

EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT

Spring 2009

Vol. 17, No. 2

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International Evangelical Mission Forum, Irpen, Ukraine

Sergey Rakhuba, Mikhail Cherenkov, Alexei Melnichuk, and Sergey Golovin

An International Evangelical Mission Forum was held in the Ministry Center of the Association for Spiritual Renewal, Irpen, Ukraine, 24-25 October 2008. Some 250 representatives from 100 missions and Christian organizations working in the former Soviet Union marked a new stage in the developing discussion of a crisis in the evangelical movement and its prospects for renewal.

Participants in the Forum identified several key areas for the development of mission work in the former Soviet Union. These included social evangelism (being open to society and its needs), informal approaches to education (that would motivate and train young believers without taking them away from their ministry), planting new churches (rather than giving old ones makeovers), and creating a new missiology (harnessing creativity for self-examination and strategic planning).

Social Evangelism and Church Planting

Social evangelism assumes a connection between witness and good works, Christian culture and enlightenment. In the former Soviet Union a cultural barrier exists between evangelical and Orthodox believers and between Christians and Muslims. It is imperative to have local models of enculturation, with sermons contextualized for various national cultures.

Planting new churches remains a priority of mission work. Instead of focusing all efforts on changing traditions and remaking the composition of communities, it is important to plant new churches with new forms of ministry and new methods of mission work. The experience of missions such as Light of the Gospel, Good News, and the Association for Spiritual Renewal is evidence that a new generation of Christian leaders and a more effective model of church ministry has been developed in some missionary churches.

Leadership Training

The most urgent task facing evangelical churches in the region remains the preparation of ministry leaders who, during a global crisis, are able to continue mission work responsibly and competently. This call must be answered by Christian educational programs which are directly connected to missions and have practical application. At the same time, the need for quality academic preparation of ministry leaders, systematic theology, and multi-faceted analysis has become apparent. Education has become the meeting place of secular scholars and theologians, students of secular and Christian schools – a new and untapped mission field. This work requires not only theological competence, but also professional preparation.

Announcement

Dr. Mark R. Elliott, professor of history at Southern Wesleyan University, Central, SC, will retire from teaching in May 2009. He will continue as editor of the *East-West Church & Ministry Report*. New contact information from June 2009 follows: Dr. Mark R. Elliott, Editor, *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, Asbury College, One Macklem Drive, Wilmore, KY 40390; 864-633-9666; emark936@aol.com; www.eastwestreport.org.

A New Missiological Paradigm

Effective partnership between churches and missions requires reevaluating the principles of cooperation and transparency, with missions adapting their work to the needs of local churches and local mission strategies. A new missiological paradigm must include the following elements:

1) Christ-centeredness: Conformity of a mission's activities to its goal under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Missionaries should have maximum freedom to make decisions on the spot, as only they are familiar with their situation. Insuring accountability and integrity is essential, but this goal should not impose bureaucratic regulations and pre-planned methods in ways that ignore cultural realities.

2) Accessible infrastructure: One or two mission coordinators should represent each missionary in supporting churches. The duties of these coordinators would include regularly reminding churches of the importance of supporting the missionary in prayer; making sure the missionary receives pastoral care; organizing visits to the missionary by church members (short-term mission trips); and providing financial support and financial accountability for the missionary.

3) Calling vs. education: Missionaries are not those who have a degree in missions, but those whom God has called to ministry. They must have the freedom to part with the past (experience, problems, projects) for the sake of the future. They must have the ability to communicate effectively, using appropriate technology and an understanding of the mindset of nonbelievers. Finally, they must be rooted in a local church and be accountable to a local body of believers on the field.

4) An orientation towards the "ordinary" person: While ministry to people in crisis should be a major emphasis of missions (drug addicts, the homeless, prisoners), it should not exclude those who are not experiencing a particular crisis, but who need to know Christ, such as students, workers, military personnel, and those working in small businesses.

Sergey Rakhuba is president of the Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow, Russia, and senior vice president of ASR's U.S. counterpart, Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries, Wheaton, Illinois; **Mikhail Cherenkov** is vice president of the Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow, Russia; **Alexei Melnichuk** is president of Connect International, Sacramento, California; **Sergey Golovin** is president of the Center for Christian Apologetics, Simferopol, Ukraine.

Keys to Re-energizing Our Outreach

Alexei I. Melnichuk

God's mercy cannot be overstated in bringing freedom to the former Soviet Union after 70 years of repression. This new-found freedom, in turn, brought about a huge inflow of missions work, and with it, many positives: widespread access to the Scriptures, new churches planted in cities where there were none before, Christian media, international contacts (former Soviet Union churches were able to learn from Koreans, Germans, Africans, Americans, and others), educational institutions, and hundreds of thousands of peoples' lives changed.

However, we now see that the number of converts has stopped growing or has slowed down significantly. We must ask ourselves: did we do something wrong? Did we use our time and resources unwisely? I believe there are four categories of problems with our mission work.

Ideological Concerns

In most churches a division exists between conservatives and innovators. In most cases, both sides can come up with a list of 100 doctrines that the other side can agree with, so the problem is not doctrinal. They do not disagree about the doctrines themselves, but differ in their priorities. It is what churches accent and consider most important that generates conflict. These ideological differences leave a big mark.

On the one hand, traditional churches require new believers to accept certain customs of that church in addition to accepting salvation. Otherwise, new converts will not feel comfortable in that church, and people will not see them as normal believers. On the other hand, activist churches are those which think we need to change the world through politics or social action. But we should strive to be a confessing church which models God's character through its life. Its members and its actions reflect a loving, merciful, and patient God. This kind of church will address the needs of the world. It will call people to salvation. But it will also be concerned with the purpose for which God created the church – to be His body. And God expects no less than this in our mission work.

In the former Soviet Union there are almost no activist churches, but we do have a problem with tradition-minded churches. A danger of idolatry lies in trying to preserve the way our fathers worshipped God. The idea that old forms of worship express our faithfulness to God is slowing down our missions work. Jaroslav Pelikan said that "Tradition is the living faith of the dead. Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living." Genuine faith is like Abraham's – it means taking a risk. We must pass on the baton of living faith from generation to generation, but we must not think that by using yesterday's forms of worship we will solve all the church's problems.

Methodological Concerns

When the doors opened to the Soviet Union, we saw how our brothers and sisters did things in the West and thought, "Why don't we do the same things?" A lot of schools, organizations, and projects were copied directly from the West into our

context. Not everything we copied worked. We work in complicated circumstances here in the former Soviet Union, and one area in which we operate differently from the West involves professional Christian service. In the West a demand exists for Christian workers – they go to seminary, and jobs are waiting in churches and missions which will pay them a salary, support them, and take care of them. The situation is different in the former Soviet Union. People here look with suspicion on a missionary without a job.

We have come to realize that tentmakers would be the most effective types of missionaries here – they have a profession, and while they may not fully support themselves with their work, they can at least identify themselves as teachers, social workers, or doctors. Unfortunately, that idea remains mostly just words. People said, "Why do we need all that? We should just be preparing people for ministry." But now we see declining enrollments in seminaries and Bible colleges because many students are unable to find work afterwards. Mixed programs that provide students with a profession as well as good Christian ministry training practically do not exist.

We should also pay more attention to the needs of the missionaries we send out. We were very proud that our original missionaries drank tea without sugar. But I was ashamed because I returned home from work one night and drank tea with sugar. Those who went out to do mission work, thinking that those who sent them would also provide for them financially, were wrong. Even tentmakers need support.

Strategic Concerns

The time is coming when we will need to move from looking for resources to support our multitude of programs and projects, to searching for people who are moved by God. In I Timothy 5:17, Paul tells Timothy that "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." Paul makes the goal of our strategy finding, supporting, and caring for people who are committed to searching out God's will and implementing it in their lives, in order to be a convincing witness to others. The Holy Spirit seeks such people, calls such people, forms such people. But will we work with the Holy Spirit to find such people, stand with them, and offer moral, organizational, spiritual, and financial help to them, so that they do not tire, lose faith, and become disillusioned? Unfortunately, today churches seek far and wide to gather enough money to support their projects and build buildings, but do not invest in finding and supporting such people. We need to seek God's face, and those who have been called and anointed by God must commit their energy to this. We should free them from the job of fund-raising and let someone else who is gifted in this area raise the necessary support.

Spiritual Concerns

We are part of one work of God on earth, though this work is expressed in different churches,

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different denominations. The time has come “to gather up the scattered stones” (Ecclesiastes 3:5). God is calling us to evaluate our resources. Maybe it is time for the leadership of our seminaries to come together and decide to combine two or three seminaries so as to have one strong arm instead of two or three weak ones.

