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The Level of Religious Commitment in Russia

Valeria Sorokina

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2006-2007 Gallup Poll Data

On 25-26 August and 1-2 September 2007, the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion (Russian acronym - *VTSIOM*) conducted two nationwide Gallup Polls, "Religion in Our Life," reaching 3,200 people (1,600 people in 153 localities in 46 regions, territories, and republics of Russia in each poll).¹ According to poll data, 50 percent of Russians identify themselves as believers. Among self-identified believers 10 percent go to church regularly and observe all rites and ceremonies, while 43 percent visit church only on holidays and do not keep all rituals. One-third of respondents (31 percent) believe that God exists, but take little interest in church life. Only six percent of those questioned are convinced atheists, while eight percent have no opinion. Among respondents 75 percent identified themselves as Russian Orthodox, and eight percent identified themselves as Muslims. Only one to two percent of respondents chose other religious affiliations.

Just eight months prior, in December 2006, *VTSIOM* published data concerning the Russian population's religious affiliations and understanding of religion.² Remarkably, most respondents (74 percent) were not eager to physically fight for their faith, even if inspired by their spiritual leaders. Only 14 percent of respondents were likely to participate in a religious war. Two-thirds of respondents (69 percent) did not consider violations of religious sacred places as a sufficient justification for going to war. On the other hand, 16 percent of participants

who were younger than 45 were ready to fight in case their faith were blasphemed.

Russian Orthodox consider their enemies to be "sectarians," in the first place, (indicated by 26 percent of respondents), followed by occultists, astrologists, and practitioners of magic (nine percent); adherents of non-Christian religions (five percent); non-Orthodox believers (two percent); and atheists (four percent). A quarter of respondents (24 percent) did not identify any enemies of the Russian Orthodox Church.

VTSIOM figures for 2007 show that Russians do not consider the church as the main source of moral values for youth. In the opinion of 67 percent of those surveyed, children and young people must be introduced to morals in their families and at school. Only four percent of respondents identified the church as a source of moral values.³

1999 - 2007 Comparisons

If we compare answers published by Drs. Kimo Kaariainen and Dmitry Furman in 1999 with data for 2007, we see that the number of people who do not go to church has increased from 45 percent to 59 percent; fewer Russians visit church once a year – down from 29 percent in 1999 to 16 percent in 2007. In 1999, 53 percent of respondents never participated in the Divine Liturgy whereas in 2007 the figure was even higher: 83 percent. Ten percent of those surveyed take part in communion once a year or less. Nevertheless, the number of baptized people has increased to 76 percent.⁴

Changes In Religious Commitment in Russia²

"Do you affiliate yourself with any confession? If yes, which one?"

Answers in Percentages	1991	1994	2001	2004	2007
Orthodoxy	31	38	50	57	56
Islam	1	2	4	4	3
Catholicism	*	<1	<1	<1	<1
Protestantism	*	<1	<1	<1	<1
Judaism	*	<1	<1	<1	<1
Other	1	<1	2	1	1
Do not consider yourself a believer	61	58	57	32	33
Failed to answer	6	1	7	6	6

*These options not offered in 1991.

"Are you baptized?"

Answers in Percentages	1989	2001	2004	2007
Yes	65	75	76	76
No	31	21	21	20
Failed to answer /no answer	4	4	3	4

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A “Cultural Religiosity” Criterion

In 2005, Sergei Filatov and Roman Lunkin suggested a new criterion of religious self-identification: cultural religiosity, in contrast to personal religious commitment or ethnicity.⁵ Thus, “a person claims that he/she belongs to a particular religious tradition though he/she might not share its doctrines, does not participate in its ceremonies, and does not belong to a religious community.”⁶ This phenomenon permits Filatov and Lunkin to explain “the Orthodox religiosity of modern Russians” as “so loose and unstructured in terms of organization, dogmatics, and ideology that any quantitative findings are estimates at best. Thus, it is hard to distinguish whether the majority of Orthodox believers are genuinely committed or not. No matter if one extends or limits applied criteria, practicing Orthodox in Russia total only two to ten percent of the population, that is, 3 to 15 million people.”⁷

Practicing Believers

In total, Filatov and Lunkin calculate the following number of practicing believers in Russia:

- Russian Orthodox – 3 to 15 million
- Old Believers – 50,000 to 80,000
- Catholics – 60,000 to 200,000
- Protestants – no more than 1.5 million
- Jews – 30,000
- Muslims – no more than 2.8 million
- Buddhists – no more than 500,000
- Structured authoritarian cults – no more than 300,000

The authors believe that in a secular society where faith has become a mere cultural symbol, the value of a religious factor is quite low. Mainly “ethnic” religious leaders play some role in the social and political life of Russia. Politicians and religious leaders see the number of believers as evidence of the influence of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and others. In Russia doctrinal profession and worship attendance are not considered the main characteristics of those who call themselves believers.⁸

Between 2002 and 2006 the number of self-identified believers slowly increased, whereas the number of non-believers or believers in some supernatural powers declined.⁹ In this time frame fewer respondents claimed to be Orthodox if their behavior did not reflect their religious life. Nevertheless, Russian Orthodox believers are susceptible to omens (over one-third of respondents and over 40 percent in the Orthodox “half-churched” group), superstitions, and occult practices. Self-identified Orthodox keep going to sorcerers, fortune tellers, and extrasensory individuals to obtain cures or solve problems in their lives.¹⁰

Social Profile of Russian Believers

Unlike Sergei Filatov, who is more involved in qualitative research of “true believers,” the Center for Religion in Modern Society focuses on a social portrait of believing Russians.¹¹ Its findings from a December 2000 Gallup Poll of 1,800 people older

than 18 include the following:

1. Women prevail among believers in God. Also, a high percentage of youth and people with higher education believe in God.¹²
2. Among Muslim believers one most frequently encounters men, youth, and persons with relatively low levels of education, income, and job skills;
3. Those who hold to a general belief rather than specific religious confessions are predominantly young people with the highest levels of education and income. A considerable proportion of these upwardly mobile youth work in prestigious and well-paid private and joint-stock companies. Thus, the most socially and professionally active groups in contemporary Russian society are characterized by the highest degree of worldview instability and ambiguity.¹³

Overall, Russians demonstrate a relatively low level of trust in religious organizations. Less than 50 percent of believers in God give credence to them. Among non-believers the percentage is five times lower. Women, children, elderly people, less-educated and less well-to-do respondents, followers of Communist and centrist ideologies, and those indifferent to ideological doctrines trust religious organizations. The most socially influential strata of society hold the lowest degrees of trust in religious organizations.¹⁴

Degrees of “Religiosity”

In May-June 2004, the Center for Religion in Modern Society conducted a Gallup Poll to determine the “nature and depth of religiosity in Russia.”¹⁵ As a result, the research team was able to calculate high, middle, and low levels of religious activity.

“The highest percent of regular church-goers are in the Protestant group, followed by Jews and Catholics – among them over half of respondents participate in public worship services weekly. In contrast, Russian Orthodox and Muslims are reluctant to visit a church or a mosque; they make up only a fifth and sixth part of respondents. Buddhists indicated the lowest level of active participation: under one percent visit temples weekly.”¹⁶

Protestant communities, as a rule, are highly consolidated groups of fellow-believers who are eager to communicate informally. Jews and Catholics also show a high level of community consolidation. Also, the phenomenon of a religious minority existing in a hostile environment is important. Simultaneously, in Russian Orthodoxy and Islam, religious communities are more amorphous and unstable, especially in big cities.¹⁷

Why Religious Participation is Weak

In the 1990s the expectation of an increase in genuine religious activity did not occur, if it is understood as incorporation of new believers into church activities and their observation of religious ceremonies. Why does a considerable portion of the Russian population who claim to believe avoid an active religious life? What underlies their

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The Level of Religious Commitment in Russia

Respondents with High Levels of Religious Activity (in Percentages)

	Orthodox	Muslims	Catholics	Protestants	Jews	Buddhists
Go to church at least once a week	15.0	19.0	50.0	81.1	52.7	0.9
Observe basic ceremonies and rules	19.8	31.6	46.4	49.0	33.6	26.9
Celebrate religious holidays regularly	33.5	51.0	54.5	51.7	54.5	38.0
Pray daily	35.0	35.2	52.7	78.3	35.5	19.4

motivation? Why did the 1990s, a favorable period for religious confessions in Russia, not lead to a considerable growth in active religious adherents? To find the answers, a Gallup Poll in 2000 surveying 1,184 people identified three factors that influence believers' low motivation to actively engage in religious life.

1. Some stated that the church as an organization lacks credibility. It is seen as insincere, putting pressure on people and inappropriately mixing faith and politics.
2. Some responded that they lacked the time for an active religious life.
3. Some held to the conviction that a person may remain a believer outside of church life.

