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Evangelicals and Orthodox: Crossing Paths and Crossing Swords

Editor's Note: Evangelicalism and the Orthodox Church, a new study produced by ACUTE, the theological commission of the Evangelical Alliance (UK), deserves wide circulation, especially among mission executives and missionaries serving in historically Orthodox countries. Excerpts are reprinted with permission. The Evangelical Alliance has given consent for use of subheadings and paragraph divisions not in the original study.

Common Ground

1. Doctrinal Conservatism

Both Orthodoxy and evangelicalism are conservative in holding to the apostolic presentation of Jesus Christ and the giving of the Spirit and the birth of the church in the New Testament. Both hold to the historicity of the apostolic record.

2. Scripture

Undergirding this shared set of credal convictions is a shared high view of Scripture as inspired by God.

3. God

Both Orthodox and evangelicals confess God to be the creator and sustainer of the world. . . . [Both believe] the cosmos gains its life and meaning only from its divine Creator.

4. Eschatology

Both communities believe in the life of the world to come as one which involves bodily resurrection. And for both communities, the reappearing of Christ as Lord and King is a fundamental belief.

5. The Church and Its Mission

Evangelicalism is notoriously weak in ecclesiology, and has generally shrunk from speaking of the church as a divine entity. . . . Yet evangelicalism shares with Orthodoxy the conviction that salvation is received in human experience and is inseparable from incorporation into Christian community. . . . Evangelicals have from time to time been so immersed in parachurch evangelism [that] . . . the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) has become separated from the church. Orthodox, by contrast, often appear to have placed more emphasis on maintaining a Christian civic order and culture, although they have a missionary heritage rich with inspiration for contemporary missiology. For them mission has for long periods been a matter of enduring persecution and martyrdom, and they often have seen their church as given a divine vocation to suffer.

6. Christian Experience

Orthodox may envisage [the Christian experience of the Spirit] . . . more in sacramental and ecclesial terms, but they would agree with evangelicals that men and women are called to experience regeneration, rebirth into participation in the life of God himself, through the Holy Spirit. . . . Thus Orthodoxy and evangelicalism both maintain, more strongly than present-day historic Western church traditions, a sense of access by the Spirit into a transcendent realm of experience. . . . Both Orthodox and evangelicals have also been readier than most other traditions to recognize the reality of miracles worked by the power of God in the ongoing experience of his people.

7. Ethics

Orthodox and evangelicals share considerable common ground on significant contemporary ethical issues, notably those of ecology, sexual ethics, and bioethics. In the realm of personal ethics, Orthodox and evangelicals share a belief in the divine ordering of marriage and the family, and concur in refusing to recognize homosexual practice as acceptable in the sight of God.

Summary

Orthodox and evangelicals are committed to a Christianity that holds uncompromisingly to God's self-revelation in Israel and supremely in his incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, to which the inspired Scriptures bear wholly truthful witness. This revelation attests a divine rescue mission in which God himself came to save his own creation mired in sin and death.

Editor's Note: This issue of the East-West Church & Ministry Report calls attention to perhaps the best two sources in print giving a balanced, evangelical Christian understanding of Eastern Orthodoxy: Evangelicalism and the Orthodox Church, produced by the British Evangelical Alliance; and Eastern Orthodoxy Through Western Eyes, by Don Fairbairn. Both studies are highly recommended.

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Evangelical and Eastern Orthodox Differences

1. Church and Movement

One could say that Orthodoxy is a church (or confession) while evangelicalism is a constituency (or movement). This contrast points up a problem which complicates relationships between the two: Orthodox are more used to relating to institutions and their self-understanding includes the aspect of belonging to a united and visible church tradition, whereas there is no body which can speak authoritatively for the whole of evangelicalism. . . . Because of the emphasis on individual faith, some evangelicals have a very under-developed sense of the significance of the church. This contrasts with Orthodox reverence for the church and their reluctance to criticize it.

2. Scripture and Tradition

In comparing these two faith families [one notes] . . . evangelical championing of freedom for each individual to engage directly with the text of Scripture, as over against Orthodox emphasis on reading the text within the context of Tradition and together with all the faithful. . . . Following the Reformers' insistence on "Scripture alone," evangelicals hold the Bible as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. Orthodox also see Scripture as authoritative but also speak in terms of the authority of the Tradition of the church, of which Scripture is a part. Whereas evangelicals would insist that the individual conscience must be subject ultimately to Scripture, even when this results in conflict with churchly tradition, Orthodox hold that Scripture can only be understood aright from within the framework of that tradition. . . . [In contrast,] the sixteenth-century Reformation makes most evangelicals more sharply aware of the fallibility and corruptibility of the church.

3. Evangelism and Proselytism

[Orthodox faith] . . . has a long history and due recognition of this is especially important. The Orthodox have struggled for existence alongside alien forces, whether militant Islam, Communism, or the materialism that has succeeded the downfall of Marxist ideology.

Part of the story has also been the record of the Roman Catholic Church through its promotion of *Uniatism*. From the twelfth century onwards the Vatican has allowed a number of communities in Eastern Europe to retain their own Eastern liturgical practices, canon law, and . . . married priests, on the one condition of accepting the primacy of the Pope. . . . [This policy] has been seen by the Orthodox. . . as a major way of proselytizing not just individuals but whole communities. It is against this background that Protestant missionary endeavors have to be judged. If Roman Catholicism has exploited the vulnerability of Orthodoxy in the past, then [Western] Protestant missionaries are seen [by many Orthodox] as continuing in that tradition, with their unequal access to technological power and

educational privilege and the lavish promises sometimes made to potential converts.

On the other hand, evangelical groups in predominantly Orthodox countries point to state, and sometimes church, slander of their good name and even overt persecution. Well-documented incidents of evangelicals being threatened by mobs which have received encouragement from local Orthodox clerics, of evangelical churches and prayer houses being destroyed, and of evangelical groups being denied permission to register as legal entities, lead many Western evangelicals to take a sharply critical attitude towards Orthodoxy.

With stress laid on conflict and disagreement, there are very real difficulties in perceiving Tradition in church history as reflecting the work of the Holy Spirit. Whilst evangelical missionaries can never surrender to Orthodox any idea of exclusive operation within given "canonical" territories, they may be able to agree not to disturb the faith of the faithful who are regular in their attendance at the liturgy, and concentrate instead on unbelievers and those who have lapsed from regular participation in church life.

4. Worship and Spirituality

Differences of practice . . . include the contrast between the evangelical use of the vernacular and Orthodox deployment [in some jurisdictions] of an ancient ecclesiastical language no longer in common use. (In the light of the older Orthodox tradition of translating the Scriptures and the liturgy into local languages this has been described as a "blatant contradiction" by the Orthodox missiologist Ion Bria.) . . . The evangelical pattern may seem very didactic, while the Orthodox, although deploying much Scriptural language . . . focus more on symbol and action. Evangelical worship often climaxes in a verbal presentation of the gospel; Orthodox worship tends to lead into apprehension of mystery, heightened perhaps by the use of color, chanting, and incense.

5. Conversion, Salvation, and Deification

Areas of difference may be expressed in a series of questions:

- ◆ Is Christianity more a matter of individual decision or of community-based faith expression?
- ◆ Is conversion to be seen as a single event or a continuing process?
- ◆ How does justification relate to sanctification—and how can both be related to Orthodox language of deification?

Does Charles Wesley's plea in one of his hymns—"Change my nature into thine"—suggest that there could be convergence of understanding? Reflection on 2 Peter 1:4 would seem to lead in a similar direction, for the apostle writes, "[Christ] has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature." The language of deification was used by Reformers such as Luther and Calvin, although it is not as prominent in their thinking as it is in Orthodox theology.

