



EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT

SPRING 1999

VOL. 7, NO. 2

A Guide to Giving and Receiving Aid in Post-Communist Europe

Kathy Rogers and Tina-Joy Kinard

After innumerable trips and millions in finances poured into East European relief, some unpleasant truths have emerged: corruption, wrongly placed relief, donor fatigue, well-meaning but overzealous givers, arrogance from both givers and receivers, out-of-date goods, overworked and overvisited recipients, hoarding, jealousy, and envy. What truly motivates our giving? Our receiving? What assumptions and expectations do we have? What lessons have been learned?

Positive Results

With the exception of Albania, which had no functioning churches and few believers when the country opened, ministry expanded as local churches and individual Christians participated in distribution. A majority of relief was channeled through churches and Christian contacts. Christians were the most organized and best prepared to help. Churches gained new credibility for their role in relief after years of government ridicule and persecution. In Cluj, Romania, a pediatrician held regular meetings for the parents of his patients, distributing some of the aid he received while educating them on health and spiritual issues. The old Baptist church in downtown Wroclaw, Poland, suffered extensive damage during floods in 1997. Requests for financial aid to restore the building were met with an overwhelming response. Deciding to tithe, the church reached out to the community—providing rent money for a poor family, purchasing coal to heat another family's home, etc. During [Bosnian] war years in Serbia, one Protestant church, considered a sect to be avoided, broke down barriers by sharing relief not just with members of its own denomination (the usual practice), but with the community at large. The church's generosity profoundly affected its image. Now the pastor is well-respected and is considered a leader within the village.

DIFFICULTIES FOR RECIPIENTS

Jealousy and Criticism

Though relief brought joy, it also caused trouble. The biggest trap in receiving relief is discontent, caused

not by what is received, but because someone else receives something better. More than one church nearly split because people fought over who should receive the nicest things. Westerners, who placed Central and East European Christians on spiritual pedestals during 45 years, may be shocked to learn that a few material things stirred such carnal attitudes. It shocked Central/East European Christians themselves—"The relief became a mirror for us and revealed what was in our hearts," said Benjamin Faragau, a Baptist pastor in Cluj, Romania. Christians responsible for distribution became specific targets for criticism. Despite efforts to prioritize aid, national distributors were accused of prejudice and favoritism.

Temptation and Power

Temptation is one of the greatest dangers confronting the relief distributor. Well-known Christians faced this issue shortly after the frontiers opened. Prior contacts with Western Christians and good language skills meant that their homes were among the first reached by relief vehicles. These contacts were often, if not always, living in difficult circumstances themselves. The question immediately arose, "How much are we allowed to keep for ourselves and how much do we give away?" The character of many Christians was destroyed because suddenly they went from being very poor to being in a position of control, handling all those goods.

Recently, on two consecutive days in Sofia, Bulgaria, there were long lines waiting for relief outside a Protestant church. A visiting Slovak Christian was told that only church members were entitled to receive the aid, often a defining feature of Central/East European churches. Such a definition raises questions regarding the real reason people become church members.

Hoarding

Missionaries visiting half a year after the [1989] openings in Romania were appalled to find attics filled with shoes and even baked goods rotting in Christmas ribbons. Having had nothing or very little for so many years, some distributors began hoarding.

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The pastor's wife in a small town in Poland warned two missionaries who recently brought and distributed children's clothing that they needed to watch the women closely. Otherwise, they would take clothes to "save" for up to five years.

Reciprocity

These people groups have strong, historical traditions of hospitality. One of these is the cultural practice of reciprocity. Receiving a gift, the recipient becomes indebted to return a gift of equal or greater value or to do the person a favor. The temptation to elevate one's position by use of reciprocity can be overwhelming. This is especially true in countries with chronic shortages in which the only way, historically, to obtain some necessary item is via [personal] "connections."

INSIGHTS FOR PROVIDERS

Many aid recipients are reluctant to criticize the hand that feeds them. Even though national distributors have the most immediate contact with donors and the best opportunity to give valid suggestions, they also are receivers and are thus hesitant to criticize or tell Westerners how to do their job. However, Western groups need a good look at problem areas apparent to their Central and East European coworkers.

The Need for Organization

Lack of organization on the part of many foreigners, especially during the first few months following the [1989] openings, caused much hardship for in-country distributors. Strangers obtained names and addresses and arrived unknown and unannounced, sometimes in the middle of the night. Not only was the receipt of the goods difficult; the practical aspects of housing and feeding those who brought it were overwhelming. Westerners refused to hear that communications and information-gathering might take more time [and that] storage and distribution [would] be more difficult to manage than in the West.

During the initial months of freedom, another typical and difficult problem arose with the receipt of strange foreign goods, such as cleansers, medicines, and even food items.

Prescription medicines were given to ordinary citizens. A transport carrying 80 drums of cleanser arrived with no instructions regarding its use, how to dilute it, or whether it could be dangerous. When Albania first opened, nationals were observed beating cans with stones; there were no can openers.

The Need for Cultural Understanding

Groups arrived at borders without proper papers. When difficulties ensued, they phoned contacts who felt compelled to come to the border and try to resolve the problems. For the contact, this might require locating a car to use, getting fuel, and taking a day off from work. It was a frustrating situation for nationals who felt bound to help those bringing relief

even though they didn't do it in the best way. It was—and still is—hard for them to say no, especially to Westerners.

The Need to Value Relationships

The importance of relationships in these countries cannot be passed over lightly. In Poland, for example, a national will miss a scheduled appointment if, when departing from his front door, a visitor arrives. The visitor will never be told of the impending appointment, nor will his visit be rushed. Westerners who brought relief goods were generally in a hurry. They planned two hours to unload at one place and left it up to the local contact to discover how and where it should be distributed. After being isolated from Westerners for so long, it hurt to have foreigners "dump and run."

The Need to Say No

Saying no is difficult for the average Central/East European. Culturally, it is impolite to turn down a request, particularly from a guest. Most will say no to a foreigner only when there is no other choice. Most Westerners are unaware of the effect relief work has had on the personal lives of local distributors. One Romanian family shared:

A very serious crisis occurred about four months after the revolution. We were ruining our family life, unwise in our involvement. Our children had no regular schedule; they didn't know when to eat or sleep. We either had to take them with us when we distributed or leave them with their grandparents. Our house was so filled with relief goods that the children couldn't even use their own room. It was very stressful for the whole family. I couldn't cope with distribution and keep our lives normal. Part of the problem was that people were coming in such a hurry, knocking at our door, sometimes very late at night. They'd say, "We've got a two-ton truck that we have to unload, and we have to leave the city early tomorrow morning." Well, you have to do something very quickly.

The Need for Donor Discernment

Nationals often asked Westerners for currency or to change money or for an invitation to the West. Desiring to help, the uninformed Westerner frequently gave whatever was requested. This was wrong. It caused many Christians to lose their spiritual focus because of a few glittering things.

The Need for the Right Coordinator

Western relief groups were not always careful in choosing a national to assist with distribution. Again, we encounter the historical traditions of hospitality leavened with the communist experience. Not only do nationals desire to "please" the foreigner, but they have been taught to give the "correct" answers, whether or not those answers are true.

From the beginning, bringing aid to Albania was enormously difficult. Just when a group thought it had a local person whom it could trust, it discovered

Churches gained new credibility for their role in relief after years of government ridicule and persecution.

it was wrong. Culturally, there was open acceptance of stealing. When the country opened in 1991 all churches had been destroyed or closed. Relief groups had to establish a joint warehouse area which was heavily guarded at all times. However, there are now foreign missionaries under the AEP (Albanian Encouragement Project) umbrella and Albanian Christians with the Albanian Evangelical Alliance (VUSH) teaming together to aid relief efforts to Kosovan refugees. Having both indigenous, trustworthy workers and foreigners who live in the culture and speak the language has been a tremendous help. They not only can translate but also counsel.

The Need for Sensitivity

Nationals recognize that some of their own people should not be involved with relief work. But they also make the same judgment regarding many foreigners. Especially in the beginning, some Westerners were extremely insensitive. They laughed at living conditions, even discussing the good and bad points of the country in front of its inhabitants. People are usually aware of their own country's shortcomings and may even criticize them, but are highly sensitive to the criticism of others.

The Need for Dignity

Relief work should preserve the dignity of the people you are attempting to help. Public distribution in particular, such as stopping a truck filled with goods in a public place to distribute, is offensive. You, the giver, become like a little "god" high above on the truck tossing down "bones" while you watch the "beasts" below fighting for existence.

