



EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT

Spring 2011

Vol. 19, No. 2

The Hope Center of Latvia: Help for Unwed Mothers

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Latvia's Daunting Road to Recovery

Latvia is a country struggling to recover from a half-century of occupation by a foreign, atheistic, totalitarian regime. Soviet rule undermined much of the social fabric of Latvian society and created a climate of distrust. God and church were seen as enemies to be conquered and eliminated.

Along with efforts at economic recovery, Latvia is struggling to retrieve its spiritual compass and respect for human dignity. The difficulty, however, is that volunteerism is just beginning to reappear. Many feel helpless and frustrated with Latvia's lack of necessary funds to support a social welfare network that would guarantee some sort of minimal living standard for its less fortunate citizens. Alcoholism has had an impact on almost every family in Latvia. Its consequences include dysfunctional families, verbal and sexual abuse, as well as economic destitution. Increasing numbers of common law marriages frequently end with many single mothers raising children, a pattern that has become multi-generational.

Methodism Re-emergent

The United Methodist Church in Latvia is in the process of rebirth after Soviet occupation led to the closure of all Methodist churches following World War II. Thirteen small congregations which have reopened since the fall of Communism are determined to spread the good news of the gospel throughout Latvia. They are helped and nurtured by support from other United Methodist congregations around the world. Nevertheless, in the current difficult economic conditions, it is hard to find ways to fulfill God's mission to help the needy.

Hope Center Beginnings

The Hope Center in Latvia was born out of a deep desire to serve God by ministering to the outcasts of society, in particular, to provide new beginnings for young, single mothers and their babies. Through prayer, God put on our hearts the plight of young single women who were pregnant and who wanted to keep their babies. However, in the face of economic hardship and lack of living space, many of these young women thought they had no choice other than abortion. To address this concern we established the Hope Center, a non-profit organization that provides expectant single mothers with shelter and support, giving them a viable alternative to abortion.

In our first six months of operation, when all our work was still in the planning stage, God sent us a young homeless woman who was eight months

pregnant. She either spent her nights in a bus terminal or went home with any stranger who would take her in. Helping this young woman proved to be a true challenge and leap of faith for us. At the same time, caring for her became the birth of the mission God gave us—to help underaged, pregnant teens, the discards of society, who had been both mentally and physically abused and who had searched for love in all the wrong places. The Hope Center became a haven for young women who either had no place to live or came from orphanages or less-than-adequate crisis centers. What is true of all of our young women is that they have no loving families embracing them, and they have never had loving mothers as models. Each of these young, injured souls needs the example of a loving mother who can provide for her. Each expectant mother needs to experience family life that will allow her to bond with her baby and learn how to give her new baby proper care.

Modeling Motherhood

One mission of the Hope Center is to model motherhood, which is accomplished through the wonderful heart and example of Rigonda, our house mother. She has a burning passion for this ministry because she herself came from an abusive home. Despite a fractured homelife, she credits her mother for saving her life and instilling in her values that have given her an opportunity to be a good and loving mother to her own children. It is her mission in life not only to teach parenting skills but to be a model of a loving mother for the young mothers in her charge in the hope that they will become loving mothers themselves.

Another mission of the Hope Center is to provide a safe environment for newborns for at least the beginning of their lives. A third mission is to teach young mothers how to budget their money to prepare them to accept responsibility and to properly care for their babies. It is not an easy mission because expectant mothers join our "family" regardless of their ability to pay. We also give consultations on effective networking with government social services. In addition, our Hope Center office in Riga collects and distributes used baby clothing and baby food to mothers who come for help.

Stretching Funds

We always stretch our available funds to cover as many needs as possible. We are funded mainly by donations from loving believers who have heard God's call to aid in this ministry. It is hard to

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To date, we have been able to help over 200 young women.