It is time to turn to God in prayer. A pastor in Uganda said that Christians in his homeland implemented a prayer strategy: daily prayer in families, weekly prayer in small groups, monthly prayer in churches (devoting a whole day to it), quarterly prayer at the city level (where all the churches of a city gather together and pray for renewal and revival), and yearly prayer at the national level (where people from all over the country gather together at a stadium to seek God’s

face). Maybe we do not have to copy their exact schedule, but we do need to “gather stones” and seek God’s face. God has a lot He wants to change in our hearts, a lot He wants to say. Our analysis of the current situation will be fruitless if it does not include looking at the situation from a spiritual perspective. ♦

Edited excerpts published with the author’s permission from a presentation given at the International Evangelical Missions Forum, Irpen, Ukraine, 24-25 October 2008.

Alexei I. Melnichuk, a native of Donetsk, Ukraine, is president of Connect International, Sacramento, California.

Maybe it is time for the leadership of our seminaries to come together and decide to combine two or three seminaries so as to have one strong arm instead of two or three weak ones.

Post-Soviet Protestant Missions in Central Asia

Andrew Christian van Gorder

Government Restrictions

Even careful attention to cultural sensitivity as prescribed by the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization (see sidebar) may not spare missionaries difficulties with Central Asian governments. For example, on 6 October 2006 the justice ministry in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, placed the Missionaries of Charity, originally founded by Mother Theresa, under state control. The investigation into the activities of this Catholic mission, universally praised for its help for the poor, came as part of a larger crackdown on foreign missionaries and representatives of non-government organizations (NGOs) who might be bearers of potentially objectionable “Western ideas.” The focus of the investigation was on their activities, not on their legal status, because the Missionaries of Charity had been registered in Uzbekistan since 1995, and the mission was re-registered in March, 2004.

New Protestant Outreach

This action by the Uzbek government is part of a larger trend in Central Asia to regulate outside influences. Both Orthodox and Catholic missionaries have served in Central Asia in the past two decades, but their work has been almost entirely focused on pastoral care for their adherents or humanitarian efforts such as those of the Missionaries of Charity. The same is not true for many Protestant denominations which typically share some degree of North American or European church affiliation. As a result, Central Asian governments pay particular attention to the activities of European and North American Protestant missions working on their territories. Protestant denominations in Central Asia include Mennonites, Pentecostals, a range of Baptists, and Seventh-day Adventists, while new religious movements include Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons.

Conservative Protestant missionaries base their activities in Central Asia on biblical commands to be witnesses to non-Christians (Matthew 28:16-20) and to support fellow Christians in need

(Colossians 1:27-29; Galatians 6:4). They follow the example of the first Christians who preached across both cultural and religious lines (Acts 14: 17; Romans 1: 2).

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Best Practices for Western Christian Partnerships in Central Asia

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) has developed six recommendations for intercultural cooperation between Central Asian Christians and Christians from other parts of the world. In a word, they deserve to be followed.

1. All international partnerships should exist primarily for the benefit of local congregations, not parachurch or international religious organizations. Thus, the first question that should be asked is: “How will missionary efforts impact local Christians?”
2. Non-resident missionaries and humanitarian workers should serve as positive models of intercultural cooperation. All too often, mission and service organizations function as independent entities instead of working in partnership with local Christians. Those outside the Christian community learn volumes from the example of Christians from different cultures who are able to cooperate with each other in mutual respect. Creative partnerships need to emerge in which missionaries see themselves as learners and beneficiaries and not simply as those who are coming to give and direct.
3. Mission and service agencies should assist at the point of greatest need as defined by local residents. The external priorities of Westerners should not carry more weight in decision-making than the views of those who live in Central Asia.
4. Programs should be long-term, not temporary, token gestures that cannot be sustained.
5. All international initiatives should be rooted in the specific cultural context of the region, cultural sensitivity being the foundation for effective partnerships.
6. Christian missionaries and service workers participating in inter-church partnerships must be vigilant to conduct their dealings with complete ethical and financial integrity.

Source: A. Christian van Gorder, Muslim-Christian Relations in Central Asia (London: Routledge, 2008), 95; <http://www.lausanne.org>.

Post-Soviet Protestant Missions in Central Asia (continued from page 3)

While Protestants in Central Asia who have not left the region since 1991 are often Ukrainian or ethnic German, Central Asian Christianity today is largely Russian Orthodox. (Editor's note: In the years 1992-1996, ethnic German immigration from the five Central Asian republics to Germany totaled 644,273. Source: Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will; The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* [Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004], 210.) In Central Asia Christians of all persuasions seldom express any desire to positively "connect" with Muslims at the level of interfaith engagement. This lack of desire to interact with Muslims on the basis of faith generally stems from valid fears of persecution.

One German mission organization, Licht im Osten (Light of the East), has made Muslim-Christian dialogue an area of particular focus in its missionary efforts. Also, a Christian outreach, Ray of Hope, based in Frunze, Kyrgyzstan, as well as the mission efforts of the Church of the Cross, Riga, Latvia, stress the fostering of better Muslim-Christian relations.

Cross-Cultural Missteps

One important issue for Protestant missions in Central Asia is their relationship with indigenous Slavic and German Christians who have lived in the region for generations. A number of North American and European denominational mission organizations have not felt it necessary to establish working relationships with local Christians, particularly with Russian Orthodox Christians. This sends a fundamentally disrespectful message. In addition, some Russian and German Christians have chosen the safety of isolation from foreigners who often seem completely lacking in cultural sensitivity.

Protestant missionaries and service workers should work sympathetically toward diffusing possible suspicions. Treading carefully through difficult terrain will serve Protestants from abroad as it has Central Asian Christians of Russian and German descent. In fact, such care has sustained indigenous believers through difficult decades of tremendous opposition and physical persecution.

Protestant missionaries have a better chance of being welcomed, instead of being seen as a threat, when their actions consistently show a willingness to participate alongside Central Asians. One example of such a partnership exists between Southern Baptist missionaries and the Church of the True Way, a student fellowship in Almaty, Kazakhstan. In this case, missionaries and local Kazakh Christians pray and ceremonially wash their hands in a manner similar to their neighbors.¹

Westerners may come to a greater appreciation of Central Asian ways by showing respect for the authority of elders and by placing an emphasis on courtesy over rigid devotion to schedules and clocks. Central Asians are proud of the fact that they extend gracious hospitality to visitors even if they speak a different language or hold to a differing religious point of view.

But, regrettably, examples can be cited of missionaries and service workers who have sown

seeds of division in Central Asia. Countless problems have arisen when Westerners have insisted that their way of proceeding is best, using arrogant assertions and misusing theological arguments. In keeping with Lausanne standards, to avoid potential problems, foreign missionaries and service workers should not insist on programmatic leadership of given initiatives. Plans are best directed by local Christians or by Christians from non-Western nations. Turkish, Gagauzi, or Pakistani Christians may be more effective working in Central Asia than missionaries from Sussex or Texas. Wealthy Westerners might consider sponsoring Christians from poorer nations, perhaps those with sizeable Muslim communities, instead of sending people from their own countries who must overcome major cultural and linguistic hurdles.

Humanitarian and Medical Aid

A host of Christian organizations in Central Asia are involved in humanitarian efforts. Numerous NGOs are funded and staffed by Christians committed to the alleviation of human suffering. Initiatives range from education to agricultural concerns to helping organize greater civil services within Central Asia.² Some Christian groups dig wells in Central Asia to provide villagers with safe drinking water. Other Christian organizations tackle issues of economic injustice and champion greater respect and greater opportunities for women. Still other groups provide care for orphans and assist local adoption agencies.

Medical programs are also increasingly in evidence in Central Asia, addressing the needs of desperately under-staffed and under-supplied health care services. The focus of one British mission organization has been on "those in need of healing" (Luke 9:11), which has led to annual trips of medical specialists and students who come to Central Asia to provide basic health care.³ Similarly, the mission organization, Frontiers, is involved in eye clinics and pediatric and dental projects in Central Asia. Also, Global Health Ministries, affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, provides short- and long-term service opportunities in Central Asia. ♦

Editor's Note: The concluding portion of this article will be published in the next issue of the East-West Church & Ministry Report.

Notes:

¹ See the Central Asia section of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board website (www.imb.org) for accounts of Central Asian conversions to Christianity.

² <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/pp091804.shtml>.

³ Christian Medical Fellowship: <http://www.cmf.org.uk/literature/content.asp?context=article&id=271>.

Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from A. Christian van Gorder, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Central Asia* (London: Routledge, 2008).

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Foreign missionaries and service workers should not insist on programmatic leadership of given initiatives. Plans are best directed by local Christians or by Christians from non-Western nations.

Half a Million Protestants

“In Central Asia, according to underestimated official data, there are half a million Protestants.”

Source: Russian Orthodox missionary priest Fr. Daniel Sysoyev, “Famous Missionary Urges to Make

Kirghizia a Base for ‘Offensive’ of Russian Church to Central Asia and China,” *Interfax*, <http://www.interfax-religion.com/print.php?act=news&id=5716>, 18 February 2009.

