the actual population of these countries. In fact, in spite of the very optimistic expectations of both Romanian and Western Christian leaders, the number of church members has not grown significantly in the seven years since 1989.

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### Importing Western Theological Disputes

Finally, we face the risk of unnecessarily importing Western disputes which are totally irrelevant to the Romanian context. Just two examples. Romanian Christians of every denomination have never conceived of the theoretical or practical possibility of "splitting" Christ between His work as Lord and as Savior. What is the point then, of importing into the Romanian Evangelical context the so-called "Lordship salvation" dispute? Or, given the high view of Scripture and the virtual absence of theological liberalism among Romanian Christians of all denominations, what is the relevance of making the Western dispute on inerrancy a hot point on the Romanian theological agenda? Again, this may satisfy and reassure some donors, but it will surely not help Evangelicals in Romania very much in the long run.

Closely related to the above issue is the fact that,

The kind of help we need these days does not create dependence, but stimulates local initiatives, helping Romanians to help themselves.

possibly also as a result of Western influence, religious manifestations of Evangelicals in Romania have become more and more rationalistic, leaving devotional and emotional aspects of Christian living as secondary. Of course, we as Romanians needed more conceptual content to our faith, but not at the price of what John Stott calls "the search for transcendence," which is so characteristic to the East European spirit. We will never be satisfied with a religious experience which is devoid of its mystical, emotional, and relational aspects.

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### **Christian Vocations—and Salaries**

Inheriting, as Evangelicals traditionally do, a negative attitude towards culture and intellectual matters, most Romanian Evangelicals manifest a dualistic and Platonistic approach to life. Thus, religious activities like prayer, preaching, evangelism, and full-time Christian ministry are sacred and superior in quality to earthly, mundane activities like cooking, pursuing a secular profession or political career, or the pure manifestation of artistic creativity, unless it is an effective means of Christian "propaganda."

One specific manifestation of this rather schizophrenic approach to life is the obsession with fulltime Christian ministry as the highest possible calling. The result is the tendency of many gifted young people in Evangelical churches to leave promising professional careers to become pastors and evangelists. In the context of the critical shortage of ministers in Romanian Evangelical circles, this may seem a positive phenomenon, but when it is prompted by a deformed and unbiblical perception of reality and definition of Christian ministry, it will have disastrous effects on the incarnation of the Gospel in Romanian society.

Western missionary agencies contribute to this problem by recruiting—for a very low price in Western terms, but a very good salary in our terms—gifted young Christians to further their specific activities. Or should we say for furthering the interests of the Kingdom? Do these wellmeaning missionaries consider what will happen with the national workers when the Western support ceases? Will they ever again be competent professionally, able to earn a living other than by doing "Christian ministry"? Unfortunately, such people, when in despair, are easily manipulated financially or become candidates for emigration. Well-meaning missionaries also ignore the effect this has on churches, in creating divisions and depriving them of their best people, since they will never be able to compete with Westerners in paying their people. It's a true manifestation of "free market" capitalism. We believe this aberration calls for a radical redefinition of missions if we do not want to see resentment and frustration among national Christians concerning the way Western missionaries handle these issues. Based on discussions with many leaders in Central and Eastern Europe, we believe this situation appears to be the rule rather than the exception. Will the West take this warning seriously? Or are Western Evangelicals too preoccupied to be able to hear?

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### **Evangelical Christianity and Orthodox Culture**

Evangelicals are perceived by the Orthodox majority as being estranged from the spirit of the Romanian nation and culture. We must admit that this accusation is legitimate, at least to a certain extent, when we realize that most of our theology, worship music, and liturgy are imported from other cultures, with very little effort at cultural adaptation. Unfortunately, it seems to us that very few of our leaders are conscious of the importance of this issue. Consequently, instead of being able to communicate the Gospel to Romanians in the appropriate cultural garments, we risk becoming a more and more isolated subculture in our society. At the same time, it is possible to detect stirrings among young Evangelical intelligentsia who desire an integrated biblical approach to life, resulting in active cultural, professional, social, and political involvement of Christians in society. The hostility of most Orthodox clergy is prompting increasing Evangelical intolerance and verbal aggressiveness towards Orthodoxy. This risks becoming an open conflict, which will not be in the interest of the Gospel. Even if many Romanians are only formally Orthodox, they have a strong emotional attachment to Orthodoxy and will never be able to hear the Gospel if communicated in a manner which, at least from their point of view, threatens essentials of their own identity.

Fortunately, an increasing number of younger Evangelical theologians and church leaders have become aware of the importance of exploring, understanding, and learning from the Romanian Orthodox tradition. There are significant efforts taking place in the Evangelical camp to renounce the traditional hostility and establish a sincere Orthodox-Evangelical theological dialogue. It is only a small positive beginning which risks being undermined if not met by a reciprocal openness from the Orthodox side. We are still very far from a true ecumenical dialogue, which is in fact perceived as totally unacceptable by many Evangelical leaders who are either entertaining dispensational eschatological convictions or are just showing open resentment. But, it is good that the dialogue has begun.

