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Evangelism and Proselytism in Russia: Synonyms or Antonyms?

Mark Elliott

Editor's Note: *The present article draws heavily upon and reacts to findings in two major studies on proselytism in the former Soviet Union (see endnote 1) produced by a Pew Charitable Trust grant project directed by Professor John Witte, Jr., Emory University Law School.*

Protections and Limits on Religious Proclamation

Christianity strongly enjoins its adherents to give witness for the purpose of converting nonbelievers. Modern human rights covenants both aid and restrict this propagation.¹ The 1966 European Covenant, for example, protects one's right to "impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers."² But international human rights accords also have set limits on the expression and propagation of beliefs where they infringe on "the right of individuals to hold a belief of their choice without impairment."³ These covenants put limits on proselytism, the act of converting an individual from one faith or church to another, by specifically disallowing coercion, material inducement, violation of privacy, and preachments to captive audiences.⁴ But it is not easy to reconcile the freedom to manifest a religious belief and the sometimes contending freedom to maintain a religious belief.⁵ Some parties will insist on the existence of a legitimate right to unfettered religious expression for the purpose of persuasion and conversion. Others, conversely, will insist on the right to be free of all unwanted religious proclamation, not just that which is coercive, invasive, or manipulative. In such cases of rigid single-mindedness, no meeting of minds is possible, and juxtaposing advocates of such uncompromising positions produces diatribe instead of dialogue. But if one concedes both a right to free religious expression and the legitimacy of restrictions upon abuses of religious expression, then there is a basis for discussion.

The Issue of Material Inducements

The issue of inadmissible material inducements in evangelism and missions, what Israeli legal scholar Natan Lerner calls "evangelistic malpractice," deserves serious consideration.⁶ Keston Institute Director Lawrence Uzzell is correct to state categorically that "missionaries should not buy converts. Giving a

provincial Russian a free Bible as an inducement to attend a religious lecture or worship service is the equivalent of paying an American fifty dollars or so for that purpose." And "offering brand-new converts or prospective converts . . . a free trip to America . . . can easily become just a holiday, shopping opportunity, or springboard for permanent emigration. . . . Conditioned by Madison Avenue, American missionaries too easily forget that Christ said, 'Take up thy cross and follow me,' not 'Take advantage of our new special offer.'" Still, Christian proclamation without concrete acts of compassion for the poor, the destitute, and the suffering rings hollow, a theme reiterated time and time again in the Book of James.

Longtime mission researcher and mission practitioner Anita Deyneka has written guidelines for Evangelical missionaries in Russia that underscore the necessity to "proclaim the Gospel in word and deed." At the same time, to avoid any hint of manipulation, Dr. Deyneka recommends that "Humanitarian aid as a part of the Christian mission should be given without coercion to convert to any religious confession."⁸ In the same vein Lawrence Uzzell explains, "There is nothing inherently wrong with giving away goods or services free of charge. But missionaries should make such items available to all who are in need, not just to participants in the missionaries' own programs Free soup kitchens or food parcels should be targeted to all who are hungry, not just those willing to sit through Protestant sermons."⁹ Sad to say, this writer attended a church in Moscow in July 2000 in which elderly women were provided tickets for a free meal in exchange for their presence in worship.

However, the increasingly xenophobic Russian Orthodox Church sees not only such manipulative charity, but all Western Protestant compassionate ministries and communications as "illegitimate material inducements." Moscow Patriarchate

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Paradoxically, genuine champions of religious liberty must even defend professions of faith they consider false and ungracious; and genuine followers of Christ must ever champion witness that is winsome and gracious.

Elliott (cont. from page 1)

Department of External Relations representative Alexander Dvorkin, whose U.S. citizenship serves as a rather odd adornment for a fierce Russian nationalist, deplors all manner of Western Christian ministry in the former Soviet Union, including "the furnishing of humanitarian aid, English lessons, education, and employment . . . the use of television, newspapers, and other mass media to propagate the faith and the organization of loud and insensitive crusading carnivals."¹⁰ Similarly, throughout the 1990s Patriarch Alexis II decried the "massive influx" of "well-organized and well-financed" missions of "foreign proselytizing faiths,"¹¹ "zealots" in search of "new markets."¹²

Missionary Practice versus Missionary Presence

Undoubtedly, it is hard to draw a clear, precise line between legitimate expressions of Christian compassion on the one hand and material enticements offered to effect what must be superficial conversions on the other. But such points of discernment do not concern the Russian Orthodox Church because, as Emory legal scholar John Witte notes, "The Patriarch is not only complaining about *improper methods* of evangelism—the bribery, blackmail, coercion, and material inducements used by some groups; the garish carnivals, billboards, and media blitzes used by others. The Patriarch is also complaining about the *improper presence* of missionaries."¹³

Patriarchs and archbishops of fourteen Orthodox Churches, including Alexis II, who met in Istanbul in March 1992 signed a joint message castigating new Catholic and Protestant initiatives in Eastern Europe. The assembled Orthodox hierarchs expressed consternation that Catholics and Protestants were treating their territories as *terra missionis* (missionary lands), whereas, they noted, "in these countries the Gospel has already been preached for many centuries."¹⁴ Since the long historical conditioning of the Byzantine and Russian Empires involved state privileges for established Orthodox churches and an absence of religious pluralism, and since *Russian* and *Orthodox* are taken as synonyms by conservative churchmen and nationalists, Western evangelism among any Russians is regarded as proselytism. Nevertheless, even as Evangelicals come to appreciate Orthodoxy, the exceptional achievements of Russian culture, and the remarkable perseverance of a long-suffering people, they need feel no constraint to abstain from, or feel apologetic for, sharing the good news in a Russia minus Marx.¹⁵ This is so because the former Soviet Union is home to many tens of millions of people who claim no religious allegiance or are nominal believers.¹⁶ Evangelicals have ample room to minister in this setting without engaging in proselytizing.¹⁷

Balancing the Great Commission and the Golden Rule

In closing, two seemingly contradictory propositions deserve consideration, one legal and one theological. Legally, freedom of conscience, to be genuine, must concede the possibility of culturally insensitive, even patently obnoxious propagation—short of the aforementioned coercion, material inducement, invasion of privacy, and preachments to captive audiences. However, theologically, legal scholar John Witte makes the telling point that a Christian must keep in balance the imperative of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) and the imperative of restraint and respect for others that derives from the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12).¹⁸ Thus, paradoxically, genuine champions of religious liberty must even defend professions of faith they consider false and ungracious; and genuine followers of Christ must ever champion witness that is winsome and gracious.

Notes

1. T. Jeremy Gunn, "The Law of the Russian Federation on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations From a Human Rights Perspective" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia, The New War for Souls* ed. John Witte, Jr., and Michael Bourdeaux (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 241; Natan Lerner, "Proselytism, Change of Religion, and International Human Rights," *Emory International Law Review* 12 (Winter 1998), 497–98, 500, 519, 542.
2. Lerner, "Proselytism," 485.
3. *Ibid.*, quoting Donna J. Sullivan, "Advancing the Freedom of Religion or Belief through the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Religious Intolerance and Discrimination," *American Journal of International Law* 82 (1988), 487.
4. *Ibid.*, 482–83, 486, 495–96, 526–27, 559.
5. *Ibid.*, 504.
6. *Ibid.*, 495.
7. Lawrence Uzzell, "Guidelines for American Missionaries in Russia," in Witte and Bourdeaux, 326–27.
8. Anita Deyneka, "Guidelines for Foreign Missionaries in the Former Soviet Union," in Witte and Bourdeaux, 335–36.
9. Uzzell, "Guidelines," 326–27.
10. John Witte, Jr., "Introduction" in Witte and Bourdeaux, 7. See also Joel A. Nichols, "Mission, Evangelism, and Proselytism in Christianity: Mainline Conceptions as Reflected in Church Documents," *Emory International Law Review* 12 (Winter 1998), 639–40, 642.
11. Witte, "Introduction," 7.
12. Nichols, "Mission," 649.
13. Witte, "Introduction," 22.
14. Nichols, "Mission," 635.
15. The previous two sentences originally appeared in Mark Elliott, "East of the Old Iron Curtain: Can Christians Coexist?," *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 2 (Fall 1994), 16, and Kent Hill and Mark Elliott, "Are Evangelicals Interlopers?,"

East-West Church & Ministry Report 1 (Summer 1993), 3.