The task of the Hope Center is to be the helping hands and feet of God and the loving heart of God.

establish a working budget when we have no definite income except a small amount government social services provides for some of those coming from orphanages. Nevertheless, God has been faithful, and we have never lacked for funds. Our 24-hour nannies and our house mother are all underpaid, but they understand how desperately they are needed by the young mothers. We also have the assistance of a part-time psychologist, which meets a legal requirement. To date, we have been able to help over 200 young women.

The Center has two facilities, one working and one temporarily closed. High heating costs have forced us for the present to close our largest facility deep in the country. With seven fully furnished bedrooms, it operated for several years. Our currently functioning facility is in Liepa, located on the second floor of the United Methodist Church of Liepa. It can accommodate six mothers and their children and has one on-duty nanny. It is the more cramped of the two facilities, but is also less expensive to run. We hope to reopen our larger facility in the future.

The Hope Center is the only home of its kind in Latvia. The few other centers in our country focus on offering shelter and food for women in crisis, but they do not prepare mothers for independent living. In contrast, we teach life skills, parenting skills, cleanliness, and proper food preparation essential for the wellbeing of babies.

“Ruth”

“Ruth” came to us because she had become pregnant and refused to have an abortion. At 15, she had experienced incredible neglect and abuse: her father was unknown, her mother a drug dealer and addict. At age ten Ruth’s mother locked her and her ten-month-old baby brother in their apartment and disappeared. Ruth did her best to keep her baby brother alive and the two of them from starving. They were saved by the police who found them while trying to find evidence against the mother for drug dealing. Ruth and her baby brother were put into separate orphanages. The baby brother was so neglected that he is now mentally and physically handicapped.

Ruth’s orphanage provided little oversight. She ended up living in a car with three other orphans. When they needed money, the two boys in the group would act as pimps for the two girls. Ruth became pregnant by one of the boys who started to abuse her physically. Frightened for her unborn child, she went to the police who brought her to the Hope Center. Ruth had never had any nurturing, any normalcy, anything that would be an example to follow in the future. It took her a full, frightened, tearful month to finally begin to trust us. We were there to hold her hand and comfort her when the doctor predicted heart problems for her baby. When the doctor unceremoniously announced that the baby’s intestines were growing outside the body cavity, we were there to assure her that her unborn child was not a monster growing in her belly. We were there to hold her through all the tears, fright, and doubts. We were there to rejoice with her when a healthy baby boy was born with no heart problems. We were there to help after the operation to correct the intestinal problem.

“Anna”

The police brought “Anna” to the Hope Center. She had been camping out in a tent in a park in Riga. She was afraid of institutions, afraid that they would take her baby since she was six months pregnant with another child. This young mother had strong survival instincts despite having experienced an incredibly difficult life. Her first baby was born with indeterminant sex organs. She had to decide whether the baby would be raised as a male or a female. She had no family and no friends to help her with this overwhelmingly confusing and complicated issue. We surrounded her with friendship, love, and a safe environment. We took her to experts who helped her understand the issues. We were with her when she gave birth to her beautiful second baby and helped her understand that both babies must be loved and treated equally.

“Lana”

“Lana,” with Down’s Syndrome, was our first mentally challenged young mother. Her mother is also mentally challenged and an alcoholic. Lana became pregnant by a boy who had his own serious problems. One day, this youth, suffering from depression, committed suicide by running in front of a moving train, with Lana as an eyewitness. Lana later gave birth to a son, but she was frightened by him. She did not know how to care for him, and she was afraid to bathe him. Government social services brought her to the Hope Center with the understanding that the baby would be taken away from Lana unless she could learn to care for him. Lana and her infant arrived so filthy and dirty that their clothes were immediately thrown away. Seven months later, Lana and her baby were able to leave the Center. Lana knew how to bathe and care for her baby. Social services found her a job and a day care center for her baby and watches over the family to make sure that Lana’s mother does not spend all of Lana’s money on alcohol.

Each of our “family” members has her own tragic story. Each one can stay with us until we are sure that she has found an appropriate place to live. Each one knows when she leaves our home that she can always turn to us for help. Many of our young mothers continue to stay in contact with us, sharing news of their lives.

