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A Home for Every Orphan: An Interview with Anita Deyneka

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Editor's Note: Anita Deyneka and her husband, Peter Deyneka, Jr., headed Slavic Gospel Association, Wheaton, IL, from 1975 to 1991 and founded Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries (PDRM), Wheaton, IL, in 1991. Following the death of her husband in 2000, Anita Deyneka was elected president of Russian Ministries in 2002. (For tributes and commentary on Peter Deyneka, Jr.'s ministry, see the East-West Church and Ministry Report 9 [Winter 2001], 4-6.) In September 2010 Anita Deyneka retired as president after a decade of exemplary service, passing the reigns of leadership to the Deynekas' longtime coworker, Senior Vice-President Sergey Rakhuba.

Editor: I understand you now plan to devote your energies to children at risk in the former Soviet Union. How did this concern become such a passion?

Knowing the ongoing plight of orphans and street children in the former Soviet Union (FSU), three years ago PDRM initiated "Home for Every Orphan" to promote adoption and foster care within Russia and Ukraine. We had always attempted to help children at risk, but as the Russian and Ukrainian governments began to encourage domestic adoption and foster care, a wide and wonderful door opened for Christians in those countries to care for orphans as never before. During the past three years, "Home for Every Orphan" has become an informal alliance with three American Christian organizations and nine Russian and Ukrainian groups. (See accompanying list.)

"Home for Every Orphan" has now helped place over 1,000 children in caring Christian homes in Russia and Ukraine. I will work as a missionary of PDRM, helping to coordinate the "Home for Every Orphan" partnership. I have always hoped to be able to do more to help orphans in the former Soviet Union. Having more time to focus on orphan ministry is especially meaningful to me because my children, Mark and Lily, were once in orphanages in Colombia. To the joy of Peter and me, God brought them to our home—and now I even have five grandchildren! Both Lily and Mark and their spouses and children have a heart to help orphans.

Editor: For decades you and your husband enjoyed a deserved reputation as gifted facilitators and networkers. Can you share the ministry philosophy that has informed your approach to working with others?

Peter and I always believed that being part of the body of Christ and seeking to follow Christ's Great Commission mandated partnership, networking, and appreciating all parts of the body. Assisting some of the many organizations entering the former Soviet Union after the collapse of Communism was a primary purpose for starting PDRM in 1991. In the 1990s we had the privilege and pleasure of working in some way with at least 300 western organizations and, of course, many national churches

and parachurch groups.

Editor: And can you illustrate Russian Ministries' networking for the benefit of orphans and street children?

I am so encouraged by the "Home for Every Orphan" partnership, a network which PDRM helped form. Now a network of 12 organizations in America, Russia, and Ukraine work together to help orphans find homes in their own countries with Christian families.

In our "Home for Every Orphan" partnership, CoMission for Children at Risk has connections through its network with over 400 organizations working to serve children at risk in Russia and Eastern Europe. Doorways to Hope in the West is an organization founded and led by young Americans who are networking to help find other Americans who want to help orphans in Russia and Ukraine find homes. Risk Network in Russia, also a part of the "Home for Every Orphan" partnership, is an alliance of over 200 Russian Christian organizations working with children at risk. The Alliance for Ukraine Without Orphans is an umbrella for many other groups. So just in our informal "Home for Every Orphan" partnership, several regional networks and partnerships work to help orphans. While we all praise God for every child who has been adopted or placed in foster care with a Christian family in Russia and Ukraine, many thousands more children need homes.

Editor: What prompted your August 2010 visit to children at risk ministries in Ukraine?

Although I spend much time traveling in the U.S. and working at the Russian Ministries office in Wheaton, it is always a privilege to be able to spend time with national partners in Russia and Ukraine—and especially to be with the children.

Editor: Is Kyiv an important center for outreach to children at risk?

Yes. For example, Kyiv is the headquarters for the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) in the former Soviet Union. CBN in Kyiv is headed by Steve Weber, a Seattle Pacific University graduate who oversees a (mostly) national staff of 120. CBN has multiple and widespread ministries, including

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television, humanitarian assistance, and an orphan ministry, Gift of Adoption, headed by Karen Springs who has lived in Ukraine for six years. Karen shared with me that Gift of Adoption has established six orphan transition centers and is involved in the production of literature and films promoting orphan care and adoption.

CBN also sponsors conferences such as a meeting in April 2010 for 200 adoptive parents. Participants paid their own travel expenses while Christian Vision from England subsidized reduced hotel rates for attendees. It was a huge blessing for the adoptive parents to be able to share their experiences.

Editor: Are there other groups based in Kyiv?

Yes. Another important one is International Leadership Development Center (ILDC) headed by Oleg Shelashsky. ILDC's primary emphasis is training and orientation including conferences, literature, and other activities for actual and prospective adoptive and foster care parents and orphan caregivers. Oleg shared with me that ILDC is an interdenominational ministry with ties to CBN, Christian Vision, the Ukrainian government, and the Ukraine Without Orphans Alliance.

Editor: Is the Alliance for Ukraine Without Orphans an organization or a movement?

I believe it is both. It is an alliance of Christian ministries whose main goal is to cast a vision for adoption and foster care by Christians. Its members envision Ukraine becoming a model of a country where Christians make it possible for every orphan available for adoption to have a Christian home. While in Kyiv I had a chance to meet with Ruslan Malyuta from Ukraine Without Orphans who has this amazing vision for a home for every Ukrainian orphan eligible for adoption.

Editor: Is there some shift in emphasis in helping children at risk?

With the Ukrainian and Russian governments currently encouraging domestic adoption, we find a growing movement among Christians in the former Soviet Union (FSU) to adopt and provide foster care for orphans, even though this has not been the tradition in the past. Often Christians in Russia and Ukraine have small homes, but they have huge hearts. Ever since it became possible, Christians East and West have been working with orphans in the FSU in many ways, such as organizing summer camps and other activities, giving food, toys, and love to the children.

This is a very important focus as there are thousands of children who cannot yet be legally adopted or placed in foster care for various reasons—such as having surviving parents, although the parents may have abandoned or been unable to care for their children. Ultimately, however, it is vital for children to have families. Sadly we know in Russia that when children leave orphanages, 40 percent become alcoholics or drug addicts, 40 percent become involved in crime, and 10 percent commit suicide. In addition, statistics show that roughly half of the girls are forced into prostitution.

It is essential to work with parents so they don't abandon their children. It is essential to promote adoption care. It is essential to help the next generation of Christians think differently about adoption and foster care. And this is what I was so

encouraged to see happening with the outstanding Christian groups I recently visited in Ukraine. For example, I was encouraged by my meeting with Lubov Nesteruk, wife of the president of the Evangelical Christian-Baptist denomination in Ukraine, who has become mother to 17 older orphans after they left state care, including Anya who works in our PDRM office in Irpen. Lubov is a remarkable woman with a great heart for children. She has done so much for orphans individually and now feels God is calling her to help spread the word and motivate Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Ukraine to adopt, provide foster care, or help orphans after they leave the orphanage.

Ukrainian Baptists are widely helping orphans in orphanages, bringing gifts and organizing camps, along with many other worthwhile activities, including establishment of a few Christian orphanages such as the one I visited in August in Odessa. Lubov is especially working and praying to encourage many more Baptists to adopt and to provide foster care

Editor: Do any other outstanding programs in Kyiv come to mind?

Another dynamic outreach is Father's House which operates a marvelous orphanage, a foster care ministry, and an outreach to street children to help them acclimate to life in an orphanage or with adoptive or foster families. President Viktor Yushchenko's government (2005-2010) donated land to Father's House which I learned was later confiscated by officials working for Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko (2007-2010). Father's House has received national and international commendation and funding not only from the Ukrainian government but also from the U.S. and England.

Editor: Is there good news to report outside Kyiv?

I believe so. I was deeply impressed by the compassion for children at risk I discovered among Christians in Mariupol (on the Sea of Azov) and Slavyansk (in eastern Ukraine north of Donetsk). One excellent example is the Pilgrim Foundation launched in 1998 by Gennady Makhnienko, pastor of the interdenominational Good News Church (Church of Good Changes), which is loosely affiliated with the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee. The Pilgrim Foundation, which originally focused on drug rehabilitation centers (27 launched to date in Ukraine and Russia!), opened its Pilgrim Republic Children's Rehabilitation Center in 2001. Pastor Gennady and his church members began simply by driving the streets of Mariupol rescuing homeless children. Pastor Gennady says that in life-and-death situations, you don't stop to debate if you should help. And many of the street children are facing life-and-death choices. Initially, Good News Church members were gathering as many as 30 children a day. Their new charges slept on mattresses on the floor or anywhere possible since the church did not have enough room. The first three years they cared for as many as 100 children at a time. The orphanage now averages 50, and Pilgrim staff is picking up fewer children, which they believe has something to do with their work in the past.