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### **How Best to Understand Evangelism**

The numerous mass evangelistic campaigns started immediately after 1989 very quickly proved to be quite ineffective in reaching Romanians with the Gospel, especially since many of those who came here to preach had very little appreciation for the way Romanians think or understand God. In Kishinev, Moldova, a few weeks after the campaign of a famous American evangelist, pastors were asked, "Where are the many thousands of converts reported at the end of the rally?" They did not know the answer.

We have no doubt that the Lord, in His providence, has used mass evangelism to call people to Himself, especially in contexts where the ground was

*(continued on page 10)*

**An increasing number of younger Evangelical theologians and church leaders have become aware of the importance of exploring... the Romanian Orthodox tradition.**

prepared to receive the seed of the Gospel. There is, however, another side of the story. Evangelism done by people with this special calling can very easily become, for the believers in churches, a way of easing their conscience for not being involved evangelistically in the natural environment where they spend most of their life. We do not believe the solution for the evangelization of the world is in having more mass evangelists, although God, in His sovereignty, may raise as many as He pleases. We need to see believers in our churches become missionary-minded and trained to present the Gospel to people around them and then teach and disciple them in order for them to be built up spiritually in Christ.

Danut Manastireanu is a lecturer at Emmanuel Bible College, Oradea, Romania.

Source: Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from a revised English translation of the author's original article published in *Korunk*, (no. 10, October 1990), a Hungarian-language cultural magazine published in Cluj, Romania.

Another specific manifestation of this escapist mentality—of this running away from responsibility—is, we believe, an obsessive preoccupation of Evangelical believers with revival. Instead of concentrating on faithfulness and obedience in the normality of life, some try to understand the mysterious ways in which the Lord works and suppose they have devised the right formula which will make God produce the desired effect. The most important issue is not when and how does revival come, but what do we do in between revivals. The steadfastness of obedience and not the fire of sacrifice is the delight of the heart of God.

The events that took place in Eastern Europe in 1989 opened many opportunities. Our hope is that in time the feverishness specific to periods of change will fade and give way to a more mature and profound approach to issues. We believe that as Evangelicals we have something significant to offer both to our brothers in Christ in other traditions and to Romanian society as a whole. Through the grace of God we are dedicated to make a difference for Christ in our country. ♦

### “Centralized Religious Organizations” (CROs) Registered Under the 1997 Russian Law on Religion<sup>1</sup>

Date	Church/Association	Number of Churches	Source
17 March 1998	Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostal)—Vladimir M. Murza, president	nearly 1,200	E-mail from Roman Lunkin, Keston News Service, Moscow, 11 August 1998
30 March 1998	Associated Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostal)—Sergei Ryakhovsky, president	1,000	<i>Radiotserkov</i> , 1 April 1998
22 April 1998	Union of Evangelical Christians—Baptists of Russia	1,200	<i>Radiotserkov</i> , 6 May 1998
15 May 1998	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)	128	Associated Press, 15 May 1998
26 May 1998	Christian Charismatic Association	30	<i>Radiotserkov</i> , 1 June 1998
28 May 1998	“Calvary Fellowship” Association of Christians of Evangelical Faith (an affiliate of the Associated Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith)	238 <sup>2</sup>	<i>Radiotserkov</i> , 5 June 1998
10 June 1998	Association for Spiritual Renewal <sup>3</sup> (a parachurch body affiliated with U.S.-based Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries)		Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries news release, 22 June 1998
22 June 1998	Association of Christian Churches in Russia (Charismatic)	63	ChristianNet News Service, 3 August 1998

**Editor's Note:** The Association of Christian Evangelical Churches of Russia, formally established in Moscow, 27 May 1998, does not yet have CRO status.

<sup>1</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate and Islamic directorates of Russia have not formally received the designation of “centralized religious organizations,” but enjoy this status de facto. Churches not confirmed to have been present in Russia for 15 years and those not registered as CROs face potentially severe restrictions under the September 1997 law on religion. See *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT* 5, Issues 3 and 4, and Vol. 6, Issue 2.

<sup>2</sup> The 238 churches are part of the Associated Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith.

<sup>3</sup> ASR is the only Protestant parachurch body to have received CRO status to date.

## NEWS NOTES

### Russian Religion Law Faces Court Challenge

Gareth Jones

Vladimir Ryakhovsky has set himself an ambitious task—to strike down a law that has the might of Russia's establishment—from devout Orthodox churchmen to atheistic Communist lawmakers—ranged behind it. But the middle-aged lawyer is undaunted by the scale of the challenge facing him and says he has Russia's post-Soviet constitution firmly on his side. The target of his ire is Russia's [September 1997] law “On freedom of conscience and religious organizations,” which has been condemned by human rights groups, the United States, and the Vatican as discriminatory and repressive. “It contradicts both the Russian constitution and all Western legal norms on human rights,” Ryakhovsky said.