The Helping Hands and Feet of God

Not all stories have happy endings, but we know that seeds have been sown and that the love, the nurturing, and the teaching our young mothers have received will sooner or later help them. The task of the Hope Center is to be the helping hands and feet of God and the loving heart of God in order to follow that great commandment to love each other and to take care of the less fortunate. We are trying to help break the vicious cycle of dysfunctional families into which our young mothers have been born. We ask for your prayers for these young women and their babies. Because Christ first loved us and gave His life for all, no one is undeserving of our help and care. ♦

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Reflections on Twenty Years of Ministry: From Odessa to Prague

Greg Nichols

Those of us who have spent the better part of two decades in Soviet and post-Soviet space have seen myriad changes. To be sure, globalization explains some of them, yet others have been unique to the region, as newly independent countries have come into their own after lengthy isolation from the world. I have experienced the upheavals personally; I have talked with my East European students; and I have written to and heard from colleagues ministering in the region. Based on these sources, I propose to highlight changes that could affect future mission strategies, as well as explain why some post-Soviet citizens find themselves feeling like outsiders in their own countries.

From Communism to Materialism

The older generation still remembers the Soviet era with nostalgia. Men and women, middle-aged and older, desire the stability of the old economy and government services, but the younger generation has no such experience. They were not members of a persecuted congregation or isolated from the mainstream because they did not join the Communist Party. Young and old still honor World War II veterans and enjoy a good Soviet movie, especially the comedies. However, any genuine understanding of the past escapes the young. As I have taught the new generation their church's history, I have found myself having to explain points in more detail than I did 15 years ago with students who had lived through persecution and understood its effects on the church.

Materialism now prevails, and the Communist idea that money is a dirty word is long gone. Some observers would say that aversion to materialism is not only a Marxist idea but also a strong idea in Orthodox and Slavic evangelical thought. In the past, Christians were not able to receive advanced education and therefore were limited in career choices. Additionally, many believers had large families and lived in poverty. Thus, Christians stood against materialism and wealth in keeping with Communist teaching, but for entirely different reasons.

Globalization has helped feed the desire of East Europeans for possessions. Overall, the standard of living for many has increased, but as in much of the world the gap between rich and poor is widening. To satisfy consumers, malls and department stores are replacing open markets. Many people now choose to buy their goods nicely packaged in the aisles of well-lit stores. The most common question today is not "Where can I buy that?" but "Did you see how much that cost?" The availability of goods in Eastern Europe is overwhelming to anyone who in the past had flown out with an empty suitcase and a list of essential items to fill it.

Improved living standards are making multi-generational apartments less and less common. Fifteen years ago, it was common in cities like Odessa, Ukraine, to find three generations living in one apartment, with grandparents and children taking the bedrooms, and the parents sleeping on a pullout sofa in the living room. Today, many families are building their own homes in the developing suburbs of the larger cities. The homes that are being built often have space for the multi-generational family, but now provide a larger floor plan with separate bedrooms for family members. Couples are now finding it possible to buy separate apartments

for their aging parents near their own dwelling and to help their independent children establish their own home or apartment.

Spiritual Hunger—Short-Lived

The collapse of Communism initially opened a window of tremendous spiritual hunger. Twenty years ago, it was easy to fill a hall for evangelistic campaigns, and churches were packed with seekers. People eagerly accepted tracts. That hunger began to taper off 15 years ago. Yet even then, a majority of people still sought some alternative to atheism. Today, that interest has been replaced with materialism. Young people fully expect to have more than their parents had. They know they have to work hard for what they want and are willing to sacrifice to obtain it. As a result, they are not as willing to divert energy toward spiritual concerns unless they expect some financial benefit. In many areas, church attendance has leveled off and mid-week services have ended. Evangelistic efforts are now met with coolness.