Faculty Development for Post-Soviet Protestant Seminaries: With Special Reference to Ukraine

Scott D. Edgar

Negative and Positive Western Influences

In researching theological education in Eastern Europe, David Bohn addresses the concerns of national church leaders regarding unwanted Western influences. Western missionaries are said to be “carriers of dangerous theological ideas, for example, Calvinism with its emphasis on ‘eternal security.’”¹ Linda Eilers’ research exposes this flashpoint common in post-Soviet theological schools that use visiting North American professors who are Calvinist in their orientation.² As an example of serious tensions since 1999 surrounding eternal security in Ukrainian institutions, Western faculty teaching at Zaporozhe Bible College have had to sign a document promising neither to defend this doctrine nor bring it up for discussion.³

Bohn identifies other negative influences of Western instructors, such as cultural ineptness, the tendency to live and work independently from national believers, leading by controlling resources, and enticing gifted national students to study abroad – contributing to the “brain drain.” However, Bohn also identifies positive influences of foreign involvement, such as cooperative financial partnerships that facilitate theological education, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge, and the provision of critical resources for theological education.⁴

Lack of Contextualization

While the investment of Western resources and faculty has been valuable to theological education in the former Soviet Union, a common weakness has been the lack of contextualization as educational models, methods, and goals have been imported from the West. Commenting on this situation, Paul Stevens maintains that, rather than theological contextualization, what is actually taking place is theological globalization. He observes:

In theological education, globalization, according to my definition, would involve learning educationally and spiritually from younger churches as well as contributing with cultural sensitivity Western resources, perspectives, and the fruits of Western scholarship. I fully understand that this loaded term is usually defined differently. The current practice of globalization tends to work against contextualization. Instead

of mutual sharing and mutual learning there is usually wholesale, uncritical importing and exporting of the Western model. In other words, globalization of the Western model with a minimum of contextualization.⁵

Stevens also identifies the growing reality that Western faculty members serving in schools in the former Soviet Union often lack ministry experience in the local church, contributing to the gap that already exists between church and seminary.⁶ While visiting faculty make worthwhile contributions, their frequent lack of ministry experience limits the effectiveness of their teaching.

Limiting Negative Western Influences

Initiatives to minimize financial dependence upon the West are certainly to be encouraged. A few seminaries are now pursuing aggressive campaigns to encourage national churches to contribute financially to their training efforts. Western Siberia Baptist College in Omsk, Russia, for example, has a specific strategy for encouraging support from local churches. While teaching at this institution, I was encouraged to observe the positive response to this initiative. In addition, Western mission agencies are helping national churches start businesses that can provide long-term funding for Bible colleges and seminaries. SEND International has helped nationals start lumber mills, printing companies, and other businesses in order to reduce financial dependence upon the West.

Western faculty play an important role in the success or failure of contextualizing theological education. With this in mind, Western mission agencies should support individuals in faculty roles who have significant ministry experience in their sending countries, have cross-cultural competencies, are effective educational facilitators, and are engaged in ministry in the host country.⁷ Furthermore, Western faculty should have preparation in contextual theology to avoid merely transferring pre-packaged Western content.

Developing Indigenous Faculty

Western experts and national church leaders are in agreement that the development of indigenous faculty is a critical step towards contextualizing theological education. However, efforts to prepare national faculty have encountered numerous obstacles. Manfred Kohl argues that while post-

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Western mission agencies are helping national churches start businesses that can provide long-term funding for Bible colleges and seminaries.

The development of indigenous faculty is a critical step towards contextualizing theological education.

Faculty Development for Post-Soviet Protestant Seminaries (continued from page 5)

Soviet church leaders overwhelmingly support training theological educators in their own countries, the reality is that the lure of study opportunities in the West is often too strong for aspiring faculty to resist.⁸ Addressing this issue, Ralph Alexander recognizes the inherent problems of training potential faculty members in the West, arguing that the challenge of contextualization is exacerbated when “training is removed from the normal ministry context.”⁹ Identifying an additional danger, Mark Elliott states:

Seminarians’ introduction to Western living standards and Western cultural values makes going home a difficult adjustment. The negative influences of narcissistic materialism and individualism are self-evident. But even defensible Western mores, such as the high premium placed on efficiency, productivity, and punctuality, pose problems for graduates attempting to re-enter societies that frequently value the building of relationships more highly than the completion of tasks by a set date.¹⁰

Such a dynamic has contributed to many potential faculty members permanently staying in the West, following the completion of their academic training. According to Elliott, this brain drain of theological talent is “one of the biggest threats to [post-Soviet] Protestant church leadership and retaining Protestant seminary faculty.”¹¹ Miriam Charter also maintains that those who do return to their home countries after studying abroad are often viewed with suspicion.¹²

Developing Respected Programs In-Country

One preferred approach to providing advanced training and credentials to potential national faculty is the development of respected programs in-country, which are accredited by the West. Toward this end, for example, Saint Petersburg Christian University offers a M.Th. program accredited by the University of Wales.¹³ Similarly, in order to train Ukrainian faculty, Kyiv Theological Seminary has launched a cooperative educational program with Talbot Theological Seminary, La Mirada, California.¹⁴ In addition, accredited master’s level programs are available for Ukrainian Baptists through the Realis Center in conjunction with Alliance Theological Seminary, Nyack, New York,¹⁵ and Vienna-based TCM Institute.¹⁶

Study Abroad – But Minimizing the Length of Stay

While these in-country programs provide specialized training at the master’s level, programs at the doctoral level currently are not available, with the exception of those in religious studies at state universities. Proposing a different strategy, David Bohn suggests that the most effective – and safest – means of training potential national faculty involves “a rhythm of study abroad and ministry at home.”¹⁷ In such an approach, students do not lose contact with their ministry context. An educational

process involving frequent trips home attempts to minimize the pitfalls of removing students from their own ministry and theological context. In adopting this approach, several options are currently available within Europe for students from Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to receive advanced training and credentials from accredited, evangelical institutions. Viable academic programs for Evangelicals in Europe include London School of Theology, European School of Evangelical Theology (Leuven, Belgium), and International Baptist Theological Seminary (Prague, Czech Republic). Although preparation of national faculty has been a slow process, some institutions such as Zaporozhe Bible College have made significant progress by partnering with Western theological schools in preparing promising scholars through short, intensive periods of study out-of-country. Several of its Ukrainian faculty members have received accredited master’s degrees at Columbia Biblical Seminary through a combination of distance education and one semester of residential study at the main campus in Columbia, South Carolina.¹⁸ As is evident in the case at Zaporozhe Bible College, the preparation of national faculty must be an intentional strategy for all parties involved. Success will not only require financial assistance for national faculty to receive additional education, but will most likely require some initial financial support as they carry out their teaching ministries. As a result, schools like Odessa Theological Seminary have specific strategies to raise financial support for national faculty.¹⁹

In addition to providing advanced credentials to national faculty, Andrey Konovalchuk, an instructor at Zaporozhe and a product of the intentional strategy for developing Ukrainian faculty, maintains that the inclusion of additional Ukrainian faculty in pastoral preparation can be facilitated with the use of effective ministry practitioners supervised by faculty with higher academic credentials.²⁰ Admittedly, this would require a broader definition of faculty and a different system for academic supervision. However, pastors serving as teachers would strengthen ties between churches and schools and provide students with first-hand ministry applications for their studies.

Broader initiatives have been launched to train national faculty in educational administration and teaching in theological schools. An initiative by Global Associates for Transformational Education (GATE), Columbia, South Carolina, launched a series of seminars for faculty development in 2004. In cooperation with the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association, a team of North American specialists in theological education held a seminar on the campus of Ukrainian Theological Seminary in Kyiv, 2-4 June 2004.²¹ This training provided broad exposure

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to a variety of topics related to teaching theological disciplines and educational administration.

In Summary

As a whole, the training and credentialing of national faculty for Russian and Ukrainian seminaries has been slow to develop. Western faculty often have superior degrees, serve at educational institutions at no cost, and are a valuable link to additional financial resources. Nevertheless, the vast majority of Western supporters and national leaders recognize the crucial importance of developing indigenous faculty. The pitfalls of study abroad may be theological, financial, cross-cultural, or geographic (loss of faculty to the West). All these concerns underscore the necessity for training faculty at home, close to home, or at least away from home for as short a time as possible. ♦

Notes:

¹ David Bohn, "The Perspectives on Theological Education Evident Among Evangelical Church Leaders in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia," Ph.D. dissertation, Trinity International University, 1997, 181-82.

² Linda Eilers, "When Calvinist and Arminian Beliefs Collide: Facilitating Communication Between North American Professors and Russian Bible Students," M.A. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1998, 1-4, 54-74.

³ Mark Elliott, e-mail to author, 7 September 2007.

⁴ Bohn, "Perspectives on Theological Education," 188-98.

⁵ Paul Stevens, "Marketing the Faith – A Reflection on the Importing and Exporting of Western Theological Education," *Crux* 28 (June 1992), 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁷ A valuable resource for Western faculty is Judith E. and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).

⁸ Manfred Kohl, "Towards Globalization of Theological Education: Feasibility Study on Extending Theological Education into Eastern Europe and Parts of the Former USSR," thesis prospectus, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 15 October 1992, Appendix, p. 1.