What changes are needed to attract people to church? Among those willing to attend church (56.3 percent), the following judgments were prevalent:

"The church must be more open and must quit blaming others for its flaws";

"The church should not limit freedom of thought but help a person to come to know and find him or herself, instead of creating chaos in people's heads";

- "There must be an atmosphere of sincerity and truth";
- "There should be no fanaticism or coercion; the church must not 'crush' people";
- "The church must not arouse suspicion and must not differ from what is written in the Bible";
- "A priest must be a trustworthy man, sincere, honest, interest in people and their needs";
- "The church must be merciful and understanding."¹⁸

Among respondents who no longer attend church, the following reasons were most often given for leaving the fold:

"no time" (36.9 percent)

"personal spiritual problems" (32.6 percent)

"unsatisfied with a theological doctrine" (28.3 percent)

"unethical behavior of other believers" (28.3 percent)

"interpersonal conflicts" (21.8 percent)

Most pastors blame believers for leaving the church; only four clergy identified such reasons as "lack of consideration for new converts" and "lack of family atmosphere in the church." Churches as organizations often find it difficult to adjust to social changes such as democratic reforms, freedom of speech, openness, pluralism, and the tendency towards tolerance. Survey research showed, in particular, that many Protestant churches today have authoritarian structures with a clear hierarchy with little tolerance for dissent or nonobservance of set rules and traditions. Breaking church rules can lead to isolation or excommunication.

Conclusion

It would appear that the overwhelming majority of Russian Christian believers do not go to church regularly because of a deep intrinsic organizational crisis within the church. People need a more open, flexible, and tolerant church. Factors that reinforce the motivation of many believers not to attend church, or to leave it altogether, include interconfessional and inner church conflicts, insincerity and poor education of church leaders, and the desire of church leaders to suppress individuality. One must also consider economic factors since believers often feel they have no time for an active church life.

More than 50 percent of Russians claim to be believers, but just six percent are actively involved in religious practice. Any increase in the number of committed faithful will be possible only if reforms take place that will rehabilitate the church's image in the eyes of believers. ♦

Editor's Note: The author cites both 75 and 56 percent Orthodox and both eight and three percent Muslim. The disparities derive from two separate polling efforts.

Notes:

¹ Press Release 789, "Religion in Our Life," 11 October 2007; http://wciom.ru/arkhiv/tematicheskii-arkhiv/item/single/8954.html?no_cache=1&cHash=83b4f38aeb&print=1. The margin of error was 3.4 percent.

² Press Release 601, "Religion in Our Life," 19 December 2006; http://wciom.ru/arkhiv/tematicheskii-arkhiv/item/single/3756.html?no_cache=1&cHash=2164c64274&print=1.

³ In July 2007, the Levada Center conducted a representative poll of 2011 Russians: "The Russians and Religion," 14 August 2007; <http://www.levada.ru/press/2007081409.html>. The margin of error was three percent.

⁴ Kimo Kaariainen and Dmitry Furman, *Old Churches, New Believers: Religion in Mass Conscience of Post-Soviet Russia* (St. Petersburg, Russia: Letniy Sad, 2000), 21 and 23.

⁵ Sergei Filatov and Roman Lunkin, "Statistics of Russian Religiosity: The Magic of Numbers and an Ambiguous Reality," *Journal of Sociological Research* No.5 (2005), 45-85.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁹ Dr. Yulya Yurievna Sinelina is senior research officer at the Institute for Socio-Political Research, Russian Academy of Sciences.

Churches as organizations often find it difficult to adjust to social changes such as democratic reforms, freedom of speech, openness, pluralism, and the tendency towards tolerance.

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¹⁰ Y. Y. Sinelina, "Dynamics of Russian Orthodox *Votserkovleniye* Process," *Journal of Sociological Research* No. 11 (2006), 97.

¹¹ A. G. Shevchenko, "About a Social Portrait of a Modern Believer," *Journal of Sociological Research* No. 7 (2002), 68-77. Project Supervisor Dr. Mikhail Petrovich Mchedlov is Director of the Center for Religion in Modern Society, Institute of Complex Social Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences. Senior research officers included Dr. Y. A. Gavrilov and Dr. E. A. Kofanova.

¹² "Surely, religiosity has not become a must for good career growth yet, but it has been transformed from a 'stigma' of a marginal social status into a characteristic of respectability. Putin's example of an energetic, middle-aged, modern president-believer who takes religious ceremonies seriously, can't help but impact people who aim at success in society." See Kimo Kaariainen and Dmitry Furman, "Religiosity in Russia on the Threshold of the XXI Century," *Journal of Social Sciences and Modernity* No. 2 (2007), 87.

¹³ M. P. Mchedlov, Y. A. Gavrilov, and A. G. Shevchenko, "Concerning a Social Portrait of a Modern Believer," *Journal of Sociological Research* No. 7 (2002), 76.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁵ M. P. Mchedlov *et al.*, "Confessional Features of Religious Faith and Notions of Its Social Function," *Journal of Sociological Research* No. 6 (2005), 46-56. The Gallup Poll used an individual standard interview based on target sampling. Among 1,500 respondents were 400 Russian Orthodox, 250 Muslims, 150 Protestants, 110 Catholics, 110 Jews, 110 Buddhists, and 370 nonbelievers. The research covered 37 nationalities and 15 social-professional groups in 22 cities. Respondents came from six cities of Central Russia, including Moscow and St. Petersburg. None were younger than 18. Researchers also questioned 64 priests and pastors and 230 nonbelievers.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 47-48; Irina G. Kargina, "Self-Identification of Believers: Social Motivation," *Journal of Sociological Research* No. 1 (2004), 45-53.

¹⁸ Mchedlov, "Confessional Features," 45-56.

Valeria Sorokina is a research associate with the Center for Apologetics Research, St. Petersburg, Russia.

Christian Counselor Training in Ukraine

Dennis O. Bowen

Seminaries, Bible colleges, and church-based training of Christian workers have emerged in great numbers since 1990. Pastors have been trained, missionaries sent out, churches planted, and many other ministries have been started. However, very few Christian counselors have been trained. Nevertheless, pastors, missionaries, Sunday school teachers, and church elders are all doing counseling today, but, in most cases, without training in counseling skills. Certainly well under ten percent of church leaders in the former Soviet Union have any training in this field. A few counseling books have been translated, and some counseling seminars have been held. All this has been a help to the church. But Christian counselor training should be the next priority for church leadership training. This article, while not comprehensive, does provide an overview of all that is underway in counseling and counselor training in Ukraine.

Free-Standing Programs

The Realis Center (Research, Education, and Light Center) in Kyiv launched a three-and-one-half-year, graduate-level training program in Christian counseling in 2001. The first class of 28 students completed the program of study in 2005. Six of these graduates continued with the Realis Center for supervised practical ministry training. The Center also operates a counseling center at Christ Cathedral Church, one of Kyiv's large evangelical churches, where Realis Center graduates meet with clients, gaining valuable experience. In addition to the counselor training program, the Realis

Center operates an accredited master's degree in intercultural communication.

The Eurasia Soul Care Training Center began offering extension training and modular courses in counseling in 2008. One-week sessions are held four times a year. The program offers training in biblical counseling at extension sites in Odessa, Rivne, and Sumy, Ukraine, and in Krasnodar, Russia. Two groups of students completed their three-year course of study in 2007. The program is popular with pastors, who make up approximately 50 percent of the enrollment.

Another biblical counseling training program began in Kyiv in 2002, and presently continues under the name International Counseling Institute Coram Deo. The teaching team, with the help of Dr. Ron Harris, author of the curriculum, delivers this training and mentoring program in 12 modules over the course of three years. After quarterly, one-week sessions, pastors and church leaders are mentored in practical work with clients. The program maintains the emphases of the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF), a biblical counseling training ministry based in Glenside, Pennsylvania, U.S.

Another extension program, in which courses may be taken at the student's own pace, is the Internet-based training offered by the Association of Christian Counselors of Ukraine (UACC). The curriculum and courses have been adapted and translated from the French ACC training program. UACC also organized an all-Ukraine Christian counseling conference in June 2007. This was

Christian counselor training should be the next priority for church leadership training.

Christian Counselor Training in Ukraine

one of the first national conferences for Christian counselors in Ukraine.

Since 1997 Youth with a Mission in Kyiv has presented an introduction to biblical counseling on four occasions, and its Addictive Behavior School twice. These courses of study are accredited through YWAM's University of the Nations (<http://www.uofn.edu/>). YWAM schools consist of three months of coursework followed by three months of practicum and outreach.

University and Seminary Programs

Kyiv Christian University (KCU) teaches individual courses in Christian counseling, but no longer offers a counseling major at its residential campus. KCU, accredited through the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association of Evangelical Schools, currently is considering a specialization in Christian counseling for its residential and graduate level programs.

Kyiv Orthodox Seminary prepares students for the priesthood by focusing on theology and pastoral ministry. While it does not have a major in counseling or a related field, it does offer some general psychology courses as part of its curriculum. This is a pattern that is followed by many seminaries of various denominations in Ukraine.