Attitudes toward Westerners

The attitude toward the West tends to change with politics. When I first arrived in Ukraine 20 years ago, a cab driver asked me what Ukraine had to do to become the next state of the United States of America. I was the first native English-speaker who had taught in the local university's English department. My opinion carried weight. People were eager to hear about the West even if it was largely incomprehensible. They could not understand how an ATM or credit card functioned or how one could drive across Europe and not be stopped every 30 minutes for a document check or that many Americans were in debt for 40 years paying for their houses and their education.

Today, English is the international trade language. Young people in post-Soviet states need to be able to communicate in English to compete for new jobs. Others need English to keep their jobs or move up in their career. Globalization, through the internet, television, and film, has had a huge impact. This familiarity with the West can be confused with an approval of Western culture, which it is not. Many individuals in the former Soviet Union would be quick to blame the current economic global crisis on America. Sympathy after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington changed to an anti-American attitude, especially during the later years of the Bush administration.

In most cases, after the fall of Communism, Americans were the first outsiders to enter the region in significant numbers. They were exotic, foreign missionaries and entrepreneurs who were considered to be the champions of Christianity, democracy, and capitalism in a region that had been atheistic, totalitarian, and Communist. Today, Americans are no longer exotic. Today, post-Soviet citizens are savvier at determining which foreigners are actually capable of creating needed change and providing needed services. They also are more sensitive now when entering into partnerships with Western agencies because of their past experiences with broken promises, unrealized funding, or worst of all, their stories used to generate compassion that filled the pockets of Western organizations before meeting local needs.

Western missionaries have become less significant over the past 15 years. When they first arrived in the region, they were motivated by the stories of the

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persecuted and committed church. That persecution caused a certain amount of cohesiveness among those who were persecuted. When the persecution ended, simultaneously, Western missionaries appeared. A current missionary in Ukraine told me that the timing of these two events has caused some Christian leaders to conclude that “all of our church problems come from the West.” Western missionaries are still viewed as useful partners, but are no longer seen as the key ingredient in a successful ministry.

Difficulties in Ukraine and Russia

Generally, the lack of a clearly recognized state church in Ukraine has produced a climate which grants more freedom to non-Orthodox organizations than in Russia, which favors the Russian Orthodox Moscow Patriarchate over all non-Orthodox expressions of faith. However, today non-Orthodox churches in both Ukraine and Russia have difficulty securing space for worship, especially in rural areas. One missionary in Ukraine related to me that when he was looking for space, a town councilman told him that he had received a memo from Kyiv stating that all local officials were to do what they could to support the Orthodox Church, and they were not to offer assistance to other religious groups. This missionary’s ongoing experience has been that many government workers are afraid to offer any assistance to non-Orthodox religious groups. This prohibition includes renting meeting rooms or officially acknowledging evangelical assistance provided to state institutions such as orphanages or retirement homes. I will not attempt to clarify the visa situation for religious workers in Ukraine and Russia other than to say that it has become increasingly difficult to remain in residential ministry for extended periods of time.

Difficulties in Central Asia

In Central Asia, Islam is resurgent. Mosques and infrastructure are being built in many of these former Soviet republics with funding from Arab countries. Many Russians are leaving Central Asia, which in many cases has been their home for generations. In a recent trip to Uzbekistan, I was staying in the home of a Russian family when an Uzbek came to the door offering to buy the house. The Uzbek threatened the Russian family, stating that if they would not sell, he would eventually take their house. Sadly, the majority of Christians in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan are Russians. Despite being residents for decades, Russian believers did not work effectively among non-Russians. With their departure, many churches cease to exist.

Countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, for a variety of reasons, have not followed this trend. I have been told by some travelers there that a vibrant expression of Christianity exists among the indigenous population. Additionally, a number of Slavic and non-Slavic missionaries established church fellowships among the populations of Central Asia following the breakup of the Soviet Union. With the growing influence of Islam these movements are now being forced underground. However, not all ethnic Slavs are leaving the region. Some are choosing to support these underground churches, moving in and out less conspicuously than Western missionaries.