One practice pointed out as particularly dangerous, as well as degrading, was the habit of throwing candy out a vehicle window to children. Children may fall down, hurt each other, or dare each other to step into the road to stop vehicles. The precedent set by the first truck convoys entering Albania and throwing out candy led to particularly violent reactions. Children no longer asked for candy but rather *demand*ed it! Groups of children spread across the road whenever a vehicle approached and didn't move until the last possible moment. Candy or not, they usually threw a barrage of rocks. By 1993, possibly 90+ percent of all vehicles operating in Albania had broken windows.

The Need for Appropriate Relief

One missionary in Romania observed a particular group sending baby food for a local orphanage, despite advice that it was not good for the children. Unused to such rich food, the children became ill. Then, when the baby food ran out, they returned to eating bread and water. Why did this group continue sending baby food for the orphanage? Did they think they knew better than the contact? Was it surplus, out-of-date, or used as a charitable contribution or tax write-off? What was the motivation? Many mistakes were made—thousands of cans of Coca-Cola dropped off at a Romanian orphanage for

children under three years of age; tennis balls at a school for the blind.

Expired medicine also posed a problem. Many medicines are good beyond the expiration date if properly stored, but few nationals were informed of this fact. There was frequently no translator to read the directions *when* there were directions. Relief groups often gave antibiotics and other prescription medicines to people unqualified to handle them. In Albania, the government dug huge pits and buried expired medicine to prevent its misuse. Some Western missions now send medicines through local networks supervised by Christian doctors.

Much-needed equipment, such as copy machines, overheads, slide projectors, even computers and fax machines, were donated. Unfortunately, neither the giver nor the receiver considered the supplies and service needed to maintain such machines. Another problem with giving technical equipment was inexperience and overuse. People came into church or relief offices and photocopied books all night. Others with little or no computer experience tried to use the computer in their local church office. Especially in the case of churches where members consider themselves co-owners, it was and is difficult for pastors to say no.

Unfulfilled Promises

A common problem was that promised relief goods were never sent. Sometimes this occurred because Westerners spoke too lightly or gave their word too easily. Sometimes specific requests were promised but never kept. "Christian list-makers" visited once, asked pertinent questions, wrote their lists, went home, and were never heard from again.

Photo-Op Fund Raising

Explaining the real reason for taking pictures to those whom you wish to photograph is important. Some relief groups lied, telling their subjects only that the pictures were memory photos of the people whom they had met, while in actuality they were later used for fund-raising purposes. There were also instances of staged relief distribution in public areas, totally for the purpose of photographing the event. Such picture-taking is offensive and unethical.

Pulpits Commandeered

Accompanying the tons of relief were thousands of Western pastors and speakers. In the tradition of hospitality, churches offered their pulpits. For months following the political changes, especially in Romania, but also to a lesser degree in neighboring countries, you heard only Americans, British, or other Westerners in Sunday pulpits, often giving the same message. Spiritual growth was put on hold. At one Baptist church in Romania, some of the congregation approached the elders after having their pulpit dominated by Western preachers for six months. They threatened to leave the church if the preaching by Westerners didn't stop. The steady influx of Westerners eager for that once-in-a-lifetime

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opportunity to share a "message from God" frequently did not realize that they were part of a nameless, faceless parade of foreigners. At some churches, in the most frequently visited cities, the problem persists. However, most pastors now allow foreign visitors to bring only brief greetings, yet feel guilty for somehow violating their culture's tradition of hospitality. ♦

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Editor's note: "A Guide to Giving and Receiving Aid in Post-Communist Europe" will conclude in the next issue of the *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT* with ten specific recommendations for "Improving Delivery."

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Popular Faith and Practice in Bulgaria Today

Kristian Ismail and Gary Griffith

It would be beneficial for anyone interested in the spiritual climate in Bulgaria, officially Eastern Orthodox, to become familiar with its rich religious heritage which has its roots in multi-layered traditions. Popular beliefs, which are syncretistic in nature, dominate people's spiritual worldview, especially for the generation over forty-five years of age, as well as for those who live outside cities.

Remnants of Paganism in Popular Christianity

The declaration of Christianity as the official religion of Bulgaria in 865 A.D. in reality resulted in a dualistic faith, reflecting on the one hand, the beliefs and practices of pagan primitivism, and on the other hand, the officially accepted Orthodox version of Christianity. Belief in animistic, spirit-infused beings, which took on human qualities and possessed supernatural power, coexisted with the state-approved Bulgarian Orthodox Church. This blending of Christian faith and paganism would remain at the root of Bulgarian spirituality for centuries to come. The Orthodox Church strove to preserve Bulgarian Christian culture, but during five centuries of Muslim Turkish rule it had no power to undermine the pagan beliefs already inherent in a dualistic belief system. Because of this, pagan phenomena have survived as a part of Bulgarian Christian tradition at a deep level. Thus, Christianity, imposed by the government, did not erase pagan beliefs from the minds of uneducated masses.

The national calendar, for example, closely tied to agricultural cycles, blends Christian and pre-Christian elements. Established Christian holidays coincided with pagan events: the birth of Christ, for example, was named in the Bulgarian calendar *Koleda*, connected to the winter solstice. Veneration of saints quickly became an integral part of the spiritual practices of Bulgaria's Christianized pagans. Certain features and functions from the pagan pantheon were

projected onto Christian saints. Thus, Saint George became the defender of livestock and the earth; Saint Elijah controlled thunder and lightning; and Saint Nikolaus defended fishermen. Other saints represented different cycles of the peasants' field work.

Magic, Fairies, Fire-Dancing, and Fortune-telling

■ Through the centuries, the practice of magic has been preserved alongside Christianity, often with a merging of the two. The cross, for example, revered and kissed, is to this day thought by some to possess magical powers. Magical practices in Bulgaria are rooted in ancient, animistic superstitions. In the words of one contemporary writer, "The world is gifted with life, created by the Almighty; invisible, mystical, and unknown powers control it; and spirits inhabit it." In the popular beliefs of the people these notions are connected not only with familiar concepts of Christianity—God, the Devil, demons, and angels—but also include many legendary and mythological figures. In the minds of the multitudes certain taboos, derived from Bulgaria's spiritual dualism, remain valid today. Many everyday tasks must be done in a certain prescribed way, both because they have been passed down from ancient storytellers, and because of Bulgarians' inclination to rely on superstitions. In this way various residual influences continue to exist without explanation. One example would be the saying, "Don't let anything pass over a deceased person's body before it is buried," which comes from the old belief that people turned into vampires if they died unexpectedly or were not prepared for burial according to certain traditions and customs. Since burial customs and rituals are numerous and it would be easy to overlook one or more, it is common to see cotton or straw which "protects" the corpse placed next to the deceased. Fire is believed to be protective, and since these items are easily ignitable materials,

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they are thought to provide the necessary protection for the body.

■ Bogomilism, an Orthodox heresy which arose during the eleventh century, took to extremes a dualistic view that divides the world between good and evil, between God and the Devil. Since Bogomilism promoted an easily understandable cosmology it found widespread acceptance among the population.

■ Besides the world view of good and evil contending for man, Bulgarians long held to a belief in a mythical pair of fairies (*orisnitsi*) which predestined man's fate. People, of course, desired to know their predetermined fate. With the passage of time systems of rules and procedures developed which were to indicate a person's fate, along with diviners who would interpret the signs. Indicators for determining fate were to be found in just about every facet of the daily life of Bulgarian peasants. Certain places and days, certain organs of the body, a facial twitch, encounters with certain animals, dreams, fire, or anything occurring in an unexpected manner could serve as a sign of what was to happen.

■ Fire-dancing, still practiced today, originally served as a means of divination. After singing and dancing on hot coals, a person falls into a trance, and then is said to be able to foretell the future. This custom is particularly associated with the feast day honoring Saints Constantine and Elena.

■ The well-known Bulgarian phrase, "Five fingers prevail over God," suggests that the Devil's magic, conjured up through various potions, is even greater than the power of God. "Five fingers" represent the arm-waving gestures of a magician casting a spell over a victim.

■ Fortune-tellers (*vrachari*) practice divination, but are best known for healing using herbs or even magic (if they determine that the illness is caused by magic) to bring about good. People who believe they have fallen ill due to a curse or influence of an "evil eye"

will seek the help of fortune-tellers. Babba Vanga (Grandma Vanga), who died in 1997, was the best known and most influential of Bulgaria's fortune-tellers. It was not uncommon for political candidates and office holders to visit Babba Vanga to make sure that no curse had been put upon them that might affect their success.

■ Bulgarian tradition holds that the visible and invisible worlds are united by means of ongoing contacts between the living and the dead. Thus, Bulgarian peasants typically set aside the first fruits of the land for the dead, before any of the produce is consumed, to ensure good crops for the future. The dead are thought to have influence over the productivity of the land. Other practices surrounding death and burial illustrate the close relationship of the living and the dead. At a funeral hot bread or grains are passed out to those present. These offerings are said to please and nourish the deceased, and again help maintain the ties between the living and the dead.