16. Susan Goodrich Lehmann, "Religious Revival in Russia: Significant or Superficial," paper presented at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Washington, DC, 21 October 1996, Fig. 6.
17. Mark Elliott and Sharyl Corrado, "The Protestant Missionary Presence in the Former Soviet Union," *Religion, State and Society* 24 (No. 4, 1997), 341-42; Nichols, "Mission," 646.

18. Witte, "Introduction," 24. See also Nichols, "Mission," 565-66.

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The Proselytism of Majority Faiths

Earl A. Pope

It is readily apparent that the whole concept of proselytism is in need of much greater study and objective analysis than it has received. The majority churches in Eastern Europe make many charges of proselytism, and ecumenical agencies frequently agree with them. The question remains, however, as to who will have the courage to tell the majority churches with all their political and social power that they also engage in forms of proselytism by claiming to possess the absolute truth and demeaning other perspectives, by creating and communicating caricatures of other religious communities or demonizing them, by demanding restrictions on the religious freedom of other groups because of their love of power, by instilling false fears regarding the

subversion of the nation that they maintain they alone can defend against, and by encouraging discriminatory actions or even outright violence against those who would challenge their religious monopoly.

Excerpt reprinted with permission from Earl Pope, "Ecumenism, Religious Freedom, and the 'National Church' Controversy in Romania," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 36 (Winter-Spring 1999).

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The Religious Topography of Eastern Europe

Paul Mojzes

More History Than Can Be Consumed

Eastern Europe is a veritable mosaic of religious communities. In this belt of countries, stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic and Black Seas, four great clusters of religious communities meet—and collide. Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Islam, and Protestantism vie for the loyalty and adherence of, and even provide identity to, the rainbow of nationalities who have migrated, settled, and subjugated one another; who pursued or were pursued, then migrated again; who lost, gained, and again lost territories. These encounters are generally outside the pale of interest of the conventional historians in the West but are subject to endless squabbling and distortion by historians of the East. In the West the stories of these encounters bring about confusion or neglect. In the East they raise passion, hatred, and even wars, as each group views the events of the past and the present through incompatible lenses and contradictory accounts of the past that often shed more heat than light. Winston Churchill once allegedly said about the Balkans that the area

produced more history than it could consume, a clever insight that tends to be valid for the entire Eastern European area.

Repeated Subjugation, the Rule

An astonishing variety of religious topography characterizes Eastern Europe. There are countries that are relatively homogeneous in their religious make-up, although the dominant religion differs from country to country. There are countries that are heterogeneous. In a few of the latter the multi-religious make-up causes some tensions but not great enough to cause the break-up of the country, while in others the strife has become open and has led to ethnoreligious wars.

What all the countries have in common is a series of great social changes throughout the twentieth century. Many of these countries had been under long colonial occupation by their more powerful neighbors, which has left them a legacy of inferiority

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Winston Churchill once allegedly said about the Balkans that the area produced more history than it could consume.

Religious Topography (cont. from page 3)

complexes covered up by illusions of grandeur. Most have gone through stages from feudalism via a short-lived capitalism into socialism and then into post-communism, all in a span of less than a century. They switched from monarchies to republics to people's democracies and back to republics, and a few of them are contemplating a return to monarchy. Practically none of them experienced genuine democracy (the exception is the Czech Republic) but have experienced many forms of authoritarian rule. Two great totalitarian ideologies, nazism and Communism, swept over the area, leaving a considerable imprint on the people's psyche. The ideology of modern nationalism has also held powerful sway in nearly all the countries, at least since the nineteenth century. Nationalism was able to adapt itself both during the right-wing fascist and the left-wing Communist totalitarianism. It reemerged with various intensities in the post-communist period, often still tainted with leftover fascist and Communist tendencies.

Nation Building on the Shoulders of Religious Identity

Most of the countries of the area became modern nation-states only in the twentieth century. While some scholars envision the end of the nation-state, Eastern Europe is experiencing the process of nation building, which for some states is at its very beginning. During the nation-building stage the emphasis is on strategies of national unification; religion often becomes a factor in the affirmation of the collective identity. While the national collective identity was either suppressed or marginalized during the Communist period, in the post-communist period the unfinished task of building national identities came to the fore. The dominant historic religion of each country is making valiant efforts to regain its preeminent place in the life of a nation. Nationalistic politicians are eager to gain the support of religious leaders and institutions in this process, while leaders of majority religions are elated to move from the margins to the center of social influence.

Missionaries as "Spoilers" of Nation Building

Proselytizers and missionaries, however, appear to be obstacles in the process toward maximal homogenization and tend to arouse great resistance from both national political and traditional religious leaders. The majority of the population is agitated against them with the help of the mass media. Proselytizers often have not fully comprehended why and how threatening they are because they tend to be focused on more universal values such as "truth," "salvation," "supranational values," and multiculturalism, all of which are internationalist agenda, in contrast to the nationalist agenda of majority religions.

Eastern Europe is thus in the midst of a great

clash of values. On the one hand is the right of collectives to define and defend themselves, and on the other hand is the individual's right to all civil liberties protected by law. Few believe that respect for every person's religious liberty will contribute to a more vital modern community.

Representatives of all religious groups, domestic and foreign, became very active in Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism, not only because there was now greater freedom to do so but also because Communism had been so inimical to all religions and had suppressed them so vigorously (though unevenly) that it appeared to religious people that they had a holy mandate to (re)turn the Eastern European population to a (or, in their mind, "the") religious path. To many proponents of religion it seemed as if the soul of their respective nation had been either driven out or driven into the deepest recesses of the nation's collective consciousness. They felt duty-bound by a divine mandate to attempt to redeem the soul of both the nation and individuals and to return it and them to the right relationship with the divine.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Paul Mojzes, "Religious Topography of Eastern Europe," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 36 (Winter-Spring 1999), 7-43.

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Resource Note

John Witte, Jr., Emory University Law School, and Paul Mojzes, Rosemont College, served as coeditors for an invaluable theme issue of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 35 (Winter-Spring 1999) dealing with "Pluralism, Proselytism, and Nationalism in Eastern Europe." Anyone concerned with the church and missions in Central and Eastern Europe would be well advised to purchase this issue for \$9. Contact JES, Temple University, 1114 W. Berks St., Philadelphia, PA 19122-6090; tel.: 215-204-7714; fax: 215-204-4569; E-mail: facshaferi@mercur.usao.edu or ihs@ionet.net; Web site: <http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/jesindex.htm>.

Majority Versus Minority Faiths in Romania, Ukraine, and Poland

Julie Mertus and Kathryn Minyard Frost

Religion as a Political Tool

In Central and Eastern Europe, religion and national identity go hand-in-hand, and thus the project of reconstructing religious identity becomes synonymous with the revitalization of the nation. Both majority and minority nations find religion a useful tool in their attempt to reshape their identities and gain power. Only natural identity counts, an identity based on a "nature" that cannot be approached rationally. A person's religion is a matter of "natural identity." That is, Romanians are said to be "naturally" Orthodox; Ukrainians, also "naturally" Orthodox but of a Ukrainian Orthodox variety; and Poles, "naturally" Roman Catholic. In other words, authentic Romanians and Ukrainians are Orthodox, and an authentic Pole is Catholic. Those who step outside their natural designations—for example, those who choose a new religion or minority religion—are deemed traitors to their group. Those who have long been outside the majority "natural" designation are simply the "other," who may be tolerated but who need not be supported.