Editor: What were your firsthand impressions of the Republic's orphanage?

When three other American Christians and I visited the Pilgrim Republic Rehabilitation Center this past August, we were met by about 30 orphan

“citizens” of the republic. As we entered the front walkway, we were flanked on either side by children who hoisted their flag, stood at attention, and welcomed us. They brought us the traditional Ukrainian symbols of hospitality, bread and salt, and four or five children had even formed a small brass band and were playing a march as we approached. We also met fourteen-year-old Yury, who was elected to serve a term as “president” of the Republic.

Many of the orphans, who range in age from 7 to 17, have parents who are HIV-positive and alcoholic. When the children first come to the orphanage, many are already addicts themselves. Often they also arrive undernourished. That was clear to us as we saw how small for their age many were. As former street children, Pilgrim “citizens” are at high risk for running away. Learning more of the stories of some of the children and seeing the miraculous transformation that happens in the orphanage, we came to appreciate why few of the children return to the streets.

Editor: Did you have a chance to visit any Pilgrim-sponsored foster care homes?

Yes, I did. A Pilgrim staffer drove us to a village outside Mariupol where the Foundation sponsors three foster families and where Pastor Gennady Makhnienko and his wife live with their three biological and ten foster children. Although we did not meet the pastor—he was out of town—we saw Gennady’s footprints of good deeds everywhere we went.

Near the Makhnienko family home we visited the Pilgrim Foundation’s modest foster home, House of Dreams, for HIV-positive children. House parents Evgeny and Svetlana, who themselves are HIV-positive, have one biological child who is not HIV-positive and eight foster children. Their ten-year-old Sasha is most on my mind. She was adopted in December 2009, the same month as her birthday. The doctor at the orphanage told Evgeny and Sveta that because Sasha was HIV-positive and had been diagnosed with bone TB as well, she might have only six to twelve months to live. Though frail and fragile, she is a beautiful little girl who plays well with the other children. Sasha and her new siblings are all obviously loved by their remarkable parents, who were the first family in Ukraine, and maybe in Russia as well, to adopt HIV-positive children.

Editor: I understand Gennady Makhnienko has visited Africa. How did that trip relate to his ministry?

Pastor Gennady believes that the Pilgrim Foundation should not just be receiving financial support—although it certainly does need it—but should also reach out to help addiction ministries in other countries. Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church encouraged Gennady to travel to Africa to meet with Christian addiction ministries there. Before he departed, the orphans and rehab center community members gave \$100 to buy a bicycle for an orphanage in Africa. After this happened, someone in Ukraine donated 46 bikes for Pilgrim orphans. Good News Church and its Pilgrim Foundation certainly have been a blessing to many, but the staff observed that their orphans also blessed them by helping revitalize their church.

Editor: After two days in Mariupol, you next traveled to Slavyansk. Is that correct?

We were in Slavyansk for just two days, but we

saw a great deal in that time. The first day there we had the privilege of meeting with five adoptive and foster care families with diverse and inspiring stories. First we visited the home of Pyotr and Tamara Dudnik who have five adopted and two biological children. Pyotr, a former businessman and now a pastor, was traveling so we spent most of the day with Tamara, who somehow manages to raise all these children. Her phone often rings many times during the day as adoptive and foster care parents in their circle are constantly calling her for advice and assistance. The Dudniks found their adopted son, Sergey, now 21, when his mother, a prostitute, propositioned Pyotr one evening on the street. When Sergey’s mother learned that Pyotr was one of the pastors of Good News Church, she asked if he would take her eleven-year-old son to the church’s orphanage. Then the Dudniks adopted him. Pyotr and Tamara and Good News members continue to help Sergey’s mother, who has been in and out of prison, but is now attending the church.

Tamara also shared with us how their seven-year-old daughter, Ramina, came to accept being adopted. When she saw a photo from the children’s hospital with an empty metal crib and realized that this was the place where her parents had found her, she curled up and wept. Even though she now has a loving family, she was only comforted when her older sister told her that God had put her in their family for a purpose—so that she could grow up and help other orphans.

During our visit, we also met Sergey Demidovich, the affable, energetic senior pastor of Good News Church. He and the Dudniks spearheaded the adoption movement in Slavyansk that has resulted in 100 children finding homes in families from their church. Both families, and Sergey’s older brother, Alexey, who also is a pastor, are involved not only with the church, adoption, foster care, and addiction ministries, but they also are helping to start a new church.

Editor: What is the origin of the Good News Church, and how did it come to be involved in outreach to children at risk?

This church, which started in 1980 with 15 people, now has 600 members and 1,000 in attendance on Sundays. It also has four daughter churches in Slavyansk, one of which has an attendance of 250. The mother church’s ministry to street children began in 1999 with meals for four glue-sniffing waifs living at the train station. As their feeding program grew to 46, then 60, children per day, Good News sought help from other churches. As a result 17 churches now feed 1,000 children daily.

This was the Soup Project. But the question was, where could the children sleep at night? They were just going back to the sewers, railroad stations, and other terrible places. The church began to wonder whether the Soup Project was even of any use if the children were just going back to their street lives. One afternoon, however, as they were feeding the children, it started raining. Four little ones said, “Please don’t send us back!” The church workers decided to let them sleep on the same tables where they had been fed. This was the beginning of You Shall Be Found Orphanage, which I had the opportunity to visit with Tamara. Now housed in a renovated kindergarten, it currently is home to 50 orphans. The day we visited, the children were away at camps, or were spending

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the summer with church families, many of which end up adopting the orphans they care for during school vacation.

Editor: *You shared with me previously that Good News Church has broadened its understanding of its responsibility to children at risk. Can you explain?*

As much as orphans need help, Good News Church concluded that orphan graduates also need assistance. Good News workers observed that many of the youth, after leaving the orphanage at age 18, do not survive. They asked God what they should do. The model they follow today is to take children from crisis families where they are on the brink of orphanhood, but only if their parents want them to take the children. Their main vision comes from Malachi 4:6 where God promises to turn the hearts of children toward their fathers and fathers toward their children. Whenever possible they try to restore biological families and help them to become a family again. Otherwise they take them to the orphanage or work to remove parental rights of abandoned children so that the children can be adopted or placed in foster care. Often the mother (usually only the mother is in the picture) dies from HIV and/or tuberculosis. Even in the week we were in Slavyansk the mother of one of the boys in the orphanage died from tuberculosis, and Tamara began looking for a home for him.

Together with the government, Tamara and other Christians run seminars for adoptive and foster care parents. Tamara also volunteers with city social services, even using her own car to accompany social workers to appointments. They are amazed she cares enough for the children to do this for free.

Editor: *And has the Good News Church been able to convince other congregations of the importance of adoption?*

It has. For example, we visited a Good News daughter church in Mariupol which believes strongly in the culture of adoption and spreading the movement to other Christians. Evgeny Isaev and his wife, Sveta, a psychologist at Sails of Hope Orphanage—which You Will Be Found Orphanage started—have two biological sons and a five-year-old adopted daughter, Masha. Sveta told us that, at first, church members kept their distance from little Masha, as some disapproved of adoption. However, the situation has changed radically and now many families have adopted, which has brought growth and vitality to the church. Amazingly, their church members (54 in number) have so far adopted 24 children! The church, incidentally, purchased a building that originally was owned by Gypsies who were dealing drugs. Sveta told us that when they purchased the church, they had to haul away sacks of hypodermic needles used by the addicts. Although most of the Gypsies moved away, some started coming to the church and were converted.

Editor: *How did the adoption movement get started in the Good News Church?*

It began when God spoke to Tamara Dudnik and other women in the church, directing them to volunteer in a children's hospital that included 17 abandoned orphans. Tamara had been in the hospital earlier when she was pregnant but lost her child. At that time she received a revelation that God would give her many children. She and Pyotr immediately started sharing this vision in their churches and with other churches.

Pastor Sergey Demidovich and his wife, Anya, were one of the first families to adopt as a result of Tamara's vision. Now more than 100 children have been adopted by Good News Church members.

In addition, the Dudniks connect with adoptive families far and wide. In May 2010 they decided to take a trip to meet with adoptive families all over Ukraine. Before their return to Slavyansk they drove some 3,000 miles visiting 22 families who care for 84 adoptive and foster care children. Tamara and Pyotr have noticed that when a family adopts a child, it typically shares the vision with people around them, spreading the word and the movement. Good News keeps in touch with these people so they can encourage them, invite them to conferences, and help build an adoption network. The church sees its task as supporting families who have adopted. The church gives orientation and emotional support, and when there is a need, financial support. Because parents face many difficulties raising these children, adoptive families need a great deal of help.