The Role of the Orthodox Church

Many evangelical Christians consider the Orthodox Church responsible for the blending of Bulgarian Christian faith and pagan traditions. It appears that "the conquered superstition became in its own way the conqueror." Today a similar motif appears to be reinforced as both Orthodox Christian and purely political elements are blended in a popular "Bulgarian national identity." Unfortunately, this popular religion, this "Pagan Christianity," simply confirms that pragmatism and superstition in Bulgaria in matters of faith always find a way to survive and resurface. ♦

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Ethnic Tensions in the Baltics: How the Church Can Point the Way

Mark P. Nelson

The Problem

How can Estonia function with 30 percent of its population ambivalent or even hostile toward its existence as a nation? If the Baltic countries, and other new states in the former Communist world, cannot find a peaceful resolution to this question, all that they have worked for, including advances made by the church, may be lost. Ethnic strife is a serious obstacle and must be overcome. Yet the Church can—and indeed must—lead the way in lessening, rather than heightening, ethnic tensions.

Soviet leaders bear part of the responsibility for fueling ethnic hostilities in the Baltic states. After

seizing power at the end of World War II, they supported the influx of a large number of Russian-speaking immigrants, which deeply alienated the indigenous population. Officially, the Soviet constitution proclaimed freedom of religion, yet believers were harassed and discriminated against at every turn. Officially, the Soviet Union was democratic, with elections held regularly. In reality, citizens had no choice but to vote Communist. This constant contradiction between word and practice extended into the realm of ethnic policy. While the Communist Party celebrated cultural minorities in

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the Soviet Union, the system also constantly stressed the superiority of Communist culture coming from Moscow and the Russian Revolution.

It was considered axiomatic that Communism brought progress and material advancement. A recent documentary of Estonian television concerning life in the 1940s illustrates the point. After the Soviet occupation following World War II, a propaganda film showed Estonian children rushing in for the first day of school, while the commentator explained, "Now Estonian children have the opportunity to explore the wonders of education." Propaganda clearly stated that it was only with the arrival of Communism that education was introduced. Of course, Estonians knew this to be a blatant lie. Education had been common since the Lutheran Reformation made Bible reading a prerequisite for confirmation, which in turn was required for a Lutheran wedding. But according to Communist ideology, wherever Communism went, revolutionary improvement took place in all aspects of society.

Half a century later, Estonians understand the 1940s propaganda film as a ludicrous attempt by an illegitimate government to vindicate itself. The effect has been resentment toward Communism and all things Russian. In addition, postwar Russian immigrants by the hundreds of thousands were affected adversely by the lies of Communist propaganda of "progress."

Due to both language barriers and feelings of animosity, Estonians had minimal contact with postwar Russian immigrants. The newcomers, bombarded with propaganda about improvements to society following the arrival of Communism, innocently believed what they were told. They assumed that, before Communism, local society had been culturally backward. Since Communism came from Russia, and since new immigrants were Russian, they considered themselves bearers of light in a dark and primitive land. While official policy honored ethnic diversity, Communist ideology drove groups apart, stirring up, rather than reducing, ethnic tensions.

A Solution

If the present situation grew out of years of Soviet policy, how can society today begin to solve the problem? Obviously, the solution is not to ignore deep-rooted causes of prejudice, but rather to address them directly. If misinformation about ethnic groups caused the problem, the first step toward reconciliation is to teach the truth. Only by bringing the Russian minority together with the local majority can the tensions truly be dealt with.

The Baltic Mission Center in Tallinn, Estonia, a multifaceted project which includes the Tallinn Methodist Church and the Baltic Methodist

Theological Seminary, is one example of peaceful and promising ethnic relations. In the seminary, simultaneous translation allows Estonian and Russian students to study God's Word side by side. For most, it is the first time in their lives that they have been together. Even with language difficulties, they get to know each other as individuals, rather than as representatives of stereotyped ethnic groups. They better understand each other's culture, background, and way of thinking. Estonian students appreciate the tremendous zeal in their Russian brothers and sisters, while Russian students appreciate the methodical way in which Estonians spread the Gospel.

The language barrier still does divide. Estonians speak little or no Russian, and many Russians speak no Estonian. In the seminary, students communicate with each other in Russian, Estonian, or English, depending on the situation, and if no common language is found, another student translates. While it is unavoidable that groups tend to socialize with others of the same linguistic background, there is some mixing, providing a necessary first step. Prejudices built on ignorance and lies can be removed only when people come to know each other as human beings.

The Role of the Church

The church is the natural place for such reconciliation to start. The early church believed that "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). From its beginning the church was a place where people of different backgrounds met together as brothers and sisters. If the church cannot bring cultural groups together, then how can we ever expect society to?

Reconciliation must take place, and it cannot be done by ignoring the past. Rather, the past must be confronted. Both sides must admit prejudices, acknowledge the causes, and show a willingness to work together. Members of Baltic nationalities must realize that the atrocities of Communism do not excuse negative feelings towards Russian minorities. After all, Russians suffered under Soviet dictators as well as non-Russians. On the other side, Russian minorities in Baltic states much acknowledge the serious effect Communist propaganda had on their views of Baltic cultures. These Russians need to respect the right of self-determination and must work with—not against—the governments of independent Baltic states.

The church in former Soviet republics must take as a part of its mission the active reconciliation of Russian minorities with local ethnic majorities. Total merging of cultures is neither possible nor desirable. The unique identity of each group must be protected. But the protection of any one nationality should include understanding of and appreciation for those who are different. This protection must go beyond words, to include a willingness to actively work together as one in the Body of Christ, and in so doing, point the way for society. ♦

The church in former Soviet republics must take as a part of its mission the active reconciliation of Russian minorities with local ethnic majorities.

Translating the Russian Bible

Mark Elliott

"Russian Christians, both evangelical and Orthodox, now anticipate the preparation of a new Russian translation of the Bible that will modernize the language of the Synodal Version." So wrote Russian church historian Paul Steeves in 1976 on the centennial of the completion of the Russian vernacular Bible.¹ But a contemporary Russian translation of the Bible generally acceptable to Orthodox and Protestants still has not appeared over two decades later. On the one hand, theologically conservative Orthodox and Protestants both accept as authoritative the nineteenth-century Synodal Version, so named because of its approval by the Russian Orthodox Holy Synod. On the other hand, this translation did not reflect the language of the common people even at the time of its initial publication, and the number of archaic and incomprehensible passages has steadily increased over time as the Russian language has evolved.

In 1996 Scott Thomas Munger's published doctoral thesis, *Russian New Testaments* (Amsterdam: Free University, 1996), evaluated three translations of the Russian New Testament; and in 1997 the Russian Bible Society reprinted the nineteenth-century classic, *Istoriia perevoda Biblii na Russkii iazyk (History of Russian Bible Translation)*, by I. A. Chistovich.² These publications draw attention to the need for an accurate and readable translation of the Scriptures in modern Russian. Find below brief descriptions of various Russian vernacular Scripture translations and translation projects.

The Synodal Version

The British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), founded in 1804, played a major role in the work of the Russian Bible Society (RBS), founded in 1812. The Russian Bible Society benefited greatly from the personal support and patronage of Tsar Alexander I. In addition, the monarch's close confidante, Alexander Golitsyn, served both as president of the Bible Society and Oberprocurator [Director] of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. Before being closed in 1826 by the reactionary Nicholas I, the RBS, working with the BFBS, published the first Russian vernacular Gospels in 1819, a complete Russian New Testament in 1821, and a Russian Psalter in 1822. (Translation of the first eight books of the Old Testament were completed by 1825 but were not circulated.) Using advanced stereotype printing technology imported from England, the RBS, before its closure in 1826, published and distributed between 750,000 and one million Russian New Testaments and scripture portions in 26 languages. Under Nicholas I neither the state nor the Russian Orthodox Church permitted work on Russian vernacular translations of scripture. In the 1840s Professor G. P. Pavskii actually

completed the first Russian translation of the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew, but he was put on trial for his trouble and his work did not survive. However, in the 1850s in the reign of Alexander II work on a Russian vernacular Bible revived under the direction of Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow. The Holy Synod approved a new translation of the New Testament, published in 1862, and the first complete Russian vernacular translation of the Old Testament, published in 1876. The Holy Synod gave its official blessing to this Synodal Version for personal, but not liturgical use. It remained the only full Russian vernacular Bible for well over a century.