The public appropriation of religion by competing nations dilutes the message of faith and places at its core a corporate entity that is more concerned with power consolidation than with any religious doctrine. As such, religion in Central and Eastern Europe can be conceptualized as a form of civil religion, the purpose of which is "to sanctify modern pluralistic states supplying some common goals and visions to their citizens." (Rina Neeman and Nissan Rubin, "Ethnic Civil Religion: A Case Study of Immigrants from Romania in Israel," *Sociology of Religion* 57 (Summer 1996), 195.)

The civil religion of Central and Eastern European states and nations seeks to support a single set of values and symbols that represent their own goals and interests. Thus, states and nations often find themselves in conflict with those who exercise their new consumer ability to choose an alternative expression of faith, be it either the majority faith expressed in an alternative manner or a minority religion.

A Spectrum of Church-State Relations

State legal practices toward religion can be placed on a continuum: from measures that seek the elimination of a religion, such as laws attacking and dismantling a faith or a set of practices; to measures that permit the existence of a certain faith, such as laws of indifference; to measures that respect differing faiths, such as human rights and nondiscrimination laws; to measures working toward the development of religion generally or toward certain faiths, such as

financial support of places of worship and religious education. Quite rapidly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Romania, Ukraine, and Poland tended to move away from measures restrictive of all religious faiths to a combination of measures reaching across the following spectrum: elimination/[state] attack, existence/[state] indifference, respect/human rights and legal guarantees, and development/[state] support.

For the most part, human-rights-watch groups have been able to note a vast improvement with respect to freedom of religion in Central and Eastern Europe because treatment toward most faiths tends to lie in the center of this continuum, hovering between existence (indifference) to respect (human rights). There are, in fact, few government restrictions on establishing and maintaining places of worship in Romania, Ukraine, or Poland, and for the most part states tolerate traditional minority religions. In Poland, for example, more than ninety-five percent of Poles are Roman Catholic, but Eastern Orthodox, Ukrainian Catholic, and much smaller Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim congregations exist and are treated with respect and/or indifference by the government.

State Preferences for Majority Faiths

Countries tend to be on the right side of the continuum—that is, the development (support) side—and on the left side of the continuum—that is, the elimination (attack) side—only with respect to new religions brought in by outsiders. For example, the government of Poland favors the Catholic majority in many respects; in particular, it allows the Roman Catholic Church special access to television-station frequencies while denying such privileges to other faiths. Similarly, the government of Romania grants the Orthodox Church special tax breaks and favors Orthodox clergy in their quest to (re)gain land appropriated by the previous regime, while denying similar requests by Greek Catholics and other minority religions.

Under such conditions Protestants in Poland worry that they may have been better off under the Communists than under the Catholicized new government. Likewise, Baptists and ethnic Hungarian Protestants in Romania are concerned that they will suffer more under the increasingly Romanian Orthodox-driven state than under the prior regime.

For members of the majority religion in many parts of Central and Eastern Europe, religion has become a sociopolitical safety measure, a way of reaffirming one's identity with the dominant nation.

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In many parts of Central and Eastern Europe, identity with the "national religion" easily becomes a tool of political elites who then manipulate it to dredge up fear of the other.

Majority Versus Minority (cont. from page 5)

In these cases, identity with the "national religion" easily becomes a tool of political elites who then manipulate it to dredge up fear of the other.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Julie Mertus and Kathryn Minyard Frost, "Faith and (In)Tolerance of Minority Religions: A Comparative Analysis of Romania, Ukraine, and

Poland," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 36 (Winter-Spring 1999), 65-80.

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An Ideal Theological Education: The Vision of Moscow's Protestant Leaders

Nicholas Holovaty

Editor's note: The author interviewed 34 Russian Protestant mission leaders and pastors in the fall of 1999 to evaluate the effectiveness of five Bible schools and seminaries in Moscow: Moscow Evangelical Christian Theological Seminary, New Life Bible College, Korean Pastors' School, Moscow Evangelical-Christian Baptist Theological Institute, and Moscow Theological Seminary of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. What follows is a summary of Russian Protestant leaders' vision of the ideal institution of theological education.

Theological education is thought of in terms of two basic categories: the practical and the theoretical, "know-how" and "know-what." Virtually all those interviewed agree that both are indispensable in Russia today.

Admissions

A student at the ideal school would have a strong and relatively mature faith, an obvious desire for ministry, a moderately clear vision of how he or she will carry out that ministry upon graduation, and an indication that he or she possesses the necessary God-given talent. Prior higher education would not be required but would be much preferred. All else being equal, preference would be given to those with higher secular education. Both men and women would study at the ideal school—though not the same subjects.

Residential or Extension?

Both are necessary. Those surveyed agree that the ideal would be to educate every single mission worker before he or she went to the field. But that is not possible as hundreds are already in active ministry and many cannot leave their work for any prolonged length of time. Consequently, the ideal school would have a residential program, evening classes for Christian workers in the area, and an extension program for those too involved to leave their place of ministry.

Denomination and Doctrinal Orientation

Very few of those interviewed favor interdenominational schools. The general opinion seems to be that doctrinal issues arise so early that a nondenominational education would be impossible for more than a few months, and a truly interdenominational education would only be within the scope of a four-year seminary. Better to choose one doctrinal position and adhere to it consistently. Students would not be required to adopt it, but the doctrinal orientation would be clear from the beginning.

The Western Connection

Presently, the biggest question in theological education is how to improve relations between graduates and the churches to which they are sent, or from which they come. This points to a problem noted by almost all of those interviewed: The connection is weak between schools and local churches. Theological education in Russia has, for the most part, been oriented from the top down. Most churches are too poor, as yet, to support even themselves, and as a result almost all of the theological institutions begun since the early 1990s have been at least funded by Western missions, if not organized and directed by them.

The efforts of Westerners to provide theological education in Russia, understandably enough, have not been altogether successful. Graduates reportedly are changed by Western influences to so great an extent that it is very hard for members of the older generation of believers to accept them. According to Vladimir Petrovich Zinchenko, pastor at Moscow's autonomous Church of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, "Churches in Moscow are modern; people in Moscow are used to Westerners. But outside Moscow it's different. When graduates of the Bible schools and seminaries here are sent to provincial churches, it's as though they don't even speak the same language." Some insist that this is a doctrinal issue while others say it is a question of culture. Regardless, many feel that until theological education is re-worked from the ground up—directed by the local church and not simply toward it—there will continue to be a great rift between the church and the theological academy.

A majority of those interviewed hold to the following doctrinal positions: biblical inerrancy, salvation by grace, believer's baptism, and an Arminian perspective on salvation (as opposed to what is called Calvinism, more specifically, eternal security). This, according to practically all of those interviewed, is in contrast to what most of the Western Bible schools and seminaries teach. Whether readers are sympathetic to these positions or not, if the West's

primary purpose in assisting Russian theological education is to serve Russian Protestant churches, these are the doctrines that must be adopted. To promote contrary views is to do more than simply serve, it is to change.

Length of Study

Two years is held to be the approximate length of time needed for basic missions training. Another one to two years of more specialized and practical training under the personal guidance of a mentor is recommended for those wishing to become senior pastors. Between two and four more years is regarded as sufficient to produce theologians and professors of theology.

The Curriculum: Theoretical or Practical?

Those surveyed seem to identify as theoretical and abstract such subjects as church doctrine, church history, theology, and Bible study methods. Subjects such as homiletics, marriage and family ministries, counseling, and discipleship are considered more practical.

There is great variation in the ways people think these subjects should be taught. American methods, understandably enough, are said to be less effective for Russians than Russian methods. The pastor of Moscow's Church of the Annunciation, Evgeny Vasilievich Karpenko, explained that, "The concept of a 'workbook,' which is designed more as a learning tool than as a learning resource, is foreign to most Russians. When a Russian student is given a book he expects to find answers, not questions." Another leader surveyed gave the rebuttal, "The Russian method promotes passive receptivity in contrast to the American approach which fosters inquiry and encourages the student to think for himself."