One program of theological education that has had an extensive offering in counseling and psychology is Odessa Theological Seminary (Evangelical Christian-Baptist). Its curriculum includes introductory classes in psychology and counseling which are designated as *dushepopechitelstvo* (soul care), along with related courses. Donetsk Christian University also offers courses in Christian counseling as part of its Bachelor in Pastoral Ministry degree. Carl and JoLynn Krause, who developed this program, have offered courses in pastoral ministry and pastoral care, marriage and family counseling, and biblical counseling.

Grace and Truth Seminary in Kyiv has been offering Introduction to Christian Counseling and Christian Marriage and Family courses in its residential and extension programs for several years. The seminary has plans for a specialization in Christian counseling at both the bachelor's and master's levels.

From 2001 to 2005 Ukraine Evangelical Theological Seminary (UETS) in Kyiv offered a three-year certificate in Christian counseling. However, staff departures because of pregnancies and other factors led to the closure of this residential program. Fortunately, Christian counseling courses continue in the seminary's four-year Bachelor of Theology extension program, which currently enrolls 151 students.

UETS, along with some Christian professionals in the field, took the initiative in early 2005 to start a Christian counseling center. This Rapha Center trained graduates of various Christian counselor training programs and offered services to patients. The center offered family systems therapy training, featuring live observation of sessions, plus group

supervision for students. The Rapha Center has since closed.

The Vosozhdenie Center

The Vosozhdenie Center, another Christian counseling service in Kyiv, opened its doors in 2005. Supervised by the author and his wife, Lydia, the center employs seven counselors who completed the three-and-one-half years master's program through the Realis Center. These seven students spend two academic years in the center's internship program. In fall 2007 two interns returned for their second year, and two interns began their practicum. Interns, who range in age from 27 to 55, typically have completed a university degree in such fields as biology, education, languages, or psychology. One intern completed a master's degree in psychology from a state university in Kyiv.

The goal for the first group of interns at the Vosozhdenie Center was to have each one receive no less than 100 hours performing counseling, with a minimum of 400 hours in internship. Some interns have exceeded this target. We meet weekly for group supervision; in addition, interns meet for individual supervision. Counselors and interns have led Christian 12-step dependency recovery groups and educational groups; they have taught church and community seminars; and they have consulted with Christian organizations. They offer individual counseling and have begun to offer family and couple therapy. To prepare for marriage and family counseling, I presented a 30-hour marriage and family therapy skills course for our interns and other interested students in Kyiv. In the winter and spring of 2007 the interns had live observations of weekly family sessions. Also in spring 2007 the center presented a seminar for counselors and leaders on pre-marital counseling.

In summary, two extension biblical counselor training programs, one Internet-based Christian counselor training program, and one ongoing supervision and internship program are operating in Ukraine, in addition to seminaries that offer one or more relevant courses. Unfortunately, very few teachers or clinicians have training and experience in clinical supervision in Ukraine. It is clear that despite recent progress, shortcomings still exist in Christian counselor training in Ukraine. While great gaps may be noted in Christian counselor training in Ukraine, developments in this field in recent years give hope for the many hurting people who need wholeness in Christ, presented to them via a healthy church and a caring listening ear. ♦

Dennis O. Bowen is a licensed clinical psychologist living and working in Kyiv. He earned a Psy.D. degree in clinical psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology and a master's degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He and his wife, Lydia, have served 12 years in the former Soviet Union with ReachGlobal, formerly the Evangelical Free Church International Mission. In addition to the Vosozhdenie Center, the Bowens have taught in the Realis Center, Ukraine Evangelical Theological Seminary, Grace and Truth Seminary, Kyiv Christian University, and Donetsk Christian University.

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Christian Counselor Training in Ukraine (continued from page 5)

Editor's Note: By the same author see "Training Pastoral Counselors in Russia," East-West Church and Ministry Report 12 (Spring 2004), 3-4; and

"Christian Psychology in Russia," East-West Church & Ministry Report 6 (Spring 1998), 11-12.

Christian Counselor Training in Ukraine

Dennis Bowen, compiler

Association of Christian Counselors of Ukraine
Alexander Tumanov, President
Kreiser Avrora ul. 5/57
Kyiv-191, Ukraine 03191
Tel: 8-050-334-5289; 357-8039
acc_ukraine@km.ru
<http://offtop.ru/dsc>

Donetsk Christian University
Sergei Ribikov, President
106A Iliche Avenue
Donetsk, Ukraine 83059
Tel: 062-297-2210; 297-2519
secretary@dcu.donetsk
www.dcu.donbass.com

Eurasia Soul Care Training Center
Artyom Kluchnikov, Director
8 Vishnikova #122
Kyiv, Ukraine
Tel: 38-044-565-8509
esctc@internationalfaith.org;
artyom@internationalfaith.org

Grace and Truth Seminary
John Bin Choi, President
52b Obolonsky Prospekt
Kyiv, Ukraine 04214
Tel: 044-467-8911; 411-1588
seminary@ua.fm
www.seminary.kiev.ua

International Counseling Institute Coram Deo
Ludmilla Moonko
Box 66
Kyiv, Ukraine 02154
Tel: 044-361-64-12
Ron.Harris@worldteam.org

Kyiv Christian University
Ilya Kozubovski, Academic Director
Sortovalna 5A
Kyiv, Ukraine
Tel: 044-574-4097; 574-40-72
office@kcu.org.ua; ilia@kcu.org.ua
www.kcu.org.ua

Kyiv Orthodox Seminary
Preovyashenishi Anatoli Pakanich, Rector
Bul. Sichnevogo povstaniya 25
Kyiv, Ukraine 01015
Tel: 044-255-1206 (rector);
044-255-1179 (seminary office)
rektorkda@bk.ru; pom.rektor@bk.ru
<http://www.kdais.org.ua/>

Odessa Theological Seminary
Volodymyr Shemchyshyn, President
Alexander Geychenko, Academic Dean
Odessa, Ukraine
Tel: 048-755-64-42
acdep@odessasem.com
http://www.odessasem.com/index_e.html

Realis Center
Sergei Timchenko, Director
Sabor Khrista
Ul. Popudrenko 34a
Kyiv, Ukraine 08296
Tel: 38-044-331-91-68
Sergei_Timchenko@realis.org
<http://realis.org>

Ukraine Evangelical Theological Seminary
Anatoly Vladimirovich Gluhovsky, Rector
Gamarnika ul. 57, Pushcha-Voditsa
Box 83
Kyiv, Ukraine 04128
Tel/Fax: 38-044-431-82-41; 431-82-42
welcome2u@uets.net
www.uets.net

Vosozhdenie Center/Kyiv Family &
Counselor Training Team
Dennis Bowen, Director
Box A/C 5
Kyiv, Ukraine 02140
Tel: 044-565-7313
Pomosch.kyiv@gmail.com
www.kievcounseling.org

Youth With a Mission Kyiv Team
Phil and Alyona Spys, Directors
Box 120
Kyiv-1, Ukraine 01001
Tel: 044-295-1730
info@ywamkyiv.org
ywamkyiv.counseling@gmail.com

Augustine in Russia

Melissa Jones

East-West Church Conflict Overstated

Theologians and historians of religion have too often posited that Western theology is incompatible with Eastern Orthodoxy, and past scholarship has found it easy to define Russian theology mainly by its reaction against Western theology. Even today, rhetoric coming from leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church demonstrates that an anti-Western stance can provide an easy means to bolster Orthodox solidarity in troubled times. This can be seen, for example, in continuing conflicts between Moscow and Rome regarding Ukrainian Greek Catholics, and the 1997 “Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations,” which was a clear effort by the Russian church to keep Western religious influence out of post-Soviet Russia.

However, today’s Russian church leaders who attempt to reunite their flocks by taking an anti-Western stance distort the history of the church. Although there was certainly a history of conflict between Eastern and Western political and religious leaders, the assumption of an insurmountable theological dichotomy is not supported by historical evidence.

Although there were certainly times when medieval Russian Orthodoxy existed in relative isolation, modern Russian Orthodox theology has been in continuous dialogue with the West and has even looked to elements of Western theology to help support itself during times of social and political stress. As a specific example, Russian churchmen and intellectuals drew upon the work of Augustine of Hippo (354-430) in an effort to buttress a truly Russian theology.¹ Rather than looking at ways in which Russian theology changed and developed in reaction to Western theology, careful examination shows that Russian theological study was deep and broad, and that it sought knowledge of major theologians from the Western tradition for the sake of preserving and developing Orthodox theology. The popularity of Augustine in Russia was not a victory of Latin expansionism. Rather, Augustine was accepted in Russia for purely Russian reasons.

Although Augustine is considered a seminal Western theologian, his voluminous writings explored issues that were of interest to Russian theologians and philosophers as well. His historiography is one example of this. In many of his works, Augustine became a historian who endeavored to find meaning in the chaotic events of his personal life and the world around him. It is not difficult to understand why his works might have been attractive to idealistic members of the Russian intelligentsia who were seeking true wisdom in the face of social and political changes that were convulsing Russian culture in the post-Petrine period.