The Synodal Version, which incorporated archaic constructions derived from the Old Church Slavonic text, was difficult for Russians to comprehend as soon as it was published. Modern readers are even more challenged to understand its meaning. Petrograd Theological Academy professor I. E. Evseev wrote in 1916 that the Synodal Version depended upon "pre-Pushkin language," reflecting its failure to incorporate the richness of the common nineteenth-century literary language.³ Tamara Portnova, retired professor of English at Moscow State University, came to the same conclusion many decades later. Although her grandfather was an Orthodox priest, she was 65 years old before she first saw a Bible (in an English translation). "I was determined to get one in Russian but could actually get it only many years later. To my great disappointment the Russian translation of the Bible was so confusing that I put it aside and continued to read the English translation instead. I consider myself a rather well-educated person, and yet the number of archaic forms of verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and the irregular word order in sentences make the reading of the Synodal Version of the Bible very difficult." According to Russian language professor Svetlana Barber, Kent State University, "The Synodal Version is written in archaic Russian not used at all in contemporary spoken or written language. The original [Old Church Slavonic] language was translated word for word, often resulting in incorrect Russian grammar and atypical sentence structures." Finally, Anatoly Rudenko, director of the Russian Bible Society, believes, "We need a new generation Bible for young people. Many view the Bible like sacred music; nice but not understandable."⁴

The Cassian or Bezobrazov or "Paris-Brussels" New Testament

After World War II the British and Foreign Bible Society funded a revision of the Synodal New Testament under the direction of Bishop Cassian Bezobrazov, professor of New Testament and rector of the St. Sergius Theological Institute, Paris. Work

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A contemporary Russian translation of the Bible generally acceptable to Orthodox and Protestants still has not appeared.

began in the 1950s, with the BFBS finally publishing the new translation in 1970. The first portions published in 1953 quickly prompted a series of hostile articles in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* beginning in 1954. In fact, opposition to the Cassian translation, which is also known as the Paris-Brussels and the 1970 translation, significantly reenergized Russian Orthodox biblical scholarship. According to Russian historian Stephen K. Batalden, "The strength of the text rested in its incorporation of modern textological advances represented in the Nestle-Aland critical Greek New Testament. But this strength was more than offset by the rather unreadable nature of the Russian translation [which adhered to] the original Greek word order. No one from the sponsoring BFBS translations staff could sense the full dimensions of this problem until it was too late to rectify the literary unreadability of the text."⁵

While from the standpoint of readability, the case can be made that Russian émigré language was preferable to Soviet Russian of the 1950s, the Cassian New Testament still could never hope to receive approval from the Moscow Patriarchate. The Russian Orthodox Church attacked this "Paris-Brussels" translation precisely because it allegedly did not take into account the Byzantine textual tradition but, rather, drew heavily from the Western textual tradition.

The World Bible Translation Center Version

In 1981 the Church of Christ-related World Bible Translation Center (WBTC) began work on a new Russian Scripture, publishing the New Testament (*Blagaia vest [Good News]*) in 1989 and the entire Bible (*Bibliia: sovremennyi perevod bibleiskikh tekstov [Bible: Contemporary Translation of Biblical Texts]*) in 1993, apparently only the second full vernacular Russian translation in history. According to the

WBTC website (<http://www.wbtc.com>), Russian translators worked from Greek-English and Hebrew-English segments (phrases), later explaining in English the content of the foreign language translation to Hebrew and Greek scholars for further revision. (For a complete description of this process, see http://www.wbtc.com/articles/translation/translation_process.htm.) WBTC distributed 10,000 copies of its New Testament at the Moscow International Book Fair in August 1989, took requests for 17,000 additional copies from fair-goers who provided their names and addresses, and has distributed millions of copies to date. Unfortunately, this version, also known as the Easy-to-Read translation, does not fare well in Scott T. Munger's survey of Russian Scripture translations, or in the opinion of Russian Bible Society director Anatoly Rudenko.⁷

The Word of Life Translation

Living Bibles International (LBI), following in the footsteps of Kenneth Taylor's popular Bible paraphrase, produced a Russian New Testament in 1991. Distribution of this *Slovo zhizni [Word of Life]* (Moscow: Protestant, 1991) edition is said to be in the millions. Since the merger of LBI and the International Bible Society (IBS) in 1992, the latter has held the copyright to the *Word of Life* version. Scott T. Munger considers this Russian paraphrase closer in spirit to the New International Version (NIV) than to the English Living Bible.⁸ He also notes, "Freedom from restriction to source text forms [i.e. paraphrase] increases the potential for comprehension, but also the potential for omissions and exegetical error." Even as many believers resist new translations, "the [Russian] general public and even a sizable portion of a highly literary audience are attracted to a freer translation." However, *Word of Life* "contains some glaring mistakes and omissions that could be avoided with better editing."⁹

Earlier, Living Bibles International sponsored a version of the Gospels, Acts, Romans, and First John under the title *Nachala khristianskoi very [The Beginning of Christian Faith]* (Naperville, IL: LBI, 1984). Russian émigré interpreter Eugene Grosman prepared the text, but did not approve of subsequent editing by Russian émigrés in Sweden.

V. N. Kuznetsova's Translation

V. N. Kuznetsova's scholarly publication of new translations of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, *Kanonicheskiye Yevangeliiia [Gospels]* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), and *Poslaniye k Rimlianam [Romans]* (Moscow: Dom Marii, 1993), aimed at accuracy and comprehension. Kuznetsova has abandoned the principle of literal, word-for-word translation, in favor of the principle of dynamic equivalence. Her work closely follows the more recent critical editions of the original Greek texts based on the scholarship of Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland.¹⁰

Given the Russian Orthodox Church's strict adherence to the Byzantine textual tradition, one

Keeping Current on Russian Bible Translations

Mir Biblii [The World of the Bible], founded by the late Fr. Alexander Men and published by St. Andrew's Biblical Theological College, is an excellent source for information on Russian Bible translation. For example, volume 1, issue 1 (1993), includes a translation of "Job" by S. Averintsev, with Bible commentary by G. K. Chesterton; articles on Qumran (Alexander Men), "In Memorium" to Fr. Alexander Men (Alexander Borisov), Russian Bible origins (Aleksei Bychkov); and reviews of new Russian Bible translations: "Acts" (K. Logachev); "The Gospels" (L. Lutkovsky); *The Living New Testament* (Mikhail Seleznev); and the World Bible Translation Center *Good News New Testament* (Mikhail Seleznev). Issue 4 (1997) includes articles on the Greek text of the New Testament (Bruce Metzger), exegesis and spirituality (Gordon Fee), Jesus in the Qumran (Aleksei Jouravsky), and ecology and the Bible (Leonid Vasilenko); and reviews of new Russian Bible translations: "Jonah" (Edward Junz); and "Genesis" 1-8 (Mikhail Seleznev). Cost: Vols. 1-3 (1993-95): \$6 each; Vol. 4 (1997): \$8; Vol. 5 (1998): \$9.50; Vol. 6 (1999): \$10.50. Contact: Aleksei Bodrov, editor, ul. Volkhonka, d. 18/2, 121019 Moscow, Russia; tel: 7-095-233-2790; fax: 7-095-551-3462 and 230-2902; e-mail: standrews@standrews.ru.

would not expect it to approve of Kuznetsova's work, which is based on the Nestle-Aland Greek text. On the other hand, the Moscow Patriarchate does support the Russian Bible Society, which is preparing a new translation of the New Testament, based on Kuznetsova's work, as modified by a committee of experts. This translation is near completion. ♦

Editor's Note: The author wishes to express his appreciation to Dr. Henry R. Cooper, Jr., professor of Russian and chair of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, for his helpful reading of an earlier draft of this article.

¹"A Centennial Celebration Nine Hundred Years Late," *Christianity Today* 21 (8 October 1976), 14-16.

²Second edition—St. Petersburg: M. M. Stasiulevich, 1899. Reprinted by the Russian Bible Society in 1998. Readers should be aware that a Soviet-era study superseded the work of Chistovich: M. I. Rizhskii, *Istoriia perevodov Biblii v Rossii* [*A History of Bible Translations in Russia*] (Novosibirsk: "Nauka,"

Sibirskoye Otdeleniye, 1978). It is a valuable study despite its admitted biases: it claims to have been written for propagandizers of atheism. But that is probably how it managed to get published, if only in Siberia.

³Quoted in Stephen K. Batalden, "The Politics of Modern Russian Biblical Translation" in *Bible Translation and the Spread of the Church*, ed. by Philip C. Stine (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 76. See also Scott T. Munger, *Russian New Testaments*, 25.

⁴"A Bible for the Russian People: Easy-to-Read Russian Version" (Fort Worth, TX: World Bible Translation Center, [1993]), 5-6.

⁵Batalden, "Politics," 75.