To insure the practicality of the program, many recommend close association with local churches. Mikhail Victorovich Fadin, pastor of Moscow's autonomous Church of the Transfiguration, suggested, "Each student would be assigned to a local pastor or church leader with whom he would serve and by whom he would be evaluated on a quarterly basis. The pastor would be able to evaluate as well as advise the student on a much more personal level than anyone else, and in return he would be getting

help in his church, a mutually beneficial arrangement." Other suggestions include a split graduation: one half upon completion of the program, the other half after a year of apprenticeship under an active missionary or pastor.

A common complaint is the absence of clearly defined goals for theological education. Departments might solve this problem. Male students would be given the choice of a pastorship major, a chaplaincy major, etc., while female students would be given the choice of music, children's ministry, women's ministry, etc. Once a department was selected, students would know what they would be actually qualified to do upon graduation.

Faculty and Staff

The ideal, of course, would be an all-Russian faculty and staff. However, the majority of those interviewed agree that this is impossible under present circumstances. According to Pastor Pavel Sergeievich Nikora of the Evangelical Christian Church at Moscow's Olympic Village, "There simply aren't enough Russian Protestant Christians who are qualified to teach in this country. For truly Russian theological education to be possible, there must be a body of Russian research, study, and experience to draw upon. It will be 20 or 30 years before real theological education is possible. We will have to build upon Western foundations until enough time has passed to build upon our own." The only practical compromise is, of course, a mixture, but it must be a compromise with a vision for change. With the ultimate but gradual Russification of theological education in mind, each successive year must be regarded as one step further toward the final goal. The best and most practical arrangement, then, would be to have multinational faculty and staff committed to the acculturation of the school, and ready to fulfill this commitment over time and in their students' best interests.

Nicholas Holovaty, who grew up in Moscow, is a classics major in his third year at Notre Dame University, South Bend, IN.

Theological graduates reportedly are changed by Western influences to so great an extent that it is very hard for members of the older generation of believers to accept them.

A Moscow Case Study: Mixed Reviews for the Korean Pastor's School

Nicholas Holovaty

Founded by Pastor Hwang Sang Ho in 1996 as a ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Moscow, the Korean Pastor's School offers classes two days a week to allow its students to carry on regular ministry

while they are attending. The three-year program is designed for those already active in ministry who would like further theological education. The program seems to be focused more on conveying

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The value of the education pales in comparison to the value of the stipend, and consequently the education has been discredited.

Case Study (cont. from page 7)

information than honing students' academic skills. This is understandable as most of the students are middle-aged and in the midst of fulltime ministry already. It would seem that the faculty is sensitive to this fact and does its best not to overburden students with work. Responses vary as to the spiritual and social atmosphere at the Pastor's School. The sense of community was not rated very highly by graduates. There are several possible explanations for this. The school has only been in existence a few years. Also, the fact that students are already members of other communities and only come together twice a week for classes could explain the weak sense of community.

Students' Discomfort with Reformed Doctrine

Professors at the Pastor's School are reportedly qualified and competent. Graduates rate the quality of their teachers very highly. They are said to be vocal about their doctrinal views and unhesitant to promote them in class. This is evidently frustrating for some. Though few graduates describe their professors as intolerant of contrary views, many agree that during their education they were under pressure to accept the doctrinal positions of the school. Nonetheless, graduate Mikhail Ivanovich Chekalin, pastor of Moscow's Good News Church, said he and most graduates still have a great deal of respect for their teachers. Several said Pastor Hwang, especially, was "a very good man" and had been an inspiration.

Despite the fact that its declared denomination is "Evangelical Christian" and its doctrinal orientation is "Reformed," the Pastor's School falls, in the minds of a good many of those interviewed, into the mildly "heretical" category of "Calvinist." As was already mentioned, the pressure to accept the doctrinal orientation of the faculty and staff is an acute sore point for some and a mild frustration for most. Some graduates

go so far as to say that it seems the main focus of the program is not simply to equip pastors for ministry but to convert pastors to Presbyterian ministry.

A School Best-Known for Its Stipend

Classes are held in a building owned by the Korean Presbyterian Church of Moscow near subway stop Akademicheskaya. As most of the students are from Moscow, housing is not provided. However, a stipend, or what the administration prefers to call "church support," is also given "according to need." This rumored and controversial "\$100 per week" complicates the reputation of the Pastor's School. The exact sum was not confirmed by the administration, though it was implied that the amount varied as to need. Nonetheless, in the minds of most, \$100 per week is evidently the distinctive characteristic of the school. What was intended as a compensation has reportedly become an incentive. Most graduates agreed that their primary reason for attending the school was the stipend. Though they were glad to receive the education, it was secondary. The fact that classes are only held twice a week made the situation ideal. With the stipend, pastors were free to perform their ministerial duties fulltime; they were not obliged to work to support their families for an entire three years.

This evidently has affected the general attitude not only of the students, but of outsiders as well. The entire situation seems to have turned into a conundrum. The fact that students go to school to get paid and not educated has adversely colored the education itself. The value of the education pales in comparison to the value of the stipend, and consequently the education has been discredited in the minds of everyone outside of the arrangement, and even by many on the inside. Whether this has occurred with good cause, or simply as a result of misunderstanding, is unclear.

Hard-Earned Counsel for Assisting Post-Soviet Seminaries

Judith Berling

Editor's Note: In two recent articles seminary professor Judith A. Berling has offered a wealth of quite practical advice for the incorporation of global perspectives and cross-cultural experience in theological education.¹ While the author's recommendations, derived from the experience of various seminaries that have undertaken globalization initiatives, were published for the benefit of North American seminaries, the advice is readily transferable to Western ministries serving new Bible schools and seminaries in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe.

Developing Institutional Commitment and Preparation

1. Any Western organization should "make a hard assessment of its depth of commitment and available resources before starting down the road of cross-cultural relationships. A willingness to commit the financial and human resources necessary for the program is essential. Moreover, a cross-cultural

relationship cannot be a one-year experiment. Cross-cultural relationships take time and resources to develop, to implement, and to assess."² "Globalization and cross-cultural training are expensive. They demand . . . time and energy."³

2. "Cross-cultural relationships and programs will founder if not integrally related to the mission and self-understanding of the school."⁴

3. "Faculty, students, and leadership of the school

need to understand what is entailed in global perspectives and cross-cultural understanding. . . . Workshops, seminars, or conferences on cross-cultural skills and sensitivities can help to develop the conceptual tools necessary for success in this field."⁵

4. "Schools find it wise to foster the cross-cultural experience of the faculty . . . well before committing to programs for students. Institutional ownership comes from actual cross-cultural experience."⁶ Denver Seminary requires all new faculty to "participate in a cross-cultural immersion before tenure."⁷

5. Denver Seminary also requires a "ten-day immersion component" of all M.Div. students.⁸ "A genuinely successful program will be integrated into the curriculum. Mere enrichment opportunities are fine, but the experience of seminaries is that enrichment opportunities are unlikely to be sustained over time—more likely to be tied to the enthusiasm of a single individual and less likely to be 'owned' by the school."⁹

Developing Trust and Mutuality with Partners

6. A school "must commit to a process of exploration with the partner (the other cultural group or community). Representatives of the seminary will need to spend time with the partner and build mutual relationships, entering into ongoing conversations to learn and explore mutual interests. Time must be spent at the site(s) where programmatic aspect(s) of the relationship will be implemented. . . . Most Euro-American institutions have relatively 'short-term' goals and think of relationships as quickly realizable. Many non-Euro-American cultures have a different sense of time and see relationships as developing slowly over a long history of give and take. The 'time frame' of the other culture needs to be understood and respected in order to build a sound relationship. Good cross-cultural relationships develop organically and are nurtured slowly and over the long term by means of steady personal contact."¹⁰