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6. Sacramental Theology and Liturgy

Since the eighteenth century many evangelicals have seen ecclesiology as a secondary issue, and there has often been a corresponding lack of emphasis on the sacraments. By contrast, Orthodox see the sacraments as essential nourishing of the believer with the grace needed to tread the way of salvation. . . . A substantial proportion of evangelical eucharistic theology tends to be memorialist: a dramatic re-presentation in symbolic action of the death and resurrection of Jesus. . . . By contrast, the Orthodox believe the actual body and blood of Christ to be present in consecrated bread and wine. . . . Orthodoxy has generally resisted any attempt to define how it happens. But mystery is what the Liturgy is all about. . . . Whilst to many evangelicals the form of the Liturgy may seem very strange, many of the emphases of the service are Trinitarian, Christocentric, and biblical.

7. Theological Method

Evangelicals have always stressed the importance of God's revelation as propositional in nature. Consequently their message emphasizes what can be known about God. Although they acknowledge the impossibility of knowing everything about God, they would nevertheless affirm that because he has revealed himself to humankind in the events of salvation history . . . and in Scripture . . . men and women can have a knowledge of God which, though partial, is still true. . . . Orthodox speak of two ways of doing theology, kataphatic and apophatic. The first emphasizes what can be known; the second what cannot be known. We must declare what we know of God, but in the end we must balance this with the recognition that God is so far beyond human comprehension that it is easier to say what (or who) God is not. . . . The experience of God is one which passes understanding; ultimately, knowing God is not a matter of intellectual comprehension, but of experiential union through prayer and contemplation.

Next Steps

Clearly these are weighty matters and discussions will require both a willingness to speak honestly and a readiness to listen humbly to the views of others. Careful interpretation is also needed in view of the different theological languages that we speak. Dialogue which papers over cracks is limited in what it can achieve; it is better to seek to learn from one another, repentant for past misunderstanding, and committed to obeying the Spirit of Truth who will lead us into all truth (John 16:13).

Guidelines for Orthodox-Evangelical Discussions

Recognize Common Ground and Differences That Remain

We encourage our respective constituencies to recognize and affirm those truths which we have in common. . . . We believe that contact between evangelical and Orthodox communities has considerable potential, not least because encountering another

tradition stimulates us to reflect critically and appreciatively on our own theology and sense of identity. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that deep theological differences remain between the evangelical and Orthodox communities, notably in the area of our understandings of salvation, of the church, and of the relationship between Scripture and Tradition.

Steer Dialogues Clear of Compromised "Ecumenism"

There is a need for clarification of what is meant by "ecumenism." Many on both sides regard it as a pejorative term and are suspicious of any activity . . . thus designated. Behind this may lie concerns about matters such as political manipulation or doctrinal and ethical compromise, or else a lack of experience of, or interest in, contact with believers of other Christian traditions. A distinction needs to be made between the kind of contact envisaged here, between communities which "confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures," and [those which deny] . . . the uniqueness of Jesus Christ by an acceptance of all religions as paths to salvation.

Accept the Necessity for Rigorous Study

In establishing an appropriate methodology for continuing conversations, it should be recognized that in order to appeal to evangelicalism, Orthodox must engage in rigorous study of the Scriptures, while evangelicals must steep themselves in the teaching of the Fathers and the early councils if they are to present a case that Orthodox will find acceptable. [Also,] further joint study of the Scriptures is urgently needed and active steps should be taken to make this a reality.

The creeds and definitions of the early centuries have shaped the belief of all Christian traditions, Protestant and Catholic as well as Orthodox. Since . . . the early Fathers have been appealed to by Protestants as well as Orthodox and may fairly be regarded as the possession of the whole church, East and West, we believe that joint study of their writings is needed. This could be a fruitful way of establishing common doctrinal foundations. In such a context, it will be possible to examine the fundamental issues of belief raised by the Filioque clause in the Western form of the Nicene Creed.

Encourage Conversations, High and Low

We recommend that contact between evangelicalism and the Orthodox Churches in the United Kingdom be continued at the highest levels possible. Some form of officially sponsored conversation would be potentially the most fruitful. . . . Contact at the local level is also desirable. We recognize the need for leaders to encourage the evangelical and Orthodox traditions to change their perceptions of each other at this level, and notably to challenge the widespread belief that all members of the other tradition may be dismissed out of hand as "unsaved" or "heretics." To that end, we suggest that members of each community seek out local representatives or

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congregations of the other, develop personal relationships, and if possible attend their services. . . . Our encounter must be with evangelicalism and Orthodoxy as . . . lived out in practice, not merely with one another's liturgical books and theological writings.

Work for Mutual Understanding

We are aware that in certain areas of the world there are considerable tensions between evangelicals and Orthodox. We pray for a greater level of mutual understanding between the two communities, and to that end we encourage those working in such situations actively to seek out and build relationships with their counterparts as far as possible. Such contact is particularly vital at the local level. Much work is urgently required for the healing of wounds caused by past insensitivity and ignorance on both sides. This will include open acknowledgement of those injustices and hurts that each side believes it has suffered at the hands of the other, with a view to seeking resolution and reconciliation.

Evangelical churches that send out missionaries should formulate a mission policy that recognizes the importance of informed understanding of the local

religious context, and of seeking to establish good relationships with local Christians and churches of all traditions. For this to be done, there is a need for widespread dissemination of relevant information. . . . We encourage denominations and mission agencies with an interest in work in Orthodox countries to set up forums for discussion and assessment of possible mission strategies. . . . We suggest that theological courses in each constituency include some element of introduction to the other's history, beliefs, and practices.

All the above must take into account that evangelicals and Orthodox are already encountering each other daily, especially in Eastern Europe. . . . What we will be able to do will be constrained or facilitated by the climate which our dialogue (or lack of it) helps to create. All the talking . . . is to serve the aim of knowing Christ better ourselves and making him known more faithfully to a world which needs him. ♦

Source: *Evangelical Alliance (UK)*. *Evangelicalism and the Orthodox Church*. Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 2001. £7.99. U.S. distributor: Paternoster Publishing, Waynesboro, G.A. \$12.99.

Practically Speaking

The nonprofit **Wheelchair Foundation** seeks to serve the over 20 million people worldwide who have been immobilized due to warfare, disease, accident, or advanced age. Its goal is to provide one million wheelchairs in five years to those who cannot afford them. Established in 2000 with a grant from the Kenneth E. Behring Foundation, the Wheelchair Foundation to date

has provided 24,744 wheelchairs to handicapped persons in 74 nations, including 17 countries in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe. For more information, contact Box 2973, Danville, CA 94526-7973; tel.: 877-378-3839; fax: 925-736-8243; E-mail: info@wheelchairfoundation.org; Web site: <http://www.wheelchairfoundation.org>. ♦

Faith American Style: Goods to Export

Deacon Andrei Kuraev

Editor's Note: Deacon Kuraev draws inspiration for his comments from George Ritzer, The McDonaldization of Society; An Investigation into the Changing Character of Contemporary Social Life (London: Pine Forge Press, 1993). While the editor takes strong exception to Kuraev's overarching condemnation of Western missions, evangelicals will be well served to read firsthand an Orthodox caricature of Protestant ministry. And as Don Fairbairn notes in his response, Kuraev does deserve a hearing to the extent that evangelical ministry in the East consists of an assembly line, "output" mentality. See also Dennis W. Hiebert, "The McDonaldization of Protestant Organizations," Christian Scholar's Review 29 (Winter 1999), 261-79.

The dollar, the hamburger, and the gospel from Billy Graham pass from hand to hand. In his latest book American sociologist George Ritzer presents his version of the rationalization of American society by calling it McDonaldization. He has in mind various

forms of such industries that serve Americans in their everyday lives: fast food, quick service of automobiles, quick purchases in stores, and convenient healthcare. These types of everyday services function also as iron cages of bureaucratization and rationalization.