⁶"A Bible for the Russian People," 4 and 8.

⁷Munger, *Russian New Testaments*, 27; author's conversation with Anatoly Rudenko, June 1996.

⁸Munger, *Russian New Testaments*, 23.

⁹*Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 22-26.

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

Modern Russian Bible Translation: Four Questions That Prevent Consensus

Stephen K. Batalden

The Question of Authority

Modern Russian biblical translation generated and continues to generate intense controversy precisely because fundamental questions of authority raised in the process of biblical translation have remained unresolved. Moreover, the very framing of the questions and the difficulty of their resolution reflect the highly structured and politicized nature of modern Russian culture, while also reflecting the official position of the Orthodox Church within that culture. In clarifying the larger cultural parameters within which Russian biblical translation has occurred, it may be helpful at the outset to identify two special features affecting the use of the Russian Bible. First of all, the Russian Bible has only rarely been used as a liturgical text. Rather, the biblical text used in Orthodox worship has continued to be that of an Old Slavic or Church Slavonic edition. There were efforts to introduce a modern Russian Bible into liturgical worship both during the Russian Revolution and the Russian All-Church Council of 1917-1918 and in the church renovationist movement of the 1920s and early 1930s. Still, the Slavonic Bible has remained the text of liturgical worship for Russian Orthodox.

A second feature bearing upon use of the Russian Bible is the relatively late development of Bible reading as an element of Orthodox piety or spirituality. Unlike Protestantism with its early sixteenth-century Luther Bible and its appeal to a Bible-reading "priesthood of believers," Russian Orthodoxy has traditionally found the clearest expression of its spirituality in the daily marking

of the church calendar with its fasts, its saints' lives, its veneration of icons and, most important, its liturgical celebration of the Eucharist. Until the nineteenth century, most Russians, including some rural parish priests and their peasant flock, were illiterate, and literacy was not required for the fulfillment of Orthodox religious observances. Only with the growth of literacy and popular education in the later nineteenth century did Bible reading become a significant element of Russian religious life — and then only because of the development of an elaborate colportage network for dissemination of biblical literature. Still, the fact that such Bible reading became most prevalent among Russian sectarians, or Protestants, confirmed for some of the more wary Orthodox prelates their suspicion that Bible reading and broad dissemination of Scripture in the common language was a distinctly Protestant practice.

The first and most fundamental of our questions of authority in the politics of modern Russian biblical translation [is] namely, who has the right to translate and publish Russian scripture? The burning relevance of this question for Russian society remains behind the scenes to this day a ticklish, unresolved problem in a religious and political culture that has in the past been conditioned to expect such questions of authority to be resolved from the top down.

The Question of Source Texts

Another fundamental question of authority [is] namely, what biblical texts [are] to be considered authoritative? The question of biblical texts had

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Modern Russian biblical translation generated and continues to generate intense controversy.

already arisen in the [nineteenth century] Bible Society era when the decision was taken to use the Hebrew Massoretic text rather than the Greek Septuagint as the basis for translation of the Psalter. Sensing the potential for controversy over this issue, the translations subcommittee of the Russian Bible Society prepared a preface to the Russian Psalter defending readings and numeration that differed from the established Slavonic text—a text that rested largely upon the Septuagint.

If anything, the politics of modern Russian New Testament textology has been thornier than that of the Old Testament. Here the problem has not been that of a conflict between rival supporters of Greek and Hebrew texts, but rather a conflict over the introduction of modern New Testament textology into Russian translation. At the base of both the Russian Bible Society New Testament [1821] and the Synodal New Testament of 1862 rested essentially the same *textus receptus*, a basic Greek text that dated with modification to the work of the Renaissance scholar Desiderius Erasmus. (See Editor's Note at the end of the article.)

The Question of Defining "Modern" Russian

While the right to translate and the authority of texts have raised fundamental political issues for the Russian Church in modern society, a third issue is the more confounding because of the inability of the society itself to fix upon any resolution. This third fundamental question involves the basic authority of the linguistic medium. Reference has been made to the politics of the modern Russian Bible. The Russian Orthodox Church in the nineteenth century developed its own official language, a variant of modern Russian that reflected its bureaucratic nature and its debt to old Slavonicisms. Thus, in some sense, the language of the Synodal New Testament constituted a regression from the more common language of the early Bible Society New Testament. The problem facing modern Russian biblical

translation, in this respect, is that of the myriad literary voices in contemporary Russia—from the colloquial street talk of some Russian writers to the high-cultured Russian of some poets. Arguably, there is no single authoritative modern Russian literary language; there are many. And in the absence of such a norm, the Synodal text has had remarkable staying power, despite the occasional limitations of its textual base.

The Question of Distribution

Finally, the problems of authority in modern Russian biblical translation have also included the profoundly divisive question of distribution. Who, the question arose, had the authority to distribute Russian scripture? Unlike its hegemonial [exclusive] claims in the area of translation and publication, the [Russian Orthodox] Holy Synod never managed to secure in the nineteenth century monopoly rights on the distribution of Holy Scripture. Instead, there developed an unprecedented system of colportage led by the St. Petersburg agency of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Such colportage inevitably came to arouse the concern of Synodal officials. The fear, not entirely unjustified, was that colportage was becoming a front for proselytizing and recruitment into sectarian, Protestant ranks.

In the Soviet period, especially since the Stalinist accords with the Orthodox Church during World War II, the authority officially to distribute Russian Scripture was lodged squarely within the Moscow Patriarchate and its publication office. The only major exception to that was the case of Russian scripture provided by the British and Foreign Bible Society and now the United Bible Societies to the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

Modern Russian biblical translation has been inevitably drawn into politically controversial questions of authority in a highly structured Russian and Soviet politicized environment. The authority of texts, the authority of the language itself, and the authority to distribute Scripture are all a part of this political context. ♦

Editor's Note: Henry R. Cooper, Jr., professor of Russian at Indiana University, believes that Synodal translators may have consulted Greek texts, but he also contends that the Synodal Version fundamentally is a translation from Old Church Slavonic. *Letter to Mark Elliott, 15 January 1999*. Dr. Batalden's response: "As regards Henry Cooper's comment, all the major translators involved in the Synodal translation were competent in Greek, and the translation did employ the old Greek textology. If Cooper, on the other hand, is trying to argue that the translators sought to make the final text conform to Slavonic textology as much as possible, then he is probably right. I would have to defer to him as the linguist." *E-mail to Mark Elliott, 28 January 1999*.

Excerpt reprinted with permission from "The Politics of Modern Russian Biblical Translation" in *Bible Translation and the Spread of the Church*, ed. by Philip C. Stine (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 68-80.

Stephen K. Batalden, professor of history, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, is the author of *Catherine II's Greek Prelate: Eugenios Voulgaris in Russia, 1771-1806* (1982) and *The Newly Independent States of Eurasia: Handbook of Former Soviet Republics*, 2nd ed. (1997).

Russian Orthodox and Evangelicals at Odds

Kaarina Ham

Protestants as Half Churches

The era of Communism, which led churches to practice mutual aid and support, is over. Now traditional Orthodox piety views the Orthodox Church as the only true church and Protestant churches as half churches which have lost much of the truth and spirituality of the apostles. Protestant traditionalists also have their claim: They tend to believe theirs is the pure church, free from nonbiblical accretions.¹

A 1995 Orthodox Consultation on Mission and Proselytism affirmed the need to accept some responsibility for current tensions in Eastern lands in which Orthodoxy has been the predominant Christian faith. Members suggested that Orthodox churches should examine possible causes of proselytism "coming from our own weakness and negligence" and make every effort to remove them. Yet the tendency of Russian Orthodox prelates has been to lay responsibility for current hostilities primarily on Western missionaries. Metropolitan Kirill has summarized the hierarchy's attitude toward the influx of foreign religious groups in unmistakable terms:

Having survived "cultural and spiritual genocide," the church, exhausted and weak, must now confront "a multitude, an army of sects and cults" attempting to "convert" the Russian people, 80 percent of whom are baptized.²

Throughout the years of repression, ties with the World Council of Churches (WCC) were maintained. Now, states the Metropolitan, instead of offering assistance, some WCC member churches sponsor mission work in Russia, in violation of ecumenical commitments: "They 'come to destroy our cultural foundations, not even saying hello, as though there had been no 30 years of dialogue.'"³ Not only is Metropolitan Kirill mistaken in assuming that, after nearly seven decades of Marxist-Leninist inculcation, such a high percentage of the Russian people are baptized; his comments also reveal a lack of knowledge of the Protestant community. Only a small percentage of Western Protestant missions now working in Russia are ecumenically minded. The majority are either evangelicals with minimal connection to the WCC or fundamentalists with no connection to the WCC or other ecumenical forums. If they are aware of ecumenical statements, they neither subscribe to them across the board nor consider them binding on their universal mandate to evangelize.