Ryakhovsky, a practicing Protestant, and several evangelical Christian groups have appealed to the Constitutional Court. If the court backs them, part or even the whole law would have to be dropped, embarrassing Russia's establishment. Alexei Malashenko, a political analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think-tank in Moscow, said the law's fate was tied closely to the broader political situation in Russia. “Without amendments

the law is bound to cause more problems after the next presidential election in 2000," he said, noting that the strongest candidates to replace Yeltsin were nationalists little swayed by Western ideas about human rights.

Lawyer Yekaterina Smislova, who is involved in the bid to overturn the law on religion, said she hoped the Constitutional Court would make its ruling within the next six months. "Russia is now a member of the Council of Europe and a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights, so this law has attracted great interest abroad. Russia's credentials as a free, open society that respects basic human rights are what is at stake here," Smislova said.

*Excerpt of a 15 July 1998 Reuters news dispatch reprinted with permission.*

**Editor's note:** Vladimir Ryakhovsky's associate, Anatoly Pchelintsev, director of the Institute for Religion and Law, challenged the 1997 Russian religion law in a suit filed on 1 July 1998 on behalf of the Christian Praise Center and the Evangelical Lutheran Mission, both in Khakassia; the New Generation Christian Center, Yaroslavl; and Zion Presbyterian Church, Reutov, Moscow Region. Also, on 15 July 1998, Yaroslavl Jehovah's Witnesses filed suit with the Constitutional Court, contending that the 15-year provision for registration is unconstitutional.



**Jaroslav Pelikan, renowned Lutheran scholar** and professor emeritus of Yale University, was **received into the Eastern Orthodox Church** at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, Crestwood, NY, 27 March 1998. Dr. Pelikan, a prolific church historian, is perhaps best known for his masterful five-volume work on *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (© 1971-89). Mikhail Kulakov, Jr., of the Russian Bible Society, is involved in a Russian translation project for volume two in the series, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).



On 5 May 1998 **Russian Orthodox Church conservatives** burned "heretical" books on the grounds of the Orthodox seminary in Yekaterinburg, 1300 km east of Moscow. Among the books destroyed were **works written by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983), Fr. John Meyendorff (1926-1992), and Fr. Alexander Men (1935-1990)**. Schmemmann and Meyendorff were successive deans of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, Crestwood, NY. Men was a popular Russian priest and prolific apologist for the faith who was murdered in 1990 near Moscow. Orthodox distressed by the action state that Bishop Nikon of Yekaterinburg was responsible, although the bishop denies the book-burning. Moscow correspondent Andrei Zolotov notes that while "Men's views have always been considered controversial," Schmemmann and Meyendorff "are widely respected as mainstream Orthodox thinkers.... Patriarch Alexei II has often expressed his admiration for Schmemmann and Meyendorff, whose books are studied in seminaries and religious schools across Russia."

*Source: Ecumenical News International Bulletin, no. 11, 10 June 1998, 16-17.*



Ecumenical News International reported on 27 July 1998 that **the Bulgarian Orthodox Church will withdraw from the World Council of Churches**. In 1997 the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Georgian Orthodox Church, and the former Soviet Union's Evangelical Christian-Baptist Church left the WCC.



Two **Hungarian church workers** held hostage 275 days in Chechnya in the Russian Caucasus were **released** 25 July 1998. Gabor Dunajski and Istvan Olah, of Hungarian Interchurch Aid, had been kidnapped in Grozny, Chechnya, 23 October 1997. "The men are in good condition despite being chained and denied sleep, light, and fresh air for most of their captivity" (*Religion Today*, 29 July 1998). A **Swedish Pentecostal couple**, Daniel and Paulina Brolin, were **released** 23 June 1998, having been held hostage in Dagestan, Russia, since 8 January 1998. **Russian Dmitry Penkovsky, of International Orthodox Christian Charities**, seized on 20 September 1997 in Ingushetia, Russia, was **freed** in March 1998, while his coworker Dmitry Petrov, kidnapped with him, remains in captivity.

*Sources: Felix Corley, "Pentecostal Missionary Couple Freed in Dagestan," Compass Direct, 17 July 1998, 6-7. and Religion Today, 29 July 1998. For more information on the Brolins' captivity, consult the Hope for Europe home page at <http://www.hfe.org/prayer2.htm>.*



### **Death of a Leading Scholar of the Russian Church**

The Institute for East-West Christian Studies regrets to announce the death of Jane Ellis, one of the Western world's leading specialists on the Russian Orthodox Church. The funeral was held 14 July 1998 at the Anglican Parish Church of St. Peter, Wolvercote, Oxford, England.

Jane Ellis, who studied at the University of Birmingham and Oxford University, was a senior researcher at Keston College, a leading center for the study of religion under communism, from 1973 to 1994. She served as editor of Keston's serials, *Religion in Communist Lands* (1981-86) and *Frontier* (1987-89). She also was the founder of Aid to Russian Christians, a charitable organization which provides literature and material aid to Russian believers. Concerned for growing tensions among Christians in Russia, Jane Ellis in recent years also organized a number of Orthodox-Protestant dialogues in Moscow.