McDonaldization has four main aspects:

- ◆ *Effectiveness*
Wherever there is human need, the McDonaldizing system identifies what is most important about this need, determines a quick path to its satisfaction, and launches the chosen marketplace solution.
- ◆ *Quantity and Capital Growth*
You can judge by the condition of your stomach what size hamburger you need. You know in advance how much time a visit for the respective service will take. Your photographs will be ready in one hour, your food will be delivered 20 minutes from the time of order, etc.
- ◆ *Predictability*
You know what you are waiting for and can be certain of what you will receive. The McDonald's hamburger in Moscow has the same taste as the hamburger you bought three months ago.
- ◆ *Control through Nonhuman Technology*
In such a system, McDonald's manages your behavior whether you are a customer or a worker. It is expected that consumers will conduct themselves in a definite way, that they do this even without instruction, and that workers do this even more, possibly, because they are taught the appropriate McDonald's behavior. Man becomes the object of control, managed by business.

Marketing Faith and Marketing Hamburgers

Evangelistic campaigns directed today at Eastern Europe have, in my opinion, a resemblance to fast-food restaurants, which now are opening in this part of the world. These and others fancy themselves as symbols of the ideological ruin of socialism and, as such, are enthusiastically welcomed by those who in this ideological system were the most cheated. It is easy to welcome a restaurant of the McDonald's empire in Moscow as a condemnation of the previous methods of enterprise.

The marketing of the evangelistic "product" in Eastern Europe resembles the marketing of hamburgers.

1. Support of an evangelistic campaign has a product for the individual, a one-time consumption in contrast to the gospel presentation of the state or national churches, which is indissolubly connected with culture and traditions and cannot be reduced to individual or one-time use.

2. An evangelistic campaign looks at the spiritual need as any other human need, that is, as a clearly human phenomenon. Since these needs are common to a large number of people, it is possible to analyze and satisfy them using rational economic means.

3. The campaign meeting offers a product that can be perceived by the specific person as satisfying his individual need.

4. Presence at the campaign meeting is the effective means for satisfying the individual spiritual

need. If you go to it, you are completely assured that you will experience a feeling that can be interpreted as satisfaction.

5. The specific person can make a determination to go to any organized campaign for a long time or for a short time, depending on how strong the need or how much time he has. The person can participate more actively or less actively, based on how strongly his feelings are manipulated.

6. The impression of the specific person can be predicted and controlled. You know exactly what you feel and can yourself control several aspects of your impression.

7. The organization of the evangelistic campaign resembles the prescribed system of an enterprise like McDonald's. Most often there is a center and there are clients who have decided to associate with the center.

The "Irrationality" of Rationalized Religion

I will conclude with a set of thoughts indicating the "irrationality" of rationalized spiritual products, such as East Europe evangelistic campaigns.

1. The attractiveness of mass evangelistic campaigns depends on large-scale measures, but the size prevents face-to-face meetings. This is one of the symptoms—the necessity to set up enormous audio and video systems at the meeting site in order for everyone to see the preacher. The size leads to the opposite result.

2. The strong spiritual impression "created" by the meeting is patently dissimilar to any other. Ritzer describes this precisely as the taste of fast food, but he says nothing in regard to whether this experience is really deep, favorable, or true.

3. This raises the question: Is it really possible to satisfy spiritual need with an evangelistic service or are there aspects of faith that can never be satisfied by such a line of spiritual goods.

4. In an individualistic milieu religious content is not studied, but is personified in culture and traditions.

The entrance of the fast-food industry into Eastern Europe will scarcely help the prosperity of the local foodstuffs industry. There is a big risk that new enterprises will destroy old local enterprises. In the same way, rationalized religious "goods" probably will destroy old, more traditional forms of religiosity. ◆

Excerpt translated from Deacon Andrei Kuraev, Protestantism o Pravoslavii (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Podvor'e Sviato-Troitskoi Sergievoi Lavry, 1997). The entire book is available in Russian on the Internet at <http://kuraev.vinchi.ru/books2.html>.

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Evangelistic campaigns directed today at Eastern Europe have a resemblance to fast-food restaurants.

Control Tactics Also Employed by the Orthodox Church

Don Fairbairn

American missionaries in Eastern Europe certainly need to pay attention to Andrei Kuraev's comparison of American-style evangelism to "McDonaldization." It is true that large-scale evangelistic rallies can degenerate into purely sociological events. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves constantly whether our methods are actually the most appropriate ones in the East, or, for that matter, in the West.

However, Kuraev's article seems to be based on two assumptions that are open to question. First, he implies that Russian spirituality, as practiced by the Orthodox Church, is free from the control-oriented tactics of American Christianity. On the contrary, the Orthodox Church cannot possibly pretend that it has never used control tactics and, in fact, a good case could be made that the Orthodox Church helped to create the climate that led to Communist

totalitarianism. Second, Kuraev assumes that the primary concern in Eastern Europe should be the preservation of national churches. But one could claim that the very popularity of Western-style evangelistic events in Eastern Europe is due in part to the failure of the national churches to meet the spiritual hunger of their people. Until such a time as substantial revival comes to Orthodoxy in the East, there is a great need for other forms of Christian spirituality.

In short, although Kuraev should be heeded when he criticizes Westerners for Americanizing the gospel, he also needs to look long and hard at the influences (negative as well as positive) of his own heritage on the form of Christianity he advocates. ♦

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Can Social Stability and Individual Freedom of Conscience Coexist?

Nikolas K. Gvosdev

The ending of Soviet domination over Eastern Europe and the collapse of Soviet power across the Eurasian landmass led to the dissolution of the ideological straitjacket that had constricted the philosophical and religious life in all the societies of the region. The primacy of a single worldview—dialectical materialism as interpreted by the Communist Party—was repudiated and ideological pluralism embraced in its stead. This was especially evident at the beginning of the 1990s in the area of religious freedom, for if the citizen cannot freely choose his or her opinions about God, no form of pluralism—philosophical, political, or economic—is truly safeguarded.

On the surface there would appear to be a strong historical and cultural base for pluralism within Eurasian societies. Western merchants who visited the East during the 17th century were impressed by the prevailing sentiment that "every man shall be saved by his own religion." Despite instances of persecution and harassment of minority communities, cities such as Kazan, Baku, Thessalonika, Skopje, or Istanbul enjoyed a much greater degree of religious and ethnic pluralism in the pre-modern era than comparable cities in Western Europe such as London, Paris, or Madrid. However, there is a significant difference in the way that pluralism developed

and is understood between West and East. In the largely homogenous societies of Western Europe, pluralism evolved to protect the right of dissenters to differ from the established majority community; in the East, pluralism fostered the coexistence of different communities side-by-side in the same geographic space. Therefore, in the traditional Eurasian view, pluralism is the right of different communities to exist and manifest their distinctive peculiarities rather than the right of an individual within the community to choose from a competing number of allegiances.

Protecting Groups vs. Protecting Individuals

This understanding has a profound impact on the way judges and government officials interpret constitutional provisions protecting pluralism. A "Eurasian consensus" appears to be developing whereby the primary value ascribed to pluralism is the preservation of peaceful coexistence and harmony amongst the different communities found within society, with preeminence reserved for traditional faith(s). It is based on official recognition that a specific faith tradition is considered to be inextricably tied to the development of the national culture.

The "Eurasian consensus" works from the assumption that international norms of pluralism are

best served by allowing each group, both the majority as well as minorities, existing on the territory of the state to fully function and to retain the allegiance of its members without fear of overt competition from other groups. The late Catholicos-Patriarch of the Armenian Church, Vazgen I, echoed such sentiments when, in commenting on the concept of religious liberty, he said this guaranteed to all religions the right to practice and propagate their faith, but that "They are to practice it in their respective communities only. Acts of conversion and [proselytizing] are forbidden." Each specific religious tradition is therefore connected to specific demographic groups in society. A very real fear in a number of Eurasian societies is that unrestrained competition among groups as well as the introduction of new religious movements that might not be prepared to recognize the "Eurasian consensus" of tolerance among the "traditional" groups could end up polarizing society and undermining the very basis for toleration.