Missions Refocused on the Muslim World

For those of us who rode the missionary wave that brought us to the shores of the Soviet Union, it is

clear that the direction of the wave has reversed. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West focused its attention on new opportunities presented by newly opened doors. Today, in the post-September 11 world, similar attention is now focused on the Muslim world. This change has caused a tapering off of missionaries bound for Eastern Europe. At the same time, other missionaries have focused on mobilizing evangelically minded East Europeans for service in Central Asia. In addition, some East European congregations have acquired a burden for the Muslim world and are sending short-term teams and self-funded missionaries to the Middle East. Those mission agencies that have managed to become more indigenous and have truly partnered with their local counterparts are reaping the benefits as they seek to motivate nationals to become cross-cultural workers. Some areas of the former Soviet Union, such as Moldova, are now staging points for ministry focused on Muslims, hosting training events and conferences.

Evangelical Churches in the Throes of Change

Fifteen years ago the evangelical church in post-Soviet regions was confined to a single sub-culture which could be described as closed, traditional, and isolated from the world. This isolation meant that seekers who wanted to become Christians had to learn the songs which were sung during the 1930s, dress in the style of the 1960s, and reject many aspects of modern civilization. In contrast, today, in terms of worship styles, the same trend that is found across the globe can be found in Eastern Europe. Contemporary worship, with all its string and percussion accompaniments, has come into the region. I lived in Ukraine during much of the 1990s and attended Baptist churches, and I cannot remember a worship service that included drums. I do remember the difficulty of finding a hymnal because most of the hymns were sung from memory. On a recent trip to Belarus I attended four worship services in which, in every case, full praise bands with guitars and drums had replaced traditional choirs.

It is a similar story in Ukraine among new congregations. Fifteen years ago, the choir was the heart of the church, filling the role of the youth group or adult Sunday school class in the West. It was not only a singing group but one that disciplined young believers, taught the meaning of the scriptures, and provided a close social network. This same role is still true today in older churches, but it is becoming more difficult to keep choirs together. Even in older churches youth are using and writing contemporary music, and many members know that what the youth group is singing today will be sung when they become the elders and deacons.

The influence of the West can be perceived not only in a change of worship styles but also in a change in sermons. In the past, preaching consisted mostly in retelling biblical narratives and relating them to contemporary life. The message was often an individual exposition of scripture which did not invite a theological critique because it was a personal expression of faith. By way of contrast, increasingly today pastors are expected to demonstrate expository skills used in other cultures which require commentaries, an understanding of Greek and Hebrew, and systematic theology.

In many of the Slavic countries of the former Soviet Union, strong authoritative leadership by a single pastor is still the norm. However, in the Baltic countries, leadership in many evangelical churches has changed since independence. Many Baltic churches are currently

Non-Orthodox churches in both Ukraine and Russia have difficulty securing space for worship.

seeing the development of a team of pastors or elders who share leadership responsibilities. Some of these teams oversee multiple congregations. Latvia often used this model, even in Soviet days, because of a lack of trained leaders.

Changes in Evangelical Mores

Standards of behavior and lifestyles are also changing in many evangelical churches. One missionary wrote that “the church actually is more sinful today than ten years ago.” He went on to explain that “more sinful” were words used by an older pastor who was referring to the lifestyle of new believers unaccustomed to the traditional moral requirements of his parishioners. Many whom he had preached to 15 years ago were raised in Christian homes. They grew up close to a congregation which set clear standards of moral behavior. As new families replaced the old (many of whom emigrated to the U.S. and Canada where they maintain the “old ways”), they brought to the church a fresh perspective. They had not been brought up in families that practiced the old ways, and they ignore or challenge commonly held views regarding women’s head coverings, holy kisses and authoritarian leadership. The result could be perceived as a “more sinful” congregation, or it could be perceived as a fresh, new start for a community moving away from legalism.

Funding Local Churches

In the past, it was difficult to gain support for ministry in the former Soviet Union from large, Russian-speaking congregations of the West. Today, that is not true. Western Slavic churches are mobilizing, either on their own or with the help of existing missions, to fund and minister in various endeavors in Eastern Europe. Some members of local congregations view this ministry as interference while others view it as welcome help in ministry. Regardless, Russian-speaking emigrants are a developing force in the region.