She is the author of two major studies on Russian church life since World War II: *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History* (London: Routledge, 1986), and *The Russian Orthodox Church: Triumphalism and Defensiveness* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996). Her most recent research, which will be published posthumously, focused on Russian attitudes toward Western missionaries.

Upon receiving the sad news of the death of Jane Ellis, Institute for East-West Christian Studies director Mark Elliott made the following comments: "I have known Jane Ellis since 1982 when I made my first research visit to Keston College. Jane has been a good friend through the years and I know many will mourn her passing. I have always had great respect for her scholarship and equally for her great compassion for the long-suffering Russian people. I know I speak for many when I say she will be greatly missed." ◆

### **Announcing the Web Site of the Institute for East-West Christian Studies**

As part of its mission to provide the church, academia, and the media with a better understanding of Christianity in the former Soviet Union and East Central Europe, Wheaton College's Institute for East-West Christian Studies has established a web site at <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/iewcs>. As well as selected articles from the *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT*, this page contains subscription information and tables of contents of all back issues, order information for other Institute resources, and a short history of the Institute. Of special interest are dozens of links to other web sites on religion in post-Soviet societies.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## 7-8 September 1998

**Creative Work: Illumined by God, Eighth Alexander Men Memorial Conference**, Moscow, Russia  
 Contact: Marina Geniseva  
 Library of Foreign Literature,  
 1 Nikolo-Yamskaya ul.,  
 Moscow, Russia  
 Tel: 7-095-915-7986  
 Fax: 7-095-915-3676  
 E-mail: geniseva@openmail.irexru



## 11-13 September 1998

**Hope for the Balkans Conference**, Sofia, Bulgaria  
 Sponsor: European Evangelical Alliance  
 Contact: Rev. Nikolay Nedelchev, Executive Director  
 Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance  
 Box 13, 1330 Sofia, Bulgaria  
 Tel/fax: 359-2801-555  
 E-mail: be.alliance@mbox.cit.bg



## 23-27 September 1998

**Christian Approach to the Problem of Drug Abuse**, Voronezh, Russia  
 Sponsors: Russian United Methodist Church and Evangelical Christians-Baptists  
 Contact: Vyacheslav Kim  
 ul. Geroyev Stratosphery 22-8  
 394000 Voronezh, Russia  
 Tel/fax: 7-0732-49-99-49  
 E-mail: kim@mkim.vrn.ru  
 or: Oksana Petrova  
 ul. Dybenko 22-3-67  
 St. Petersburg, Russia  
 Tel/fax: 7-812-588-91-77  
 E-mail: op@syr.usr.ru



## 24-27 September 1998

**American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Convention**, Boca Raton, FL  
 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



## 28 September -

### 2 October 1998

**LITT-WORLD '98, Publishing Priorities in a Fragile World**, High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, England  
 Contact: Sharyl Sieh  
 Media Associates International  
 130 N. Bloomingdale Rd., Suite 101  
 Bloomingdale, IL 60108-0218  
 Tel: 630-893-1977  
 Fax: 630-893-1141  
 E-mail: MAI\_LittWorld@compuserve.com

or: Rodney Shepherd  
 MAI-Europe  
 Concorde House  
 Grenville Place, Mill Hill  
 London NW7 3SA, England  
 Tel: 44-181-906-9768  
 Fax: 44-181-959-3678  
 E-mail: rods@angushudson.com



## 19-23 October 1998

**Libraries in Theological Institutions**, Kishenev, Moldova  
 Contact: Sergei Sannikov,  
 Director  
 Eurasian Accrediting Association of Evangelical Schools  
 Box 8  
 270066 Odessa 08 Ukraine  
 Tel: 380-482-54-91-61  
 Fax: 380-482-33-70-12  
 E-mail: cvc@te.net.ua



## 20-21 October 1998

**Administration, Governing, and Finance of Educational Institutions**, Donetsk, Ukraine  
 Contact: Sergei Sannikov,  
 Director

Eurasian Accrediting Association of Evangelical Schools  
 Box 8  
 270066 Odessa 08 Ukraine  
 Tel: 380-482-54-91-61  
 Fax: 380-482-33-70-12  
 E-mail: cvc@te.net.ua



## 20-23 October 1998

**Great Commission Conference**, Moscow, Russia  
 Sponsor: Alliance For Saturation Church Planting  
 Contact: Jeff Geske  
 Alliance Box 100  
 666 Fifth Ave, Suite 572  
 New York, NY 10103  
 Tel: 7-095-719-7634  
 Fax: 7-095-335-9916  
 E-mail: jeffgeske@compuserve.com



## 7 November 1998

**Keston Institute Open Day**, Oxford, England  
 Contact: Erika Cuneo  
 Keston Institute  
 4 Park Town  
 Oxford OX2 6SH, England  
 Tel: 44-1865-311022  
 Fax: 44-1865-311280  
 E-mail: keston.institute@keston.org  
 Web site: http://www.keston.org