Spiritual Occupation of Russia

In a 1994 essay Andrei Kurayev, pro-rector of the Moscow Orthodox University, accused American Protestant missionaries of organizing the spiritual occupation of Russia. He wrote that one of the

missions calls itself a "Crusade" and asked, "Against whom is it fighting? Against unbelief and lack of spirituality? Or are they once again opposed to Orthodoxy?" Missionary meetings he called "shows" where the Christian faith is "advertised like toothpaste."⁴ Foreigners' presumption that Russia is a vast spiritual wasteland, despite a millennium of Orthodox Christianity,⁵ is fueled by militant language which in turn reinforces hostility:

"Russia is a Mission Field," proclaims one Campus Crusade news release. "Yours in conquering the heartland of Russia with the irresistible love of Jesus," ends a newsletter. These references are insensitive, uninformed, and easy to misconstrue.⁶

There appears to be a strong unwillingness on the part of Russian Orthodox leaders to concede that many other faiths, including Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, and Pentecostal, were in Russia long before the Revolution.⁷ Despite affirmations of tolerance across ethnic borders, it appears to many religious minorities that Orthodox are interested in religious freedom for themselves, but eager to limit opportunities for non-Orthodox, and willing to cry proselytism (even unfoundedly) to stem the tide flooding in.

Protests of Orthodox hierarchs over continuing "missionary intrusions" in Russia seem to overlook the impact of seventy years of Marxist-Leninist inculcation, argues Cecil M. Robeck. On the basis of past Christianization, Orthodoxy claims entitlement to cultural hegemony. Yet Orthodox have defined proselytism so broadly that any missionary or evangelistic activity undertaken by non-Orthodox is labeled illegitimate, and persons engaging in such activity are frequently described as thieves.⁸

Defining Proselytism

Many Western Protestants perceive a central problem in the failure of Russian Orthodoxy to rise to the post-Communist challenge of effective witness to its own nominal flock.¹⁰ Broadly speaking, evangelicals understand that those who have an active, living faith in Jesus Christ should not be treated as persons to be evangelized. Most would agree that evangelization which is coercive, deceptive, or manipulative, is unworthy of the name and should be labeled as proselytism. Yet disagreement comes when evangelization and proselytism are equated. Proselytism should not be applied indiscriminately to all evangelistic activity; room must be left for legitimate evangelistic efforts toward individuals in other religious communities when their affiliation is nominal.¹¹ Five observations may be made in this regard:

Orthodox have defined proselytism so broadly that any missionary or evangelistic activity undertaken by non-Orthodox is labeled illegitimate.

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First, definitions and applications of the term "proselytism" differ... Second, those who use the term have defined it for evangelicals rather than with evangelicals. Third, when the term is defined for another group and then unilaterally applied to that group, the issue becomes one of ecclesial oppression. Fourth, since those who most frequently invoke the charge of proselytism against younger churches were themselves in earlier times engaged in similar activities, the older churches may well run the risk of self-incrimination. Fifth, it would be wrong to judge evangelicals as not having any sympathy for the inappropriateness of proselytism, for they have publicly recognized its evils.¹² ♦

Excerpt reprinted with permission from Kaarina Ann Ham, "The Interplay Between Orthodoxy and Protestantism in Russia 1905-1995," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1998.

Kaarina Ham is a missionary with Youth for Christ serving in Samara, Russia.

Internet Resources on Religion

Sharyl Corrado and Mark Elliott

A **Balkan-Relief email discussion list** has been created to encourage sharing of resources and networking among individuals and relief agencies, in order to facilitate emergency relief efforts in the Balkans, particularly in countries bordering Kosovo which are dealing with the catastrophic refugee problem. Contents of the list include: 1) resources to offer in the relief efforts; 2) requests for resources of any type, including personnel, supplies, and financial support; 3) volunteer and employment opportunities related to relief efforts; 4) news items directly related to relief activities, both public and personal; and 5) any other communication that would facilitate relief work in the Balkans. Governmental, non-profit, and Christian organizations and individuals are welcome to subscribe. To subscribe, send a blank message to subscribe-balkan-relief@xc.org. For more information, contact list moderator Larry Wilson at lwilson@xc.org.

Hansen, Stephen A. **Getting Online for Human Rights**. Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1998. 48 pp.

Getting Online for Human Rights (<http://shr.aas.org/Online/contents.htm>) provides valuable information in a clear and well-organized way. Topics covered include locating human rights information on the Internet, Internet authenticity and security issues, and Internet information sharing mechanisms (discussion groups, news groups, etc.). Basically, the booklet amplifies and illustrates the following sentence from the introduction: "The Internet is both a medium of communication and an online library of human rights documentation." The

¹David P. Teague, "Key Issues and Practical Advice" in *Turning Over a New Leaf: Protestant Mission and the Orthodox Churches of the Middle East*, ed. by David P. Teague (London: Interserve, 1992), 107-108.

²Donald W. Shriver and Peggy L. Shriver, "Russian Orthodoxy in a Time of Upheaval," *Christian Century* 112 (5 April 1995), 366.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Xenia Dennen, "Leading Orthodox Apologist Has Meeting With Protestants," *Keston News Service* 95 (January 1995), 16.

⁵Serge Schmemmann, "Religion Returns to Russia, With a Vengeance," *New York Times International*, 28 July 1993, Sect. A, 8.

⁶R. Vito Nicastro, Jr., "Mission Volga: A Case Study in the Tensions Between Evangelizing and Proselytizing," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 31 (Summer 1994), 241.

⁷Schmemmann, "Religion Returns to Russia," 8.

⁸Nicastro, "Mission Volga," 229.

⁹Cecil M. Robeck, "Mission and the Issue of Proselytism," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 20 (January 1996), 4.

¹⁰Philip Walters, "Born Orthodox?," *Frontier* 11 (May-June, 1997), 6-7.

¹¹Robeck, "Mission and the Issue of Proselytism," 6-7.

¹²*Ibid.*, 7.

author is to be commended for straightforward directions and illustrations. On pages 15-16 (on-line at <http://shr.aas.org/Online/Section1-1.htm#> Utilize Internet Directories) find a description of websites specializing in human rights resources, which are made available through online annotated bibliographies, directories, and databases.

Contact Gretchen Richter, AAAS, 1200 New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20005; tel: 202-326-6787; fax: 202-289-4950; e-mail: grichter@aaas.org; website: <http://shr.aas.org/Online/Cover.htm>. The document is available on-line at no charge. The print edition costs \$5 plus \$2.50 postage.

Craig Zelizer, Ph.D. candidate and adjunct faculty at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, maintains two **e-mail lists posting job openings related to the former Soviet Union (NIS) and East Central Europe (CEE)**, primarily for positions with nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and in post-Soviet countries. To subscribe, send a blank message to nisjobs-subscribe@onelist.com or ceejobs-subscribe@onelist.com.

The **French-language Orthodox monthly news service SOP (Service Orthodox de Presse)**, published since 1975, has been on-line free of charge since March 1997 at <http://www.orthodoxpress.com/>. Each issue contains news from a variety of countries, as well as resources and book reviews. The March 1999 issue, for example, contains news from Egypt, Russia, Romania, Serbia, Albania, Poland, France, Lebanon, and Kenya. Subscriptions to the print

version are 200 F per year within France, 225 F internationally. Regular supplements to the monthly service are available for a small additional fee, and several other news services can be combined with SOP as a package deal. See <http://www.orthodoxpress.com/abonnement.html> for a complete range of subscription options, or contact: SOP, 14, rue Victor Hugo, 92400 Courbevoie, France; tel. 33-01-43-33-52-48; fax 33-01-43-33-86-72; e-mail: sopdoc@micronet.fr.



Hunt, Kathleen. *Abandoned to the State: Cruelty and Neglect in Russian Orphanages*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1998. \$15.00.

This informative, well-researched, and shocking report documents the state of orphanages in Russia. Ample evidence confirms cruel and inhumane treatment of children by orphanage staff. According to the report, orphans "may be beaten, locked in freezing rooms for days at a time, abused physically, [and] denied adequate education and training. It is deplorable that the very state that is charged with the care and nurture of more than 600,000 children "without parental care," condemns untold numbers to an archipelago of grim institutions." The report also includes relevant extracts of national and international laws and practical recommendations. The complete report is available free of charge at <http://www.hrw.org/reports98/russia2/>. Print copies cost \$15.00. Contact: Human Rights Watch, Publications Department, 350 Fifth Ave, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10118-3299; tel: 212-216-1813 or 212-290-4700; e-mail: mingesp@hrw.org; website: <http://www2.viaweb.com/hrwpubs/info.html>. In Europe, contact: Central Books, 99 Wallis Rd., London E9 5LN, UK; tel: 44-81-986-4854; fax: 44-81-533-5821. Human Rights Watch provides a variety of other valuable reports and information at <http://www.hrw.org/>.