Order and Hierarchy

Many of Augustine’s works dealt with order and hierarchy, topics of vital interest to members of the church and intelligentsia in modern Russia. It

is interesting to note that Augustine’s *Confessions* and *City of God* were translated into Russian and published in their entirety in both the 18th and 19th centuries. It is no accident that Russian translation and publication efforts were applied to these works which deal with meaning in history, the ordering of society, and the place of the individual in society and the cosmos.

Augustine is considered the architect of the Western Christian view of history, a history that is linear and providential. His *City of God* replaced the classical, cyclical historical view with a linear history that would end with the coming together of the City of God and the City of Man. The inherited Hellenic system of Russia’s past had not developed a philosophy of history that would allow Russia to move into modernity with a sense of historical purpose. Augustine’s theology offered a foundation for members of the intelligentsia seeking a new historical consciousness.

A Late-Roman, Post Petrine Parallel

Ideas regarding order and hierarchy became more important to Russian thought after Peter the Great’s Westernization policies were enacted. The *City of God* addressed the issue of how individual Christians could reconcile the practice of Christianity with their relationship to an imperial state that was often unjust and corrupt. This issue also affected the Orthodox Church as it struggled to maintain its spiritual integrity after being incorporated into Peter’s rigid bureaucracy. Augustine’s writings not only explained why such an earthly political hierarchy was allowed by God, it accepted this order and described how the Christian believer could attain salvation within it. In Augustine’s cosmology, fallen humanity needed the political structure for the sake of preserving peace and social welfare.

Augustine’s writings, particularly the *City of God*, provided a foundation for a church and intelligentsia hungry for historical grounding. It is this author’s suggestion that after the reign of Peter the Great (1695-1725), Russia experienced a crisis similar to that suffered in Augustine’s time. The post-Petrine Russian intelligentsia, forcibly Westernized, experienced the same societal flux as Augustine’s contemporaries who watched the great Roman Empire crumble. In many ways, Peter the Great’s heavy-handed Westernization gave Russians a feeling that they were created *ex nihilo* on an intellectual level. Writer Piotr Chaadaev’s lament that Russia had “no past, no present, and no future” echoed again and again. In his *Apology of a Madman*, Chaadaev described Russia as a “blank sheet of paper” and claimed the Petrine reforms were possible because there were no deep-rooted traditions or sense of history to stand in Peter’s way.²

The post-Petrine church found itself facing both political and social pressures: political pressure from politicians who wanted to either eviscerate it or co-opt it for state purposes, and social pressures as the Russian church faced growing losses of its educated elite to enlightenment philosophies based in German

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Augustine’s writings, particularly the *City of God*, provided a foundation for a church and intelligentsia hungry for historical grounding.

Augustine in Russia (continued from page 7)

idealism and French rationalism. The simple piety of traditional Orthodoxy embraced by common folk could not hold members of the upper classes who had Western education and sophistication. As in Augustine's time, simple piety was no longer enough: complex philosophical questions needed to be addressed in an attractive, literary form, and Augustine's *Confessions* did this extremely well.

Combating Secularization with Augustine

Russian Orthodox officials sought to provide a textual foundation which would be accessible to the clergy and educated elite to buttress the traditions of Orthodoxy in the face of attack by secularism and competing religious movements. Perhaps this best explains the church's educational reforms and turn toward the patristic canon. In the absence of biblical translations accessible in the common language, Russian versions of the Church Fathers could provide a textual basis for spiritual and intellectual dialogue regarding the truth of Russian Orthodoxy. Thus the maintenance of Orthodoxy's place within the new political and social orders required a reformulation of certain theological matters, which in turn required an appeal to the patristic canon and a reexamination of Western theology and patristics.

Rather than being a corrupting influence, as suggested by scholars such as Georges Florovsky, the examination of Western theology was a tool utilized by modern Russian church leaders in an attempt to maintain Orthodoxy's Christian identity in the face of challenges of modernity. The 19th century Russian Orthodox Church sought to reform theological education, eliminate Latin scholasticism, and enliven the church. These religious reform efforts resulted in a return to patristic studies that led to the Kievan Theological Academy's extensive, systematic translation of Augustine into Russian. Key figures in this renewal movement were Metropolitan Platon (Levshin), Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov), and Archbishop Filaret (Gumilevskii). These church leaders were instrumental in the move toward educational reforms that eventually resulted in the flowering of theological literature in the late 19th century.

Translating Augustine

As the study of patristics grew in the second half of the 19th century, the translation of Church Fathers was systemized. The Kievan Theological Academy's geographical and educational contacts with the West

made it the logical choice for the task of translating Augustine and other Western Church Fathers. Its *Trudy kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii*, the journal of the Kievan Theological Academy (1860 to 1917), carried numerous translations of, and articles about, Augustine.

Although the 1917 Revolution brought an end to this ambitious project, the excellent effort put forth by Kievan Academy scholars and editors was not in vain, for the translation of Augustine's works into Russian corresponded with a blossoming of Russian secondary works on Augustinian thought. This project also stands as a monument to the sophistication and high level of academic discipline of the Kievan Theological Academy. The Russian translations of Augustine's works produced by the Academy indicate a level of scholarship that was equal to any in Europe at the time.

Nevertheless, not only anti-Western zealots but even moderate Orthodox theologians tread carefully around Augustine's ideas regarding original sin and the resulting limits it puts on human freedom.³ Nineteenth-century Russian churchmen experienced the same discomfort as 20th-century Orthodox theologians regarding Augustine's interpretations of Genesis. ♦

Notes:

¹ In the 18th century, the Kievan Theological Academy referred to Augustine as *sviatyi* [saint] instead of the less exalted *blazhennyi* [blessed]. But in general, 18th- and 19th-century publications referred to this early Church Father as *Blazhennyi Avgustin* [Blessed Augustine].

² P. I. Chaadaev, *Apology of a Madman* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 167.

³ Reinhard Flogaus, "Palamas and Barlaam Revisited: A Reassessment of East and West in the Hesychast Controversy of 14th-Century Byzantium," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 41 (no. 1, 1998), 1-32.

Edited excerpts published with permission from Melissa Ann Jones, "Augustine in Russia," Ph.D. dissertation, Arizona State University, 2000.

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Melissa Jones is an adjunct faculty member of religious studies at Chapman University College, Irvine, California.

Tech Schools for Russian Orphans: Failing the Grade

Cristi Hillis

Editor's note: The first portion of this article was published in the previous issue of the East-West Church & Ministry Report 16 (Spring 2008): 10-11.

Unprepared for Life

If life inside Russian tech schools is difficult, then life once students leave is even harder, particularly since Russian orphan graduates usually do not possess the skills or the drive necessary to survive and succeed in life on their own. (*Editor's note: PTU, the Russian acronym for tech schools, is no longer being used to designate these institutions.*)

Though tech schools train orphans (with varying degrees of success) in a given trade, they do not teach basic life skills such as cooking, navigating public transportation, or renting a flat. In tech schools orphans have many of their basic physical and security needs met, but once they leave, they suddenly find themselves on their own, having to care entirely for themselves.

The Russian translations of Augustine's works produced by the Academy indicate a level of scholarship that was equal to any in Europe at the time.

Tech Schools for Russian Orphans: Failing the Grade

The Problem of the *Propiska*

One of the biggest problems for Russian orphans after leaving tech schools concerns the issue of *propiska*, the basic document in a system that requires everyone to register their legal residence. In Russia, if people desire to move, they must register in the new location by means of a tedious, bureaucratic process. People can apply legally for a job or buy an apartment only in the location in which they are registered. The issue of registering and changing *propiska* is difficult for average, educated Russians; but for orphans who have never been trained in how to navigate the waters of the Russian bureaucratic system, it can be almost impossible.

The registration system is critical for Russian orphans because many of them come from small, remote villages, with registration documents that limit their options. Once orphans graduate from tech schools, the registration law forces them to return to the villages in which they were born. This presents enormous problems for orphans because many of them were taken from their villages in the first place because of alcoholic or abusive parents. Since 95 percent of Russian orphans have a living parent, many of them find their parents once they return to the villages. Frequently, however, the reunion is not pleasant. A tragic but common example is Vova (not his real name), an orphan I met in a city in southern Russia.

* * *

Vova's bright eyes glimmered as he recounted the story of his first time going ice fishing with his brother as a child. In 2004, at age 22, he was one of the oldest orphans at the tech school, getting ready to graduate with a degree in woodworking. He desired to move to St. Petersburg to try to find work there, but due to the propiska system, he had to move back to his village of birth and registration. Years ago, Vova had run away from the village to an orphanage in an attempt to escape his abusive, alcoholic father. He knew that upon graduation he would have to return to that same village, where there were few jobs and no one to take him in.

When I returned to Russia in the summer of 2005, I went back to visit the orphans I had gotten to know in 2004. However, I could not find Vova. When I asked his friend, Ira, what happened to him, her face grew somber and her voice lowered: "Well, did you know that he had to go back home?" I nodded, and she continued. "He went back to his father, and his father did not want him. His father beat him again. So Vova ran away, but he had nowhere to go. Three days later they found him frozen by the side of the road."