## 4-7 November 1998

**Training Writers Workshop**

## 9-13 November 1998

**Advanced Publishing Seminar**

## 14 November 1998

**Desktop Publishing and Publishing on the Internet**

## 16-19 November 1998

**Photograph to Publish**, Moscow, Russia

Contact: Sharon Mumper  
 Eastern European Magazine Training Institute  
 Postfach 33  
 2502 Baden-Leesdorf  
 Austria - Europe  
 Tel: 43-2236-540760  
 Fax: 43-2236-52390

E-mail: 101567.2064@compuserve.com



## 15 November 1998

**International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church**  
 Contact: Steve Haas, President  
 Prayer for the Persecuted Church  
 2025 S. Arlington Heights Rd., #113  
 Arlington Heights, IL 60005  
 Tel: 888-538-7772 or 847-718-0560  
 Fax: 847-718-0564  
 E-mail: idop@xc.org  
 Web site: http://www.persecutedchurch.org



## 16-20 November 1998

**Christian Mission and the Renewal of Eastern Europe (Peter Kuzmic)**, New Haven, CT  
 Contact: Lee Bellows,  
 Registrar  
 Overseas Ministry Study Center  
 490 Prospect St.  
 New Haven, CT  
 06511-2196  
 Tel: 203-624-6672  
 Fax: 203-865-2857  
 E-mail: Bellows@omsc.org  
 Web site: http://www.omsc.org



## 18-21 November 1999

**American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Convention**, St. Louis, MO  
 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

# PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

## Internet Visa Instructions

Sharyl Corrado, compiler

### Former Soviet Union

Official Home Page of the ARMENIAN Embassy in the U.S.

<http://www.armeniaemb.org/visa/visaguid.htm>

Contains visa regulations and fees, as well as an application form.

American Embassy in Baku, AZERBAIJAN

<http://www.usia.gov/abtusia/posts/AJ1/wwwwhvisa.html>

Posted by the American Embassy in Baku, this site contains visa requirements and fees. Does not contain application forms.

Facts about BELARUS

<http://www.belarustourist.minsk.by/visit.htm>

While Belarus does not have an official website, this page, prepared by the Belarusian tourist and excursion company Belarus Tourist, contains contact information for Belarusian consulates and representations worldwide, as well as general tips regarding the obtaining of visas.

ESTONIAN Embassy in Washington, D.C.

<http://www.estemb.org/pages/visas.htm>

This new site, currently under construction, provides contact information for visa regulations and fees, and will eventually contain a list of Estonian representations worldwide.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of ESTONIA

<http://www.mfa.ee/eng/consularinfo/>

Contains contact information for Estonian representations worldwide as well as a link to customs regulations and a detailed explanation of who does not need a visa, who can obtain one at the border, and who must purchase one in advance.

Embassy of GEORGIA in the United States of America

<http://www.steele.com/embgeorgia/consulate.htm>

Contains visa requirements and instructions. Does not contain an application form.

KAZAKHSTAN – Consular Information Sheet

<http://travel.state.gov/kazakhstan.html>

While Kazakhstan does not have an official web page, this page by the U.S. State Department includes basic instructions and contact information.

Official Homepage of the Embassy of the KYRGYZ REPUBLIC to the USA and Canada

<http://www.kyrgyzstan.org/visa.htm> or

<http://www.kyrgyzstan.org/consulin.html>

Contains visa requirements and fees. Currently, links within the site appear to be mismatched. Does not contain an application form.

Embassy of LATVIA, Washington, DC

<http://www.seas.gwu.edu/guest/latvia/>

Contains information on obtaining visas and temporary residency permits, as well as contact information.

Mission of Latvia to NATO

<http://hq.nato.int/pfp/lv/visa-eng.htm>

Part of the NATO Partnership for Peace web site, this page contains

a list of countries whose citizens are not required to have a Latvian visa, instructions and fees for single-entry, multiple-entry, and group visas, and contact information for obtaining a visa in Belgium.

Embassy of the Republic of LITHUANIA to the USA

<http://www.urm.lt/consular/>

Contains instructions and fees, as well as lists of countries whose citizens do and do not require invitations. Does not contain an application form.

MOLDOVA – Consular Information Sheet

<http://travel.state.gov/moldova.html>

While Moldova does not have an official web page, this page by the U.S. State Department includes basic instructions and contact information.

Embassy of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, Consular Division

<http://www.russianembassy.org/consulate.html>

Contains complete instructions, fees, and application forms (requires Adobe Acrobat Reader) for business, homestay, tourist, and transit visas.

Embassy of TURKMENISTAN, Washington, DC

<http://www.turkmenistan.org> or

<http://www.dc.infi.net/~embassy/visa.html>

Contains visa instructions and fees for U.S., Canadian, and Mexican citizens, as well as a visa application to download and print.