International Fides News Service

(<http://www.fides.org>) of the Pontifical Mission Society for the Propagation of the Faith was founded in 1927 to disseminate news fostering Roman Catholic missionary cooperation, spiritual communion, and material support. *Fides* provides news, photos, and studies of contemporary Roman Catholic mission conditions throughout the world. The print and e-mail versions are available in English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, and Chinese for U.S. \$75.00 (Lire 125,000) from Fides International Service, Via di Propaganda 1c; 00187- Rome, ITALY; tel: 39-06-69880115; fax: 39-06-69880107; e-mail: fides@fides.va; website: <http://www.fides.org/abbona-ing.htm>.



The Slavic Reference Service (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/spx/srs.htm>) of the University of Illinois Slavic and East European Library answers bibliographic and reference questions in the humanities and social sciences from individuals and

libraries at no charge. One section of the Slavic Reference Service website (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/spx/fsrsl5.htm>) provides links to search engines in Russian and a variety of East Central European languages. Reference questions may be submitted by phone, fax, or e-mail to the Slavic Reference Service, 225 Main Library, Slavic and East European Library, University of Illinois, 1408 W. Gregory Dr., Urbana, IL 61801; tel: 217-333-1349; fax: 217-244-8976; e-mail: hfsulliv@uiuc.edu; website: <http://www.library.uiuc.edu/spx/slform.htm>. (See also *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT* 1 (Summer 1993), 18.)



Metaphrasis News Agency has posted issues 10-17 (12 May - 6 July 1998) of its Russian-language information service on religion in post-Soviet lands on the internet (<http://www.glasnet.ru/~mf/>). Since November 1998, Metaphrasis news, events, analytical articles, and book reviews have been posted on a new Russian-language Orthodox site, Sobornost (<http://www.sobor.ru/>), updated several times a week. Of special interest is the electronic bulletin "Pravoslavnye Resursy Internet Segodnya i Zavtra [Orthodox Internet Resources Today and Tomorrow]" (<http://www.sobor.ru/conference/index1.asp>), which includes a description of Russian Orthodox sites. This site also provides a Russian Orthodox perspective on the Kosovo crisis.



The **Russia Intercessory Prayer Network**, maintained by Zhenya Dikaryova, Seattle, WA, as a means of facilitating prayer for Russia, now offers *RIPnet News*, a free daily e-mail list monitoring religious liberty in Russia and the former Soviet Union. To subscribe, e-mail ripnet@ripnet.org. The RIPnet website (<http://www.ripnet.org>) contains a searchable archive of past articles, as well as links to a variety of related websites.



Ray Prigodich, professor of missions at Denver Seminary, Denver, CO, and associate academic dean of Donetsk Christian University, Donetsk, Ukraine, regularly forwards **articles on religion in Russia** to a self-maintained list of interested parties. Along with *Compass Direct*, *Keston News Service*, and the Russia Intercessory Prayer Network, Professor Prigodich provides one of the most consistent sources of information on religion in the former Soviet Union. To be added to his list, e-mail Prigodich@aol.com.



Eesti Kirik (Church of Estonia), a weekly Estonian-language newspaper of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, has been on-line since October 1998 at <http://www.kirikuleht.ee/>. It publishes news about Lutherans and other Christians in Estonia. Contact: Ms. Sirje Semm, editor, ülikooli 1, Tartu, EE2400 Estonia; tel: 8-27-431-437; fax: 8-27-441-231; e-mail: eelkleht@tartu.astronet.ee. The Estonian

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Internet Resources (con't from page 13)

Evangelical Lutheran Church home page (<http://www.zzz.ee/eelk/>) also contains helpful information, such as names and contact information for a variety of departments within the church.



The Russian-language homepage of the **Russian True Orthodox Church** [*Istinno-Pravoslavnyaya Tserkov*] (<http://www.ipc.od.ua/>), published by the Odessa and Crimea Eparchy, contains a variety of helpful information, including contact information for parishes in the Black Sea-Kuban and Odessa Eparchies, and a list of church publications. Especially helpful is material from the directory *Gde Istinno-Pravoslavnyaya Tserkov?* (<http://www.ipc.od.ua/sekt.html>), providing short summaries of various religions and sects. Selected articles and tables of contents from back issues of the quarterly *Vestnik I. P. Ts. [Vestnik of the True Orthodox Church]*, containing news, articles, upcoming events, and statistics, are available in full on-line. Subscriptions to the print version are available for \$12/year by contacting Irene Dutikow, 2536 37th St., Astoria, NY 11103; tel: 718-726-7870; e-mail: IDutikow@aol.com. In Ukraine, subscriptions are \$5/year. Contact: Natalia Sergeevna Kovtun, Box 64, 270014 Odessa-14, Ukraine; e-mail: ipc@paco.net. In Russia, subscriptions are \$8/year. Contact: L.A. Yanisheva, Box 813, 190121 St. Petersburg-121, Russia.



While they do not have an active website at present, back issues of the Russian-language *Russkiy pastyr [Russian Shepherd]*, the Holy Trinity Seminary (Jordanville, NY) alumni pastoral journal, are available at <http://www.dux.ru/guest/church/>. Holy Trinity Seminary is affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. Print subscriptions are available for \$18.00 per year (3 issues). Contact: *Russkiy Pastyr – The Holy Trinity Seminary Alumni Pastoral Journal* Editorial Office 475 26th Ave. San Francisco, CA 94121 Tel: 415-387-5164 E-mail: ruspast@flash.net



The mission of Rome-based **ZENIT International News Agency** (<http://www.zenit.org>) is "to provide objective and professional coverage of events, documents, and issues emanating from or concerning the Catholic Church for a worldwide audience." ZENIT currently offers its subscribers free daily dispatches in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, including special reports, feature articles, interviews, and a dossier of Roman Catholic events. To subscribe, send a message with the subject "subscribe" to english@zenit.org. ZENIT's daily dispatch provides regular information on the Balkan crisis from a Catholic perspective. ◆

Estonian Church Statistics

	MEMBERSHIP	CHURCHES	CLERGY
Lutheran	172,000	168	143
Estonian Apostolic Orthodox	30,000	52	11
Old Believers	10,000	11	5
Evangelical Christians—Baptists	6,500	87	97
Roman Catholic	3,000	7	3
Estonian Christian Pentecostal	2,500	36	56
New Apostolic	2,500	10	
Adventist	1,997	18	13
Methodist	1,842	21	22
Estonian Full Gospel	1,000	5	35
Evangelical Charismatic	1,000	9	18
Word of Life (Estonian Christian Free)	1,000	5	18
Moravian Brethren	ca100	1	
Independent		34	
Charismatic Episcopal		22	
Totals	233,439*	486	421

Source: Norie Roeder *et al.*, *How Christian is Estonia?* [Tallinn]: Estonian Evangelization Alliance, 1997. Available on-line at <http://sool.ioc.ee/~alland/kogudus/stat/kuikr0.htm>.

*The percentage of total population of 1,486,031 holding church membership is 15.8.

Estonian Survey Results

I think that I am...

A believer	9%
Inclined towards religion	52%
Indifferent towards religion	32%
Inclined towards atheism	6%
Atheist	1%

How often do you go to church?

Weekly	3%
Once or twice a month	4%
3-4 times per year	13%
Once or twice per year	53%
Never	27%

Do you have a copy of the Bible or New Testament?

One copy	45%
More copies	41%
None	14%

How often do you read the Bible?

Every day	2%
Once a week	6%
Seldom	60%
Never	32%

I listen to/watch religious broadcasts ...

	Over the radio	On TV
Often	18.2%	17.3%
Seldom	41.4%	53.6%
Never	34.2%	25.8%

RESOURCES

Religious Freedom in Central and Eastern Europe After the Collapse of Communism. Budapest: Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary, 1998. Reviewed by Mark Elliott.

How does one, on the one hand, respect religious freedom and, on the other hand, guard against the dangers of new religious movements (nrms)? Some 80 representatives of historic Christian confessions of East Central Europe (Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox), as well as religious studies specialists from Western Europe, met in Dobogókő, Hungary, 21-25 September 1997, to address this issue. The present volume includes papers from this conference. Presenters are, for the most part, quite restrained in their portrayal of new religious movements. Tolerance is championed, but the volume's presupposition still is that Europe should be wary of new religious movements.