⁹ Ralph H. Alexander, "Assessment of Leadership in Post-Communist Europe," paper presented at the Consultation on Theological Education and Development in Post-Communist Europe, Oradea, Romania, 5 October 1994.

¹⁰ Mark Elliott, "Theological Education After Communism: The Mixed Blessing of Western Assistance," *Asbury Theological Journal* 50 (Spring 1995), 69.

¹¹ Mark Elliott, e-mail to author, 7 September 2007.

¹² Miriam L. Charter, "Theological Education for New Protestant Churches of Russia: Indigenous Judgments on the Appropriateness of Educational Methods and Styles," Ph.D. dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1997, 145.

¹³ <http://www.spcu.spb.ru/master.php> (accessed 12 April 2007).

¹⁴ Dr. Anatoly Prokopchuk, President, Kyiv Theological Seminary, interview by author, Kyiv, Ukraine, 18 September 2006. Educational goals and objectives for this M.A. program may be found at Kyiv Theological Seminary, "Programs," <http://www.ktsonline.org/new/content/view/38/204/lang.en> (accessed 12 April 2007).

¹⁵ Alliance Theological Seminary, "M.A. Program Description," Realis Christian Center, <http://realis.org/en/vesor.htm> (accessed 17 May 2007).

¹⁶ TCM Institute, "Program Information," <http://www.tcmi.eu/templates/System/details.asp?id=38337&PID=431811#07CLschedule> (accessed 17 May 2007). M.A. program offered in Ukraine. The acronym TCM stands for "taking Christ to the millions."

¹⁷ Bohn, "Perspectives on Theological Education," 232.

¹⁸ Gordon Snyder, Academic Dean, Zaporozhe Bible College, interview by author, Zaporozhe, Ukraine, 19 September 2006.

¹⁹ "Calling: Quarterly Newsletter of Odessa Theological Seminary," (Summer 2006). The Local Teachers Assistance Fund is designed to support national faculty.

²⁰ Andrey Konovalchuk, instructor, Zaporozhe Bible College, e-mail to author, 11 May 2007.

²¹ Euro-Asian Accrediting Association, "Faculty Development Seminar held in Kyiv," <http://www.e-aaa.org/d/e/news/27/3E.htm> (accessed 3 May 2007).

Edited excerpt published with permission from Scott D. Edgar, "Pastoral Training Among Baptists in Ukraine: Conversation Between Indigenous Voices and Theoretical Perspectives," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wales, 2007.

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The pitfalls of study abroad may be theological, financial, cross-cultural, or geographic (loss of faculty to the West). All these concerns underscore the necessity for training faculty at home, close to home, or at least away from home for as short a time as possible.

Romanian Baptist Leadership Training

Ovidiu Cristian Chivu

Baptist churches in Romania experienced growth after the 1989 anti-Communist revolution. However, the number of trained leaders is lagging far behind the number of churches. While Romanian Baptists should explore new domestic and international mission fields and plant many more churches, the most urgent need is training more pastors and church leaders in order to meet current and future ministry needs.

In 2004 the Baptist Union of Romania reported 1,400 churches and 300 mission churches under 20 members, but only 700 pastors. Thus, leadership shortage is critical. I was first exposed to the lack of trained leaders in Romania when God called me into the ministry in 1993. I was working with the Missions Department of the Baptist Union of Romania. As I traveled with different mission teams, I met pastors and missionaries who were serving several mission churches at a time, trying to minister by themselves to each of these congregations. I found this situation present almost everywhere in the country, with very few exceptions. I began to take note of how widespread was the Romanian Baptist leadership shortage. It became evident that one of the greatest needs among Romanian churches was the training of pastors, missionaries, church planters, evangelists, and children's and youth workers. The pictures of those hard-working pastors and missionaries laboring alone among those congregations captured my mind and never let go.

In researching various approaches to Baptist leadership training, eight formal and informal programs were identified, each of which is briefly described below. In summary, programs include two Baptist institutions with full academic accreditation; Bible Education by Extension (BEE), a training program that has been at the heart of non-formal training since Communism; cooperative training sponsored by a regional Baptist association of churches; three cases of church-based training; and one case of conference and modular training.

Academic Training in Bucharest

The Baptist Theological Institute operates in Bucharest (south Romania) – the capital city with over three million population, which makes the school strategically located. The Institute is fully accredited by the Romanian government and includes a School of Baptist Theology operating in partnership with the University of Bucharest. According to one of the leading professors, the main orientation of the Institute is to train “ministers for practical pastoral ministry, evangelism, and missions.”¹ The Institute is offering a three-year pastoral theology degree (residential and distance programs are offered).² In the last four years an average of 24 students have graduated per year from the Institute.³

According to its vision statement, the Baptist Theological Institute in Bucharest is training ministers “for the church, and in cooperation with local churches.”⁴ In order to help students gain practical experience in ministry, the school assigns each student to a church in Bucharest to work under the supervision and evaluation of that church's pastor.⁵ In 1991, the Institute opened a double-degree Baptist school in cooperation with the University of Bucharest, which is offering degrees in theology and linguistics, theology and social assistance, and theology and international

languages. A missions program was started in 1998 as part of the same partnership with the University of Bucharest. This program is strategic, since Romanian Baptist students graduating with a University of Bucharest diploma have their degree recognized internationally and are welcomed to teach in many countries closed to most Western missionaries. The School of Theology, operating in cooperation with the University of Bucharest, offers a master's and a doctoral degree in theology.

Academic Training in Oradea

The training program in Oradea (northwest Romania) started as a Bible institute or seminary and has now evolved into a Christian university fully accredited by the Romanian government.⁶ Emmanuel University has two schools – the School of Baptist Theology and the School of Management. The School of Theology offers degrees in Baptist pastoral theology, musical pedagogy, and a double degree in Baptist theology and social assistance. Another double degree – Baptist theology and linguistics – is offered in partnership with the University of Oradea. The School of Management offers a degree in organizational management. Several research centers have been started within the university, which conduct research in evangelism, Christian counseling and education, reformation, evangelism, preaching, and social assistance.⁷

The university “is training ministers for the local church and through the local church, for the society in its entirety.”⁸ The aim is to train not only pastors, but also other leaders in order to meet the needs of both Romanian churches and society. Emmanuel University has accomplished much during its 17 years of existence. The university is working fervently to strengthen its faculty. The majority of the faculty consists of Romanian professors, helped by several visiting professors, mainly from America and England.

Bible Education by Extension

Western missionaries pioneered the Bible Education by Extension (BEE) training program in Eastern Europe among Romanian Baptists. One BEE missionary reported how, before 1989, various missionaries traveled from Western countries to Romania to teach local church leaders. The training was done mostly in homes. Visiting missionaries distributed to their students textbooks printed in Romanian, had them work on lessons ahead of time, and returned to teach short-term seminars and test the students.⁹ Visiting missionaries have trained both pastors and lay leaders.¹⁰ According to one BEE missionary, the training is now done in churches and homes.

The strategy continues to be one of training leaders for the local church. But the process has been much more indigenous, with Romanians themselves assuming teaching responsibility within their own churches and denominations. However, key elements of the ministry continue to be small group training, Socratic dialogue, independent study, and emphasis on knowledge, skills, and character.¹¹

Today, BEE International's strategy in Romania is “to assist church leaders both in training leaders with BEE courses and in developing their churches as training centers.”¹² A Romanian Baptist pastor

Baptist churches in Romania experienced growth after the 1989 anti-Communist revolution. However, the number of trained leaders is lagging far behind the number of churches.

Romanian Baptist Leadership Training

acknowledged that BEE uses quality textbooks and a biblical leadership training methodology. When asked to evaluate BEE training, the same pastor declared that the majority of pastors and lay leaders trained by BEE have “solid biblical and practical training.”¹³

Training by Baptist Regional Associations

Several Baptist regional associations have started their own training programs.¹⁴ Typically, pastors, missionaries, church planters, and various ministers from churches throughout an association come together to a central location for training. The programs vary in length, the frequency of meetings, and teaching priorities. Some meet several times a year for intense, one-week training programs. Others meet on a more regular basis. Although the programs are administered by local Romanian Baptist associations, in most cases the teaching is done by Western ministers and missionaries from churches or mission organizations in partnership with Romanian associations. Some teaching is done by Romanian ministers. Several of the organizations involved in this type of training – for example, Bible Education by Extension (BEE) and Precept Ministries – were present in Romania during the period of Communism, and they had a part in underground training at that time.

Church-Based Training in Comănești

A small church-based leadership training program was started in 2003 in Comănești. The program is hosted by Victory Baptist Church and led by the pastor of that congregation. The pastor meets once a week with seven Baptist pastors and missionaries from Northeastern Romania in order to better equip them for ministry. Each meeting lasts three to four hours. The program was started with a vision for “fellowship, doctrinal unity, and cooperation among pastors and ministers from churches in the area.”¹⁵ Believing that correct practice in ministry is the direct result of correct biblical, doctrinal teaching, they all meet to pray, study the whole counsel of God, and attempt to find the best ways to put Scripture into practice.