The Consulate General of UKRAINE in New York

<http://brama.com/ua-consulate/visa.html>

Done by BRAMA-Gateway Ukraine advertising and webhosting/design services, this page provides detailed information on the visa application process for Ukraine. Does not contain visa application forms.

Embassy of the Republic of UZBEKISTAN in Washington, DC

<http://www.uzbekistan.org/frame4.htm>

Contains visa regulations and fees for business, transit, and tourist visas, as well as an application form to download and print.

### East Central Europe

Embassy of BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA in Washington, DC

<http://www.bosnianembassy.org/>

While this official "experimental" homepage does not contain visa requirements, it does contain addresses and contact information for Bosnian diplomatic offices worldwide.

Embassy of the Republic of BULGARIA in Washington, DC

<http://www.bulgaria.com/embassy/wdc/consular/services/>

Contains visa regulations and fees. Downloadable application forms are currently under construction.

Embassy of the Republic of CROATIA to the United States of America

<http://www.croatiaemb.org/base/consular.htm#VIZA>

This page contains visa instructions and requirements. Does not contain an application form.

Republic of CROATIA — Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consular Department

<http://www.mvp.hr/mvprh-www-eng/8-informacije/vizni-sustav.html>

This page, which appears to be still under construction, contains lists of countries whose citizens do and do not require entry visas, as well as countries which require entry visas from Croatian citizens. Does not contain an application form.

(continued on page 14)

Practically Speaking (continued from page 11)

#### Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the CZECH REPUBLIC

<http://www.czech.cz/english/textc.htm>

Contains contact information for Czech consulates, embassies, and representations worldwide.

#### CZECH Info Center

<http://www.muselik.com/czech/visa.html>

This interactive electronic information service provides visa instructions and fees, as well as the various visa requirements for citizens of various countries.

#### Embassy of the Republic of HUNGARY in Washington, D.C., USA

<http://www.hungaryemb.org/ConsAffIncVisaInf.htm>

Contains visa instructions and procedures for various types of visas. Does not contain an application form.

#### Ministry of Foreign Affairs of HUNGARY

<http://www.mfa.gov.hu/consul.htm>

This official page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contains information on visa regulations and fees, as well as on the abolition of certain visa requirements. Does not contain instructions or application form.

#### Embassy of the Republic of POLAND

<http://www.polishworld.com/polemb/english/visa.htm>

Contains visa regulations and fees. Does not contain application forms.

#### Consulate General of the Republic of POLAND

<http://pan.net/konsulat/vfees.htm>

Polish-American Network provides a page for the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Los Angeles, CA. This is not the official page of the Polish embassy. Provides visa requirements and fees.

#### The Embassy of ROMANIA Consular Section

<http://www.embassy.org/romania/consular/e-consular.html>

Contains visa instructions for U.S. citizens wishing to enter Romania, as well as contact information for Romanian diplomatic facilities worldwide.

#### Embassy of ROMANIA in Norway

<http://home.sol.no/~romemb/page2.htm>

Contains instructions and fees for Norwegian citizens wishing to enter Romania, as well as contact information for the Romanian Embassy in Norway.

#### Embassy of the SLOVAK REPUBLIC Consular and Visa Information

<http://www.slovakemb.com/consular.shtml>

Contains visa instructions, requirements, and fees for citizens of many countries wishing to enter Slovakia. Does not contain a visa application.

#### A Guide to Virtual SLOVENIA

<http://www.ijs.si/slo/country/economy/embassies/index.html>

While Slovenia has no official homepage, this resource page of the National Supercomputing Center in Ljubljana offers contact information for Slovenian embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions worldwide. It does not provide visa regulations or application forms.

### General Sites

#### Embassies Worldwide: Contact Details

<http://www.tagish.co.uk/embassy1a/>

UK-based Tagish, Ltd. Consulting Service provides an on-line directory of all nations' embassies worldwide, including postal addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and web sites (where available). While the site does not contain visa information, the contact information it provides will be especially helpful to non-Westerners wishing to travel abroad.

#### Travisa Visa Service, Inc.

<http://www.travisa.com/>

Travisa, a private "passport and visa expeditor," provides passport and visa information and forms for many countries throughout the world. Visa application forms can be downloaded and printed for Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

#### Travel Document Systems

<http://www.traveldocs.com/>

This Washington, D.C., visa agency provides visa requirements, customs regulations, and other travel information on line for most countries in Europe and throughout the world. On-line visa application forms are available (requires Adobe Acrobat Viewer or Common Ground Viewer) for Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Russia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Yugoslavia.

#### U.S. State Department Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets

[http://travel.state.gov/travel\\_warnings.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html)

Consular Information Sheets, available for every country of the world, include such information as location of the U.S. embassy or consulate, visa requirements, and crime and security information. Travel warnings are issued when the U.S. State Department recommends the country be avoided.

**Editor's Note:** Embassy and consulate homepages are most likely to have the latest requirements. For more detailed—but less current—information, see Matt Miller, "Visa Application Requirements for Travel to East Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union," EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT 2 (Spring 1994), 10-11.