7. "Seminaries need to be particularly wary of using other communities for their own purposes. Both parties should benefit from a cross-cultural relationship and each should understand the needs and the stakes of the other. Before committing to a short-term experience, school decision-makers should consider seriously any long-term expectations

from its partner communities or cultures."¹¹

8. "Many cultural groups have had histories of unfortunate or unreliable relationships with mainstream North American institutions. North American money has too often created asymmetry in relationships. A sense of indebtedness or of being the client of a wealthy patron has inhibited international or cross-cultural partners from expressing their needs, concerns, and stakes. North American schools need to be aware of this historical dynamic and exert discipline to refrain from using their considerable resources to shape a one-sided relationship. Cross-cultural partners from outside North America seek a long-term reliable commitment and relationship. . . . It takes patience and hard work to create genuine mutuality in the power dynamics of the relationship."¹² Partners abroad are often too polite to assert their own agenda or challenge the unconscious assertion of privilege, which can so easily come with the resources and good intentions of North American institutions."¹³

Notes

1. Judith A. Berling, "Collective Wisdom: What ATS Schools Have Learned about Establishing, Sustaining, and Evaluating Cross-cultural Relationships," *Theological Education* 35 (Spring 1999): 85–98; Judith A. Berling, "Getting Down to Cases: Responses to Globalization in ATS Schools," *ibid.*, 99–139.
2. Berling, "Collective Wisdom," 88–89.
3. Berling, "Getting Down," 136.
4. Berling, "Collective Wisdom," 87.
5. *Ibid.*, 88.
6. *Ibid.*, 87.
7. Berling, "Getting Down," 109.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Berling, "Collective Wisdom," 92.
10. *Ibid.*, 89.
11. *Ibid.*, 90.
12. *Ibid.*, 90–91.
13. Berling, "Getting Down," 111.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Theological Education 35 (Spring 1999).

Judith Berling, who served as director of the Incarnating Globalization Project of the Association of Theological Schools, teaches at Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA.

North American money has too often created asymmetry in relationships. A sense of indebtedness or of being the client of a wealthy patron has inhibited international or cross-cultural partners from expressing their needs, concerns, and stakes.

Post-Soviet Theological Education: Highlights of Two Doctoral Dissertations

Mark Elliott

Two recent doctoral dissertations directly address the issue of Evangelical theological education in post-Soviet societies:

Charter, Miriam L. "Theological Education for

New Protestant Churches of Russia: Indigenous Judgements on the Appropriateness of Educational Methods and Styles," Ph.D., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1997; and

(continued on page 10)

Theological Education (cont. from page 9)

Bohn, David P. "The Perspectives on Theological Education Evident among Evangelical Church Leaders in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia," Ph.D., Trinity International University, 1997.

Both were completed at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, now known as Trinity International University, Deerfield, IL, near Chicago. Dr. Ted Ward, a specialist in nonformal education, served as director for both theses. Miriam Charter and David Bohn both have extensive experience in the region, particularly Central and Eastern Europe, and both have worked for Biblical Education by Extension (BEE). Both dissertations argue that the best choice East European educators can make is to not adopt the traditional residential Western approach to theological education, at least not without very serious adaptation. Miriam Charter writes, "The most redemptive role for Westerners in the inevitable partnership of East and West in the development of theological education . . . must be one of encouragement, intentionally encouraging . . . educators not to allow the West, unchallenged, to replicate the educational models and styles that they have implemented in countries around the world" (261).

Likewise, David Bohn equates reform in theological education with movement away from formal, residential programs, and instead, the implementation of one or another nonformal model.¹ Slightly more than half of his respondents agreed with his survey item that stated, "Post-Communist countries are forfeiting a marvelous opportunity to initiate theological education reform" (120). As he envisions it, reform would involve a "multiple-step approach to ministry" proficiency involving "various educational experiences and 'street' competencies," an approach that has worked well in Latin America and Mexico (297-98). Drs. Bohn and Charter see nonformal education as closer to the church, more practical, and meeting the needs of those already engaged in ministry for whom formal schooling is not an option, not to mention much less expensive (Bohn, 142-44; Charter, 218, 222). On the other hand, it should be pointed out that Alexander Romonyuk, head of BEE Ukraine, shared at a June 1998 conference that the full BEE program in the former Soviet Union now takes eight years to complete, that the drop-out rate is high, and that graduates do not receive recognized degrees. In addition, nonresidential programs typically lack the regular student-to-student and student-faculty interaction of a residential community that can so enhance student spiritual and academic development.²

In spite of the contrast outlined above, theological education in Communism's wake need not be cast in terms of formal versus nonformal. Both have their place and can be complimentary. In 1998 BEE had 6,900 students in Ukraine and 2,000 in Russia, not to mention an array of other smaller denominational and parachurch programs.³ Especially for Russia and Ukraine, where distances are great and formal Protestant theological education is in its infancy,

nonformal instruction will continue to be critically important for the foreseeable future. At the same time, strong, highly respected, accredited residential seminaries are fervently desired throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. They are the priority, and notwithstanding some Western pedagogical preferences to the contrary, they likely will continue to receive the bulk of the educational funding and effort for the foreseeable future.

East European Evangelicals desire traditional accredited institutions to escape the sense of still being "outlaws," to gain a "sense of legitimacy," and "to shift the balance of power which now favors the Orthodox church" (Bohn, 253, 324). One Russian Baptist pastor declared he would not "waste his time" in an unaccredited institution: "An official degree is very important because if you don't have an official degree, you don't have any weight, you don't mean anything to anybody" (Bohn, 258). Unquestionably, formal and nonformal programs and academic and practical emphases have their advantages and disadvantages. Often it is a question of balance. For example, academic rigor and recognized credentials can be a means of impacting society, but they also can contribute to un-Christlike vainglory. For Christian educators the promise and peril of learning are best kept in healthy tension. As regards the place of intellect in Christian experience and in theological education, it is helpful to recall what seventeenth century Christian apologist and scientist Blaise Pascal concluded: "Two mistakes: to exclude reason, and to admit no argument but reason."⁴

Notes

1. David Bohn notes that all Romanian church leaders questioned "had significant exposure to the extension model," but argues that extension education did not "touch in a significant way" Russian respondents who became leaders after the fall of Communism (290). Granted, far more Romanian than Russian leaders had BEE courses, but I believe many, if not all, current Russian church leaders have had experience with some denominational extension programs.
2. Comments of Alexander Romonyuk, BEE Ukraine, and Johannes Lange, academic dean, St. Petersburg Christian University Conference on Alternative Theological Education, 16-18 June 1998.
3. Alexander Romonyuk, Conference on Alternative Theological Education, 16-18 June 1998.
4. Blaise Pascal, *The Essential Pascal* (New York: New American Library, 1996), 200.

Excerpt reprinted with permission from Religion in Eastern Europe 19 (February 1999), 29-52. Also available online at http://cis.georgefox.edu/ree/art_list.html.

Mark Elliott is director of the Global Center, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, AL, and editor of the East-West Church & Ministry Report.

Theological education in Communism's wake need not be cast in terms of formal versus nonformal. Both have their place and can be complimentary.

Early Russian Evangelicals: Ministry Lessons for Today

Sharyl Corrado

Historical Overview

Through the preaching of Lord Radstock of England, a significant spiritual movement took place among the Russian aristocracy in the late nineteenth century. Vasilii Aleksandrovich Pashkov (1831–1902), Colonel of the Imperial Guard and one of the wealthiest members of the Russian aristocracy, dedicated his life to Christ as a result of Radstock's preaching in 1874. Pashkov soon became influential in the movement and assumed leadership upon Radstock's departure from Russia in 1878. Under Pashkov's direction, until his banishment in 1884, the new movement expanded across rigid social divides, influencing peasants and princes. It also expanded geographically, reaching from St. Petersburg to Sakhalin Island in the Far East. Pashkovite ministries included large evangelistic gatherings, private meetings for prayer and teaching, and hospital and prison visitation. Social outreach included soup kitchens, homeless shelters, schools, hospitals, and piecemeal support for poor women. The movement's large, privately funded publishing enterprise produced and distributed over 200 booklets and tracts at low prices.