"Managed" Pluralism

Increasingly, it appears that the states of Eurasia are moving toward a system of "managed pluralism" whereby the state, although imposing no one ideology, nevertheless takes steps to limit the number of options available. In Russia, a complicated registration process that is required in order to give religious groups legal standing to operate in society is being manipulated by local officials in the various regions to deny unpopular groups the ability to continue to function as legal entities. Mongolia's legislation on religion (Article 7.6) had contained a provision barring all faiths other than the "traditional" faiths of Buddhism, Shamanism, and Islam from conducting any missionary work at all. This restriction

was eventually overturned by the Constitutional Court, but another provision (Article 4.7) remains in operation by which "religious activities organized outside of Mongolia to introduce foreign religions within Mongolia are prohibited." Similarly, Azerbaijan's law "On Freedom of Religious Beliefs" prohibits the "carrying out of religious propaganda by foreigners" on the territory of the republic (Article 1).

"Managed pluralism" represents the Eurasian compromise to solve what Bulgarian human rights lawyer Atanas Krusstev describes as the "collision of cultures" that has taken place throughout the region, between a largely Western legal and constitutional philosophy focusing on the individual and a more Eastern focus on communities and communal stability. "Indisputable principles such as the rule of law, equality, the separation of church and state, and anti-discrimination clauses are compromised as soon as we enter the field of religious rights and practices . . . because the latter is seen as being indivisibly connected with national identity." As we move into the 21st century, the principal human rights issues in Eurasia—those dealing not only with religious matters, but also with such concerns as freedom of the press or freedom of assembly—are increasingly going to center on the degree of pluralism permitted in society and the extent to which divergence from the accepted list of choices provided by state and society will be permitted. ♦

Excerpts reprinted with permission from Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "Tolerance versus Pluralism: The Eurasian Dilemma," Analysis of Current Events 12 (December 2000), 7-10.

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A Response to Nikolas Gvosdev

Lauren B. Homer

Restrictions on Nontraditional Faiths Are a Legacy of Totalitarianism.

In European Communist states, regulators permitted only a handful of state-controlled religious organizations to exist and ruthlessly repressed other groups. This was convenient for both regulators and the institutions that survived under state sponsorship. In 1990 less than ten percent of the population in these countries admitted to any faith. And even today less than ten percent attend worship on a weekly basis. Historic faiths are convenient supports for state interests, but states have no business defining what constitutes a living, breathing faith community. In my experience, the motivation to remand citizens to specific faith communities based on their ethnic background stems from security and law enforcement concerns and religious jealousies, not legitimate historic traditions.

"Managed Pluralism" is Inconsistent with National and International Laws and Treaties.

Post-Communist states typically subscribe to constitutions, laws, and international agreements promising freedom of belief and freedom of association in exercising those beliefs, irrespective of nationality or faith. Under these laws, believers possess the right to establish religious organizations in which they may exercise their unique beliefs, even if they are only slightly different from others. Since 1990, with the help of good lawyers, the types of provisions Dr. Gvosdev applauds have consistently been invalidated. Examples include the Russian Supreme Court victories of Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, and Jesuits. In my opinion praising laws that intentionally violate international standards undermines the rule of law and invites a return to Soviet practice.

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Meaningful Security and Law Enforcement Concerns Can Be Addressed in Other Ways.

Under international law, governments possess the right to restrict and ban religious groups that threaten national security, public order, health, or morals. In meetings over the last decade, religious organization regulators in Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan have expressed deep concern that radical Islam and other disruptive faiths might destabilize their governments and harm citizens. The significance of their concerns became all too clear as a result of the terrorist attacks in the U.S. on 11 September 2001. Unfortunately, a common response is to place restraints on religious activities of all foreigners and all new "sects." Additional restrictions are likely that will affect all foreign religious workers in post-Communist states, including tightened restrictions on foreign religious workers, importing and use of foreign currency, and government monitoring of the content and dissemination of religious ideas. However, the focus should always be on legitimate security and law enforcement concerns, not on groups engaged in the peaceful manifestations of nontraditional beliefs.

The challenge to the historic faiths that have suffered so much from state suppression is to focus on meeting the needs of their flocks, not on eliminating "competitors."

World Faiths Need to Account for Changing Political and Social Realities.

In periods of rapid and disconcerting change it is normal for people to revisit faiths associated with their national identity and more stable times. I have heard Russians and Romanians say "We were born Orthodox," ignoring the fact that their nations tolerated only state atheism when they were actually born. This social phenomenon does not provide a religious or legal solution to the collision of cultures that exists in our world today. In reality, faiths are not static and good laws will take this into account. Historically, traditional faiths that do not adapt to cultural and political realities wither or are overthrown. Post-Soviet citizens may adopt the badges of traditional faiths, but they will be fully engaged only by living faiths that impact and improve their daily lives. As Jesus said, if we try to put new wine in old wineskins, they will surely burst and waste the wine. The challenge to the historic faiths that have suffered so much from state suppression is to focus on meeting the needs of their flocks, not on eliminating "competitors." ♦

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Orthodox Finances: Managed or Mismanaged?

Timofeev, L.M. et al. *Ekonomicheskaya deiatel'nost' Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi i ee tenevaia sostavliaiushchaia* [The Economic Activity of the Russian Orthodox Church and Its Shadow Component]. Moscow: Russian State Humanities University, 2000.

Editor's Note: See also Andrei Zolotov, "Orthodoxy, Oil, Tobacco, and Wine: Do They Mix?," East-West Church & Ministry Report 5 (Winter 1997), 7; and Sergei Chapnin, "The Income of the Russian Orthodox Church," East-West Church & Ministry Report 9 (Winter 2001), 15-16.

Researchers Mikhail Edelstein and Nikolai Mitrokhin have produced an important study of Russian Orthodox Church finances. Mikhail Edelstein, an editor with Analitika-Press (Moscow) who holds a Candidate (doctorate) degree in Russian literature, describes various levels of church finances in Central Russia: the parish, the monastery, and the diocese. In Russia today each diocese has two main sources of income: internal, involving donations received from parishes, cathedrals, and monasteries; and external, derived from business ventures and funds received from the government and community leaders. For his part Nikolai Mitrokhin, a doctoral student at the Russian State University of Humanities (Moscow) and a researcher for "Memorial" Human Rights Center, examines Russian Orthodox Church income from such sources as its publishing business and priests who profit from cathedral "ownership." Edelstein and Mitrokhin are to be commended for their thorough and extensive research that presents in a systematic way Russian Orthodox Church finances

that are complex, confusing, and disorderly.

One chapter of the book consists of interviews with anonymous priests on financial matters and business ventures of the Russian Orthodox Church. The following excerpts from their interviews provide valuable firsthand perspectives on Russian Orthodox Church finances.

From an Interview with an Orthodox Priest in a Rural Area

"Corruption is everywhere in our society, even in the church. I feel ashamed, but even I, a priest, cannot find anywhere the whole picture of our church economics. So I can speak only for our diocese and my parish. We can barely find the money for one salary and we cannot pay anyone else. When I receive money for some service, I just don't show it on paper. I cannot show the exact amount of money that our church gets because the taxes are too high. In Russia there is a tax on church income [offerings

and all other sources of church funding]. This is my version of shadow economics. But I am trying to give an honest report to our diocese.

"The situation in monasteries is much better. They get help from both the government and the diocese. How can my church obtain funds? We do not import tobacco and we do not sell diamonds, so we cannot develop any long-term programs. When we need something fixed, for example, we just ask the village to help and people come and help.

"Many people who offer something to our church ask me not to record it in the bookkeeping because they want the funds used directly for their church and not for something else. I cannot understand why I should have to fill out official forms. People who give me something for the church (money or building materials) see if I use what they gave for the church. They are my tax revenue service. I will be accountable before them with great pleasure. Why should I report to anyone else?