Editor: *The Good News Church obviously is thinking way beyond children at risk in Slavyansk.*

You're right. Good News Church and its leaders are remarkably active nationwide in promoting adoption and foster care by Christians. In addition to their numerous local ministries, they have a highly visionary outreach through television, radio, and other media, especially in Ukraine, but in many other places as well, including among Slavic immigrants in America.

Pastor Sergey Demidovich (Good News Church) and Pastor Gennady Makhnienko (Pilgrim Foundation) regularly produce six television programs promoting adoption—with plans for at least three more. They also have produced a large number of short films, and they travel widely in Ukraine, Russia, and the U.S. Trinity Broadcasting Network and CBN distribute their TV programs and films, and Steve Weber has given them a free studio room in CBN's large office building in Kyiv.

Pastor Sergey also dreams of producing TV dramas to help change Ukraine's overall negative attitude toward adoption, with the hope of convincing thousands of Christian families to adopt. He points out that Ukrainians love soap operas. Women who come to Good News Church have even asked for prayer for fictional characters on TV serials!

Editor: *What are the biggest obstacles facing the Christian adoption movement?*

Mindset and money, I would say. Sergey said he has discovered that while it is relatively easy to raise money to feed orphans, it is extremely difficult to raise funds to buy equipment to produce media that can change the mindset of the whole country. Humanitarian assistance is very important. But it is also essential to change the system—a change of consciousness. Sergey explained that most Christians in Ukraine have not had the vision for adopting. Even in his case, when Pyotr and Tamara adopted their first child, Sergey thought they had “gone nuts.” Why should they do that, he wondered, when they already had children. Then when Sergey and his wife Anya adopted their first

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child, other pastors would ask him pityingly, “Why are you adopting? Can’t you have more children?” Even when Sergey and Anya brought their baby Nikita home, his mother-in-law asked, “Why did you take this baby who is just trash that others threw out?” For six months she didn’t want to touch her adopted grandson. Nikita would crawl up to her and say “grandma,” and her heart started to change. Now if a week goes by without seeing him, she calls and asks, “Where is my grandson?”

Sergey said that one of the most terrible aspects of life in Communist days was the punishment meted out to people who took initiative. During those times people became accustomed to thinking someone above them would make all the decisions, and they did not have to think. It is very difficult to change that mindset. Sergey said that the people of the former Soviet Union struggle with a deep-seated inability to change their outlook and to take responsibility. After the Soviet Union collapsed, many people fell apart. They turned even more to alcohol and drugs, and a high percentage of people were depressed.

Editor: Do you really believe the Christian adoption movement in Ukraine can be significant on a national scale?

I believe it already is. Time and time again during my August trip to Ukraine I was confronted by believers dreaming seemingly impossible dreams, but acting on their faith and on their visions of a Ukraine without orphans. Pyotr and Tamara Dudnik, for example, are deeply convinced that if their vision spreads throughout Ukraine, their land really could become a country without orphans. They believe Christians in Ukraine could lead the world as a country without orphans. Ukraine has only 30,000 children who are legally adoptable or eligible for foster care. Their nation has 30,000 churches of all denominations. So if every church adopted only one child, every orphan in Ukraine would have a home.

In 2003 Tamara had a vision of people waiting in line to adopt children and, at that time, it didn’t seem possible that Christians knew or cared that much about adoption. Now her vision has really happened, and a waiting list exists for Ukrainian Christian families wanting to adopt children under four. Such an encouragement!

Editor: What about beyond Ukraine?

I’m glad you asked. “Home for Every Orphan” already has five Russian partners.

- My friend Galina Obrovets of Orphan Initiative based in Moscow—with her colleague, Irina Kabanova—is spearheading an adoption and foster care movement that is spreading among Christians across Russia. Galina helped coordinate the production of a documentary in 2009 promoting Christian adoption that has now been viewed by over 182,000 people, leading to many adoptions.
- Matts Ola, the Norwegian pastor of Word of Life Church in Moscow, and his Russian wife have adopted three Russian orphans, and his church helped sponsor a conference on adoption in Moscow in 2010 in partnership with Risk Network.
- Light of Love, located in St. Petersburg, provides training for potential foster parents, support for those who have already adopted, and advocacy on behalf of orphans at the local governmental level.
- Family Fund, through its School for Adoptive/

Foster Families, provides training seminars and produces training resources in the form of booklets, journals, and DVDs for Russian families who have adopted orphans or are considering adoption/foster care.

- During 2009, Vladimir Foster Homes constructed two foster homes in Vladimir, enabling two Christian foster families to take in additional foster/adoptive children. The Vladimir House is able to accommodate up to 22 foster children, while the Shkurikhin Foster Home is now able to accommodate more than the ten children who currently live there with their parents. These foster homes serve as models which can be replicated in other regions of Russia and Ukraine in order to meet the growing needs of homeless children.

Editor: Your enthusiasm is infectious. What about beyond Ukraine and Russia?

In September 2010 I attended a children’s ministry summit in New York City sponsored by the 4/14 Window Movement headed by Luis Bush. This movement, which was just launched in 2008, focuses on the evangelization and equipping of children worldwide to be followers of Christ. Luis Bush and the 4/14 Window Movement deplore the fact that 1.2 billion of the world’s two-and-a-half billion children live in poverty, that more slavery and sexual trafficking exist today than at any time in human history, that many of the victims are children, and that the most predictable victims are defenseless orphans.

At this New York summit 22 delegates attended the regional East European and former Soviet Union meeting, with representatives from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, and Bulgaria. I was encouraged to see that most were in their 20s to early 40s. The leader of this regional movement, a dynamic Polish man, Maui Dwalat, is president of a parachurch youth movement which owns a camp with capacity for 200 children at a time, among its other ministries. It was a surprising, humbling, and heartening experience for me to meet these new friends from different countries and diverse Christian denominations—now all united around a common concern and commitment to children. They constantly spoke about the importance of the “Next Generation” and their particular passion for orphans and street children. The 4/14 Window Movement also understands that children are not only recipients of ministry but partners in ministry. Repeatedly I have seen children come to Christ and then share the good news of the gospel with their family and friends.

Editor: Can you summarize some key observations that you have drawn from your recent travels and experiences regarding outreach to children at risk?

With pleasure. I appreciate the chance to do so.

- It makes most sense, I believe, for Western Christians to support existing, on-the-ground-and-running, already-motivated-and-moving ministries to children at risk, like the groups I visited in Ukraine—ILDC, Pilgrim, CBN, and Ukraine Without Orphans—rather than start new programs.
- While some denominations in Ukraine and Russia quite actively promote adoption and foster care, much more can be done to support Christian family adoptions and foster care placements through all Christian confessions and denominations in the former Soviet Union.

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It makes most sense, I believe, for Western Christians to support existing, on-the-ground-and-running, already-motivated-and-moving ministries to children at risk.

Much that is negative has come from 72 years of Soviet power. Now maybe in God's amazing sovereignty, Ukrainians and Russians will lead the nations in helping orphans!

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- While many state orphanage staff in the former Soviet Union are honest and caring, it is also a sad reality that considerable waste and corruption exist in some orphanages, including overstaffing (sometimes up to one worker per orphan) and theft of funds by orphanage staff. Also, orphanage directors generally are not eager to see a decrease in the number of orphans in their charge because their budgets depend upon a per-child government subsidy.
- Being a blessing blesses the giver as well as the receiver. Repeatedly, we heard in Kyiv, Mariupol, and Slavyansk that adoption and foster care have not only brought blessings to the orphans, but growth and vitality to the Christians and churches involved.
- Oleg Shelashsky, ILDC, believes that currently about 80 percent of all adoptions and foster care placements in Ukraine are with Christian families. If that is so—as apparently even the Ukrainian

government acknowledges—a Ukraine without orphans could become a reality. Perhaps God will use Ukraine and Russia to become a model to churches and Christians worldwide and motivate a movement in every country where the church is found to help provide a passport out of the orphan nation through adoption and foster care. We consider it a privilege for our Home for Every Orphan Alliance (CoMission for Children at Risk, Doorways of Hope, and Russian Ministries) in the West to partner with our Christian brothers and sisters in Ukraine and Russia in this great cause.

Singer Steven Curtis Chapman has said that if only seven percent of the world's population who claim to be Christians would adopt or give foster care, there would be no more orphans. Much that is negative has come from 72 years of Soviet power. Now maybe in God's amazing sovereignty, Ukrainians and Russians will lead the nations in helping orphans! ♦

Organizations Helping Children at Risk

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A Path-Breaking Conference: Ukraine Without Orphans

Cristi Hillis Slate

The Ukraine Without Orphans Alliance held its first conference in Kyiv, Ukraine, 11-13 November 2010. The meeting was attended by over 500 pastors, Christian leaders, and other believers who all desire to see Ukraine become a country without orphans. This Alliance has been a dream of many of the key orphan care leaders in Ukraine for a number of years. Attempts were made to move forward in years past, but the timing was never right. This past year, however, everything seemed to come together—finances, a great staff, and a unified vision.