While legalism is on the wane in some instances, low to non-existent salaries continue to be the case for full-time Christian workers. Valid reasons may be marshalled for and against voluntary church leadership. Nevertheless, in general, congregations do not support their churches to any significant degree. I never heard a sermon on tithing while living in the region, and my East European students continue to tell me that they as well have never heard sermons on this subject. Tithing is not a common practice. The result is felt in the church as well as in training institutions. Pastors and seminarians face extraordinary difficulties when they must secure employment to survive. It is also very difficult to bring the next generation of leadership into the church or into training institutions when so little economic security awaits pastors. In the past, rural churches could call someone who already had a job or a farm in their village.

One solution being explored by evangelical denominations in Central Europe is to use European Union money to supplement pastoral salaries. Thus, for example, the Czech Republic is using state funds for pastors’ salaries. This practice may place clergy in a difficult position because accepting state money may someday imply that they will also accept state policy. Presently, six European countries recognize same-sex marriages by law. In 12 others (including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia) cohabiting same-sex couples are recognized through civil unions. As same-sex partnerships gain firmer legal footing, pressure undoubtedly will be applied to those receiving

state funds to perform weddings for same-sex couples and accept them as church members.

Published Resources Better Contextualized

One positive change in recent years has been an increase in theological and historical works by indigenous authors. Some of these studies are based on research in newly open archives which have shed much light on the past and have provided new perspectives on church life. In years past, new Bible schools and seminaries in the former Soviet Union used Russian translations of English-language textbooks. Most were translated without regard to the history of Eastern Europe or its Orthodox and Catholic context. Today, schools have more choices for textbooks and libraries are able to add more titles written by indigenous authors and by Westerners who have cross-cultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

I fully acknowledge that some of my generalizations may not apply to all of Central and Eastern Europe and all regions of the former Soviet Union. My intent has been simply to provide firsthand observations from ministry experiences in the hope that they will be of assistance to missionaries serving in the region. In brief, some opportunities are at an end while new circumstances suggest new, open doors for the gospel.

As I look back, I am struck with both a sense of joy for the new and nostalgia for the old. I am thankful to have witnessed the rapid changes that have resulted in new freedoms for the peoples of the region. Freedom to travel and to exchange ideas has increased opportunities for Christian mission exponentially, but the days of the “wild, wild East,” both for the good and the bad are now gone. I recall the first time I took my family to the newly opened American fast food restaurant in Odessa, Ukraine. We were enthralled by the shiny menu board and the workers’ matching uniforms, remembering some of the bleak and rude dining experiences of the past. I felt as if our city finally had emerged from its Soviet past. As I sat there, I knew that the notion of customer service, which I relished, could change the city for the good. Still, in the back of my mind, I experienced a twinge of guilt as I embraced the lifestyle of my birth culture here in the heart of my adopted culture. I had worked so hard to adopt the new culture and thought that I was content. Still, I left the restaurant thinking that on a busy day, this new style was going to be convenient. Some of the changes are unfortunate and short-sighted, as computers replace cups of tea with friends and as impersonal malls replace neighborhood markets. Still, we recognize the loss, but we are busy and time is precious. ♦

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Religious Monopolies versus Pluralism in the Post-Soviet Era

Paul Froese

As Muslims and Christians in the former Soviet Union jockey to influence state policy, one finds that traditionally dominant groups are successfully regaining their previously favored status. Political actors seeking to distinguish themselves from the antireligious policies of the Soviet Union have generally favored religious groups that claim a connection to the regional ethnic and national identity. The result is a reemergence of repressive religious policies that tend to favor one religious group.