The trainer prepares a written lesson plan for each meeting, which serves as a guide to the teaching session. The teaching is interactive, with students encouraged to ask questions and discuss what is being studied. Students are also required to complete a list of reading assignments for each major theme studied. The study is practical, with those involved seeking to find the best practical ways for putting the Scripture in action, while taking into consideration “the specific situations each of them and their churches are in.” Also, the training pastor visits his students in their churches and supports them “every time they need it.”¹⁶

Church-Based Training in Constanța

A church-based leadership training program – Antioch Leadership Training Center – was started in 1995 in Constanța (southeast Romania) by the pastor of Golgotha Baptist Church. The center offers a three-year equipping program. Twenty-nine people are being trained in this center, among whom are people from the hosting local church and other churches in the area. The center uses the church’s facilities for its meetings and operates in close cooperation with Leader Formation International, based in Dallas, Texas. According to the leading trainer, the program is open to pastors and church

ministers in order to enhance their ministry skills. The center’s motto is “serving servant leaders.” The program places emphasis on academic (reading, studying, writing papers) and practical training, but the main accent falls on the practical aspect – “how to implement what you have learned.” Three departments operate within the center – pastoral and missionary leadership development, church leadership development, and women’s ministry development.¹⁷

Church-Based Training in Brăila

Another church-based training center was started in 1998 in Brăila (southeast Romania). The center is hosted by Holy Trinity Baptist Church. It was started through the initiative of the church’s pastor, who caught a vision for leadership training while training leaders during Communism. The center offers a three-year training program, primarily equipping missionaries and church planters. Among those teaching are pastors from Brăila, Galați, Tulcea, and Bucharest, several Romanian missionaries and seminary professors, and visiting teachers from America and England. Since 2001 an average of eight students have graduated each year. Students come from Romania and the Republic of Moldova. A high percentage of graduates have entered the ministry, which is not the norm for most of the non-accredited Baptist training programs in Romania. The center is located close to Moldova, Bulgaria, and Ukraine. Romanian-speaking people live in all these countries. If reached with the gospel and trained for the ministry, they could become a mission force among Slavic-speaking peoples.

Conferences and Modular Training

Many Baptist pastors attend three- or four-day conferences and intense modular training sessions organized in various parts of the country by churches, mission organizations, and the Baptist Union of Romania. Usually, these training events are led by well-known pastors and professors from America. Hundreds of pastors gather in one location, where they have fellowship and learn new insights from the Word of God and practical ministry skills. Leading Romanian pastors have been used lately to teach in these conferences alongside their American brothers, helping contextualize the teachings to the Romanian and Eastern European context.

Various training programs have been started by Baptist churches since 1989, but no indigenous leadership training strategy has been offered. Following is a proposal for church-based leadership training in Romania which, if implemented, could help Baptist congregations in Romania strengthen their leadership training efforts. The proposal contains seven steps:

1. Evaluation: Assess existing church-based leadership training.
2. Vision: Develop and spread a vision for a church-based leadership training strategy.
3. Design: Plan the training strategy.
4. Orientation: Share the strategy and organize the process.
5. Cooperation: Pursue and build training networks and partnerships.
6. Implementation: Implement the strategy.
7. Tuning: Evaluate and improve the training process.

This indigenous, church-based strategy includes cooperation with more traditional academic

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Various training programs have been started by Baptist churches since 1989, but no indigenous leadership training strategy has been offered.



Romanian Baptist Leadership Training *(continued from page 11)*

The time has come for Romanians to train their own leaders without relying heavily on teachers and trainers from the West.

training programs. Western missionaries pioneered Bible Education by Extension in Romania during the period of Communism with good results.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the time has come for Romanians to train their own leaders without relying heavily on teachers and trainers from the West. Everything has a starting point, no matter how hard it is, and being determined to put together a training team and program is crucial, no matter how small the beginning or how scarce the resources.

In a country where evangelicals are perceived as being a foreign entity of Western origin, Baptist churches should make strong efforts to implement indigenous ministry and leadership training free from Western influence. An indigenous church grows without outside control.¹⁹

Fine Tuning: The Training Process

Evaluation is critical to the entire training process. No strategy is perfect, but in order to improve it continually, regular and continuous evaluation should be implemented. Baptist churches involved in leadership training should set specific times throughout the year for evaluation of the training program and its effectiveness. Evaluation should be carried out in order to assess the training program's goals, methods, resources, the effectiveness of the training team, and the progress of those being trained. The leadership team could use feedback forms and meet regularly at least twice a year to openly discuss, evaluate, and adjust all elements of the training process calling for improvement. The purpose of the assessment process "is not to demean or control people but to evaluate work."²⁰ The desire is to see each one involved (discipler and disciple) "grow up in every way into Him who is the Head, into Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). Therefore, evaluation should be planned and implemented according to realistically designed means and measurements, and improvements made whenever and wherever necessary.

Conclusion

Church-based leadership training ought to be implemented by Baptists in Romania in a well-planned and strategic manner alongside academic training for the ministry. Having the largest number of Baptists in Eastern Europe and great potential and zeal for local and global ministries, but facing a significant shortage in trained leadership, Romanian churches have the responsibility to equip godly leaders for the future.

Romanians consider church-based training to have much potential for developing well-equipped leadership.²¹ Great potential can be realized by preparing and employing an organized strategy. Baptist congregations in Romania would do themselves and their future generations much good by making leadership training a priority, adopting a plan for developing leaders, and investing in equipping mature leaders. ♦

Notes:

¹ Educator D, interview by author, digital recording, Bucharest, Romania, 21 June 2005. (Missionaries

interviewed are identified with code letters to protect their privacy.)

² Institutul Teologic Baptist București – Licență [on-line]; accessed 15 August 2005; available from <http://www.itb.ro/licentaid.htm>.

³ Institutul Teologic Baptist București – Cifre Școlarizare [on-line]; accessed 15 August 2005; available from <http://www.itb.ro/saptp.htm>.

⁴ Institutul Teologic Baptist București – Viziune [on-line]; accessed 15 August 2005; available from <http://www.itb.ro/viziune.htm>.

⁵ Educator D, interview, 21 June 2005.

⁶ Interview with Rector Paul Negruț; Emmanuel University website, accessed 15 August 2005; available from <http://www.emmanuel.ro>.

⁷ Universitatea Emanuel – Viața Academică [on-line]; accessed 15 August 2005; available from <http://www.emmanuel.ro/academic/cercetare.html>.

⁸ Missionary A, who serves in Romania with BEE.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Educator F confirmed that BEE trained both pastors and lay leaders prior to 1989 and continues to be instrumental in training Baptist pastors and leaders for the local church even today.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Missionary B, who serves in Romania with BEE. He confirmed that "most of the teaching of BEE courses is now done by Romanians."

¹³ Educator E, interview by author, e-mail, Bucharest, 7 July 2005.

¹⁴ The information was confirmed by several pastors who participated in the surveys and interviews.

¹⁵ Educator G, interview by author, e-mail, Bucharest, Romania, 5 July 2005.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Educator E, interview by author, digital recording, Bucharest, Romania, 26 March 2004.

¹⁸ Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 21st century ed. (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 537.

¹⁹ Charles Brock, *Indigenous Church Planting: A Practical Journey* (Neosho, MO: Church Growth International, 1994), 89.

²⁰ Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelism* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1990), 324.

²¹ David P. Bohn, "The Perspectives on Theological Education Evident among Evangelical Church Leaders in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia," Ph.D. dissertation, Trinity International University, 1997, 339.

Edited excerpts published with permission from Ovidiu Cristian Chivu, "A Strategy for Church-Based Leadership Training in Romania," Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007.

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Baptists in Romania, Hungary, and Yugoslavia: Surviving Hostile Authorities and Well-Meaning Missionaries

R. Tandy McConnell

Martyrdom . . .

During the 1960s and 1970s, Richard Wurmbbrand, the Romanian expatriate who built a career out of his anti-Communist diatribes, spoke boldly and repeatedly on behalf of the “martyred churches” behind the Iron Curtain. At the same time, he anathematized in the strongest possible terms those Christians in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union for whom the cost of discipleship did not include prison, exile, or a life of secrecy. There was for him no room for compromise. Christians who lived under Communist rule were either martyrs or apostates. Christians who cooperated with the Communist authorities, or who avoided conflict simply by remaining quiet, were guilty of denying Christ.

. . . Versus Accommodation

Yet martyrdom was a vocation to which few Christians in Eastern Europe – or elsewhere – appear to have been called. For most, faithfulness to their religion and loyalty to the government did not seem altogether as contradictory as Wurmbbrand insisted it ought to have been. If Wurmbbrand and his sponsors could enjoy a comfortable moral certitude – as well as a comfortable life in the West – most religious people who tried to live out their faith in consistently hostile climates found some compromises unavoidable. Most bishops, pastors, and religious leaders chose their battles carefully. Few followed the uncompromising example of Hungary’s József Cardinal Mindszenty. Even Josif Țon, the Romanian dissident, seems to have made substantial efforts to avoid antagonizing the Ceaușescu regime, even as he pushed for greater freedom of religion and church autonomy – issues that put him clearly at odds with the authorities. In an article he wrote for *Fundamentalist Journal* on “The Christian Church under Communism,” Țon acknowledged that even in Romania religious oppression, while very real, had not driven the churches underground. The social and political costs of active participation in religion were higher in Romania than in Western Europe, or even in Hungary or Yugoslavia, but not so high that millions of Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants were not willing to pay it.