The Vision

The president of the Ukraine Without Orphans Alliance, Ruslan Malyuta, is a highly capable man who has worked with orphans in various capacities for a number of years. At the conference, he defined the vision of the Alliance: To see Ukraine as a nation without orphans, where the Christian community is aware and mobilized to make a difference in the life of every orphan. The goal is to see Christians, churches, and organizations working cooperatively to reach every orphan with genuine Christian care, to provide an opportunity for every child to live in a loving family, and to prevent the abandonment of children.

Working Together

In addition to Ruslan Malyuta, the Alliance board includes a diverse group of concerned activists who, working together, were instrumental in the formation of the Alliance:

- Roman Korniyko is president of Father’s House, an outreach and rehabilitation organization that

runs two residential programs, including foster homes for 35 children, promotes adoption, and provides humanitarian aid (www.otchiy-dim.org).

- Steve Weber is president of Emmanuel Mission, a branch of CBN in Ukraine. Its Gift of Adoption program supports children in orphanages, provides life skills training for orphan graduates, and assists with adoptions (www.adoptua.org).
- Peter Dudnik is a pastor, founder of You Will Be Found Orphanage, and director of a program to promote and assist in-country adoption (www.adaption.tv).
- Gennady Makhnienko is president of Pilgrim Fund, which provides rehabilitation for children at risk, especially those with addictions. In addition to its large rehabilitation center for children, Pilgrim Fund also sponsors three family-style homes for orphans, each with 8 to 13 children (www.m-x.org.ua).
- Pavel Gladchenko is director of One Hope which identifies and trains mentors for children in orphanages. Gladchenko himself was an orphan, so his perspective is invaluable (www.onehope.com.ua).
- Alexandr Fedorchuk is director of Agape Mission which provides Bible classes for children in orphanages and runs transitional homes and provides training for orphan graduates (www.agapeua.com).
- Alexandr Gordenko is founder of My Home Foundation, which promotes adoption and family care, with a focus on special needs children (www.myhomefororphans.com.ua).
- Finally, Nikolay Kuleba is director of child services for the city Kyiv. Prior to entering

The goal is to see Christians working cooperatively to reach every orphan with genuine Christian care, to provide an opportunity for every child to live in a loving family, and to prevent the abandonment of children.

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The Ukraine Without Orphans Alliance has the lofty goal of seeing that all children in Ukrainian orphanages who are available for adoption have homes by 2015.

A Path-Breaking Conference: Ukraine Without Orphans *(continued from page 7)*

government service he was president of Child Rescue, an NGO that runs outreach, rehabilitation, and placement programs for children at risk in Kyiv (www.childrescue.org.ua).

In addition to the agencies represented on the board, two other groups have effectively partnered with the Alliance: TV-Together and the International Leadership Development Center (ILDC). TV-Together is a Christian media production group led by Sergei Demidovich. It creates promotional films and video clips to encourage Ukrainian adoptions. TV-Together has worked with the Alliance to create excellent video material. Another key partner, ILDC, provides training for orphan care workers as well as for adoptive and foster families. In addition, ILDC staff has chosen the best adoption and foster care literature in English and are working to translate it into Russian to make it available to adoptive and foster families. Already ILDC has translated several books, as well as over 100 booklets. At the Ukraine Without Orphans Conference hundreds of complimentary copies of ILDC books were given to attendees.

Throughout the conference an overall sense of cooperation prevailed. While Alliance board members are a diverse lot, they still manage to find common cause. This cooperation and unity among board members contributed to a sense of harmony among conference attendees as a whole. Both Westerners and nationals seemed to share the same heart and the same vision for working together to see Ukraine without orphans. Also, all concerned were unified in the conviction that Ukrainians, rather than Westerners, needed to lead the movement.

Speakers

International speakers at the conference included Dan Brewster from Compassion International, which helped to fund the meeting, Ruby Johnston from Lamb International, Steve Weber from CBN, Marek Wnuk from Sunshine Kids, Switzerland, and Karmen Friesen and Cristi Hillis Slate from The CoMission for Children at Risk. Ukrainian speakers, representing Christian organizations, the government, and many denominations, included Vyacheslav Nesteruk, head of the Evangelical Christian-Baptist Union, and Oleksei Demidovich, head of the Church of God for Ukraine.

Participants

Conference participants came primarily from Ukraine, with smaller representations from many other countries including Russia, Belarus, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Most attendees were Christians, representing either local churches or NGOs. While some Catholics and Orthodox

were in attendance, Protestants formed the majority. The Alliance hopes to include more Catholics and Orthodox in its work in the future, but at this point the key leaders in the adoption and foster care movement in Ukraine seem to be Protestants.

In-Country Adoption and Foster Care

The conference focused primarily upon in-country adoption and foster care. The Alliance for Ukraine Without Orphans strongly believes that families are the best places for the best care of orphans, thus the emphasis upon adoption and foster care. At the conference, speakers ranged from painting the big picture of God's heart for adoption to the details of how to actually help adopted children work through their struggles and adjust to family life.

In addition to speakers, a number of powerful video clips and promotional films helped explain the Alliance and its work. These films presently are in Russian or Ukrainian, but they will be translated into English in order to spread the word around the world about what God is doing through His people in Ukraine.

Next Steps

The Ukraine Without Orphans Alliance has the lofty goal of seeing that all children in Ukrainian orphanages who are available for adoption have homes by 2015. (It should be noted that this would not completely empty orphanages because many children in orphanages are not available for adoption. At this point, of the 100,000 children in Ukrainian orphanages, about 30,000 are available for adoption.)

One of the challenges the Alliance will have to face is opposition from government officials, particularly local officials, including orphanage directors. The latter are paid based on the number of children in their care, so they have a financial incentive to keep children in orphanages. Therefore, in order to truly empty the orphanages, some type of system would have to be created in which orphanage directors and staff could keep their jobs, but would work as social workers, helping adoptive and foster families adjust and grow. In this way, they would still be able to work with children, just not in the same capacity. The Ukraine Without Orphans Alliance is already working with government officials to try to deal with this situation. It is their hope that in the future the Alliance will serve as a voice for the adoptive and foster parents of Ukraine to lobby the government for the rights of orphans. ♦

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Correction

The editor regrets statistical errors in the first paragraph of the article by Weonjin Choi, "Korean Baptist Missions in Kazakhstan," in the *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 18 (Summer 2010), 6. The second sentence of the first paragraph should

read: "As of 2010 its 62,000 plus churches were responsible for a worldwide missionary force of 20,840."

Both sources for endnote 1 may be accessed at <http://kwma.org>.

Pentecostal and Charismatic Denominations in Russia

Torsten Löfstedt

The Pentecostal and Charismatic movement is the third largest religious movement in Russia, after the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and Islam, and it is growing rapidly. Russia is home to three large Pentecostal denominations. The largest is the Russian Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (RCCEF), sometimes referred to as the Russian Church of Evangelical Christians, with approximately 300,000 members, if children are counted, and some 1,300 congregations. It is headed by Eduard Grabovenko (www.hve.ru). It is followed by the Russian Association of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (RACEFP), led by Sergei Ryakhovsky (cef.ru). The third largest Pentecostal church is the unregistered United Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (UCCEF) led by Ivan Fedotov.

Differences among these three denominations today are rather small. All three are Trinitarian, all practice believers' baptism, all believe in healing in response to prayer, and all value speaking in tongues. Grabovenko's RCCEF has its roots in traditional Russian Pentecostalism and has had close ties to the Assemblies of God, but it also includes more Charismatic congregations. Ryakhovsky's RACEFP is an umbrella organization including groups of churches associated with various Neocharismatic missions, including the Churches of Faith, but it also includes more traditional congregations.

Elusive Numbers

Individual congregations in these denominations have considerable freedom, and some congregations are registered with one denomination, but in practice show their allegiance to another. The most notable example is the New Testament Church in Perm. The congregation is officially part of Ryakhovsky's union, but its head pastor, Grabovenko, is himself head of the RCCEF. This kind of overlap makes it very difficult to give accurate statistics for Russian Pentecostalism, as Roman Lunkin has pointed out. ("Pentecostal and Charismatic Statistics," *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 13 [Winter 2005], 3).