* * *

Unfortunately, Vova's situation is not entirely unusual. The *propiska* system forces orphans to return to dying villages where neither jobs nor human support systems await them. In the villages, many of them turn to alcohol or commit suicide. Others stay illegally in the cities, often resorting to lives of crime. It is true that the *propiska* system affects not only orphan graduates, but all Russians who desire to move to a new location. Since Russia is such a vast territory, the *propiska* system is to the Russian government's advantage as a means of keeping track

of the country's population. But for orphans it is a particular problem because it forces them back into unhealthy and even dangerous situations.

Though a serious problem, the *propiska* system is not the only difficulty that orphans confront once they leave tech schools. Another important issue concerns housing. By law, the Russian government is required to give graduating orphans a stipend and provide them with a place to live (which is much more than most governments do for their orphans). Many orphans already have apartments in their name left to them by deceased family members, such as grandparents. However, these apartments are often in small villages and in such rundown condition that they are uninhabitable. One of the orphan graduates I work with has an apartment in her name, but it burned down years ago. Nevertheless, according to her documents, she has an apartment in her name and because of this nonexistent apartment, the bureaucracy has not provided her with another place to live.

Non-Governmental Organizations Attempting to Make a Difference

With over 15,000 graduates leaving orphanages each year, the government faces a formidable task in its attempt to address the individual needs of this vulnerable population. Recent years have seen a steady rise in the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals working with orphans in Russia. However, the majority of NGOs, including faith-based organizations, working with orphans in Russia and Eastern Europe focus on young children and those still living in orphanages. Very few groups are attempting to provide orphan graduates living in tech schools with the love, esteem, and drive that they will need to survive. As project coordinator for the CoMission for Children at Risk (a networking organization serving over 400 NGOs working with orphans in Russia and Eastern Europe), I have had the privilege of seeing firsthand what is being done (and what is not being done) for orphans living in tech schools in Russia.

Those NGOs in Russia that do attempt to assist orphan graduates employ a variety of approaches. Some offer mentoring programs similar to Big Brother/Big Sister programs in the United States. Others offer drop-in centers where orphan grads may spend their afternoons and stay out of trouble. Still other agencies have established live-in programs, the most comprehensive option of all.

Spoken For International Youth Outreach sponsors Broken Dancers, a unique mentoring program working with older Russian orphans. American Scott Werntz, visiting Russia in 2001, saw an orphan boy doing complicated break-dancing. He was so impressed and intrigued that over the next few years, he gathered a team of Russian staff to teach break-dancing to teenage orphans in tech schools. In addition to break-dancing lessons, staff members have the opportunity to build relationships of trust with orphans and to get involved in their lives. In the past few years, Scott Werntz has been able to further broaden the horizons of orphan teens by bringing orphan break-dance troupes to the United States to share their stories in high schools and churches.

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Once orphans graduate from tech schools, the registration law forces them to return to the villages in which they were born. This presents enormous problems.

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Broken Dancers staff members often develop relationships with younger orphans and then continue their mentoring as the children graduate out of the government system. For orphans, this is a wonderful opportunity to have someone consistently involved in their lives, someone whom they know they can depend upon and go to for support and love.

Live-In Centers

Both secular, non-profit organizations, as well as faith-based organizations, run orphan care drop-in centers. In St. Petersburg, a secular agency, Doctors of the World (DOW), runs a drop-in center that provides medical care for orphans and street children, from basic bathing of sores to extensive treatment for HIV-positive orphans. In addition to medical care, Doctors of the World staff provide warm and loving care in their efforts to meet the needs of at-risk youth. Additionally, Doctors of the World has outreach workers who spend three afternoons a week on the streets of St. Petersburg, getting to know street children, letting them know about the medical assistance that is available at the Doctors of the World drop-in center. I had the privilege of spending an afternoon with DOW outreach workers and was very impressed with the rapport they had with street youth.

Hand of Hope (name changed for security reasons) is an example of a Christian organization that runs both a drop-in center and live-in programs in Russia. Its drop-in center operates daily from 3 to 11 p.m., providing safe activities for at-risk orphan graduates. Hand of Hope does not offer the medical assistance that Doctors of the World provides, but it does offer spiritual counseling and guidance. Since tech schools do not offer students religious education, many orphans begin to explore faith for the first time at Hand of Hope. Students are invited, but not required, to participate in Bible studies and to attend a local church. Hand of Hope staff, including four Russians and one American, focus on loving and helping orphans, regardless of their religious views. Every evening different students cook dinner for 30 to 60 at-risk youth who come to the drop-in center. This provides orphans with essential life skills of cooking and budgeting money in grocery shopping. Staff members also invite orphans to their homes on weekends and generally provide the love, care, and support that are missing from their lives. In addition, staff work with local businesses in an attempt to secure jobs for students once they graduate from tech schools. In 2006 Hand of Hope opened a live-in program for a few orphans who were homeless after graduating from tech schools. The majority of these students are doing very well, adjusting to life in a home and holding steady jobs.

Throughout Russia various groups and individuals are running live-in centers for orphan graduates. In St. Petersburg, I visited a Russian Christian woman named Marina who oversees a live-in center sponsored by supporters in the United States. The center provides a home for four girls who otherwise would be living at tech schools. The live-in center provides comprehensive help for these orphans, providing them with a family environment and with long-term care and support. As with Hand of Hope, students

living with Marina are invited to join Bible studies and to attend church if they desire. Though live-in facilities are certainly the most comprehensive of all approaches to care for older orphans, unfortunately they are limited based on their high cost and the small number of orphans who can be helped at any one time.

Combatting Indifference

Though many Russians staff non-profit organizations that work with Russian orphans, unfortunately few of these agencies are indigenously Russian. One possible explanation may be that prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian orphans were entirely provided for by the government. By law, if not always in fact, they were supposed to be given an education at a tech school, guaranteed an apartment, and given a job upon graduation. Russians expected the government to provide for orphans. Consequently, today, many Russians still consider it the government's responsibility to care for the needy. Therefore, few Russians are even aware of the many needs among orphans living in tech schools. (Radio Rossii, Family Radio Journal, <http://www.radiorus.ru/section.html?rid=2454>.) Of course, blindness to the needs of orphans and the poor is not just a Russian problem. In the United States many middle class and wealthy people are unaware of the actual needs of the homeless in their own cities or of the single moms living on welfare in trailer parks. When one does not come into contact with destitution and poverty on a regular basis, it is easy to avoid thinking about such problems. And a lack of first-hand acquaintance with need makes it easier not to take action.

However, a volunteer culture of long standing exists in the United States. As a result some people who would not ordinarily come in contact with the poor or orphans on a daily basis are able to meet them through holiday feed-the-homeless events or volunteering in soup kitchens. Unfortunately, in Russia volunteerism is not part of the culture. In a recent survey, "when asked about their attitude toward orphans, out of 1,000 respondents [in downtown Moscow], 999 said the problem had nothing to do with them." ("Changing Russia's Approach to Orphans," Russian News and Information Agency [RIA], 25 April 2007.) Most Russians never come in contact with orphans who have aged out of orphanages, and so the situation seems very distant to them. As a result, most Russians are oblivious to the need.

Though many secular non-profits and faith-based organizations working with orphans in Russia are doing excellent work, their current efforts are miniscule compared to the scale of the problem. The lack of Russian awareness of the orphan situation, as well as the lack of a volunteer culture, only compound the unfortunately low number of people involved in assisting orphan graduates.

Additionally, orphans lack preparation for life once they leave tech schools. When raised in families, children are able to learn life skills directly from their parents, with increasing independence and responsibility as they mature. However, children growing up in institutions are not prepared

When asked about their attitude toward orphans, out of 1,000 respondents [in downtown Moscow], 999 said the problem had nothing to do with them.

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to take responsibility for themselves once they leave the institutions.

Though organizations in Russia working with orphan grads deserve commendation, the best solution for homeless children would be homes. Increasingly, domestic adoption and foster families are providing homes for orphans in the former Soviet Union. By these means, children are able to grow up in families where it is easier to learn life skills (such as looking people in the eye and being polite to neighbors) as an eight-year-old than as a seventeen-year-old. Domestic

adoption and foster care would be by far the best way to keep orphans from ever having to go through the difficult transitions of aging out of the orphan care system. ♦

Edited excerpts published with permission from Cristi Hillis, "What Do They Need to Survive? Addressing the Needs of Adolescent Russian Orphans," Senior thesis, Davidson College, 2006.

Cristi Hillis is project coordinator for the CoMission for Children at Risk.

The Balkans Appropriation of Mother Teresa

Gëzim Al pion

Editor's note: The first portion of this article was published in the previous issue of the East-West Church & Ministry Report 16 (Spring 2008): 5-6.

Competing Macedonian and Albanian Claims

Almost immediately after Mother Teresa was "discovered" by the BBC's Malcolm Muggeridge in 1968, various Balkan parties tried to "appropriate" her. But when the Albanian Catholic nun was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, the competition between several Balkan countries to claim her as their own "daughter" began in earnest. From that moment she was seen by many parties in the Balkans as a god-send, especially by Macedonian Slavs and her fellow Albanians, most of whom previously were blissfully unaware of her.