But the editors of *Fundamentalist Journal* knew, as Țon perhaps did not, that their readership wanted moral absolutes, not ambiguities: Communists were bad. They oppressed the church, killed the saints, tortured the faithful witnesses. Thus the photo layout that headed Țon’s article pictured a scene from a concentration camp: a Bible thrown casually into the mud lay next to an outstretched hand which was crushed beneath a neatly shined jackboot. This marked incongruity between the dramatic picture and Țon’s carefully written article neatly summarizes the disjunction between myths and realities in the religious history of Eastern Europe during the Cold War.¹

As the experience of Baptists in Yugoslavia,

Hungary, and Romania demonstrates, the governments of these countries made extensive use of concentration camps and jackboots when dealing with religion only in the first years of the Cold War era. In the 1960s and 1970s, all three governments sought to diminish the place of religion in society, but the restrictions they placed on religious activities, while certainly a burden on the faithful, still left substantial room for individual religious belief. Religion was of concern to the government only when it threatened the ideological hegemony of the Communist Party.

Baptists in Yugoslavia were few in number and were further divided among six nationalities, including Slovaks, Romanians, and Germans. As a result, they could never have threatened the government’s ideological hegemony, even if that had been their goal.

Hungary’s *Diakonia* Theology

In Hungary, Baptists were better organized and much more unified than in Yugoslavia, but went to much greater lengths to avoid even the appearance of offering an ideological alternative to socialism. *Diakonia* theology, emphasizing Christian service to society in cooperation with, and even under the direction of, the Marxist state, served to align Hungary’s Protestant and Catholic churches with the goals of the state. If Hungarian Christians could not embrace Socialism with a whole heart, they were expected, at the very least, to serve the interests of the Hungarian nation and its government. By adopting *Diakonia* theology, the Hungarian Baptist Church was able to maintain institutional continuity and autonomy throughout the Cold War era. But one can only wonder what long-term effect such an ideology will have on the denomination’s life.

Romanian Growth Despite Repression

Romanian Baptists endured a longer period of persecution and a more hostile political climate than did Baptists in either Hungary or Yugoslavia, and the regime seems to have succeeded in its campaign to regulate their affairs and subvert their leadership. In the climate of quiet desperation that Ceaușescu’s version of socialism engendered, religion offered one of the few places where an independent culture could flourish.

Romanian Baptist churches grew rapidly under Ceaușescu, and it is tempting to relate the existence of an outspoken Baptist dissident movement with the denomination’s growth. But there are many factors that influence a denomination’s growth and decline: the effectiveness and charisma of the leadership, competition from other religious and non-religious institutions, and the perceived social, as well as spiritual, benefits of joining.

Southern Baptist Missions

The influence of Southern Baptist missionaries and mission dollars in all three countries remains problematic. Hungary, because it was the oldest of the Baptist unions and the most institutionally

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The social and political costs of active participation in religion were higher in Romania than in Western Europe, or even in Hungary or Yugoslavia, but not so high that millions of Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants were not willing to pay it.



advanced, was relatively less influenced by Southern Baptists in the inter-war era than Romanians, where Southern Baptists established a seminary, or Yugoslavia, where the denominational organization was established under Southern Baptist leadership.

Yet it is meaningless to typify relationships between missionaries and natives in Europe in this era, for there were no typical missionaries and no typical relationships. If in the 1920s and 1930s Southern Baptist missionary Everett Gill exhibited a proprietary interest in the educational and other activities of the Baptist Unions of Eastern Europe, he also clearly believed he knew what was best for them. He also understood that his ability to influence events in Eastern Europe was exceedingly limited, and that the one tool he did have at his disposal – money from America – could create a sense of dependency he wanted to avoid. Whatever his faults, he did not want the Baptist Unions of Romania, Hungary, or Yugoslavia to become clients of the Southern Baptist Foreign Missions Board. And had that happened, they would likely not have survived the Cold War era when contacts and support became limited or non-existent. And if missionary John Allen Moore also felt responsible for the welfare of Baptists in Eastern Europe, he knew, even in 1938, that he too would be limited in his ability to influence them. Baptists in Yugoslavia, where Moore worked before the war, accepted Southern Baptist money, but stubbornly resisted any perceived attempts to meddle in their internal affairs. Yet even Slovak Baptist insistence on an unpaid, uneducated clergy, and the consequent difficulty in establishing a centralized Baptist Union, while it frustrated Moore, insulated the denomination from the sort of official meddling that constantly plagued better-organized Romanian Baptists.

In summary, from 1920 until the beginning of World War II, Southern Baptist missionaries to Eastern Europe played a supporting role in the work of indigenous Baptist organizations. After the war, all the Foreign Mission Board had to offer these organizations was friendly advice, an occasional grant of financial aid, and the encouragement that

comes from knowing that one's plight is a matter of concern for people in another part of the world.

Ironically, when the Iron Curtain fell in 1989 and Southern Baptists could more freely relate to their East European fellow believers, missions no longer served the same role in Southern Baptist life that it had earlier. Professional foreign missionaries came to lose their luster in the late 1970s and 1980s. Increasingly, upscale Baptist congregations began sending their own "mission teams" and short-term missionaries to work for several weeks or months on specific projects. The Foreign Mission Board had encouraged the use of volunteers in a number of settings, but in 1990 and 1991, thousands of such "missionaries" poured into Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Some of the professional missionaries working with the Foreign Mission Board sought to slow this tide, arguing that traditional missionaries were needed who would spend years learning to speak the language and understand the culture. Nevertheless, their reservations were brushed aside by the increasingly fundamentalist-controlled Board. If long-term missionaries had learned anything in the last 50 years, it was, they argued, that only indigenous Baptist churches, not transplanted Southern Baptist churches, could survive the test of time and political change.² ♦

Professional foreign missionaries came to lose their luster in the late 1970s and 1980s. Increasingly, upscale Baptist congregations began sending their own "mission teams" and short-term missionaries.

Notes:

¹ Josif Ţon, "The Christian Church under Communism," *Fundamentalist Journal* 2 (July-August 1973), 21-28.

² Keith Parker, interview by author, 28 June 1994, Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Edited excerpts published with permission from R. Tandy McConnell, "Indigenous Baptists and Foreign Missionaries: Baptist Communities in Romania, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, 1872-1980," Ph.D. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1996.

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A Frank Assessment of Church Growth and Missions Today

Rich Correll

Many will agree that the 1990s were a very special time with many conversions, new churches started, theological institutions opened, buildings built, literature published, and multiple ministries of all types launched. This was a period of incredible activity at home and abroad for Slavic evangelicals.

Many will also agree that the gospel is no longer on the advance. Conversions and baptisms are declining; new church plants are at a low level. Although some good foreign work is underway, theological institutions are struggling for students, buildings are only partially filled, and we observe widespread indifference, although the needs and opportunities are still tremendous. There has been limited reproduction of churches. The fire seems

to have been extinguished. What is needed is an honest discussion about the hindering effects of dependence on outside finances, dependence on buildings, and dependence on academic education and professionalism.

Edited excerpt published with the author's permission from a workshop held at the International Evangelical Mission Forum, Irpen, Ukraine, 24-25 October 2008.

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Uneasy Catholic Church-State Relations in Slovenia

Marjan Smrke

In Slovenia in the 1960s and early 1970s, changes wrought by the Roman Catholic Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and changes in the attitude of the Communist Party towards religion led to noticeable improvements in church-state relations. With Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church finally implicitly recognized separation of state and church, which in turn contributed to a détente in relations between proponents of religious and secular ideologies. It is difficult to imagine the 1 March 1971 meeting between Pope Paul VI and Yugoslav President Josef Broz Tito taking place if corresponding ideological changes had not previously occurred within both the Roman Catholic Church and the Marxist regime of Yugoslavia.