Origins

The first truly Pentecostal congregation on Russian territory was established in 1911 as a result of the preaching of Lewi Pethrus and T.B. Barratt in Helsinki, Finland, which was then part of the Russian Empire. From there Alexander Ivanov and Nikolai Smorodin went to St. Petersburg to preach the Pentecostal message. As early as 1914 a congregation called the Society of Evangelical Christians in the Spirit of the Apostles was established in St. Petersburg. Ivanov and Smorodin eventually became Oneness or Jesus-Only Pentecostals, and their direct theological descendants are the Evangelical Christians in the Spirit of the Apostles, a union of about 70 Jesus-Only Pentecostal congregations.

The larger Pentecostal denominations trace their history primarily to the missionary work of Ivan Voronaev, another returning emigrant, who was sponsored in part by the Assemblies of God, and who in 1926 established the All-Ukrainian Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith in Odessa. The following year the National (or All-Union) Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith was established, showing that Voronaev's ambition was to spread

the Pentecostal movement throughout the Soviet Union. This union planted churches in both Russia and Ukraine, but was forced to close after Stalin's promulgation of the Law on Religious Associations in 8 April 1929. Voronaev was arrested in 1930 and died in one of Stalin's labor camps. Many other leading Pentecostals were repeatedly arrested, and some were killed by Soviet authorities. Soviet repression of Pentecostals continued up until the late 1980s, and the Pentecostal movement grew but slowly.

Strength in Ukraine and Western Borderlands

The leadership of Grabovenko's RCCEF today is largely ethnically Ukrainian, with many Russian Pentecostal congregations having pastors of Ukrainian or Belorussian origin. The Pentecostal movement reached western Ukraine and Belorussia in the 1920s, in part through the ministry of Ukrainian and Belorussian emigrants returning from the United States. In addition, the work in Ukraine and Belorussia grew through the ministry of Gustav Schmidt, a Russian-German missionary with the Assemblies of God. He served in Poland from 1920 to 1925 and founded a Bible Institute in Danzig in 1930 that trained Pentecostal ministers from various parts of Eastern Europe. Many newly established Pentecostal churches primarily in eastern Poland joined together as the Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith of Poland in 1929. In 1939, when the Soviet Union annexed from Poland what are now the western parts of Belorussia, Ukraine, and eastern Lithuania, many Pentecostal congregations that had belonged to the Polish union now found themselves in the Soviet Union. While these congregations also suffered from Soviet repression, the Pentecostal movement was on the whole more firmly established in these western regions than in other parts of the Soviet Union. During World War II parts of Belorussia and Ukraine were under Nazi control, and some Pentecostal groups were allowed to formally register with the Nazi occupation government. When these areas came under Soviet rule, they kept their legal status, but in August 1945 they were forcibly merged together with other Protestant denominations to form the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB), which operated under state control. Many Pentecostal congregations were disbanded while others continued to operate in secret. Many Pentecostals in the UECB soon left, in part because they were not allowed to continue distinctively Pentecostal practices such as speaking in tongues. These Pentecostals preferred to operate without official sanction rather than conform to Baptist practice. In the years that followed, Pentecostals repeatedly sought to register their denomination with the state, but without success.

New Freedoms

Even before the new Soviet law "On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organizations" was promulgated in 9 October 1990, Russian Pentecostals that had belonged to the UECB left that union en masse to form a Pentecostal Union, together with autonomous Pentecostal congregations. This first congress of the Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith of the RSFSR was held 14-16 May 1990. In 2004 this denomination changed its name to Russian

The Pentecostal and Charismatic movement is the third largest religious movement in Russia, after the Russian Orthodox Church and Islam, and it is growing rapidly.

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Pentecostal and Charismatic Denominations in Russia *(continued from page 9)*

Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith. Much of the initial growth of this denomination came about thanks to the efforts of thousands of missionaries sent by Pentecostal congregations in Ukraine and Belorussia in the late 1980s and the 1990s.

Missionaries from Abroad

After the promulgation of the new law in 1990, thousands of foreign missionaries (European, American, and Korean) also entered Russia and began planting new congregations. Many of these missionaries were associated with the Neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic movement, which now began to compete with traditional Pentecostals. Among these new movements were some that promoted prosperity gospel teachings. Among these were congregations affiliated with the Swedish-based Word of Life, New Generation (Riga), and the Embassy of God (Kyiv). Prosperity preachers teach that it is God's will that those who believe should be blessed here and now with health and wealth; all that is required is faith. This gospel was attractive to many Russians raised under Communism, who desired the benefits of capitalism but lacked an understanding of the work involved.

New Restrictions and Responses

The 1997 law, "On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations," forced many traditional and Neocharismatic churches in Russia to join forces because it stipulated that denominations that had existed in Russia for less than 15 years could not obtain legal status unless they affiliated with an officially recognized denomination. Thus, many congregations founded by European, American, and Asian missionaries chose to affiliate with the RCCEF in order to be legally registered. The result was rapid numerical growth within the RCCEF, but it also put the unity of the denomination at risk. In fact, some considered it more of an umbrella organization for various *de facto* independent congregations, rather than a true denomination.

In 1999 leaders of the RCCEF took steps to unify the teaching and practice of the congregations constituting the RCCEF. Several borrowings from Western Neo-Pentecostalism were rejected, including the prosperity gospel. RCCEF centralization has since continued. Leaders of some of the largest congregations who in the past tended to operate as leaders of their own denominations have been promoted to bishops of the RCCEF. In May 2000 President Vladimir Putin divided the country into seven (today eight) federal districts and appointed "presidential plenipotentiary envoys" responsible for each district. In similar fashion the leadership of the RCCEF has promoted certain bishops to the status of "bishop in the federal district," who report to the executive bishop in Moscow about developments within their jurisdiction.

Not all Pentecostals, however, wished to join the RCCEF. Some congregations remain deeply distrustful of all forms of registration with the government. These are gathered into a loose organization called the United Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith. Others, led by Sergei Ryakhovsky, formed an alternative union. Ryakhovsky, who had a background among unregistered Pentecostals, but developed ties with the Church of God, Cleveland, an American Pentecostal denomination, founded the umbrella organization RACEFP in 1997.

Several Charismatic churches, among them Moscow's Word of Life and its Russian sister churches, chose to affiliate with this group rather than with Grabovenko's RCCEF, as Ryakhovsky's RACEFP gave them greater freedom in organization, theology, and practice. Ryakhovsky's RACEFP today includes a total of 20 smaller denominations and as a consequence is far less centralized than Grabovenko's RCCEF.

Improving Relations between Pentecostal Unions

Relations between the two leading Pentecostal denominations in Russia were strained for some time, with traditional Pentecostals accusing Neocharismatics of stealing their sheep, but ties between the two have improved of late. I suspect that relations between the leading Pentecostal churches will continue to improve. Eduard Grabovenko was elected executive bishop of RCCEF in 2009; as was mentioned, the megachurch he founded, the New Testament Church in Perm, is officially part of RACEFP. Grabovenko's own preaching resembles that of RACEFP's Neocharismatic preachers. His congregation has an impressive record of planting new churches (400 by one count), and in November 2010 he was invited to give a sermon at a conference for the Churches of Faith, a sub-denomination within RACEFP, to which the Word of Life congregations belong. On a more sombre note, on 15 July 2010, Artur Suleimanov, RCCEF's bishop in Dagestan, was murdered. One of the first to offer condolences was Artur Simonian, head pastor of the Word of Life congregation in Yerevan, Armenia. Sergei Ryakhovsky (RACEFP) attended the funeral together with leaders of RCCEF, again showing solidarity among the leadership of the largest Pentecostal unions.

Latest Developments in Prosperity Gospel Teaching

The two movements have continued to come closer together in both worship and theology. Charismatic forms of worship have become commonplace in many RCCEF churches, and the Word of Life congregation in Moscow, like its mother church in Uppsala, Sweden, has downplayed prosperity teaching, developing a more mature theology. Some congregations strongly associated with the prosperity gospel have been tainted with scandal, most notably Sunday Adelaja's Embassy of God Church in Kyiv, Ukraine, and Alexei Ledyayev's New Generation Church in Riga, Latvia. This problem may have led to serious soul searching on the part of some prosperity gospel congregations. But Word of Life still teaches a form of prosperity theology, as is evident from the statement of faith of the Association of Christians of the Evangelical Faith Churches of Faith, the sub-denomination headed by Word of Life Moscow. It still speaks of *polnoe protsvetanie*, that is, full prosperity or complete well-being:

By his life, death and resurrection Jesus showed that God wants to save the individual in his spirit, soul and body, and that God's will is this, that every person in his life walk in divine health, divine prosperity, [and] by means of faith be a victor in all areas of life: spiritually, in his soul, physically, economically, socially. (www.wolrus.org)

But Ulf Ekman, founder of the Word of Life

I suspect that relations between the leading Pentecostal churches will continue to improve.

movement in Sweden and Russia, now contends that one is not to seek after wealth for its own sake. Rather, wealth that is given in answer to prayer is to be used in the service of the kingdom, to help the poor and spread the Gospel.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that Grabovenko's RCCEF has lately taken a more positive view of wealth, similar to the position of Word of Life. Pavel Bak, formerly the second-ranking bishop in RCCEF, now head of the denomination's legal division, gave the following explanation of RCCEF's view of wealth in an interview on 3 September 2010:

If wealth is the highest form of self-expression for a person, then it witnesses to the presence of sin in that person's heart. If property is seen as means given by God for the realization of the Divine vision, then it is pleasing to God and will bring great fruit, both for the person himself and for people around him. (www.hve.ru)

Word of Life Moscow's head pastor, Mats-Ola Ishoel, a Norwegian who has been working in Moscow since 1998, is one of the highest leaders of Ryakhovsky's RACEFP. At the same time, he is respected by leaders of Grabovenko's RCCEF, and some pastors in RCCEF have studied in Word of Life's Bible school in Moscow. In Moscow RCCEF youth are encouraged to participate in Word of Life activities, and one of Grabovenko's first deputies, Vladimir Murza, recently travelled to Israel with Word of Life.