Repressive Religious Policies: Some Less and Some More

As might be expected, the least religiously restrictive regions of the former Soviet Union are also the ones that are the most pluralistic. Estonia and Latvia do little to regulate their religious markets, and both countries have no clear majority religion. A statistical analysis of the different regions of the former Soviet Union confirms this trend—regions with the most repressive religious policies tend to contain the most religiously homogeneous populations. (The correlation between levels of regulation and levels of pluralism for all the countries in my sample is $-.671$.) The regulation of minority religions provides significant advantages to majority religions. The relationship between religious regulation and the growth of a majority religion is highly correlated. (The correlation between regulation and the growth of majority religions is strong $-.588$.) Countries with more religious restrictions tend to have more rapidly growing majority religions.

Regulation clearly works to the advantage of dominant religious groups. Through the regulation of smaller religious groups, dominant religions can better exploit the opportunities left by the collapse of their powerful atheist competitor. In the end, the seemingly strange reemergence of monopoly churches has occurred not through religious innovation but through political favoritism.

If traditional patterns of religious dominance fully reestablish themselves, we can expect a religious landscape that appears eerily similar to that of pre-Communist times. Current increases in religious diversity will fall, and the religious vitality of the immediate post-Communist era will similarly decay as the peoples of the former Soviet Union return to their past religious-ethnic identities.

Monopoly Religions

Monopoly religions do not occur without state assistance. Although certain religious traditions may have historical connections to ethnic or national identities, state intervention is necessary to ensure that these religious traditions hold their decided advantage over all others. Because monopoly religions tend to be propped up by states, they often become inactive and generate little religious turnover. The religious monopolies of the former Soviet Union are surprisingly vigorous, however, gaining thousands of new members, flying in the face of the label “lazy monopoly.” Monopolies around the former Soviet regions have been able to grow so impressively because of the religious vacuum generated by 70 years of intense religious repression.

The Persistence of Faith Despite Repression

One of the surprises of the post-Communist world is how deeply religious, national, and ethnic identities

were embedded in the psyches of Soviet citizens. Why did decades of reeducation, propaganda, forced migration, industrialization, and urbanization do so little to dispel the nineteenth-century identities of the Soviet public? Perhaps the Communist Party simply tried too hard. In the case of religion, Soviet leaders did not just want to diminish the role of religion in people’s lives; they also hoped to eradicate all references to religion from the social world. This proved impossible. Religion was too ingrained in the fabric of society to be washed away by an oppressive government. Perhaps the Soviet government’s failure to erase religion revealed the importance of religion in ways that previously had been hidden. Although individuals throughout the Soviet Union were not exceptionally religious by world standards, forced secularization exposed the many religious rituals, beliefs, and customs that surrounded their lives.

Atheist Agitation—Counterproductive

The forced promotion of scientific atheism actually kept religious ideas and symbols at the forefront of Soviet society. To dispel religious beliefs, Communist Party officials created a public discourse concerning the falsity of religion that may have unwittingly kept religious ideas alive. Metropolitan [now Patriarch] Kirill describes an instance of Soviet propagandists attempting to utilize a monastery as an atheist museum; he writes that the museum guide “tried to persuade the group that the magnificence of the church was created not because of but in spite of Christianity, which she maintained did not allow architects and icon painters to express themselves fully. But speaking about the architecture and icons, she willy-nilly spoke about the Gospel, and what she said and the icons and the architecture themselves came out as a witness to Christ—and that witness was so much more powerful than... scientific atheism!”¹

While keeping religion at arm’s length, Soviet officials also kept religion in view through an incessant negativity about the religious past. Traditional pre-Communist patterns of religiosity indicate that most individuals took their religious identities and beliefs for granted, but Soviet rule forced citizens to evaluate the substance of their beliefs in new ways. Atheist propagandists seemed to have erred by calling attention to religious concepts and identities that were in many ways forgotten.