Changing Demographics: Changing Faith

Parallel to church-state ideological shifts were substantive demographic shifts in Catholic adherence in Slovenia. Ninety-seven percent of Slovenes considered themselves Catholics in 1931, and 82.8 percent defined themselves as Catholics in the 1953 census. But while 71.6 percent of Slovenes still defined themselves as Catholics in 1991, that figure had fallen to 57.8 percent by the 2002 census. In urban settlements the share of Catholics has now fallen to below half (46.9 percent). The public opinion survey *Slovensko javno mnenje*, which has a tradition dating back 40 years and has included religious variables since it was founded in 1968, allows us to make a reliable estimate of the situation as regards the deeper dimensions of beliefs. Today only a minority of Slovenia's self-professed Catholics are devout in the manner prescribed by their church. Belief in a range of fundamental Christian dogmas (a personal God, the resurrection, hell, heaven, life after death) is professed by only around a third of nominal Catholics in Slovenia. The majority of these also express disagreement with a range of behavioral norms imposed on them by the church, such as the ban on contraception, pre-marital sex, and abortion. According to Niko Toš, such traditional believers account for just 18.7 percent of Slovenes,¹ while Sergej Flere and Rudi Klanjšek claim that the faith of Slovene Catholics is a heightened version of the wider European phenomenon of "belonging, not believing."²

New Religious Communities

Parallel with the fall in the share of self-professed Catholics, there has been a growth in recent decades in the number of new religious communities in Slovenia. Before the Second World War these could be counted on the fingers of one hand. In the 1970s Slovenia was home to nine religious communities, whereas at the end of the 1980s the number was around 15. Today, the government's Office for Religious Communities lists 43 different religious communities.³ There are also a few dozen groups which are not registered as "religious communities," but which by sociological criteria are at least partially religious phenomena.⁴ Although as a rule newer religious bodies are small, their very existence is making an important contribution to the growing awareness of religion as a choice. Various New Age phenomena have been embraced by a considerable number of nominal Catholics, including various opinion leaders and other influential figures. Here we need only mention Dr. Janez Drnovšek, the former president of Slovenia who died in 2008. In the last years of his life President Drnovšek wrote a number of best-selling books that were New Age in spirit.⁵ Unlike the centuries-old tradition of Catholic

monopoly, which was interrupted only by the culturally fruitful but violently suppressed period of the Lutheran Reformation, Slovenes today live in conditions which are relatively pluralistic in terms of religion. Harangues along the lines of "one nation – one religion – one church," which are still, or again, to be heard from the mouths of certain Roman Catholic speakers, are in this light not only unconvincing but a sign of ignorance of the age in which we live.

Changing Church and State Attitudes

In 1979 theologian Franc Rode of the faculty of theology in Ljubljana reflected on state confiscation of church lands in 1945:

Before the war our Church was too rich. The parish priest was often also a man of note in the economic sense, monasteries were generally too rich, and bishops spent their holidays in castles. The Church had property which was not necessary for the fulfillment of its mission; property deriving from the feudal era. It should have renounced its possessions itself and given them to the poor. But how many times has this happened in the history of the Church? Not very often. And so God intervenes in order to unburden and purify His Church. Those who carried out this operation were certainly not thinking about the purification of the Church, but even so they were a tool in God's hands and unwittingly carried out His divine plan. And so we became poorer and perhaps less proud.⁶

Contemporary changes on the secular side were evident in the abandonment of the dogmatic and restrictive attitude of the League of Communists towards religion. The early 1980s saw the abandonment of the view that a Communist party member must not be religious, and subsequently the return of religious holidays (Christmas) to public life. The change in attitude towards religious holidays, particularly Christmas, was debated by Slovenia's Communists in 1985. In 1986 the president of the Socialist League of Working People (SZDL – its Slovenian acronym), gave a public Christmas greeting, and the archbishop of Ljubljana gave a Christmas radio broadcast, provoking a great variety of reactions.

The Fall of Socialism and the Revival of Catholic Triumphalism

Nevertheless, the fall of the Communists was understood by the Slovenian Catholic Church as a great historical victory and as an opportunity to return to the advantages of former times. After 1991 a rise in a pre-Vatican II Council spirit could be noted. The triumphant, militant, and immutable Church (*ecclesiae triumphans, ecclesiae militans, ecclesiale semper eadem*) reappeared, as Croatian sociologist Srdan Vrcan observed.⁷ Particularly during the archbishopate of Dr. Franc Rode (1997–2004), a number of demands were expressed under the banner of re-evangelization which could be understood as a tendency towards a reconstituted Catholic hegemony. The view of the past changed radically in many ways. That which in the 1970s was interpreted as God's will (as can be seen from the above quotation about the secularization of church estates), now became an expression of intolerable Communist violence, the consequences of which needed to be eliminated without delay. The ownership of 32,000 hectares of land, including a considerable part of today's Triglav National Park, is no longer a sign of pride which

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Today only a minority of Slovenia's self-professed Catholics are devout in the manner prescribed by their church.

The fall of the Communists was understood by the Slovenian Catholic Church as a great historical victory and as an opportunity to return to the advantages of former times.

Religious statistics, in which we note the greatest change in the 1990s, show a fall in trust in the Catholic Church and its clergy.

Uneasy Catholic Church-State Relations in Slovenia *(continued from page 13)*

the Church should have rid itself of long ago, but something sacred which must be returned as soon as possible.

Since the fall of Communism there have been strongly expressed calls for a revision of the history of the Second World War, when part of the Roman Catholic Church compromised itself by collaborating with Italian and German occupying forces.⁸ One of Slovenian Catholicism's most compromising acts was the oath of the *domobranci* – quisling military groups supported by and partly organized by the Church. It took place on Hitler's birthday, 30 April 1944, at Ljubljana's central stadium in the presence of the German army of occupation.

The expression of such views immediately met with a negative response from public opinion. Religious statistics, in which we note the greatest change in the 1990s, show a fall in trust in the Church and the clergy, an expression of dissatisfaction with the Church's excessive role in society, and a rejection of Church interference in the political decisions of citizens. Between 1991 and 1998 the share of Slovenes who had total or considerable trust in the Catholic Church and its clergy fell from 36.9 percent to 11.2 percent.

The Re-ordering of Church-State Relations: 1992-2004

The re-ordering of relations between church and state in Slovenia's early post-Communist transition can be divided into two periods: 1) the period from 1992 to 2004, which is defined above all by the government of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) and its coalitions, and 2) the period beginning in 2004 with the electoral victory of the Slovenia Democratic Party (SDS), which formed a right-wing (or center-right) coalition.

For the most part the LDS advocated consistently for the separation of church and state as required by Article 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia.⁹ The LDS government did away with various restrictions on church activities, while on the other hand it did not undermine the principle of the separation of church and state. In this stance it could rely on public opinion, which showed resistance to re-Catholicizing tendencies. Slovenia did not follow the route of most post-socialist countries, which in the name of eliminating its Communist past, introduced hasty reforms that, in many ways restored conditions of a semi-state church. Still, the expectations and demands of the Slovenian Catholic Church were greater. It appealed to the examples of not yet fully de-confessionalized states such as Germany and Austria. It is probable that the constant complaints and demands of some of the more pro-church parties caused the various governments led by the LDS to adopt a number of compromise decisions. Here we can include the Vatican Treaty between the Republic of Slovenia and the Holy See which has caused considerable uneasiness. The Constitutional Court reviewed its constitutionality and in 2003 decided that it is not contrary to the constitution, in so far as it is understood that the Catholic Church will respect the laws of the Republic of Slovenia.

Religious Instruction in Schools

One of the most controversial church-state issues was, and is, education. While the Catholic Church wished to enter the public school system with confessional religious instruction, the LDS governing coalition succeeded in passing legislation which defends the autonomy and ideological neutrality of the public school system. Article 72 of the relevant 1996 Act prohibits confessional religious instruction in public schools.¹⁰

Confessional instruction remains an unfulfilled Catholic Church ambition and a source of anger.¹¹ Archbishop Rode threatened, "We shall destroy this school by democratic means as soon as this is possible!"¹² Even in more recent political circumstances, however, confessional instruction in public schools does not appear to be a realistic goal. First and foremost, a Constitutional Court decision in 2002 confirmed the constitutionality of the ban on confession-based activity in public schools. Furthermore, the greater part of the public opposes religious instruction. In public opinion surveys the notion of "religious education in schools" has proved to be very unpopular. In 2003 it was rated "positive" or "very positive" by just 20.4 percent of Slovenes.¹³

Property Restitution

A second controversial area concerns the return of property to the Roman Catholic Church. In November 1991 (before the LDS came to power), the Denationalization Act was rapidly adopted. This Act regulated the restitution of property nationalized during the socialist period. Property of feudal origin was excluded from denationalization. Was this supposed to mean that the Catholic Church was not entitled to 32,000 hectares of forest and land? After numerous discussions, most of which centered on the suspicious manner in which the Catholic Church came by this property immediately before the Second World War, and following a moratorium of several years on the restitution of property, the Constitutional Court decided, through the Act amending the Denationalization Act (1998), that the Church was entitled, as an "institution serving the public good," to the disputed estates, even if these were of feudal origin. When delays then occurred in the restitution of property, the Church, like the most conscientious capitalist, claimed compensation for lost income. In the meantime it has succeeded in establishing itself as an important economic player. In banking, the timber industry, catering, and the media, it is strengthening its presence and doing business with everyone – even with five pornographic television channels. Many Slovenes have been greatly disappointed by such Catholic actions and positions during the transition period. Take, for example, the experience of Slovene philosopher Alenka Goljevšček, who at the end of the previous regime was, along with her husband, initially enthusiastic about the Catholic Church, and then distanced herself from it: "After a painful period of searching we turned to Christianity and the Catholic Church. Because we didn't know any better – we are both from liberal families – we believed its words about love, forgiveness, humility, and so on. With enthusiasm

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and great inner joy we surrendered ourselves to the message of the Gospels. But after 1990 the Catholic Church in Slovenia pushed us away, changed the record and turned into a greedy dictator, and we ran away from it as fast as our legs would carry us – would that we had never entered such a church!”¹⁴

The Re-ordering of Church-State Relations: 2004-

The second period (2004-) is defined by the government of the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS). As regards church-state relations, especially noteworthy has been the adoption of a new law, the Religious Freedom Act, in 2007, but with a parliamentary majority of only a single vote (46/90).