Pentecostals and Charismatics Drawing Closer

The leaders of RCCEF and RACEFP are both involved in the Consultative Council of Heads of Protestant Churches, together with Adventist and Evangelical Christian-Baptist leaders. This council has produced an approximately forty-page document entitled "Social Position of the Protestant Churches,"

detailing these denominations' stances on a number of controversial issues such as abortion and bio-medical research. Whereas Neocharismatics in the West have been characterized as self-absorbed, in Russia Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations alike are socially active. These congregations are involved in all kinds of social ministries including outreach to prisoners, alcoholics, drug addicts, and street children. It may be that the two Pentecostal movements are coming closer together because what once seemed new and foreign has become normal. Russian Pentecostals are not always aware that many of their favorite worship songs are translations from English. Further, all evangelical denominations in the former Soviet Union are affected by a continuing emigration to the West, especially to the United States. In part because of this mass emigration, Russian Pentecostal churches are no longer growing as quickly as they did in the 1990s. As leading members of the congregations leave for America, Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations in Russia must work together to survive. The activity of foreign missionaries is also less noticeable today than in the 1990s, and after the financial crisis of 2007, they have less money to spend. This lack of funding may also contribute to the denominations growing closer, as in the past missionaries tended to polarize the various Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, as they often tried to create churches on the pattern of their home congregations, rather than working with existing denominations. ♦

Editor's note: The author recommends Vladimir Franchuk, Prosila Rossiya Dozhdy i Gospoda (Kyiv: Izdatelstvo "Svitankova zoriya," 2003), as the best source for Russian Pentecostal history.

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Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations are involved in all kinds of social ministries including outreach to prisoners, alcoholics, drug addicts, and street children.

European Baptist Federation Church Planting

Keith G. Jones

In 1990, as the impact of post-Communist and post-modern life began markedly to change the mission scene in Europe, the European Baptist Federation (EBF) established a Division of Mission and Evangelism to give more careful thought to the provision of cross-cultural resources for church planting and other forms of outreach. Even earlier, many European Baptist leaders had begun to recognize that church planting was not simply a matter of taking the latest offering from North America, but that careful examination of the European situation and Europe-appropriate efforts was needed.

Urban Ethnic Churches

One effect of globalization in this period was the growth of a multi-ethnic character to Europe's largest cities, with an inflow of migrants from other parts of Europe and from other continents. Thus the 2005 EBF Mission and Evangelism Conference focused on the establishment of ethnic churches in urban centers. In Austria, Belgium, and Germany ethnic Baptist communities began to flourish, and in large cities like London, Vienna, Brussels, Paris, and Berlin, ethnic

churches formed the most significant and vibrant baptistic communities. The 2005 conference produced many excellent papers which the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague published in book form.¹ Here was EBF cross-cultural mission concern at its best, with an issue being identified, and with Europeans gathering together, both to inform each other and to draw expertise from specialist thinkers within the EBF family.

Theo Angelov

A prior significant development had already taken place in 2000 with the election of Bulgarian Theo Angelov as general secretary. A survivor of his country's Communist repressions, Angelov addressed a September 2000 EBF Council meeting in Riga, Latvia, proposing a new EBF initiative. His idea was to talk with all of Europe's North American mission partners about four specific mission priorities which the partners might support and which would be controlled and shaped by the EBF. This proposal represented a significant first for EBF, given that previously its role had been relief and development

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European Baptist Federation Church Planting *(continued from page 11)*

through Baptist Response-Europe (BRE). As a follow-up, discussions with various partners took place at a meeting held at a hotel near London's Heathrow Airport, 24-25 August 2001. Representatives of the American Baptist Churches International Missions Board, the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board, the North American Baptist Convention, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), Britain's Baptist Missionary Society, and Baptist state conventions from Virginia, Texas, Tennessee, and North Carolina met to hear Angelov's presentation.

The Indigenous Missionary Project

While participants discussed several options at the meeting—such as continuing support for relief and development and assistance for theological education—one idea, the creation of an indigenous missionary project, seemed to engender general support. The proposal, as it developed, envisaged various national unions applying to an EBF coordinating group for funding for salaries (at an EBF-set figure) for nationals who would plant new congregations. In turn, the EBF would solicit finances from Baptist unions in Western Europe and from mission partners in the U.S. to fund this work. Regular reports would be furnished to the funding partners with declining salary support over five years as church plants became self-supporting or received increasing assistance from their respective Baptist unions.²

This Indigenous Missionary Project (IMP), as it came to be known, was an EBF initiative involving European and North American partners. Though some, including this writer, doubted that, in practice, either the North American mission partners or the Baptist unions of Europe would willingly cede key responsibilities and oversight to the EBF, subsequent events proved otherwise. Angelov already had a vigorous coordinator in mind, Daniel Trusiewicz, pastor of Wroclaw Baptist Church in Poland. The general secretary drove the scheme forward, demonstrating that EBF's executive officer could in some circumstances exercise significant leadership.

In April 2002 Pastor Trusiewicz made a modest start with a handful of missionaries in Moldova. By 2006 IMP personnel had launched church plants in Armenia, Belarus, the Caucasus region, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, and five Middle Eastern countries.³ By April 2010 newly planted churches numbered 65 in 25 countries in Europe and the Middle East.⁴ The work of Trusiewicz and the leadership of Angelov and his successor, Tony Peck, made a remarkable success of the IMP. This achievement demonstrates that both European Baptist unions and various U.S. Baptist mission agencies trusted and used the EBF to facilitate an exciting program of church planting by indigenous missionaries, involving cross-cultural support. Thus, Theo Angelov's vision of the Indigenous Missionary Project allowed the EBF to take on an important new role. ♦

Notes:

¹Peter F. Penner, ed., *Ethnic Churches in Europe: A Baptist Response* (Schwarzenfeld, Germany: Neufeld Verlag, 2006).

²EBF Indigenous Missionary Project Guidelines; www.ebf.org/articles/index; accessed 18 January 2007.

³EBF Council, Lyon, September 2006, Document C2006/14, EBF Office Archive, Prague.

⁴Updated information maintained at www.ebf.org/projects; accessed April 2010. Approximately 11 post-Soviet countries have been added since April 2006: Azerbaijan, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, and Tajikistan.

Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from Keith G. Jones, The European Baptist Federation; A Case Study in European Baptist Interdependency, 1950-2006 (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2009).

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By April 2010 newly planted churches numbered 65 in 25 countries in Europe and the Middle East.

European Baptist Federation Presidents from the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1966-2009

Michael Zhidkov, *Russia*, 1966-1968
Alexei Bichkov, *Russia*, 1976-1978
Stanislav Sveč, *Czechoslovakia*, 1981-1983
Vasile Talpos, *Romania*, 1987-1989
Theodor Angelov, *Bulgaria*, 1995-1997
Gregory Komendant, *Ukraine*, 2001-2003
Helari Puu, *Estonia*, 2005-2007
Toma Magda, *Croatia*, 2007-2009

- Thirty-six percent (8 of 22) of European Baptist Federation presidents were from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1966-2009.
- Fifty-seven percent (4 of 7) were from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1995-2009.

Source: Keith G. Jones, *The European Baptist Federation; A Case Study in European Baptist Interdependency, 1950-2006* (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2009).

American and Romanian Values at Odds

Andrew LaBreche

Editor's note: The first portion of this article was published in the previous issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report 18 (Fall 2010): 6-9.

A Nation of Contrasts

Latin is the basis for the language of Romania, but this nation is surrounded by neighbors who speak Slavic tongues. A "Latin island in a sea of Slavs," Romania is in the East, but looks to the West. Over the centuries it has straddled the crossroads of major powers – Ottoman Turks, Austro-Hungarians, Germans, and Russians – and has suffered greatly for it. Romanians are both a proud and a defeated people at the same time, and especially proud of their humility.