Even though the purpose of the gathering was to address the relationship of religious freedom to new religious movements, very little concrete data came to light on specific nrms. One exception is German Lutheran Thomas Gandow's useful typology of "Non-Christian Religious Trends" (pp. 31-33). In the main, the volume is an exercise in erudite ecumenical hand-wringing, culminating in a call for "further reflection."

This 119-page paperback is available in English and Hungarian. Contact: Okumenikus Tanulmányi Központ [Ecumenical Education Center], 1114 Budapest, Bocskai ut 15. III. 3; tel/fax: 36-1-466-4790. Cost: \$2 U.S. plus postage.



Russian and Ukrainian audiocassettes of the New Testament are available from Mission Licht im Osten (Light in the East Mission). The set of 12 cassettes, including both Ukrainian and Russian, can be purchased from:

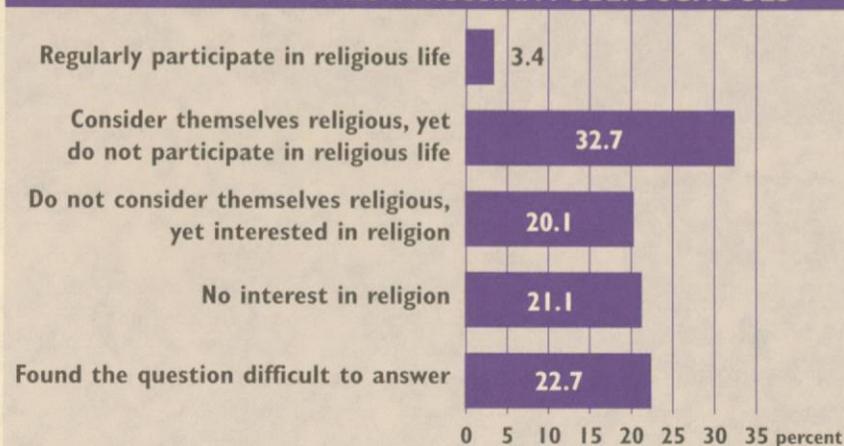
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Price: DM 120

NEWS NOTE

In April-May 1998 the Russian Independent Institute of Social and National Problems and the Center of Sociological Investigation of the Russian Ministry of Public and Professional Education conducted three sociological studies exploring the **religiosity of public school children in Russia**. The studies involved 1050 pupils of the sixth, eighth, and tenth grades (ages 11-17) from 210 schools in eight regions of the country.

RELIGIOSITY OF PUPILS IN RUSSIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Source: Mikhail Petrovich Mchedlov, "Majority of Russia's Population for Teaching Fundamentals of Faith to Children," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 16 December 1998.

Editor's Note: The low level of regular participation in religious life for Russian youth (3.4 percent) parallels a comparable low level of regular participation in worship by Russian adults (1 to 7 percent) documented in other surveys. See Mark Elliott, "What Percentage of Russians Are Practicing Christians?," *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT* 5 (Summer 1997), 5-6. The Russian Independent Institute of Social and National Problems conducted a related study of Russian youth in November-December 1997, which included a section on religion. The 64-page study, *Molodezh novoy Rossii: Kakaya ona? Chem zhivet? K chemu stremitsya?* [Youth of a New Russia: What are They Like? How Do They Live? What Do They Strive For?] is available on-line at <http://www.nns.ru/analytdoc/molod.html>.

Ministry or Service? (con't from page 16)

deliberately lying, but rather expressing what they want to be accurate. What appears to be fabrication sometimes is not malicious distortion of truth, but rather subconscious reconstruction of reality, a defense mechanism which has served Russians well, quite possibly even saving their lives.

What a difference it would make if each missionary and religious worker, Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic, strove to be literally a *svyashchennosluzhitelj*, a sacred servant, focusing ministry not on strategy, training, or even tradition, but on understanding and serving others, and on addressing real needs. May the Church seek not only changed minds, but spiritually changed lives, rebuilding piece by piece the broken memories and relationships that shape the Russian people. ◆

¹Dorinne Kondo, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) quoted in Richard Stevens, ed., *Understanding the Self* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 272.

²Kerry Thomas, "The Defensive Self: A Psychodynamic Perspective" in Stevens, *Understanding the Self*, 281-337.

³*Ibid.*, 288.

⁴*Ibid.*, 314.

Sharyl Corrado is assistant editor of the EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT.

Ministry or Service? Is There a Difference?

Sharyl Corrado

Working for the *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT*, I have at times asked myself: What is *ministry*? What does it mean to *minister*? Christians, especially in evangelical circles, use the term frequently. "God used X to *minister* to me." "I feel God is calling me to the *ministry*." My own M.A. studies are in the department of educational *ministries*. In the American evangelical subculture, phrases like prison ministry, student ministry, and cross-cultural ministry are taken for granted.

In Russia, there is no specifically Christian term for ministry. The literal translation, *ministerstvo*, refers to a political body, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, home for the KGB. When Western Christians in Russia use the term *minister*, it is translated into Russian as "to serve (*sluzhit*)."
Ministry becomes "*sluzhenie*" (devotion or service), something less abstract and more practical. The Russian term for Orthodox clergy (*svyashchenoslužitel*) can be translated literally into English as "holy servant." This understanding of ministry—not as a specifically Christian activity, but as common everyday service to others—has challenged me to consciously focus on those around me.

In order to serve others, we need to understand their needs and background. I am reminded of the child who tried to serve a goldfish by freeing it from the fishbowl! That act of service caused the death of the fish. Yet how often are Christians like that child? Do our attempts to minister to others serve them or suffocate them? Western missionaries generally leave the country after a few months, years, or, at most, decades, but for nationals, whose lives missionaries have touched, whose identity they have helped shape, these changes are permanent. A Russian teammate pointed out to me: "Missionaries so often report to

supporters how many people have been converted through their ministry. But they never count the number of people they have turned away from Christ." Ministry is a great responsibility.

The English "minister" and Russian "sluzhit" even differ grammatically. *Minister* can stand alone, with or without reference to an object of that ministry. In English, one can speak of ministering without referring to people at all. In Russian, the main definition of the word *sluzhit* takes an object: one does not simply serve; one serves *someone*. Unless a missionary is truly being of service to those she works with, can we really say that she is involved in ministry?

An understanding of the Russian mentality would benefit Westerners wishing to truly serve people of the former Soviet Union. A Russian friend once asked me, "Do you think you can become whatever you want to be?" I truthfully answered that, as a rule, yes, I did. Contemplating that, she said she did not feel she could influence her own life. She was what others made her to be, and could not be anything else. This was not only her view, but the view of her alcoholic brother and abusive father as well. This was how she and others had been taught to think.

These comments provided insight into behavior that I found puzzling. Conversion in Russia is not simply an individual decision. It affects family, friends, and coworkers. Anthropologist Dorinne Kondo found that in Japan, "Persons seem to be constituted in and through social relations and obligations to others. Selves and society did not seem to be separate entities. Boundaries were blurred."¹ I would contend that this is true in Russia as well. Relationships define identity. Western Christians must be aware of this.

It has long been recognized that both victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse can lose their memory of the event. Yet I am especially intrigued by the concept of reconstructing memory, explained by Kerry Thomas, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Open University, Milton Keynes, UK.² Not only do people "forget" painful memories, but they may subconsciously "distort reality" when the truth is too hard to bear.³ "Memories" can be created during therapies, during hypnosis, and *during ordinary conversations in ordinary relationships*.⁴ When speaking about a past event, we may actually be re-creating that event in our memory. "The notion of *historical truth* disappears behind that of *narrative truth*."⁴

While to Western minds it seems far-fetched, this could explain a fuzziness about the truth which I have noticed in Russia. Often it seems that the concept of objective truth is irrelevant, as everyone speaks from their own perception, perhaps as they wanted things to have been. Yet in certain cases of obvious contradiction, people may not be

(continued on page 15)

What a difference it would make if each missionary and religious worker, Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic, strove to be literally a sacred servant.

EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT, published quarterly by the Institute for East-West Christian Studies, seeks to encourage Western Christian ministry in East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union that is effective, culturally sensitive, and cooperative. It also serves as a forum for the exploration of a variety of issues relating to Christianity's presence in Europe's formerly Marxist states. Letters to the editor are welcomed. Subscription rates are \$44.95 per year (U.S. and Canada); \$54.95 (international); and \$19.95 (e-mail). **Reprint and photocopy policy:** 1) Quantity photocopies or reprints of up to three articles from a single issue may be distributed or reprinted with no royalty charge. 2) Written permission is to be secured for each distribution or reprinting. 3) The following statement is to be carried on each photocopied article reproduced and each article reprinted: **Reproduced (or Reprinted) with permission of EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT.**

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