Orthodox Opposition

While initially considering "Pashkovites" harmless, the Russian Orthodox Church soon came to fear them, and with the appointment of Konstantin Pobedonostsev as chief procurator of the Holy Synod in 1880, serious oppression began. In 1884, having ignored orders not to invite believers from across the empire for an All-Russian Congress, Colonel Pashkov and his associate, Count Modest Modestovich Korff, were banished from Russia, and their Society for the Encouragement of Spiritual and Moral Reading was closed. Yet their influence remained as believers continued to meet. Russian Evangelical Christians-Baptists today point to the Pashkovite awakening as an important part of their heritage.

What Can We Learn?

As during Pashkov's lifetime, tendencies today remain either to dismiss Pashkovite activity as irrelevant and short-lived or to idolize Pashkov and his followers. While either extreme is inaccurate, both national and foreign Evangelicals in the former Soviet Union can learn from both the positive and negative experiences of the Pashkovites. Several areas stand out in which Pashkovites excelled and from which many relevant lessons may be drawn.

Social and Ethnic Unity

Brotherhood among ethnic groups and social classes was a defining factor of the Pashkovite movement. In stark contrast to the social norms of the time, the unity displayed across class divides, perhaps more than any other factor, attracted newcomers to the movement, if at first purely out of curiosity. In the nineteenth century servants did not socialize with masters, or peasants with princesses, and precisely for that reason Pashkovite meetings became the talk of the town. V. G. Pavlov described the brotherhood felt at the 1884 congress, at which "a peasant dined next to a count, and distinguished women served simple brethren," as one of the best times of his life.¹ With today's ministry trend to follow sociological observations that "like attracts like," perhaps we can learn from the Pashkovite experience. American church members often focus on reaching out only to those similar to themselves, even moving locations in order to facilitate homogeneity. Within churches it is common to separate members by age, marital status, interests, and position in life. While many ministries have found this division helpful to attract a target group, Pashkovites found that those without common backgrounds united in Christ's love attracted all who encountered them.

Personal Preaching

While speaking ability apparently played a minor role in Pashkovite preaching and teaching, with few Pashkovites deemed especially capable orators, a common compelling element was to be found in the sermons of Radstock, Pashkov, and their early followers. Rather than emphasizing theological truths or logical arguments, Pashkovites spoke from their hearts of personal experiences. Their words "cut to the heart" of listeners.² Seeking objectivity, many Western Evangelicals have stressed Bible exposition and have downplayed personal experience. This has resulted in the separation of knowledge and experience, with theologically sound believers living secret lives in contradiction to their teachings. The Pashkovite practice of preaching from the heart, emphasizing changed lives through Christ rather than theological subtleties or legalistic requirements, attracted people to the movement. Educated and uneducated alike understood feelings and desires and the consequences of sin in their lives. By sharing from his own life with clear conviction, Pashkov drew people to his teaching, rather than instilling the fear and oppression so often associated with organized religion.

Brotherhood among ethnic groups and social classes was a defining factor of the Pashkovite movement.

(continued on page 12)

American church members often focus on reaching out only to those similar to themselves, while Pashkovites found that those without common backgrounds united in Christ's love attracted all who encountered them.

Personal Work

Pashkovite meetings never held altar calls or expected instant public commitments to faith. Instead, Radstock and Pashkov met with people individually to discuss matters of salvation and belief. Radstock filled his days with personal appointments and Pashkov spoke to people individually after meetings, encouraging other believers to draw newcomers into conversation concerning spiritual matters as well. They never reported numbers of converts at meetings. Faith was seen as a personal journey that Pashkovites facilitated, rather than as an exclusive club to which a person either belonged or did not. A recent dissertation by Perry Glanzer confirms that still today Russians view conversion not as a one-time decision, but as a long process.³ Pashkov's emphasis on speaking with people individually rather than prescribing steps to salvation led to firm commitments and changed lives, in contrast to insincere prayers sometimes spoken under pressure from evangelists promising prosperity or instilling fear.

Generosity

Pashkovites, in their generous sharing of their time and wealth, serve as an example to all. They did not allow their riches to stand in the way of the gospel. Princess Sophie Lieven dedicated her great malachite hall for the Lord's work, despite the risk and eventual occurrence of pieces of this semi-precious mineral being stolen from the columns. Colonel Pashkov and his family moved into a smaller apartment on the lower level of one of their homes, permitting the rental of a large section of their mansion. With the advent of persecution even greater sacrifices were made. Jenny de Mayer gave up the comforts of home to move first to the remote island of Sakhalin and then to devote her life to Bible distribution and evangelism in Muslim Central Asia. Churches today often teach giving out of abundance rather than sacrifice, and even pastors expect middle-class salaries. Prosperity theology teaches that God will materially bless those with whom He is pleased, leading to an even greater emphasis on wealth. This was never the experience of the Pashkovites, whose leaders gave up even their beloved homeland for the sake of their faith.

Examples to Avoid

Import of Western Tradition

Yet the Pashkovites are not to be emulated in everything. Because of their high-society upbringing and lifestyle, St. Petersburg Pashkovites were familiar with Western ways, often more so than they were with the lives of the Russian people. The religious practices of Lord Radstock were not as foreign to them as they were to the lower classes, and they never questioned Radstock's importation of religious traditions new to Russia: organ music, revival hymns,

and extemporaneous prayer. While edifying to those familiar with them, these and other practices can hinder reception of the message by those to whom they are unfamiliar. At the same time, an emphasis on unity and a disregard for theology left many important issues unaddressed. This omission led later to peasant abuse of Pashkovite teaching, for example, burning icons and showing disrespect for the practices of the state church.

Foreign Literature

Pashkovite alienation from the people was also evident in the literature they produced. While quality improved over time, much money and effort were spent on literature that did not meet the needs of those for whom it was intended. Literal translations of English and German religious works, retaining even the unfamiliar foreign names, confused those unacquainted with Western ways. Such literature was not only difficult to understand but even distasteful to those who held Russian culture and religious tradition in high regard. While Pashkovites responded productively to criticism by doing their best to correct mistakes and produce literature appropriate to the masses, many ministries with roots in Western culture make similar mistakes today. Due to ignorance or resistance to criticism, this continues as decisions regarding funding and publication of Russian-language Christian literature remain in Western hands.

Lack of Foresight

A final characteristic apparent throughout Pashkovite ministry was errors in judgment and naivete. Often in the enthusiasm of the moment Pashkovites acted impulsively, with little regard for the consequences of their actions. While such actions demonstrated a sincere willingness to follow God's call, they may not always have been wise. Open defiance of authorities, with the assumption that their position in society would protect them, brought about severe consequences. Indiscriminate generosity reportedly led to both blatant exploitation and the reported occurrence of "rice Christians," those who converted for material rather than spiritual gain. Especially controversial was the reported practice of Pashkov to pay field workers who gave up their work to listen to his preaching. As concern began to arise among the Orthodox regarding the intentions of the Pashkovites, few efforts were made to allay their fears, and Pashkovites, instead, separated themselves from the established church even more.

A Few Words of Caution

For those striving to serve the Lord in Russia today, the temptation may be to copy Pashkovite methods, especially those that seem especially successful. While Pashkovite methods can well be adapted—likely with more success than can Western methods so often

attempted—it must be emphasized that the Russia of today is not late imperial Russia, and that the new rich are not aristocracy. St. Petersburg in the late 1800s was in many ways more Western than Russian, and Pashkovism never gained the popularity in Moscow or other Russian cities that it did in St. Petersburg. While today, as during the 1870s, discontent and fear reign in the lives of many, causes differ, and years of Stalinism have discouraged revolutionary tendencies. With the presence of newspapers, television, videos, the Internet, and E-mail, large public meetings are no longer the most effective way to spread information, and ideas shared will no longer have the effect they may have had on those otherwise isolated from the outside.