## RESOURCES

"Soul Wars: The Problem of Proselytism in Russia" is the theme of a 738-page special issue of the *Emory International Law Review* 12 (Winter 1998), available in its entirety on the internet at <http://www.law.emory.edu/EILR/volumes/win98/wintoc.html>. Included are 10 in-depth articles on proselytism, evangelism, and freedom of conscience, by specialists John Witte, Jr., T. Jeremy Gunn, W. Cole Durham, Jr., Lauren B. Homer, Lawrence A. Uzzell, Harold J. Berman, Firuz Kazemzadeh, Mark Elliott, Anita Deyneka, Donna E. Arzt, Natan Lerner, and Joel A. Nichols. Also included are appendices containing English translations of the 1997 Russian religion law and various local and regional laws on religion. The print edition is available for \$20.00 from William S. Hein & Co., 1285 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14209; tel: 800-828-7571 or 716-882-2600; fax: 716-883-8100; e-mail: [wsheinco@class.org](mailto:wsheinco@class.org); web site: <http://lawlib.wuacc.edu/hein/>.



Firebird Video/Audio Productions, Publishers, & Tours is a division of Russian Treasures, Inc., a Michigan nonprofit. **The 1998 Firebird Catalog seeks to make accessible to the general public educational materials on the sacred arts, liturgical and spiritual life, theology, cultural and church history, and contemporary life and culture of the Orthodox Church.** It includes descriptions of 28 videos, eight audio cassettes, and five books. Materials are in English except for 13 Russian-language videos. Color videos include "Under the Protection of Grace; The 1,000-Year History of the Orthodox

**Resources** (continued from page 12)

Church in Russia" (2 hours, \$34.95, English, prepared by the Moscow Patriarchate); Metropolitan Christopher of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America on "The Historical Background of the Contemporary Situation of the Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia" (2 hours, \$14.95, English); "Christ the Savior Cathedral: Truth and Bonfire" (1 hour, \$24.95, Russian); and "Life of the New Martyr Grand Duchess St. Elizabeth (Romanov)" (1 hour, \$24.95, Russian). Contact: Firebird Video/Audio Productions, Box 303, Belleville, MI 48112-0303; tel: 734-699-0870; fax: 734-699-1295.



**Panorama of Russia specializes in the sale of nonfiction books and periodicals published in Russia and other former Soviet republics.** Its web site (<http://www.panrus.com>) provides an extensive listing of available books and most available periodicals. Books may be searched by author, title, subject, or ISBN (International Standard Book Number). Periodicals may be searched by title, subject, language, country, and ISSN (International Standard Serial Number).

Book entries include author, title in Russian (in Roman alphabet transliteration) and English translation, city of publication, publisher, date, pages, hardcover or paperback, ISBN, and cost. Almost all entries include brief English-language abstracts, which frequently include useful biographical information about the author. Periodical entries

(for almost all Russian-language serials) include title, language, issues/year, and price. A book subject search under "Religion and Theology" currently produces approximately 220 titles, including works by Berdiaev, Borisov, Bulgakov, Dudko, Florenskii, Men, Miliukov, Mitrokhin, Pospelovsky, Rusak, Schmemmann, and Soloviev. A periodical subject search under "Religion and Theology" provides 13 titles, including *Mir Biblii [World of the Bible]*, *Nauka i religii [Science and Religion]*, and *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarchii [Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate]*. Computer customers may sign up for automatic e-mail notification of newly available titles in their areas of interest by completing an on-line application.

Costs, paid by Visa, MasterCard, or checks drawn on U.S. banks, are much higher than would be the case in Russia. But that is assuming a desired title indeed can be found in Russia—by no means a certainty. While the complete on-line catalog is updated bimonthly and is more convenient to use than Panorama's periodic catalogs, the latter includes sale prices for many titles that are not posted on-line. Also, the printed catalog is valuable because it itemizes many more discount options than does the on-line web site.

The Panorama web site should prove helpful to seminary professors and librarians in the former Soviet Union and to anyone seeking to keep current on available Russian-language materials, not only on religion, but on a wide range of subjects. Contact: Panorama of Russia, Box 44-1658, Somerville, MA 02144; tel/fax: 617-625-3635; e-mail: [panoramrus@aol.com](mailto:panoramrus@aol.com); web site: <http://www.panrus.com>. ◆

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**Religious Freedom** (continued from back page)

In Bulgaria the government restricts the practice of a number of non-Orthodox religious groups and restricts access to the media for religious groups to counter lurid and inaccurate depiction of their activities by the media. In Albania minority religious groups have also been refused registration, severely hindering their ability to freely practice their faith. In addition, the Helsinki Commission is monitoring the proclivity in Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus, Albania, and Latvia to pass laws that would create a hierarchy of religions with different privileges before the law.