"I think that we do not need government supervision very much, though the government should pay the salary to the priest as it was before the [1917] revolution. I think that priests should be equal to other government workers because priests work for the good of the country. Besides visible things like watching over cathedrals and church properties, they lead people in their transformation towards their salvation, which is much more valuable than money. This is even more true when you think about the fact that all Communist workers, all those who persecuted the church, are today's authorities and this could be a good gesture for them to apologize.

"All the rest we can do ourselves. The church is not just an economic structure. Many things are accomplished by the providence of God. We needed to change the heating system in our church a couple of years ago. I had to pay 8,000 rubles on the next day but I had only 700 in my pocket. Suddenly I was brought the money late at night. I thought that it was going to be about 30 percent of the sum, but they brought me all I needed. See how it happens? So with God's help we will make it without government support."

From an Interview with a Diocesan Lay Worker

"'Shadow' economic relations are very widespread in the Church, especially at the diocese management level. First, there is no oversight of distribution of government subsidies and private offerings. No one knows how they are distributed or who sees them. For example, a diocese secretary asks a government institution to pay for a diocese car repair. Who knows whose car it is? Even if it belongs to the diocese, no one ever drives it besides the father secretary. By the way, it is a serious problem where diocese property ends and where the private property of the bishop and the secretary starts. Maybe we need a special government commission to audit the financial activity of the church like the Synod before the [1917] revolution.

"The money inside the diocese is spread unevenly and inequitably by people who are concerned for their own benefit. This 'church mafia' purposefully tries to get to the top to have the opportunity to manage financial resources. At the same time there are very good and very poor priests who spend all their money and all their efforts to rejuvenate their parishes. No one ever helps them and representatives of the 'church mafia' blame them for not being able to send money into the diocese. But local priests simply do not have the money.

"In general the church is economically very strong. The government does not have to subsidize the church directly. On the other hand, the government should help to solve some issues such as arguments between museums and the church. But the church itself should be more modest in its financial programs. For example, we start rebuilding 30 churches at once but we do not have the money for all of them. Can't we better start rebuilding one church, then the second, then the third?"

From the Authors' Conclusion

"It seems impossible to characterize the economic situation of the Russian Orthodox Church in just one word as 'good' or 'poor.' Salaries in the church are spread very unevenly: there is a colossal difference in the income of the cathedral church dean or diocese secretary on the one hand and lower rank church ministers on the other hand. Besides that, we can state that the wellbeing of a particular diocese does not depend directly on the economic situation in that region. The administrative and business abilities of diocese leaders are much more important keys. The best example to demonstrate this is the considerably wealthy Kostroma Diocese in Kostroma Oblast, which is considered to be a poor region.

"In the realm of economics, the relative weakness of the church's vertical administration is revealed first of all in the inability of the Patriarchate to provide the diocese with timely payments and the inability of the diocese to provide the parish with timely payments. The church today is not one economic structure but rather the sum of relatively independent economic units, with monasteries as primary examples. Needless to say, any attempt to strengthen control inside a diocese meets with active resistance from cathedral and monastery deans. However, all this does not contradict the main summary that we can make from the present material. Evidently, the economic activity of the Russian Orthodox Church is constantly growing. Today the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is a multi-layered, complex economic structure that requires more research. We assume that in the near future the volume of money coming to the church is going to grow, connected with the expected general growth of the Russian economy, the rejuvenation and expansion of parishes, the completion of the period of church reconstruction, and possibly an increase in government subsidies.

(continued on page 10)

At the diocese level there is no oversight of distribution of government subsidies and private offerings.

Homer (cont. from page 9)

"Sources of income for the churches can be divided into two large groups: permanent and temporary. The permanent ones are funds that come from selling candles and other goods and clergy charges for special rituals: *treby*. Temporary sources involve income from economic sideline activities of the

clergy or people who work for them. In the near future there possibly will be a struggle for control of these growing sources of income. It is impossible to predict the results of this struggle. ♦

Reviewed by, and excerpts translated by, Vitaliy Bak, a student at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, AL.

More on Russian Orthodox Finances

From Marcus Warren, *Electronic Daily Telegraph*

Russia's Orthodox Church is a "gigantic corporation" tainted with the vices of the country's shadow economy, from bribery and corruption to money-laundering and tax evasion, says the first serious study of its finances. Exploiting its privileged status in the new Russia, the Church has developed huge business interests with an annual turnover of millions and possibly billions of pounds, but priests in rural parishes are languishing in poverty, the report claims. Researchers from a Moscow university say that the Church is "a grandiose offshore zone with its own independent financial and manufacturing activity and huge potential for money-laundering by the economy's shadow and criminal sectors."

The world's largest Orthodox Church publishes no accounts but, directly or through opaque investments, has been and may still be involved in oil exports, importing cigarettes, and diamond mining, their study says. Its impenetrable finances and exemptions from many taxes and duties encourage corruption inside the church and attract criminals from outside, the report by Moscow's Centre for Research on Extralegal Economic Systems concludes. Criminal money can be laundered simply by being donated to a monastery, which then hands it back after taking a cut itself, one priest interviewed for the report discloses. Criminals also use the Church's freedom from paying excise on the sale of gold ornaments to avoid the state's scrutiny of the precious metal business, another says.

Patriarch Aleksiy II has sent conflicting signals on the issue of the Church's financial activity. In the mid-nineties, at the height of the Church's involvement in importing cigarettes to Russia duty-free, he is known to have given a dinner for executives from the tobacco giant, Philip Morris, at his residence. He has said commerce and the Church are "incompatible." But in a recent interview to mark the tenth anniversary of his enthronement he defended its

commercial dealings, saying they guaranteed its independence from big business. The Church's business interests were "demonized" by "convinced atheists and haters of Orthodoxy," he added.

And from Giles Whittell, *London Times*

The Russian Orthodox Church is mired in illegal or dubious business schemes ranging from money-laundering to selling candles at extortionate mark-ups, according to a report that was condemned by the Church as the work of atheists. A church spokesman attacked the authors of the report—one of whom, Mikhail Edelstein, is the son of an Orthodox priest—as "the heirs of militant atheism" of the Soviet era. "There are forces in this country that disapprove of the Church's new independence and its role in society," Viktor Malukhin, of the Moscow Patriarchate, said. "It's a great shame that Soviet prejudices live on in some academic circles."

Mr. Malukhin denied that the Church was involved in money-laundering but did not address the report's more detailed claims. These include bribe-taking by senior clerics in return for sought-after jobs; the failure of larger churches to declare profits from the sale of icons, candles, and grave sites; and criminals' use of the Church's tax-free status on sales of gold ornaments. One myth destroyed by the Moscow study is that of tight control from the top. Geraldine Fagan, of Britain's Keston Institute, which monitors religious freedom in the former Soviet Union, said: "The impression is one of complete and utter chaos." ♦

Source: Marcus Warren, "Criminals Cashing in on Orthodox Business Empire," Electronic Daily Telegraph, 30 June 2000; Giles Whittell, "Russian Church Accused of Illegal Rackets," London Times, 20 September 2000, Russia Religion News Web site: <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/>.

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Practically Speaking

The **Bible Foundation** distributes Bibles around the world to equip believers and to minister to seekers. Based in Oregon, this ministry networks with individuals and organizations to collect and distribute new and used Bibles to countries which request them. Most Bibles are in English,

but Scriptures in other languages are distributed. To request a newsletter or for more information, contact Box 908, Newberg, OR 97132-0908; tel.: 503-538-4897; E-mail: bf@bf.org; Web site: <http://www.bf.org>. ♦

World Christian Encyclopedia Editors Respond

They take exception to Mark Elliott, "Analysis of World Christian Encyclopedia Figures for Post-Soviet Christians," *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 4 (Summer 2001), 4-5, and "Making Sense of Russian Church Statistics," *Ibid.*, 16, 9.