With Americans they have a love-hate relationship. They are a forgiving people, yet still remind Americans of their abandonment at Yalta. They can be painfully direct, but overall are very indirect communicators. They are wonderfully warm, enjoy life to the fullest, and when necessary, stoically endure intense hardship, yet the national pastime seems to be complaining. They are open and yet closed. They are understandable and yet not. Nothing about them can be ruled out entirely.

A High Level of Religious Adherence

Compared to the rest of Europe, Romania is especially religious. It has an unusually large number of Orthodox places of worship and religious vocations: 14,529 parishes, monasteries, and chapels; 12,173 priests and deacons; and 8,029 monks and nuns. Romania also has 11,063 seminarians and 10,235 public school religion teachers.¹ All these figures are proportionately high compared to other Orthodox countries. Romania also has the third largest number of evangelical Christians in Europe, more than all Evangelicals in the rest of Eastern Europe combined. The number of evangelical churches more than doubled between 1989 and 2006, from approximately 1,800-2,400 to at least 5,000.²

Time Consciousness

Although the culture is changing rapidly, Romanians in general are much less time-conscious than Americans. Several years ago when I first arrived in Romania, we were invited to a friend's house for a birthday party. He said 7:00 p.m., so as good Americans, we arrived within five minutes of 7:00 p.m. He answered the door, clearly not dressed yet, still cleaning the house, and with a very surprised look on his face, asked why we had come early. The rest of the guests showed up "on time" around 8:00 or 8:30.

This is not to say that nothing is "on time" from an American perspective. Trains (usually) leave at the time posted. When meeting with someone from a significantly higher class, one must be on time, but between friends or in an informal gathering, "on time" can be within an hour of the announced starting time. As one can imagine, a lack of understanding of this significant cultural difference can create tremendous conflicts, especially for Americans who consider punctuality a moral issue.

Contrasting Perspectives on Planning

Americans often reject old ways in favor of something new. Mottos like "Today is the first day of the rest of your life" and "Plan ahead" are heartfelt and closely tied to faith in progress and action.³ The problem American evangelical missionaries encounter

in cultures without a strong future orientation is clear: "Given our penchant for planning, it should not surprise us that we are often frustrated when we go to societies where people do not plan ahead. Even more frustrating is the fact that in many cultures people not only do not plan, they think it is wrong to do so."⁴ Romanian culture does not consider it wrong to plan for the future, but in Romania it is very difficult to make plans that will actually come about because so many unanticipated events occur each day. Eventually one gives up on planning because unexpected and uncontrollable events frequently make planning useless.

In general, Romanians are also much more fatalistic than Americans. Describing Romanian culture, former U.S. foreign service officer Yale Richmond states: "Events should be allowed to happen, since people have little ability to change them."⁵ One of the best examples of the influence of fatalism, to the point of its almost becoming a positive value, is the Romanian ballad "Miorița," which relates the story of two shepherds who plot to kill their companion, a third shepherd. Miorița, a ewe lamb of the third shepherd, warns him of the plot. But instead of defending himself as the ewe advises, he asks her to tell the two murderers to bury him near the sheepfold. What is striking from an American perspective is the passivity of the hero in the face of death. He does nothing to defend himself and only whiles away the time philosophizing about life.

An interesting exchange was observed some years ago during a lecture on this story given by a Romanian to a group of mostly American evangelical missionaries. After finishing a very emotional recounting of the story and commenting on the beauty and meaning it holds, the Romanian narrator asked the audience for their thoughts. One American missionary said, "Why didn't he just kill the other two?" The Romanian was noticeably taken back and mumbled how everyone had missed the bravery of the hero in facing death. By way of contrast, Lucian Blaga, a prominent Romanian philosopher and poet, went so far as to describe the shepherd's death as a "sacramental act."⁶

In keeping with their Enlightenment heritage, Americans see the world as consistent and orderly, operating according to natural laws that apply uniformly over time and space. If Americans know how things work, they are confident they can rule nature, engineer societies, make things happen, and be in charge of their lives. Rather than accepting the unexpected as a normal part of life, Americans are upset when things go wrong and are quick to place blame and correct faults. They assume that if they do things right they will succeed, whether in running a company, constructing a building, or planting a church. Dominance of nature—and the world—has been very much a part of the Western ethos.⁷

This concept of a rational order in the world that explains all events is the basis for the huge emphasis one finds in American culture on problem solving. In fact, from an American perspective, reality is brimming with problems to be solved.⁸ Romanians are much more willing to tolerate ambiguity (or as Americans would describe it, chaos). Much of this

In Romania unexpected and uncontrollable events frequently make planning useless.

(continued on page 14)

American and Romanian Values at Odds *(continued from page 13)*

tolerance for ambiguity may simply stem from an inability to plan with any degree of certainty.

Task Versus Relationship Orientation

Americans place high value on planning, efficiency, productivity, and profit. The American emphasis upon tasks to be accomplished inevitably leads to a focus on techniques, on how to do things. However, in Romania, as in many traditional societies, life revolves around relationships, which are often ends in themselves, not means to an end. People do work together to complete common tasks, but friends and relatives often gather informally to simply enjoy one another's company, not waiting for holidays or a special invitation. In Romania, relationships take precedence over plans and structures. Work must wait when relatives and friends arrive unexpectedly.

Romanians find meaning in life not necessarily in accomplishments (although that is changing in the large cities), but in social connections. Consequently, people generally give priority to cultivating relationships over completing tasks. Hospitality to strangers and generosity are thus highly valued because they directly relate to the emphasis upon relationships.

The church is affected by this significant area of difference between American and Romanian evangelical cultures. Romanian churches, oriented more towards relationships, differ from American churches, which focus on order. Meeting times are governed less by clocks and more by human exigencies. Typically, Romanian services begin when some (to American eyes) undefined number has arrived and generally end not so much at a fixed time but when the service is done. Time at church focuses heavily on personal and social relationships rather than the accomplishment of a task or goal.

Church polity, too, is different in Romania. More emphasis is placed on relationships within the church than on strict adherence to constitutions, voting, and *Robert's Rules of Order*. From an American perspective much more is accomplished informally and outside official meetings. Potentially conflicting views are very diplomatically and carefully explored before any public meeting takes place. If the views of potential adversaries are not known beforehand, participants wait to express opinions until the most senior person (generally the pastor) has spoken. At the same time, leaders are careful to respect the opinions of other socially important figures present. On the positive side, the practical outcome of this is decision-making by consensus. On the negative side, it can lead to subtle power struggles, gossip, and backbiting.

Headstrong Americans

Unfortunately, American evangelical missionaries too often attend meetings with "all the answers," ready to solve everyone's problems, but with solutions to questions that are not being asked, let alone considered a problem needing fixing. This ethnocentric assumption of Americans that they understand the problem (whatever that may be) better than do nationals and that they also have the solution, only tends to confirm the widespread view among Romanian Evangelicals that Americans are arrogant and condescending. Very clearly, conflicts can result. Often, however, because of subconsciously

held ethnocentric values, Americans may be totally unaware of having given offense, instead thinking they are being very helpful—helpfulness being a strong American value in itself.

Differing Views on Social Rank

Americans are often insensitive to social rank and can cause great offense in cultures that place a higher value on formality and social status.⁹ In the high context culture of Romania, each person, upon meeting another, attempts to establish as accurately as possible the status of the other person. At times this even means not shaking the hand of those significantly below you, an act incredibly offensive to Americans. Even though I was personally aware of this as a cultural norm, it still raised my emotions when a colleague of mine did not shake the hand of another Romanian friend of mine who happened to be of the working class. At other times Romanians are taken aback by American informality with others or a lack of "decorum" in meeting someone significant.

Americans are very proud of their democratic system of government, yet problems arise when they assume that democracy is the only Christian way.¹⁰ Americans expect to be able to express their opinions and to exert an influence on the final decision taken. Everyone should be given a chance to speak and have an equal voice in the decision.¹¹ When practiced in a context where negotiations and decision-making are much more subtle and less public, as in Romania, insisting that one's voice be heard and "demanding" to exert an influence on a final decision is considered proud and arrogant.

Collectivism Versus Individualism

Answers to one question from the World Values Survey underscore the observation that Romanian culture has a more collectivist orientation than does American culture. Only 28.4 percent of Romanians considered independence an important quality for children to be taught at home, compared to 62 percent of Americans.¹²

Related to one's self-identity is the high value North Americans place on being accepted or liked. This need for acceptance can cause significant interpersonal problems because Romanians, relatively speaking, are not an affirming people. Praise and compliments are considered detrimental to one's sense of humility, so are seldom given. Thus the typical American craving for a feeling of acceptance is often not met, and strong perceptions of not being appreciated develop, causing great potential for intercultural misunderstanding. On the Romanian side, the American desire for approval is often interpreted as narcissistic selfishness. In contrast, the strong Romanian emphasis upon humility can lead to the paradoxical result of people actually being proud of their presumed humility.