In the summer of 2003 an unholy war broke out between Macedonian Slavs and Albanians over Mother Teresa's ethnic identity. It was then that the government of the Republic of Macedonia offered Rome a monument dedicated to her, which was to be a copy of sculptor Tome Serafimovski's bronze statue of Mother Teresa, already erected in the Macedonian capital of Skopje. The proposal incensed Albanians.

The Macedonian government's decision to dispatch the statue to Rome was the latest link in the long chain of honors Macedonia had been bestowing upon "its" Mother Teresa for several decades. On 26 June 1980, only six months after she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the government of Macedonia made Mother Teresa an honorary citizen of Skopje.

Albanians have always been uncomfortable with what they consider as Macedonian Slavs' excessive veneration for Mother Teresa, but the monument was apparently the last straw. What upset the Albanians most was not the monument itself (after all, Macedonian Slavs had already dedicated a statue to Mother Teresa in Skopje shortly after her death in 1997), but the Cyrillic inscription which was allegedly intended to accompany the monument in Rome: "Macedonia honors her daughter Gonxhe Bojaxhiu – Mother Teresa, Skopje 1910 – Calcutta 1997."

To prevent such an "injustice," 38 noted Albanian intellectuals and politicians wasted no time in dispatching a letter to the Mayor of the Eternal City, Walter Veltroni. In their letter to Veltroni, Albanians emphasized that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had no right "to usurp the figure and deeds of Mother Teresa" simply because Skopje happened to be her native city. Mother

Teresa was born there to ethnic Albanian parents on 26 September 1910. At that time Skopje was still under the authority of the Ottoman Empire. As for Macedonia, Yugoslavia, and Albania, such independent "states" did not exist in 1910.

Perhaps the mayor was heeding the Albanians' advice not to be "part of . . . falsified history." Or perhaps he simply wanted to avoid yet another typical Balkan squabble. Whatever the reason, Mayor Veltroni was sympathetic to the Albanians' "predicament." And so, much to their delight, the Macedonian Slavs' "elaborate scheme" to "steal" Mother Teresa from them, her "genuine" ethnic brethren, was nipped in the bud.¹

Macedonian Slavs and Mother Teresa

While the new Macedonia that emerged after the collapse of Yugoslavia is officially a multi-ethnic state, Macedonian Slavs still have the final say on how the country is run. In an effort to present themselves as a nation that can be taken seriously, Macedonian Slavs pay too much attention to "Macedonian identity," which essentially means Macedonian Slav identity. This policy has hardly endeared non-Slavic communities to Macedonian Slavs, especially Albanians who make up 25.17 percent of the country's population.²

Discriminatory practices apparent in governmental departments, the police force, and education were some of the causes of armed conflict in spring 2001 between the Macedonian state and Albanian guerrilla fighters, who demanded equal rights for the Albanian population. Fortunately, prompt intervention by the international community prevented escalation of the conflict, but this country may face further difficulties. The raging war of words on the ethnicity of Mother Teresa indicates that the two major ethnic groups in the Republic of Macedonia are becoming increasingly sensitive about and over-protective of their cultural heritage, history, and heroes.

Downplaying Nationality

Mother Teresa herself was never keen to mention her nationality when she talked to the press. There were occasions, however, when she made it absolutely clear that she was Albanian. So, for example, when she was awarded the Nobel

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In the summer of 2003 an unholy war broke out between Macedonian Slavs and Albanians over Mother Teresa's ethnic identity.

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Peace Prize in Oslo, she told curious international media that “[b]y blood and origin I am *all Albanian*” (emphasis added).³ Considering that Mother Teresa was always consistent about her Albanian origin, it makes no sense to argue that her descent is far from clear. Surely Mother Teresa was the best authority on the issue of her ethnic origin.

Macedonian Slavs have always been aware of the fact that, as far as her ethnicity is concerned, Mother Teresa never pretended that she was anything other than Albanian. All the same, this has not stopped some of them casting doubt on her Albanian roots. Macedonia has its share of Mother Teresa experts who are keen to score points over their Albanian rivals not only because, in their view, she spoke little or no Albanian but, more importantly, because during one of her visits to the Macedonian capital of Skopje she refused to give a straightforward answer when asked repeatedly if she was Albanian, Macedonian, Vlach, Serbian, or any other nationality. “I am a citizen of Skopje, the city of my birth,” she told reporters eventually, “but I belong to the world.”

For a devoted Roman Catholic like Mother Teresa, my “Skopje” did not necessarily mean the capital of the predominantly Orthodox Christian Republic of Macedonia. Nor did she refer to the city of her birth as “my Skopje” purely because it was inhabited by Albanians since ancient times. The possessive adjective “my” in this case refers to the Skopje of her childhood memories, something she was keen to emphasize repeatedly.

More importantly, perhaps, Mother Teresa referred to the city of her birth as “my Skopje” because of its 16 centuries of documented Catholic legacy. Ancient Skopje was one of the region’s thriving cities during Roman and Byzantine times. The Illyrians, like the Greeks, came into contact with Christianity during the Apostolic Age. Paul states in his letter to the Romans that “from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ.”⁴ Ancestors of present-day Albanians were among the first Europeans to convert to Christianity.

Abhorning All Things Albanian

Mother Teresa’s Skopje had its own bishop by the 4th century A.D. and since then some of the city’s Albanians have remained faithful to the teachings of Christ. For some Macedonian Slavs, however, an Albanian Mother Teresa apparently still remains unacceptable. Macedonian Slavs have always been eager to denigrate anything Albanian, the main aim of which is to deny Albanians their Illyrian descent⁵ and to present them as “uncivilized.”

The constant onslaught on Albanian history, language, culture, and tradition waged by numerous Serbian, Montenegrin, and Macedonian Slav scholars has been frequently challenged, but never more seriously than in the case of Mother Teresa. Her emergence as an international humanitarian icon inevitably shattered as never before the Serbian myth that Albanians were “barbarians.” How could someone like Mother Teresa, who came to epitomize the best of human spirit in a century dominated by savage wars and bloodshed, come from “Albanian

stock”? Surely, a nation of “thieves,” “hooligans,” “thugs,” “arsonists,” “kidnappers,” “drug dealers,” “rapists,” “human traffickers,” and “pimps” (some of the derogatory terms used by Serbian and Macedonian propaganda to demonize Albanians) who have always caused “problems” among Slavs in the Balkans, “initiated” the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and are currently posing a grave danger to Western civilization with their “obvious” links to the international mafia, could not produce a dove of peace like Mother Teresa. It is only logical, therefore, that Mother Teresa was not, could not, and should not be Albanian. If she could not be a Macedonian Slav, a Serb, or a Croat, she must certainly be a Vlach, a Roma, a Venetian – anything but an Albanian.

The news from the Vatican that Pope Paul II was to beatify Mother Teresa in October 2003 obviously upset Serbs and Macedonian Slavs who had been trying hard to vilify Albanians as Muslim terrorists, especially the guerrilla fighters in Kosova and Tetova in Macedonia. As far as those who generated, used, or hid behind Serbian propaganda were concerned, a Catholic nun like Mother Teresa, who was venerated as a saint by millions of Christian and non-Christian believers and secular people worldwide when she was alive and who was well on the road to canonization only six years after her death, was not, could not, and more importantly, should not be Albanian.

That some Macedonian Slavs were and still are far from happy to admit that Mother Teresa was Albanian is apparent by the fact that in many conferences, symposia, exhibitions, radio and television programs and documentaries, books, and CD-ROMS dedicated to her in Macedonia, her Albanian roots are almost completely ignored. In most cases, her ethnicity is mentioned mainly to emphasize that she was of mixed ethnic origin.

For an impoverished country like Macedonia that is eager to join the European Union as soon as possible, Mother Teresa is seen as excellent public relations, a means of showing Europe that freedom of religion and other civil and political rights are allegedly guaranteed by the Macedonian state equally to all ethnic groups in the country, including Albanians. Mother Teresa, some Macedonian Slav politicians apparently believe, can help them to improve the country’s image. And they may be right. The saint might not have seen herself as a Macedonian Slav, but she can still be useful to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia after her death. This is one of the reasons why, in April 2006, the Macedonian parliament approved the “Mother Teresa Award,” which will be given to distinguished personalities for their contribution to humanitarian work and culture. ♦

Notes

¹ Elda Spaho, “Nënë Tereza ‘maqedonase’ refuzohet nga Roma,” *Shekulli*, 18 July 2003.

² “Maqedoni, zyrtarisht: Shqiptarët përbëjnë mbi 25% të popullsisë,” *Korrieri*, 2 December 2003.

Considering that Mother Teresa was always consistent about her Albanian origin, it makes no sense to argue that her descent is far from clear.

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³ Eileen Egan, *Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa – The Spirit and the Work* (New York: Doubleday, 1986), 413.

⁴ Romans 15:19 (New Revised Standard Version).