The new Act begins by expressing the principle of the neutrality of the state in religious matters (Article 4), but in the same breath, the state defines religious communities as organizations serving the public good (Article 5). From this derive numerous forms of state funding of religious activities, including church involvement in prisons, police, the army, and hospitals. This is supposed to be in accordance with the “friendly separation” of church and state. Owing to the historical differences in size among churches, state funding mainly benefits the Catholic Church. It is mainly Catholic priests for whom the state pays social and health insurance and who now appear in the role of state functionaries in numerous situations. In 2007, in addition, 69.5 percent of Ministry of Culture funds intended for “real estate of cultural heritage” went to the Roman Catholic Church.

Conditions defined by the new Act for the registration of religious communities are more restrictive than criteria set out by the old “socialist” law (1976). A religious community which wishes to register itself must have been operating in Slovenia for at least ten years and must have at least 100 members. It has been established that more than half of the currently registered religious communities would not have met these conditions at the time they were registered. Ironically, not even Jesus Christ would have been able to register under these criteria, if we consider that he was active for a total of three years and had just 12 disciples.

In short, the impression is that the adopted Act has put into effect a regulated religious market in which the former Catholic monopoly has managed to reassert certain privileges and benefits. As of December 2008 the Constitutional Court has not yet rendered a decision on the conformity of the Act with the Constitution.

Conclusion

The fall of Communist, single-party rule in Slovenia in 1989 meant an opportunity for a regulation of relations between the state and churches that would give privileges to no one and discriminate against no one. In the 1990s Slovenia successfully did away with restrictions placed on religions by the previous regime without favoring the Roman Catholic Church over other confessions. Since 2004, however, and in particular with the Act adopted in 2007, the equality of religions, the equality of religious and non-religious citizens, and the separation of church and state have been compromised since the Roman Catholic Church is rapidly making inroads into state institutions. However,

in the wake of the September 2008 elections and the confirmation of Borut Pahor, president of the Social Democratic Party, as prime minister (at the head of a four-party coalition government), there may be some efforts to assure greater neutrality in church-state relations in Slovenia. ♦

Notes:

¹ Niko Toš, “(Ne)religioznost Slovencev v primerjavi z drugimi srednje in vzhodnoevropskimi narodi” in Niko Toš, ed., *Pobede o cerkvi in religiji na Slovenskem v 90-ih* (Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, IDV-CJMMK, 1999), 72.

² Sergej Flere and Rudi Klanjšek, “Ali je vottost značilnost vernosti na Slovenskem?,” *Družboslovne razprave* 23 (no. 56, 2007), 7-20.

³ See the website of the Office for Religious Communities: http://www.uvs.gov.si/en/religious_communities/.

⁴ A. Črnič and Gregor Lesjak, “Religious Freedom and Control in Independent Slovenia,” *Sociology of Religion* 64 (no. 3, 2003), 349-66.

⁵ A. Črnič, “Predsednik za novo dobo: religiološka analiza Drnovškovega obrata,” *Družboslovne razprave* 23 (no. 56, 2007), 21-37.

⁶ Franc Rode, “Through Christianity in Slovenia: Today and Tomorrow,” Lecture at the Theological Faculty of Ljubljana, 1979.

⁷ Sratjan Vrcan, *Vjera u vrtlozima tranzicije* (Split: Glas Dalmacije-revija Dalmatinske akcije, 2001).

⁸ Jože and Božo Repe, “O reviziji zgodovine” in Murko Drčar, ed., *Pet minut demokracije; podoba Slovenije po letu 2004* (Ljubljana: Liberalna akademija, 2008), 37-54.

⁹ See: <http://www.dz-rs.si/?id=150&docid=28&showdoc=1>.

¹⁰ Marjan Smrke and Tatjana Rakar, “Religious Education in Slovenia” in Zorica Kuburić and Christian Moe, eds., *Religion and Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans* (Novi Sad: CEIR, 2006), 9-38; <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/RelPlurEdu.pdf>.

¹¹ *Izeri življenje* (2002), 149-50.

¹² France Rode, “Cerkev na pragu tretjega tisočletja,” lecture in the Bishopric Hall in Maribor, 16 March 2000.

¹³ Slavko Kurdija, “Vrednotne delitve v luči političnih izbir” in Brina Malnar and Igor Bernik, eds., *S Slovenkami in Slovenci na štiri oči* (Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, IDV-CJMMK, 2004), 124.

¹⁴ Alenka Goljevšček, “Vse življenje za eno ljubezen (intervju),” *Ona* 10 (No. 20, 2008), 12.

Edited excerpt published with permission of the author from a paper presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 2008; subsequently published in Separation of Church and State in Europe, ed. by Hagg de Beaufort and Patrick van Shie (Brussels: European Liberal Forum, 2008), 163-73.

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Since 2004, the equality of religions, the equality of religious and non-religious citizens, and the separation of church and state have been compromised since the Roman Catholic Church is rapidly making inroads into state institutions.

BOOK REVIEW

Daniel, Wallace L. *The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2006. Reviewed by Erich Lippman.

Upon first confronting a book called *The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia*, one might easily assume that this is yet another political analysis positing Orthodoxy as the antithesis of civil institutions and liberal values. However, Wallace Daniel's study suggests a reversal of this trend. Rather than focusing on the anti-liberal forces at work in the Russian Church, he hypothesizes that Orthodoxy will "play a key role" in the development of a functioning civil society in Russia (192). However, this should not be read as an endorsement of all current trends within the Church. Rather, Daniel divides the Church's disparate voices into a rather simplistic dichotomy of "reformists" and "conservatives," and when discussing civil society, "one's sympathies lie with the 'reformers'" (31).

This work is easily divisible into two parts. The introduction, first two chapters, and conclusion discuss the development of civil society and Daniel's reformist/conservative dichotomy. The first two chapters provide a sometimes questionable narrative of church-state relations in Russian history. Daniel paints the pre-Petrine period in almost Slavophile tones, extolling the virtues of the church-state "symphonia." That symphonic balance was fundamentally destroyed by the reforms of Peter the Great, who turned the institutional Church into a department of state. This narrative poses interesting questions for Daniel's subsequent discussion of the helpfulness of Western models for revitalization. After all, Peter's Church reforms were based on Protestant models.

The second part of the book includes

personal stories in chapters three through five. These fascinating and rich accounts unfortunately seem to lead Daniel astray from his main points. The conflict between reformists and conservatives is clear in the first chapter, in which Daniel very sympathetically recounts the story of Fr. Georgii Kochetkov. However, the central chapter, which deals with Mother Seraphima of the Novodevichy Convent, seems far afield from any theorizing about the pillars of civil society. The story itself is engaging and worth telling, but Daniel does little to connect it to his core idea. His last clerical story involves Fr. Maksim Kozlov—a traditionalist priest in charge of a parish attached to Moscow State University. Although Daniel's tone relating to Fr. Maksim is sympathetic, it cools by comparison to his discussion of Mother Seraphima or Fr. Georgii. He characterizes Fr. Maksim's approach as generally inclined to look inward "at Orthodoxy's own traditions and heritage" (165). This inward gaze is one of the negative characteristics of traditionalists throughout the book. He also characterizes the growth of the university parish as "solid" and "steady," but it has not taken a "geometrical progression," compared to Fr. Georgii's for example (164). Although Daniel includes Fr. Maksim among those helping to build a civil society, he does not clarify how such a traditionalist could fit into the new structure after placing so much emphasis on the reformist/traditionalist dichotomy.

Overall, Daniel's work is warmly written and accessible. Its academic contribution is a philosophically liberal defense of the Russian Church, and the personal stories are inspiring and likely to arouse considerable sympathy in the reader. However, Daniel falls short of connecting the personal to the theoretical in a satisfactory manner, and his reformist/conservative dichotomy fails to take into account the complex spectrum of thought pertaining to the Church and society in Russian history. In his introduction, Daniel points out, "I have taken a selective and somewhat personal approach to a very large subject" (7). This claim effectively sums up the book's strengths and weaknesses. It is warm enough to be an enjoyable read, but too personal and selective to make a strong academic argument. ♦

Erich Lippman is assistant professor of history, Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia.

Overall, Daniel's work is warmly written and accessible. Its academic contribution is a philosophically liberal defense of the Russian Church.

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Editor Mark R. Elliott
Assistant Editor..... Billie Faye Harvey

**SOUTHERN
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ISSN 1069-5664

EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT
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