Who Is Being Honest?

In North America it generally is worse to tell a lie than to hurt someone's feelings. In many other cultures it is the reverse, even if it means bending the truth somewhat.¹³ In even mundane contacts such as asking directions, this factor comes into play. In order to please, Romanians tend to tell foreigners what they think foreigners want to hear.¹⁴ In asking directions one may receive detailed responses, whereas in reality

Americans place high value on planning. However, in Romania, life revolves around relationships, which are often ends in themselves, not means to an end.

Only 28.4 percent of Romanians considered independence an important quality for children to be taught at home, compared to 62 percent of Americans.

direction-givers simply may not know. Without any idea of the location, Romanians still want to help, or perhaps, not lose face.

Responses to the questionnaire administered to American missionaries and Romanian Evangelicals indicated each group considered the other dishonest. Romanians in general weigh the truth in terms of its potential to damage a relationship. The result is that facts often are left unsaid and problems, from an American perspective, are “swept under the rug” in a “dishonest” fashion. Because Romanians are very adept at indirect communication, they tend to “read into” what is said, thereby deciphering what the speaker is “really saying.” When Romanians speak this way with “straight talking” Americans, they often assume something was said that actually was not intended. From the American perspective indirect allusions and inferences, if caught, are seen as deceptive at best and dishonest at worst. Thus, what may not in fact be dishonesty is assumed to be so by both sides.

Efficiency Versus Bureaucracy

Efficiency is very important to Americans, including American evangelical missionaries. They want to get things done, not waste time, and accomplish their goals, all by the most efficient means possible. It is difficult for Americans to understand how a people could think differently. But under the Communist system, a different thought pattern developed in which productivity statistics mattered more than efficiency or quality of goods. Former U.S. Foreign Service officer Yale Richmond describes the Romanian bureaucratic system as one that is half Ottoman and half Habsburg and “combines the worst features of both.” He exaggerates, but those who have spent hours standing in Romanian lines waiting for a chance to be yelled at would probably agree. In theological terms, Richmond humorously describes Romanian clerks as “omnipotent but not always omnipresent.”¹⁵

The perpetual bureaucratic grind that continues in post-Communist Romania is one aspect of daily life that truly exasperates Americans. Thus, American evangelical missionaries come to Romania with a clearly thought out, detailed ministry strategy, including a specific plan to achieve these goals. Frustration is the result because the missionaries are coming to a culture that does not place a high value on efficiency. In fact, even the simple act of going to town with a list of 10 errands is fanciful because of bureaucracy and a general lack of a customer service mentality—although it is changing rapidly. Given this scenario, a former missionary friend gave this valuable advice: “Consider yourself very successful if three of the 10 errands are accomplished, or even if you went to town, got nothing done, but enjoyed the walk.”

In contrast, in most of the non-Western world, including Romania, “being and becoming” take priority over “doing.” This emphasis is also seen in the high respect for intellectuals and thinkers in Romanian culture, in contrast to the suspicion businessmen often face.¹⁶ ♦

Notes

¹ Monica Heintz, “Romanian Orthodoxy between the Urban and the Rural,” Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers, No. 67, 2004, p. 5; <http://monica.heintz.free.fr/versions>.

² www.oci.ro.

³ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985), 131-32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁵ *From Da to Yes: Understanding the East Europeans* (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1995), 134.

⁶ Lucian Blaga, *Orizont si stil [Horizon and Style]* (Bucharest: 1936), 120-21.

⁷ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 139-40.

⁸ Edward C. Stewart and Milton J. Bennett, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, rev. ed. (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1991), 68.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 90; Paul G. Hiebert, “Popular Religions” in *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission*, ed.

by James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 185 and 286; David J. Hesselgrave, ed., *Theology and Mission: Papers Given at Trinity Consultation No. 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978), 348-64; Marvin K. Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross-Cultural Evangelism*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 130; Eugene Nida, *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 41; Serena Nanda, *Cultural Anthropology* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 301.

¹⁰ S. A. Grunlan and M. K. Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 217.

¹¹ Stewart and Bennett, *American Cultural Patterns*, 63-64.

¹² Paul E. Spector, Cary L. Cooper, Juan I. Sanchez *et al.*, “Do National Levels of Individualism and Internal Locus of Control Relate to Well-Being: An Ecological Level International Study,” *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 22 (2001), 824.

¹³ Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999), 37.

¹⁴ Richmond, *From Da to Yes*, 148.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 140-41.

¹⁶ Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights*, 117 and 121.

Edited excerpts published with permission from Andrew LaBreche, “Ethnocentrism. U.S.—American Evangelical Missionaries in Romania: Qualitative Missiological Research into Representative Cross-Cultural Value-Based Conflicts,” Ph.D. dissertation, Evangelical Theological Faculty of Leuven, Belgium, 2007.

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American evangelical missionaries come to Romania with a clearly thought out, detailed ministry strategy. Frustration is the result because the missionaries are coming to a culture that does not place a high value on efficiency.

Protestant Congregations Outnumber Orthodox in Russian Far East

Paul Goble

The Demographics

Protestant congregations now outnumber Russian Orthodox churches in Russia's Far East. This development both reflects and reinforces the distinctive regional identity and anti-Moscow sentiments of many people living in Siberia and the Russian Far East, according to religion specialists. The Trans-Baikal News Agency reports that "the most 'Protestant' regions of the Far East are Primorsky and Khabarovsk." Primorsky is home to 178 Protestant communities compared to 89 parishes of the Moscow-based Russian Orthodox Church. (zabinfo.ru/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=71103&mode=thread&orderthold=0)

Leading denominations are Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Evangelical, and Seventh-day Adventist, the news service says, but the region includes "dozens of others" as well. Muslims, Jews, and Buddhists also lag far behind Protestants in houses of worship, namely six mosques, seven synagogues, and four pagodas. The situation in the Khabarovsk District is "very similar: of the 163 religious organizations, 96 are Protestant," twice as many as the Orthodox. Moreover, this Protestant advantage is growing. Not only are ever more Protestant groups organizing and building churches, but the Orthodox Church, lacking funds and followers, has been shutting down parishes.

In the past, the Moscow Patriarchate stressed that Protestant congregations were significantly smaller than Orthodox ones in terms of attendance, activity, and contributions. This report suggests, although its authors do not make this point, that this is no longer the case. This pattern of Protestantism on the rise and Orthodoxy in decline holds for other parts of Siberia as well. Krasnoyarsk is home to 111 Protestant groups; Irkutsk, 97; and Sverdlovsk, 94.

Zabinfo.ru notes that Pentecostal and Charismatic churches "are the most widespread." Pastor Konstantin Bendas, administrator of the Russian United Union of Evangelical Christians, says that "this phenomenon has a long history. Orthodoxy came to these territories quite late. Representatives of confessions not tolerated in the Russian Empire were exiled to Siberia and the Far East." Moreover, he continued, "many fled from oppression—Molokane, Dukhobors, Mennonites, Stundists, and so on. In Soviet times, those religious leaders who were able to escape execution were exiled to the Far East. And in this way, the elite of Russian Protestants were concentrated precisely there."

In a comment on this report, the editors of Religiopolis.org suggest that this Protestant trend, which they acknowledge has deep historical roots, also reflects certain contemporary realities, including the ethnic diversity of the region, immigration and outmigration, and a tradition of independent action (www.religiopolis.org/news/1373-dalnij-vostok-rossii-otkazalsja-ot-pravoslavija.html.) "The social openness" of Protestantism and its commitment to public action, Religiopolis.org argues, means that its various denominations are more attractive to the people of Siberia and the Russian Far East than is the more inward-focused Russian Orthodox Church, at least at the present time.

The Politics

The rise of Protestantism in Siberia and the Russian Far East threatens not just the Moscow Patriarchate and its pretensions to speak for all ethnic Russians, who it says are Orthodox by birth. It also represents a challenge to Moscow's political control of the region, given that Siberian regionalism and Protestant religion can and do reinforce one another. Indeed, one of the major arguments of the Siberian nationalist movement is that Siberia never knew serfdom and has a Protestant work ethic closer to that of the United States than to that found in European Russia. The rise of Protestant communities across the region will only reinforce that disparity, especially if the Moscow Patriarchate remains so hostile to Protestantism. ♦

Edited excerpts published with permission from Paul Goble, "Protestant Congregations Now Vastly Outnumber Orthodox Ones in Russian Far East," Window on Eurasia, 8 November 2010.

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