⁵ Kaplan Resuli Burovich, “The Albanian Racism Towards Its Neighbors is Based on Historical Falsifications,” Interview with Vitomir Dolinski, *Vest*, 25 February

2003; http://www.unitedmacedonians.org/macedonia/kaplan_english.html.

Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from Gëzim Alpion, Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity? (London: Routledge, 2006) and Routledge.

Gëzim Alpion is professor of sociology at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England.

Book Reviews

Wanner, Catherine. *Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007. 305 pp. \$24.95. Reviewed by Paul D. Steeves.

Ukraine was the tenth-century cradle of Russian Christianity. Ukraine also was the launching point for modern Western evangelization of eastern Slavs in the nineteenth century. Evangelicalism emerged and grew rapidly in Ukraine in the post-1855 reforms of Emperor Alexander II. Throughout the twentieth century Ukraine was home to the majority of evangelicals under Soviet rule, known variously as Baptists, Evangelical Christians, or Pentecostals. Since 1991 Ukraine has been the focus of the most vigorous evangelical activity in post-Soviet space. This book by Catherine Wanner contains a cornucopia of information that documents the product of evangelicalism in Ukraine.

The book’s title conveys no cogent message about its content. Lacking a coordinating theme, the book, which cannot be called a monograph, comprises a collection of six worthy essays loosely united by reference to Ukraine. Wanner deserves credit that she is the author of each of these rich, disparate essays collected here.

Wanner describes Ukrainian evangelicalism from her perspective of a secular sociologist. This is both a great virtue of the book and a drawback. She confesses that she is not herself evangelical, so even though she is always sympathetic, she lacks a certain empathy with her subjects. She has no training in theology, so she does not portray the important doctrinal aspect of her subjects. She is not an historian of Russia and the Soviet Union, so her generally accurate account of the past 150 years lacks essential nuance.

Chapter one narrates succinctly the history of evangelicalism in Ukraine up to the Stalin years. This story has been told in several other books and Wanner adds nothing new.

The supposed focus on Ukraine becomes blurred in chapters two and three. Chapter two leaves the subject of Ukraine to deal with the entirety of the U.S.S.R. in the post-Stalin years. Wanner skillfully portrays the great ambiguities evangelicals faced in surviving amidst Soviet atheism. Some evangelicals accommodated while others resisted. Here one confronts the greatest difficulty in the book. Wanner tells the story of an accommodationist

named Karl Jablonsky. Supposedly Jablonsky was elected “bishop” of the Moldovan department of the legalized All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) and in this role was privileged to travel abroad, allegedly giving evidence that religious freedom was respected in USSR. Wanner offers no documentary corroboration of the account. A close examination of Baptist sources turns up no evidence to support this story and much substantial evidence to the contrary. No Jablonsky occupied a responsible position among AUCECB churches or traveled with AUCECB delegations. In the absence of better documentation, for the time being one must conclude either that Wanner was deceived or failed to present her information in a comprehensible and accurate fashion.

Chapter three moves to the United States to survey how Ukrainian émigrés have fared abroad, with some retaining concern to support evangelicalism back home. Chapters four and five present the heart of Wanner’s own field research in post-Soviet Ukraine among the evangelicals who are continuing the work of the movement descended from the 19th century. These chapters show the vigor of Ukrainian evangelicals, especially in Kharkiv.

The last chapter describes the phenomenon of the “Embassy of God,” a megachurch network started by a Nigerian evangelist. This topic, while very interesting, lacks any connection with the earlier parts of the book other than its location in Ukraine. One could at least hope for a discussion of the relations among the “Embassy” and more traditional Ukrainian evangelicals. One could dispute whether the “Embassy” really is evangelical, but there is little doubt that the “Embassy” has nothing to do with the history of evangelicals in Ukraine.

This book can be strongly recommended for anyone who wants an accessible summary of what has happened among evangelicals in Ukraine.

Paul D. Steeves is professor of history and chair of the history department at Stetson University, Deland, Florida.

This book can be strongly recommended for anyone who wants an accessible summary of what has happened among evangelicals in Ukraine.

Witte, John Jr. and Frank S. Alexander, eds. *The Teachings of Modern Orthodox Christianity on Law, Politics, and Human Nature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Reviewed by Chris Bounds.

This book is part of a three-volume project arising from the work of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University. The thesis of the project is that modern Western jurisprudence has become too narrow and insular as a result of the dominance of legal positivism which has ignored the contributions of recent Christian thought on law, politics, and society. The purpose of the project is to introduce the best of modern Christian reflection in these areas with the hope that it can provide a salutary influence in legal circles today. With this in mind, the editors have identified 20 seminal Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians from the 19th and 20th centuries and published in three volumes their most salient writings on issues relevant to jurisprudence.

This particular volume examines the potential resources for contemporary law from the Orthodox tradition. Specifically, five Orthodox theologians and philosophers are addressed: Vladimir Soloviev, the first modern Russian to develop an Orthodox philosophy of law and political order from the Christian understanding of salvation; Russian Nicolas Berdyaev, who articulated an anthropology grounded in an “ethic of creation, redemption, and law;” Russian Vladimir Lossky who related human dignity, freedom, and law to the Orthodox doctrine of the Trinity; Romanian theologian Dumitru Stăniloae who argued for the natural and supernatural resources of law and authority in the midst of human freedom and sinfulness; and Mother Maria Skobtsova, a Russian nun and social reformer who developed a theology of incarnational living and sacramental care for the poor with implications for the role of law in addressing issues of injustice. In each case, a scholar has been chosen to provide a biographical sketch, a presentation of their thoughts on law, politics, society, and human nature, concluding with a selection of their primary source writings.

The work done in this volume is helpful in four ways. First, it recognizes that modern Eastern Christian thought can make significant contributions to Western

theology and jurisprudence. Orthodoxy, recognized and respected in its own right, offers a perspective not found elsewhere in Christianity and therefore deserving a hearing. Second, while Orthodox thought is firmly rooted in the past, particularly in its adherence to the early Church Fathers, this volume helps readers see that Orthodoxy is not monolithic. Readers will note true doctrinal development taking place in modern Orthodoxy as this volume highlights original Orthodox reflection in the areas of law, politics, society, and human nature. Third, the volume faithfully presents the teaching of each Orthodox Christian, with minimal or no critique. The goal is to present Orthodox thought on issues related to jurisprudence and theology, allowing readers to then critique and appropriate accordingly. Finally, the selection of original sources is outstanding. They allow readers to cut to the heart of each Orthodox thinker’s key arguments and ideas in his or her own words. Their relevance to the purpose of the book is clearly seen.

Some minor weaknesses, however, are apparent. The most glaring is the section on Mother Maria Skobtsova. While the inclusion of a woman in this three-volume series is laudable, with women well represented in the Protestant and Roman Catholic texts, the presentation of Mother Skobtsova in this volume is weak and perhaps a stretch. While Michael Plekon gives an insightful presentation of Skobtsova, her contributions to an Orthodox understanding of human society, politics, and law lack the strength of the other chapters. This is substantiated even more in the choice of Skobtsova’s writings: They do not have the same relevance to the stated purpose of the book as the other Orthodox selections.

In conclusion, this book is a useful resource for two academic disciplines – jurisprudence and theology – giving a modern Orthodox perspective on law, politics, society, and human nature.

Chris Bounds is associate professor of theology, Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana.

Pentecostal and Orthodox in Common Cause (continued from page 16)

efforts and, oh, what a thrill it was to be part of an international team of Christians of different churches and denominations working to restore an Orthodox Church!*

One favorite question that Father Georgi asks almost everyone is this: “Well, many Protestant Christians have helped me in restoring Orthodox temples. But have you ever heard of Orthodox believers doing the same for Protestants?” Every time the answer has been negative. It is his dream. Does it take too much for all Christians to build (restore) the one temple of God, that is, His Church, His Body? What constitutes this Body? It is all of us who are believers in Jesus Christ. Let this be our dream.

* *Editor’s note: Participants in the 2007 church restoration project included Orthodox, Pentecostals, Baptists, Wesleyans, United Methodists, and members of non-denominational Protestant churches. In June 2008 a second*

mission team continued work on the Church of the Nativity, Priskokovo village, and helped with the reconstruction of the Church of St. John the Baptist, Ivanskoe village, both near Krasnoe-na-Volgy, Kostroma Region. The 2008 work team of 40 included United Methodist and Wesleyan church members from the United States, plus Russian Orthodox and Russian Pentecostal believers, Russian orphan graduates, and reforming ex-offenders. For earlier East-West Church & Ministry Report articles by and about Father Georgi Edelstein, see 10 (Fall 2002): “On Orphans, Spiritual Restoration, Repentance, and Religious Legislation,” 13-15; “Thoughts on the Current Situation in the Moscow Patriarchate: Hypocrisy, Servility, or Complete Indifference to the Fate of Religion?,” 9, 12-13; and “. . . Of Such is the Kingdom,” 16.

Andrei Danilov is pastor of the Family of God Pentecostal Church, Kostroma, Russia.

This book is a useful resource for two academic disciplines – jurisprudence and theology - giving a modern Orthodox perspective on law, politics, society, and human nature.