The Annual Global Megacensus as Definitive Source

The two-volume *World Christian Encyclopedia* reports the overall results of the churches' megacensus costing the churches worldwide \$1.1 billion every year. In this, the world's 34,000 organized denominations instruct their bishops, clergy, and lay leaders to report each year on the numerical state of their work. Some ten million questionnaires in 3,000 languages are returned to their headquarters quantifying 180 major subject areas. For instance, all Roman Catholic bishops are each required to answer 141 statistical questions annually.

Two Vast Databases Guarantee Credibility

WCE's computational side has been firmly based on two large databases. First is the United Nations Demographic Database, continually updated by statistics on 100 variables for each of the UN's 189 member nations for each year from A.D.1950 to A.D. 2050. On top of this, we have built the World Christian Database, itemizing for 238 countries the world's 12,600 ethnolinguistic peoples, 6,600 cultures, 13,500 languages, 7,000 metropolises, 9,900 religions, 250 confessions, 34,000 denominations, 30,000 dioceses, 3,450,000 churches and worship centers, and so on.

The key variable in quantifying Christians is not "active believers," which most churches never measure. The only measurable or quantifiable imperative in Jesus' Great Commission is "Baptize them" (Matthew 28:10, *Contemporary English Version*). This is the one category employed by all 34,000 organized denominations in the world. We use it therefore throughout *WCE* as "affiliated Christians (church members)." This means all baptized persons, living and with names written on church affiliation rolls. Virtually all denominations worldwide provide this figure. None pretend that all are "active believers."

Church Leaders Know Their Flocks Best

[On pages 16 and 5 Elliott] . . . ignores the megacensus by making the extraordinary claim "Many Orthodox and Protestant estimates typically inflate," "Orthodox hierarchs may sometimes exaggerate," "Russian Protestants may sometimes exaggerate . . . for the benefit of Western donors" and [*WCE* gives] "overly generous figures for Catholics." After speaking over a 40-year period with hundreds of church leaders including bishops, popes, and patriarchs about their enumeration practices and examining their millions of questionnaires, we must assert that the average denominational or diocesan leader is far more likely to know and to accurately return the most believable total of baptized persons under his care than any outsider could. It is their business to know.

The two-volume *WCE* gives the overall firm totals of the megacensus. Readers wanting to go further to examine *WCE*'s 7,000-item bibliography, methodology, assumptions, sources, and so on will find detailed explanations and documentation in our new 952-page companion volume *World Christian Trends* (William Carey Library, 2001). This contains a searchable CD of the volume's entire text, tables, photographs, and color maps, plus a spreadsheet for 191 variables in all 238 countries. Of special interest is our series of computerized tables and graphs showing church growth and decline over the entire period A.D. 30 to A.D. 2200. Next to appear will be the full World Christian Database, expected to become available in 2002. ♦

David B. Barrett
Todd M. Johnson
Global Evangelization Movement
Richmond, VA

The key variable in quantifying Christians is not "active believers," which most churches never measure.

Mark Elliott's Response to Barrett and Johnson on Church Statistics

Membership figures are far from firm and even self-identification can be questionable, as in the case of "Russian Orthodox" who do not believe in God.

Unfortunately, Barrett's and Johnson's argument that "Church Leaders Know Their Flocks Best," is not necessarily the case in post-Soviet societies, at least in terms of numbers. The Russian Orthodox Church reportedly is the largest single church in the World Council of Churches, based on figures submitted to the WCC by the Moscow Patriarchate. However, the statistics that the WCC receives from the Patriarchate—what one Orthodox priest calls "an educated guess"—have to be estimates because individual Russian Orthodox parishes do not typically keep rosters of members' names nor membership totals. (Fr. Viktor Potapov to author, 19/10/01; Fr. Georgi Edelstein to author, 22/10/01; Fr. Michael Roshak to author, 22/10/01; Dr. Dimitrii Sidorov to author, 24/10/01; Dr. Nathaniel Davis to author, 31/10/01; Professor Dimitryi Pospelovsky to author, 1/11/01.)

In August 2001 the Russian Public Opinion and Market Research (ROMIR-Gallup International) conducted a survey of 2000 Russians. Of those polled, 73.6 percent identified themselves as Orthodox. However, among respondents who declared their allegiance to Russian Orthodoxy, only 51.3 percent believed in the existence of God ("What Residents of Russia Believe," *Mir religii*, 7 September 2001, Religion in Russia Web site, www.stetson.edu/~psteeves). Barrett and Johnson are correct to note the enumeration of baptized members as the only practicable basis for quantitative comparisons of churches and denominations. However, the exercise is quite problematic in post-Soviet settings because, as noted above, membership figures are far from firm and even self-identification can be questionable, as in the case of "Russian Orthodox" who do not believe in God. ♦

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More Responses to World Christian Encyclopedia Statistics:

I certainly agree that the numbers listed in the *World Christian Encyclopedia* need closer scrutiny and criticism, especially with regard to Protestants. When it comes to the number of Orthodox believers in Russia, however, I think there are some difficult issues involved that we should consider. For example, some scholars would argue that, based on recent sociological surveys such as those by Andrew Greeley and the All Russian Survey Center (see *Religion News in Brief*, 6 April 2000), the *World Christian Encyclopedia's* numbers are too low. Greeley found that 58 percent of the Russian population identify themselves as Orthodox. Conservatively speaking, that would mean over 80 million Russians are Orthodox. Furthermore, both the editors of the *Encyclopedia* and Greeley's numbers are less than the estimates of the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy, which consistently claims that 70 percent of Russians are Orthodox. Greeley and the *Encyclopedia* editors are using the criterion of self-identification and the Russian Orthodox hierarchy is likely using the number of those who acknowledge being baptized in the church as infants.

While most Evangelicals think different standards should apply (e.g., the number who claim to have accepted Christ as Savior or acknowledge that Christ died on the cross for their sins), these criteria use evangelical Christian markers that would be inappropriate to apply when attempting to discern who is a nominal or devout Russian Orthodox Christian. We probably need to ask committed Orthodox outside the hierarchy, "What criteria do you suggest for identifying committed or even nominal Orthodox Christians in Russia?" and then see what the numbers reveal.

Perry Glanzer
Russian-American Christian University
Moscow, Russia

[Barrett's] figures are all too slippery. My impression when I visit the typical provincial town in Russia is that perhaps one percent of the populace are in churches of all kinds combined—Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox—on a typical Sunday. A couple of years back the Moscow city police did an estimate of the numbers attending Orthodox Easter services: their figure was about 100,000, which of course is pathetically small in a city of ten million. As Philip Walters observed recently, we should not get carried away by the dramatic increases in the number of denominations and congregations legally functioning in Russia. A city can have scores of new religious entities but still be a place in which only one percent of the populace actually attend worship services every week. Like it or not, today's Russia looks a lot more like Sweden than the American Bible Belt. It is a profoundly secularized society.

Lawrence Uzzell
Director, Keston Institute
Oxford, England

Barrett's estimates look wildly optimistic to me. The official police figure for Easter service attendance in 2000 (including those standing around church buildings) in Moscow was just over 125,000. Even if you allow this figure some leeway, it is still hard to turn it into even a double-figure percentage, and this for the most important Orthodox festival of the year.

Geraldine Fagan
Keston Institute
Moscow, Russia

RESOURCES

Charles Miller. *The Gift of the World: An Introduction to the Theology of Dumitru Staniloae*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000. Reviewed by George Hancock-Stefan.

Over 20 years ago I studied the doctrine of God with Professor Daniel Migliore at Princeton Theological Seminary. The required texts for the course were Hans Küng's *Does God Exist?* and Jürgen Moltmann's *The Doctrine of the Trinity*. Upon finding out that I was Romanian, Dr. Migliore mentioned that, in the estimation of Moltmann, one of the greatest theologians writing on the doctrine of the Trinity was Romanian Orthodox professor Dumitru Staniloae. Needless to say, I left the classroom elated that a Romanian commanded such high esteem.