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**Religious Free Speech**

No discussion of religious liberty would be complete without addressing free speech as it relates to religious liberty. One of the most hotly contested issues in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe regarding religious liberty is whether governments can limit religious speech intended to persuade the listener to adhere to a particular religious viewpoint. Intolerance of individuals expressing alternative religious viewpoints has led to severe restrictions on religious liberty among OSCE participating States. With angry charges of proselytism, many governments prohibit religious groups from engaging in free speech or printing materials intended to persuade individuals to understand and perhaps join a particular religious community. An analogy can be drawn to governments prohibiting political parties from

persuasive speech intended to gain adherents to a particular political point of view. If governmental restrictions similar to those being placed on religious groups in many countries were applied to political opposition parties, these governments would be denounced as undemocratic and would garner an enormous amount of negative attention from the international community. Examples of restrictions on free speech that contradict Helsinki commitments can be found in the constitution of Greece and in the laws of Azerbaijan and Armenia. In addition, in Uzbekistan, under the new 1998 law on religion, all imported religious materials are censored by the state.

It is essential to the freedom of religion that OSCE participating States place the same priority on religious speech as political speech. The free exchange of ideas, whether religious, political, or philosophical, is a fundamental pillar of democracy, a basic Helsinki commitment and a crucial underpinning for the freedom of religion.

In conclusion, religious liberty has been uniquely recognized and supported in the Helsinki process. In practice, however, the infringement of religious liberty through the misuses of registration requirements must be ended, as must the limits that governments place upon free speech when speech has religious content. ◆

Attorney **Karen S. Lord** is Counsel for Freedom of Religion with the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Washington, DC.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from CSCE Digest 20 (March 1997), 31-33, and the author's unpublished paper, "The European Retreat from Religious Liberty," July 1998.

# What, Exactly, IS Religious Freedom?

Karen S. Lord

From the *Helsinki Final Act* (1975) through the *Vienna* (1989) and *Copenhagen Concluding Documents* (1990), participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have affirmed time and again that religious liberty is a fundamental human right. No other international body has so consistently supported the right to religious liberty or so consistently monitored restrictions on religious liberty in practice.

What constitutes religious liberty within the Helsinki framework? A key concept found throughout the Helsinki process is the pledge of noninterference by governments in the affairs of religious communities. In Sections 16.3 and 16.4 of the *Vienna Concluding Document*, the participating States have committed to granting legal status to religious communities and respecting their right to establish and maintain freely accessible places of worship, select and replace their religious personnel, and solicit voluntary contributions. The participating States also have agreed to take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination and foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect between believers of different communities as well as between believers and nonbelievers. (See Sections 16.1 and 16.2.)

However, religious intolerance is on the rise and recent trends are chilling. In 1997 and 1998, OSCE participating States Russia, Macedonia, Uzbekistan, and Austria passed laws restricting religious liberty, while Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, and Belarus are reportedly in various stages of considering similar laws. Furthermore, religious liberty continues to be restricted in practice in OSCE participating States Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzia.

The two areas in particular where religious liberty is being denied routinely and with impunity are in

the requirement for registration of religious groups and in the denial of religious free speech.

## Registration of Religious Communities

While the requirement of registration is not a *prima facie* violation of the Helsinki Accords, the very fact that a government can decide which religious groups may function as entities under the law represents a violation of the spirit of the agreements. As noted above, the keystone principle found in the Helsinki process regarding religious liberty is the concept of noninterference by governments in the affairs of religious communities. When governments require registration for religious communities, they create the opportunity for arbitrary and capricious abridgement of religious liberty, both at the national and at the local level. Rather than a right that is God-given and stems from the recognition that all humans have worth, religious liberty becomes a privilege granted by the State whenever the State deems appropriate. All too often, the requirement of registration becomes a *de facto* violation of the Helsinki Accords.

Following are examples of the misuse of registration requirements within the participating States. In August 1997, the Parliament of Macedonia passed a religion law that restricts religious liberty for nonrecognized groups. Registration of a "religious community" or "religious group" requires the signatures of 50 citizens (Article 10). Article 3 states that religious work and rituals can be performed only by registered religious communities or groups and violations of this provision result in significant fines (Article 28). One of the more disturbing sections of the law prohibits the existence of two "religious communities" with the same creed (Article 8), which in effect establishes the government as the arbiter between religious factions.

The Russian Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations (26 September 1997) contains discriminatory provisions against "new" religious faiths, intrusive registration requirements, and vague criteria for "liquidating" religious organizations. Proof of a 15-year existence is required, and the regulations have been unclear as to what types of proofs will be accepted.

On 1 May 1998 a new law was passed in Uzbekistan which, among other restrictions, requires 100 Uzbek citizens to sign a religious community's application for registration and criminalizes any unregistered religious activities. The new law represents a serious step backward by codifying religious intolerance in direct violation of Uzbekistan's human rights commitments within the framework of the OSCE.

The two areas where religious liberty is being denied routinely and with impunity are in the requirement for registration of religious groups and in the denial of religious free speech.

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