Book Review

Rials, Kirby. *The Protestant's Guide to Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy: How To Answer the Tough Questions*. Greenville, MI: Delta Mills Books, 2006. Reviewed by Edmund Rybarczyk.

This book's strengths are two-fold: A rapid-fire overview of the many doctrinal issues that separate Catholicism and Orthodoxy from conservative Protestantism. Second, it is succinct and therefore quite readable, and for a non-academic study it has wonderful portions of historical research interspersed throughout. The sections denoting the diversity of positions among the church fathers are especially helpful. That said, this book is overly ambitious. It addresses far too many intricate issues at a cursory level.

One would expect that a long-time missionary to Russia would produce a careful study that takes seriously the foreign contexts of Catholicism and Protestantism. Instead, Rials seems to assume that the apostles both read the Scriptures and thought like 21st century Western Evangelicals. With that assumption, Rials scrutinizes the teachings, traditions, and biblical hermeneutics of Catholicism and Orthodoxy. In this examination, neither Catholicism nor Orthodoxy fare very well.

This is not to say that a harsh polemic is wrought against these two oldest Christian traditions. Indeed, Rials says at the outset that his goal is to love "our brothers in the midst of doctrinal disagreements (p. 9)." But the lack of a contextual treatment of multi-layered issues including ecclesiology, the mystery of the Godhead, biblical hermeneutics, sacraments, the doctrine of saints, hesychasm, theosis, liturgical aesthetics, and iconography, will leave the thoughtful but uninitiated reader with more doctrinal questions than answers. For example, Rials finishes a very brief assessment of the filioque controversy by quoting II Timothy 2:23: "Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels." On the one hand, this is an attempt to be pastorally disarming. On the other hand, it assumes that the doctrine of the Trinity is not worthy of deep thought. This is neither the way to help Protestants carefully understand ancient trajectories of Christian history nor the way to teach them how to persuade others of their own perspective.

Throughout the book the goal clearly is to show that Evangelical Protestantism is right while Catholicism and Orthodoxy are both wrong. But Rials' contention that Evangelicals are more committed to Scripture than other confessions is not a sufficient method. In characterizing his non-Evangelical brothers, the author regularly cites the

Catholic Councils of Trent and Vatican I, defensive councils convened amid tremendous historical shifts, pressures, and polemics. On the Orthodox front, Rials repeatedly quotes Sergius Bulgakov, an Orthodox theologian who is rather infamous among other Orthodox theologians for some of his speculative positions. Unfortunately, Rials' reliance upon such sources promotes old and unhelpful stereotypes that recent ecumenism has worked hard to correct.

Moreover, there are too many "baby and bath water" arguments espoused. For example, "Insofar as the [apocryphal] books promote false doctrines, such as the possibility of praying for the dead or purchasing eternal life, they may be harmful" (pp. 103-4). The same type of critique could be made of several of Rials' own (and my own) Assemblies of God Pentecostal historic practices (speaking in tongues, healing, prophesying, and exhibiting emotion in services). If post-modern philosophy has taught us anything, it is that there is no objective vantage point from which to view and interpret reality. We all are profoundly shaped by our own historical-cultural-philosophical milieu. And it follows that these contexts bear heavily upon us as we encounter the reality of the risen Christ. These facts do not mean that all is relative, or that Truth does not exist. It also does not mean that the Lord does not intend to place demands and obligations upon our knowing, our thinking, or what we value in life. But what it does mean is that God takes our context seriously. Indeed, He intended that the power and influence of His teaching (the Gospel) be taken to all the earth's historical-cultural contexts where it is to penetrate like yeast (Luke 13:21) and salt (Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:50). Following that same impulse, 21st century believers absolutely must carefully consider the historical-cultural contexts of the Christian "other." This book does not do that.

Editor's note: Contact Kerby Rials (kerbyrials@aol.com) to request a free copy of the Russian-language e-book or to purchase the English-language e-book for \$3.99, payable via PayPal, credit card, or check. The English print version may also be ordered via Amazon.com.

Edmund Rybarczyk is assistant professor of systematic theology, Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, California.

This book is overly ambitious. It addresses far too many intricate issues at a cursory level.

CORRECTIONS

In the previous issue, 16 (Spring 2008), p. 10, in the biographical note following the article by Irina Limonova, "Russian Sunday School Curricula," *zhizni* was misspelled. In 15 (Fall 2007), p. 14, following the article by Jeff Thompson, "An Open Door to Russian Prisons," the last line in the biographical note was inadvertently omitted. The complete biographical note follows: Jeff Thompson is executive director of Eastern European Outreach, Murrieta, California (www.eeo.org). Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Jeff Thompson, *Leaving the American Sector* (Hemet, CA: Theatron Books, www.theatronbooks.com, 2007).

We apologize for these errors.

Pentecostal and Orthodox in Common Cause

Andrei Danilov

From Disbelief to Faith

I responded to the Lord at the age of 27 in 1992. Probably like the majority of my fellow Russians, throughout my previous life I hardly ever thought about religion. I knew that my grandmother always prayed for me, my father, and others, but she did not attend any church. I think she considered herself an Orthodox believer. Every time my mother would pick me up after work, my grandmother would bless me with the words, "Go with God, sweetheart." Often, I responded, "Without God! Bye, bye!" Religion seemed to me to be something dark and obscure.

The year 1990 proved to be a turning point in my life. First, my wife and I suddenly decided to be baptized in the Orthodox Church. The priest did his usual routine without caring too much if we were getting anything. And we were not. I continued to walk without God.

I had never talked to a believer before August 1990 when I visited friends in England. A friend of these Christians gave me a Russian Bible in which he wrote, "I pray this reaches you in time." And two years later it certainly did, after my conversion through American missionaries. Thus, representatives of three nations and three churches – Russian Orthodox, Anglican, and Pentecostal – affected my conversion.

Christian Disunity

When I became a Christian, I quickly learned the greatness of the Lord and the great disunity of the Church. Orthodox rejected believers in our "new" Russian churches as sectarians, and we in turn thought of them as idolaters and hypocrites. When I became a pastor in 1994, I soon discovered that great disunity also applied to Protestants. Sadly, Baptists, Pentecostals, Evangelicals, and other Protestants treated each other with much suspicion. All Russian Christians have been poisoned by these divisions, and I am not yet fully recovered from this discovery. At the time of my conversion, I thought to myself, "Well, at least the majority consider each other Christians. And that is good enough."

Although I think every Christian suffers from the virus of division and has to fight an exclusiveness syndrome at some point, nevertheless the majority, I believe, still have an inner aspiration from God for unity. We cannot ignore that Jesus in His longest recorded prayer, all of chapter 17 of John, urged His followers to act as one: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21). So we should realize that the blessing of Jesus is on the side of unity among believers. In addition, it follows from the whole chapter that if we really want to glorify Jesus and have His joy fulfilled in ourselves, if we want the world to believe that Jesus was sent by the Father, then we should strive for unity.

An Orthodox Kindred Spirit

At some point in my Christian life I started to desire to meet devout believers in the Orthodox Church, those who love the Lord and love believers from other denominations as brothers. Even though it was the official church that also stood behind plots to ban our Pentecostal church – we went through two court trials initiated by local authorities – I still wanted to meet an Orthodox priest who was different.

The pressure was heavy – we were attacked by local and federal mass media and some law enforcement agencies. In the midst of our trials, I met a young local journalist who wrote honest and favorable reports about us for Keston Institute. I was surprised to learn that he was the son of a certain priest who passed out *More Than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell, and who preached the Gospel in the Russian language in his village 15 miles from Kostroma. It was unthinkable that an Orthodox priest's son would put himself out on behalf of "sectarians." Later, I learned that more than once a certain hierarch made life difficult for this priest for his son's fair-minded reporting about our church. But Father Georgi supported his son. I finally met Father Georgi in August 2006. He just blew me away, and I came to wish I had met him earlier. My wife and I have become close friends with him. The Lord met my desire to meet a real Orthodox priest who is a real Christian. Father Georgi loves the Lord with all his heart, and he loves all Christian brothers the way many of us should yet learn to do. At age 76 he leads a very active life helping many people, orphanages, and hospitals.

From the first time we met and up until now his favorite topic of conversation has been the unity of Christians. We have talked about it a lot, and finally we informed other pastors in Kostroma that we would like to start meeting with each other on a regular basis. To my shame, many Protestant pastors rejected the offer. But we keep meeting with those who agree to come together.

Christian Confessions Co-laboring

In June 2007 members of my Family of God Pentecostal Church had an opportunity to work on the restoration of the Orthodox Church of the Nativity together with American Christians led by Mark Elliott. They came to help Father Georgi in his restoration

What a thrill it was to be part of an international team of Christians of different churches and denominations working to restore an Orthodox church!

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Editor Mark R. Elliott
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EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT
Southern Wesleyan University
Box 1020
Central, SC 29630
Tel: 864-644-5297
Fax: 864-644-5997
E-mail: melliott@swu.edu
Website: www.eastwestreport.org