Staniloae's three-volume magnum opus, *Dogmatic Orthodox Theology*, was translated into German and French before it began to be translated into English. First published in Romania in 1978, it now is being published in English translation by T. & T. Clark. The two volumes published in English to date are: *The Experience of God (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, Volume 1: Revelation and Knowledge of the Triune God)* and *The Experience of God (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, Volume 2: The World, Creation, and Deification)*. Not only Romanian Orthodox theologians have high regard for this work. Such leading Romanian evangelicals as Paul Negrut and Emil Bartos have written their Ph.D. dissertations on Orthodoxy and Staniloae: "The Development of the Concept of Authority within the Romanian Orthodox Church during the Twentieth Century," 1995, and "Deification in Eastern Orthodox Thought: An Evaluation and Critique of the Theology of Dumitru Staniloae," 1999. In addition, the Sixth Ecumenical Theological Symposium, held in 1999 in New York, addressed "The Theological Legacy of Father Dumitru Staniloae and Its Ecumenical Actuality."

In *The Gift of the World*, Charles Miller, an Anglican scholar and professor of theology at Nashotah House Episcopal Seminary, Nashotah, WI, has produced a succinct, well-written analysis of Staniloae's *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*. Miller's favorite adjective in this volume is "Maximian," after the Church Father, Maximus the Confessor. While foundational in the theology of Staniloae, Maximus, by contrast, receives scant or no mention in standard church history textbooks: Bruce Shelley's *Church History in Plain Language*—no mention; Martin Marty's *A Short History of Christianity*—no mention; Justo Gonzales' *The History of Christianity*—no mention; Kenneth Scott Latourette's *A History of Christianity*, Vol. 1—one sentence.

Man and His World

Dumitru Staniloae grew up in Transylvania where an intertwined Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant milieu sharpened his Orthodox theology. While he regarded himself as a universal theologian, Staniloae wrote from a Romanian Orthodox perspective that he called "Eastern Latinity." A gifted linguist who wrote in five languages, he studied theology not only in Romania but also in Athens, Munich, and Paris. He appreciated Karl Barth, so influential in Europe at the time of his study in Germany (1928-29), from whom he gained "the affirmation of a living God, the affirmation of the transcendence of God before man."

During his theological training he concluded that seminary teaching and seminary texts did not equip students to face the world. He translated many patristic works into Romanian, including the *Philokalia*. Together with Nicolae Chitescu, Staniloae launched a revival of Romanian dogmatic theology in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. He taught at the Theological Institute in Sibiu (1938-46) and at the Theological Institute in Bucharest (1946-72), except for the years 1958-62, when he was imprisoned by the Communist regime. It was during this time that he became a student of hesychasm, an Orthodox mystical devotional tradition. Although he rarely traveled outside Romania, his best foreign friends were British Anglicans whom he visited in 1968-69.

Never forgetting his peasant roots, Staniloae rarely used theological jargon in his writings. One of his students said: "Unlike other teachers who seemed to want to make the notions of God complicated, Fr. Staniloae insisted that the notion of God was really simple." Romanian Orthodox ecumenist Ion Bria, who places him in the same category as Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Karl Rahner, and Edward Schillebeeckx, writes that Staniloae was unlike many other Orthodox theologians because he addressed contemporary issues, he favored comprehensible language over theological jargon, and he wrote theology in a personal, confessional style.

Creation and the Experience of God

The theme of creation, which pervades Staniloae's mature theological thought, is understood to be a source of both natural and supernatural revelation. From Maximus's *Ambigua*, Staniloae argues that natural laws have a spiritual dimension and that the natural and supernatural orders speak with one voice. Summarizing this concept, Miller writes, "The created world of Maximus (the Confessor) which Staniloae adopts as his own starting point, is a world which is, to use C. S. Lewis's apt phrase, 'drenched in deity.'"

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The Liturgy of the Mind: Dogma and Theology

By writing dogmatic theology, Staniloae became diametrically opposed to Paul Tillich, who demanded its abdication. In fact, Staniloae sought to liberate dogmatic theology from all that prohibited it from becoming a genuine expression of the Christian faith. He argued that dogma has to be understood in a personalist way, with its content being the living Christ through the reality of the Incarnation and the Trinity. Dogma is not strictly quotable formulations. It requires living theological interaction between historic apostolic truths and the present and the future.

Rediscovering Cosmic Christianity

As has been noted, Staniloae placed great emphasis on solidarity between humanity and creation, drawing the conclusion that humanity is in a position to profoundly affect the entire cosmos. Humankind can either poison God's gift of creation by rejecting its solidarity with the created order, thus diminishing its spiritual potential, or it can labor within creation, showing respect for it. Thus, grapes, bread, wine, and oil given to God sacramentally are not only gifts to the Creator but they are objects imprinted with human labor. Here Staniloae is in the mainstream of the Orthodox tradition in affirming the whole natural order as destined for glory alongside redeemed humanity. Thus, mankind's priestly work is in solidarity with the created order.

The Cross

In contrast to Luther, whose theology of the cross sees the importance of the created order until the crucified God gave full revelation of God, Staniloae develops the theology of the cross through continuity between natural and supernatural revelation. According to Staniloae, "Without the cross man would be in danger of considering this world as the ultimate reality. . . . The cross completes the fragmentary meaning of this world which has meaning when it is seen as a gift."

Suggestions for Christian Workers(cont. from page 16)

biblical truth, we will accomplish little by insisting on the authority of the Bible alone in Christian life. Such an insistence will be flatly incomprehensible to people who are unused to thinking in terms of juridical authority. Instead, we would do well to follow an Eastern approach to the evaluation of issues on which we think Orthodoxy has departed from Scripture. Eastern theology holds that a particular witness is true if it is accepted as being consistent with other witnesses to the Church's life. No Orthodox person would deny that Scripture is one of the main witnesses (if not the main witness) to this life. Accordingly, even from an Eastern perspective,

Sacrament and Church

One can say that Staniloae's theology is eucharistic because it is in the mystery of the sacrament that mankind can comprehend an "active presence" of the "absolutely Transcendent" in the world and in its midst. Staniloae writes, "The Church takes shape as a body formed from believers to whom Christ gives himself fully in the Eucharist." However, this eucharistic body is not introverted, but extroverted as it seeks the whole universe. "The gifts of bread and wine, indeed the gift of ourselves, will by the transfiguring Spirit, include the whole of a transformed and transfigured humanity and creation."

Staniloae's Contribution: In Summary

Evangelical as well as Orthodox Christians have much to gain from Staniloae. They will observe that in the midst of Communist persecution a godly man was able to produce superb theology; that earth as well as heaven proclaims God's glory; and that the writings of the church fathers have much to offer Christians of all confessions. Evangelical Christians also can take heart that someone such as Dumitru Staniloae, in a little known corner of the world, courageously confronted a theologian like Paul Tillich and demonstrated that, when done right, dogma still deserves and commands attention. Finally, Evangelical Christians should be pleased to make the acquaintance of a respected Orthodox theologian who took the study of Scripture seriously and who sought the validation of Scripture for his conclusions. ♦

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we have the right to compare other expressions of tradition with the expression which we know the best, the Bible. If we are willing to join our Eastern friends in looking carefully at other Orthodox sources in comparison to the witness of Scripture, we will demonstrate our own allegiance to Scripture in a way which will be comprehensible to them. Moreover, we will also show a willingness to take the ideas of Orthodoxy seriously, rather than dismissing them a priori because we believe they are founded on non-authoritative sources instead of on the Bible.