In Summary

Whether viewed as a temporary social movement, a religious revival, or a Russian reformation, evidence indicates that the Pashkovites played a significant role in the society in which they lived. Dedicating their lives to serve God and their fellow man, they crossed social and cultural barriers in an attempt to share their faith and demonstrate God's love to others. While operating legally for less than ten years, their influence through Bible and literature distribution, meetings held in secret, assistance to those in need, and support of fellow believers remained long after the leaders had been banished from the country.

Many current practices of Russia's Evangelical Christians-Baptists have their roots in the faith of the Pashkovites and their associates. Their activities provide much to be learned that is relevant for Christian ministry today, both in Russia and elsewhere.

Notes

1. V.G. Pavlov, "Vospominaniya Ssyl'nogo," in *Materialy k istorii i izucheniyu roskago sektantstva*, ed. Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1908). Reprinted in *M. S. Karetnikova, ed., Almanakh po istorii russkogo baptizma* (St. Petersburg: Bibliya dlya vsekh, 1997), 197–98.
2. Ada von Krusenstjerna, *Im Kreuz hoffe und siege ich*, 7th ed. (Giessen: Brunnen Taschenbuch, 1962), 76.
3. Perry Lynn Glanzer, "Christian Conversion," in "A Critical Analysis of the CoMission: A Study in the Loss, Replacement and Establishment of an Ideology of Moral Order" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1998), 217–57.

Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Sharyl Corrado, "The Philosophy of Ministry of Col. Vasily Pashkov," Wheaton College Graduate School, M.A. thesis, 2000.

Sharyl Corrado, former assistant editor of the East-West Church & Ministry Report, began doctoral work in Russian history at the University of Illinois, Urbana, IL, in August 2000.

Due to ignorance or resistance to criticism, decisions regarding funding and publication of Russian-language Christian literature remain in Western hands.

RESOURCES

Moscow's Esther Legal Information Center has prepared a **CD-ROM containing a legal library of documents**, federal and provincial legislation, and court cases relevant to the registration of Russian religious associations and missions. Russian churches may purchase the disc for \$10 while others with more financial resources may make donations to assist the Center with its *pro bono* religious liberty defense work. Contact: Ekaterina Smyslova, president, Esther Legal Information Service, Tverskaya ul. 9a/4, Office 201, Moscow 12739, Russia; tel./fax: 095-229-7861; E-mail: esther@online.ru.



The highly informative **religion supplement to Moscow's *Nezavisimaya gazeta*** is now available at no charge **on the Internet**: <http://religion.ng.ru/>. Mr. Lawrence Uzzell, director of Keston Institute, Oxford, England, and Dr. Edwin Bacon, Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, England, both highly recommend this source.



Mark J. Harris has prepared a 19-page **"Proposal for a Contextualized Educational Program for the Training of Russian Spiritual Leaders."** The program envisioned would be based in Ryazan and would provide "training for any kind of spiritual leadership in churches," especially "for those people who

have little foundation in training or ministry." The proposal calls for a coeducational, semi-residential program employing some Western faculty at the outset, with an emphasis on spiritual formation and the imparting of practical ministry skills. Mark and Delisa Harris serve as missionaries in Ryazan, Russia, under CMC International, Box 20425, Portland, OR 97294; c/o Post Int. #258, 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10103; tel.: 0912-45-8910 (Ryazan); E-mail: mark@cmc.ryazan.ru. The above proposal may be downloaded from the following Web site: www.geocities.com/markdelisa/.



The Russian language **Web site of the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association (EAAA)** for Evangelical theological schools in the former Soviet Union (www.e-aaa.org) includes news of the association, links to other Web sites, and back issues of three theological journals: *Bogomyслиye* (Odessa Theological Seminary of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, 1990–); *Khronograf* (St. Petersburg Christian University, 1997–); and *Bogomyслиe v internete* (2000–). Future plans include the addition of a monthly *International Bulletin* for reviews of theological books and the posting of a bibliography listing Russian language texts recommended for use at various levels of theological instruction.
Source: EAAA News, No. 13 (July–September 2000).

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RESOURCES

Resources (cont. from page 13)

Ray Prigodich, former professor of missions at Denver Seminary, Denver, CO, began serving as academic dean at Donetsk Christian University, Donetsk, Ukraine, in August 2000. As a result, Professor Prigodich **will no longer be able to continue his news forwarding service** that he began three years ago. In its place he recommends another source for both religious and secular news concerning the former Soviet Union: *The Russia Intercessory Prayer Network (RIPnet)*, headquartered near Seattle, WA, and directed by Jenny McCoy. It posts dispatches on Wednesdays and Fridays and also places all articles on its website. *RIPnet* carries specific prayer requests and devotional pieces in addition to religious news that is somewhat less comprehensive than the former news forwarding service provided by Professor Prigodich. To subscribe consult the *RIPnet* Web site (<http://www.ripnet.org/>) or E-mail ripnet@ripnet.org.

"Structures of Russian Political Discourse on Nationality Problems: Anthropological Perspectives" (Washington, DC: Kennan Institute Occasional Paper #272, 1999) contains valuable material on the minority peoples of the Russian Republic and a helpful bibliography. Up to five complimentary copies and a complete list of other currently available papers may be requested from: The Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20004-3027; tel.: 202-691-4100; fax: 202-691-4247; E-mail: KIARS@WWIC.SI.EDU; Web site: <http://wwics.si.edu/kennan>; Kennan Moscow Project, c/o Pochtovyi Iashchik 90, Moscow 103001, Russia; tel.: 095-232-3496; fax: 095-232-3497; E-mail: Kennan@glas.apc.org; Kennan Kyiv Project, 40A Moskovska St., Kyiv 252015, Ukraine; tel.: 044-290-7756; fax: 044-290-6464; E-mail: kennan@orlyk.kiev.va.

NEWS NOTES

The Council for East European Theological Education [CEETE] has announced programs for its Academic Leadership Forums on the following subjects:

- "Relations with Sponsors," 13-16 September 2001, Haus Edelweiss, Austria

"Leaders of Eastern and Central European schools do not understand the mentality of Western sponsors and do not completely understand the information that these sponsors expect from them in order to maintain long-term relations. At the same time these leaders of schools also have difficulty distinguishing between the different approaches of sponsors from Western Europe and from North America." The program may be repeated at the biannual EAAA meeting in October 2001.

- "Faculty Leadership and Organization," March 2002, possibly at the International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague, Czech Republic

"Special attention at this meeting will be given to methods and ways of more effectively organizing the work of teachers in theological schools, the problem of teachers' salaries, and the creative potential and strengthening of national faculty."

- "Spiritual Formation of Students," September 2002, Haus Edelweiss, Austria

"This meeting will discuss spiritual formation as a component of an academic program and the role of the teacher and local churches in the spiritual formation of students."

- "Theological Library Development and Management," March 2003

"Special attention will be paid to the use of the Internet in the development of libraries, the development of periodical collections, and the establishment of contacts with international organizations that work in this area."

These English-language forums are being organized by CEETE with the assistance of its coordinator, Dr. Mark Young, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX.

Source: EAAA News, No. 13 (July-September 2000), published in English and Russian. To be added to the mailing list, contact Rev. Sergei Sannikov or Mr. Charles A. Warner, EAAA, Box 51, Odessa-91, Ukraine 65091; tel.: 380-487-33-70-12; fax: 380-487-32-34-59; E-mail: eaaa@te.net.ua.



According to Dorin Dobrinu, research fellow of the Iasi History Institute of the Romanian Academy, little of the **history of Evangelical Christians in Romania** has been written because of the lack of academic interest in the subject, persecution of Evangelicals by the state and by the Orthodox Church, and the resulting lack of academic training among Evangelicals. Dobrinu plans to write such a history that "would contain the beginnings of Evangelical denominations, the integration of Evangelicals in the Romanian context, and the impact of Evangelicals in Romania. One of the main tasks of the investigation would be the relation between state and church, especially how the state viewed Evangelicals, knowing that the state religion, Orthodoxy, and Romanian leaders had a close relationship, which often burst into persecutions against small denominations." Danut Manastireanu, World Vision International, considers Dobrinu "probably at this time the only Evangelical academic historian in Romania." To inquire about the project contact Professor Dobrinu at the Iasi History Institute of the Romanian Academy, Str. Lascar Catargi, nr. 15, Iasi-6600, Romania; tel.: 0040-32-212614; E-mail: xeno@mail.dntis.ro.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I appreciate Alan Scholes's response to my article on CoMission in the *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 8 (Summer 2000). He clarifies some points that readers may have found ambiguous (e.g., the cancellation of The CoMission's protocol with the Russian Ministry of Education did not mean the end of the Ministry's work with the International School Project (ISP) or The CoMission).