2. The Substitutionary Atonement

Another prominent aspect of Western Christian thought is our emphasis on Christ's death in our

Evangelical Christians should be pleased to make the acquaintance of a respected Orthodox theologian who sought the validation of Scripture for his conclusions.

place, as He took on Himself the punishment we deserved for our sins. As we prepare to discuss the work of Christ with East Europeans, we need to remember two things. First, substitution is not the only aspect of Christ's atoning work as described in the New Testament, even though we are convinced it is the most prominent emphasis. The classic idea of victory over death and the devil comes directly from Hebrews 2:14 and is also present in passages such as I Corinthians 15:54-57 and Colossians 2:13-15. As we teach about the work of Christ, we should emphasize this aspect of the atonement as well as the substitutionary aspect. Furthermore, it is important that we not give the impression that we believe the atonement exempts Christians from all suffering. Orthodoxy regards such an idea as the bedrock of Western "easy believism" and caricatures our faith as implying, "Christ has borne my cross so that I can go to heaven without having to bear a cross myself." This is not what we mean, but it is all too easy for Orthodox to hear us as saying this. Thus we need to stress that believers are not exempt from suffering in this world and that Christ is our companion in the suffering which we undergo.

3. Justification by Faith

When we approach this issue, we come to what Protestants are convinced is the very heart of the gospel. The Orthodox stress on life as a journey to the kingdom tends toward an idea that people are saved only at the end of the process of *theosis*. This is not what Orthodoxy at its best intends. Mature Orthodox theology does stress that we become God's children at the beginning of faith, and therefore that Christian life is in part a response to what God has already done in saving us. The best of Orthodoxy does agree with our emphasis on justification by faith, although Eastern theologians do not use that phrase to express the idea. However there are two things which make it difficult for people from Orthodox backgrounds to hear us accurately when we talk about justification. First, when we describe justification using legal definitions, when we speak of a change in our status before God or of imputed righteousness, we will be incomprehensible to people who do not possess our Western legal mindset. Second, Easterners who are well-versed in Orthodox polemics will have heard that justification by faith is a Protestant idea and therefore a heresy. If we use the phrase "justification by faith" itself, we will sometimes accomplish nothing except ending the conversation.

Therefore, as we discuss this crucial issue, we need to remember that the phrase "justification by faith" occurs only in Romans and Galatians, whereas the idea which the phrase signifies is expressed in other ways in the rest of the New Testament. We can use other words to convey this crucial idea, and I think the best vocabulary to use is that of acceptance. Does God's acceptance of people as His children come at the beginning of faith? Do we as believers begin to share in fellowship with the Trinity from the beginning? Or does this acceptance (as well as the communion which flows from it) await the completion of

sanctification, the accomplishment of union with God? Mature Orthodoxy answers these questions with the emphatic assertion, "At the Beginning." But Orthodoxy's stress of life as a journey often leads people toward the idea that God accepts us only at the completion of that journey. If people have only a vague understanding of Orthodox doctrine, they are likely to have a sense that they need to perfect themselves in order to have communion with God.

For those who are not believers but who have a strong spiritual hunger, the emphasis on salvation as *theosis* can lead to a great deal of guilt and frustration over their seeming inability to perfect themselves enough to gain union and fellowship with God. What such people need to hear more than anything else is that God is ready to accept them into fellowship with Himself now, even though they are not perfect. God's acceptance does not need to wait until the completion of a long process of sanctification or deification. Instead, through His Son Jesus Christ, God has already accomplished all that He requires in order to accept people. It remains simply to be united to Christ by faith in order to begin experiencing now the joy of fellowship with Him. This acceptance, which begins at the inception of faith, is the basis for pursuing a life of Christ-likeness.

We also will need to stress that God's acceptance accompanies personal faith in Christ, not citizenship in a nation which has uniquely received God's favor. When we encounter the sentiments associated with religious nationalism, we need to recognize that it is neither necessary nor productive to downplay national consciousness. Instead, we can affirm that national hopes and dreams are important to God.

At the same time, it is crucial for us to make clear that some of the conclusions drawn from nationalistic sentiment are wrong. Perhaps an appropriate way to do this is to emphasize that while a nation's dreams are important to God, He does not care for any single country alone. This was the lesson which God taught Jonah, as the prophet sought to restrict God's love only to Israel. In contrast to Jonah, God loved even the people of Nineveh, the capital of Israel's most hated enemy, Assyria. By emphasizing the universality of God's love, perhaps we can begin to jar people out of spiritual complacency based on national heritage, so that they will recognize their own need to turn to Christ in faith.

It is this message of God's acceptance which we as Christian workers can bring to Eastern Europe. In order to make sure that it is genuinely heard, we will need to correct both the idea that such acceptance awaits the completion of sanctification and the belief that it comes automatically to people of a certain nation. ♦

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Suggestions for Christian Workers in the East

Don Fairbairn

Preparation: Attitudes and Understanding

Perhaps the most important way Westerners can prepare for work in Eastern Europe is by asking questions about attitudes and goals. Are we going to the East to build Christ's kingdom or simply to expand our denomination or group? Do we overtly or subconsciously believe that true faith is to be found only among Protestants? I have known Western Protestants in Russia who have seen people come to Christ, have spent years discipling them, and then have been devastated when those young disciples ultimately chose to be part of the Orthodox Church.

It is true that many people who have an affiliation with Orthodoxy are not genuine Christians, and even worse, that some are convinced that they are genuine Christians simply because they are from an Orthodox country. Perhaps God will be pleased to grant Western Christians the joy of helping such people come to know Christ truly. Some may find their home in Protestant or Roman Catholic churches. But Orthodoxy at its best does preach Christ and can provide a place for believers to grow. We should not consider it necessarily a tragedy if people with whom we work go to or remain in Orthodox communions.

Thus I suggest that we take a larger view of God's action to build His kingdom than many of us are accustomed to take. Without minimizing the significance of our differences with the Orthodox, and certainly without ignoring the dangerous distortions of the gospel which are present in popular Orthodoxy, we can still recognize that God does not work merely through Protestantism; He can and does also work through the Orthodox Church. It may be that Easterners who gain exposure to the best of Western Christianity through contact with Protestant Christian workers will be the very ones who help to

bring about a revitalization of popular Orthodoxy.

A second way Westerners can prepare for ministry in Eastern Europe is by learning the religion, culture, and artistic and literary heritage of the region. This is important for Protestants working in the East for two reasons. First, we are often far too quick to dismiss the great cultural heritage of Eastern Europe in ways which give offense. In fact, it is the cavalier dismissal of Russian culture by Western Christians that leads to some of the angrier reactions of Russians toward us.

Another reason it is important to learn the cultural heritage of Eastern Europe is that much of this heritage is Christian. In the case of Russia, for example, early fifteenth century iconographer Andrei Rublev was an artistic genius and we can acknowledge this even though we may not agree that icons are an appropriate part of Christian worship. Also, Fyodor Dostoevsky, one of the nineteenth century's greatest novelists, was a man of deep spiritual insight. And we can acknowledge this in spite of the fact that his novels include elements of popular Orthodox piety with which we disagree. In light of this, Western Christian workers need to learn Orthodoxy and its influence on the life of the people with whom we work, and we need to be willing to express an appreciation for the ways in which that influence has been positive, even as we admit that we do not agree with it completely.

The Public Presence of Western Christians in the East

As a result of East Europeans' fear of secrecy and their confusion of Protestantism with cults, it is especially important that missionaries be publicly open about who we are and what we are doing. East Europeans are likely to assume that we are from the most radical of secretive cults if we are unwilling to identify ourselves. One of the first things I recommend to my Russian and Ukrainian Protestant students is that they contact Orthodox leaders in the area where they will be working. If, as is likely, local leadership will not have enough sympathy with our emphases for any religious cooperation to be possible, it still may be possible to do charitable work together. At the very least, if we take the initiative to make contact with Orthodox leaders we demonstrate respect.

Discussing Christianity in an Orthodox Environment

1. The Unique Authority of Scripture

Even in cases when Orthodox theology's attention to witnesses besides Scripture does lead it astray from

Without ignoring the dangerous distortions of the gospel which are present in popular Orthodoxy, we can still recognize that God can and does also work through the Orthodox Church.

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