Despite the helpful clarity Scholes provides, he argues against a point that I never made. Scholes claims that I maintain "the Orthodox Church was motivated substantially, or perhaps even primarily, by a desire to stop the CoMission." In reality, I merely suggest that the negative Orthodox attitude towards Protestant evangelistic and church-planting efforts, exemplified in its interactions with The CoMission, proved fatal for religious freedom in Russia.

Furthermore, Scholes does not address the major question that faced ISP and The CoMission that I discussed. Did these groups effectively balance their dual goals of moral education and evangelism both in practice and marketing? While I would agree with Scholes that ISP did for the most part, I would suggest that The CoMission could have more effectively balanced the two. Of course, even if it did, I am skeptical it would have softened Orthodox resistance to The CoMission's efforts to establish small group Bible studies and churches. As Kent Hill writes in the issue in which our articles appeared, "The Moscow Patriarchate insists that virtually everything 'well-financed' Evangelical Protestants and Catholics do among Russians is 'proselytism.' The Russian Orthodox Church believes the truly civil and Christian thing to do would be to support the Orthodox materially, or at least stand aside and let the Orthodox Church regain its strength." I found this to be true with most Russian Orthodox leaders' attitudes toward ISP and The CoMission. They do not mind if ISP and The CoMission distribute their materials in Russian schools. They are concerned when these same groups try to convert Russians to a Protestant form of Christianity or attempt to start Protestant Bible studies or churches in Russia.

Perry L. Glanzer

Moscow State University, Yaroslavl Branch



Thanks for the information on CoMission. I continue to be amazed at the ethical stance of telling different publics whatever they are looking to hear. A utilitarian Gospel? Hmmm?

Dr. Larry Ort, Academic Dean

Russian-American Christian University, Moscow

CORRECTION

The editor regrets inaccurate biographical information regarding Dr. Bradley Nassif in the previous issue. From 1997 to 1999 Dr. Nassif served as director of academic programs and taught part-time at Fuller Seminary's extension site in Irvine, CA. He continues to teach courses on Eastern Orthodoxy at Fuller on a part-time basis.



Editor's Note: The following letter is in response to Robert L. Saucy, John Coe, and Alan W. Gomes, "Eastern Orthodox Teachings in Comparison with the Doctrinal Position of Biola University," from the previous issue of the *Report*.

If Adam and Eve shared full communion with God then it would have been impossible for them to fall. From this you should be able to deduce that Adam and Eve were not perfect. How can a perfect person sin or fall? If you think about the consequence of your proposition that it is possible to fall into sin while sharing full communion with God you will find that it leads to a radically false view of God. As a Greek Orthodox Christian I appreciate your attempt to know and understand the differences between us and the West. Eastern Orthodox Christians consider their faith simple and beautiful but for Western Christians it would take years of study and research. Of course this research should be done with the aid of an Orthodox Christian since much has been written and there is a lot to decipher.

Maria Sanidopoulos

Charlotte, NC



I was interested to see the list of Internet resources published in the latest edition of the *East-West Church & Ministry Report*. I was sharing this with a friend of mine who is involved in churches in Siberia and his response I copy below: " 'Word and Act' Web site and newspaper are no longer supported by the Bratsk Christian Fellowship. The Internet version of the "news" bulletin continues to be published; since the financial resources for the print edition were from local churches in the province, all of which have withdrawn their support of the work, as of April 2000 there has been no print edition."

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Editorial (cont. from page 16)

At the same time, they expressed a strong desire to learn more about their role in evangelism and mission. For me it made for another sign of Life!

Recently I came across a strategy document for mission groups working in Eastern Europe formulated almost ten years ago at a conference in Budapest convened by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. To discourage "freelance entrepreneurial approaches," it included a focus on "enabling churches and mission organizations in eastern countries to undertake their own work of evangelizing their own people." It is high time to revisit this mission principle and to take it again as a starting point for partnership and cooperation.

Dr. Anne-Marie Kool is director of the Protestant Institute for Mission Studies, Budapest, Hungary, and professor of missiology at the Reformed Theological Seminary, Papa, Hungary.

Are Western Ministries Serious about Partnership with Hungary's Historic Churches?

Anne-Marie Kool

A strategy document formulated almost ten years ago included a focus on "enabling churches and mission organizations in eastern countries to undertake their own work of evangelizing their own people." It is high time to revisit this mission principle.

Mission Church-Planting Versus Mission-Church Partnership

According to many, often well-meaning, expatriate missionary workers, the traditional churches in Hungary are dead. No signs of life are present. According to their reports, traditional churches are not capable of multiplying and are not viable. Therefore, they argue, it is justifiable and even a calling to establish new churches alongside Hungary's roughly 1,700 existing Protestant churches. One mission leader involved in church planting recently underlined his perception of my supposed ignorance of the mission situation in Hungary by voicing this concern to me: "We need more churches in Hungary. I estimate that the church buildings in Hungary could not hold more than 30 percent of the population and most of the churches would not know what to do with new Christians. But God wants 100 percent of Hungarians to have new life in Christ so we better plant churches." He called on Reformed Churches to "repent of their pride and be humble enough to think that they do not own the world and control God" and he added, "I love the Reformed Church in Hungary, but God is able to work without it also."

A few years ago, while I was in the United States, a friend gave me a flier for a mission couple bound for Hungary. I had met them a few days earlier and my impression was that they had a deep, sincere love for the Lord Jesus and a concern for the spread of the gospel. On the way home, reading their flier, I was deeply disappointed because it left the strong impression that they would be among the first to start churches in Hungary. Nor was reference made to the

local churches in the city where they planned to minister, nor to the many churches around the country. Either these churches were not considered viable or were omitted in order to "advertise" the "niche in the market" this couple hoped to fill. I was surprised to learn from the flier that they would be working with one of the few Western missions in Hungary that seeks to partner with the country's historic churches. This raised a question in my mind regarding the integrity of this organization: Is it really taking partnership with Hungarian churches seriously? I wondered whether its mixed signals really would help in winning the trust of the historic churches.

Signs of Life

I am well aware that, of course, there are occasions that warrant the planting of new churches within existing denominations. Also, in the 13 years I have been living and working in Hungary, I have discovered that Hungarian churches are far from perfect. But I came from a far-from-perfect church in the Netherlands, so the difference was not that great. Despite the shortcomings of Hungarian churches, I have discovered very many small and often concealed signs of Life. Even now God is working in His mysterious way in Hungary. Allow me to illustrate. Recently I was riding on a train reflecting on the mission conference at which I had just spoken. What a surprise the overwhelming interest had been for everyone. Elders, pastors, and church members came from far and wide. My audience was attentive and involved, asked good questions, and engaged in profound discussion. One organizer had warned me cautiously that perhaps not many people would come: The weather was bad, etc., etc. But to our surprise between 120 and 150 people were present.

As another example, I was asked this past July to speak about the task and the calling of Reformed women's societies in mission and evangelization. I will not soon forget the concentrated attention and the diversity of the more than 1,200 in attendance in the large Reformed church in Debrecen. Some came from the rural areas of Hungarian-speaking Ukraine where a revival is underway. From the dress of others I knew they had come from Transylvania, the traditionally Hungarian-speaking part of Romania. Many had come from western Hungary with very small and scattered Reformed Churches. All are having to deal with great pressures in family life and many are the linchpins in their local congregations.

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