Separation from religion may make individuals long for it more passionately. Religious vigor responds to religious promotion, but the Soviet case demonstrates that religious curiosity and concern also responds to anti-religious pressure. State-supported religions tend to produce populations that rarely go to church or express strong religious beliefs.²

In many ways, Soviet elites already had their own religion—scientific atheism—and they were unwilling to compromise it. A firm and unrelenting faith in the evil of religion led Soviet leaders to commit vast resources and exert violent efforts to destroy religion, even as these efforts proved counterproductive. Paradoxically, the fervor with which Soviets attacked religion may have indirectly conveyed the importance of religion. Subsequently, religion continued to play an active role in Soviet society through antireligious propaganda, covert religious activity, and religious opposition to Soviet rule.

The seemingly strange reemergence of monopoly churches has occurred not through religious innovation but through political favoritism.

Paradoxically, the fervor with which Soviets attacked religion may have indirectly conveyed the importance of religion.

Religious Monopolies and Religious Repression – Hand in Hand

The new religious monopolies of the post-Soviet Union will not inspire spiritual vitality in their population, but this is not their main goal. Instead, these religious organizations seek political favoritism and will achieve it through their willingness to trade on their historical connection to national identities in the pre-Soviet era.

Cross-cultural research on religious regulation indicates that whenever religious freedom is available, multiple religious traditions tend to flourish. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke note that “in complex societies, the range of possible religious choices is usually very substantial, but even in preliterate groups, religious factions are common and new religious movements often arise.”³ This indicates that no one religion can fully meet the religious demands of a population, and religious homogeneity only appears to exist when religious diversity is legally and socially repressed.⁴ Taken together, the ubiquity of belief in God around the world combined with enormous diversity in religious traditions suggest that a basic demand for a religious worldview is universal, yet no singular religious doctrine can satisfy everyone.

The Idea of a Caring God

What is it about the idea of God that is so universal and seemingly important? In his analysis of the religious revivals in post-Communist Russia, Andrew Greeley found that belief in a caring God was more predictive of religious participation than whether an individual attended church as a child, was married to a religious person, or had a religious experience.⁵ This finding demonstrates that the idea of a caring God is one of the most appealing aspects of religion. In our research on religious devotion, my colleague Christopher Bader and I have also found that individuals attend church to the extent that they believe God is a caring and personally engaged being.⁶ Our research suggests that individuals are drawn to religion out of a desire for a personal relationship with the supernatural. The idea of a caring God not only presents a picture of the universe as meaningful and ultimately fair but also as loving and concerned with the individual. This key aspect of religion cannot be replicated in secular terms.

Although belief in God appears to motivate individuals differently at its most extreme, this belief can inspire individuals to risk their lives. There is something universal about its appeal. By killing the idea of God, Communist Party officials abandoned one of the essential objects of human faith. Soviet thinkers failed to comprehend the power of the idea of God and misguidedly dismissed supernatural concepts as insignificant when, in fact, this idea can inspire and legitimate a wide variety of worldviews.

Church-State Symbiosis

In the post-Communist world political actors seek to establish social and institutional ties that will solidify their hold on power. Religious groups offer something attractive to new political leaders—legitimacy. In turn, political elites can offer favored status to loyal religious groups. This relationship explains the emergence of religious monopolies that rely on government support and regulation of religious competition.

Politicians across the former Soviet Union have tended to foster mutually beneficial relationships with religions that enjoyed favored status in pre-Communist times. These religions have a historic connection to

national and ethnic identities, and leaders seeking to strengthen a shared national character often invoke the collective memory of past national glory. President Yeltsin very quickly developed ties to the Russian Orthodox Church not only to distance himself from Soviet Communism but also to exhibit his core Russian identity. In a regional analysis of religious freedom throughout the newly created Russian Federation, my colleague Christopher Marsh and I found that local governments that were more efficient and organized tended to enact laws that greatly favor the Russian Orthodox Church.⁷ The most effective political actors in Russia have similarly pursued a close relationship with the Orthodox Church in the hope of fostering a strong religio-national identity that further legitimizes their power.

Similarly, although Central Asia is predominantly run by former Communist elites, these individuals were quick to remind the public of their Muslim identities. In turn, these political leaders favor Islamic groups that were closely tied to the Communist Party. This approach has led to unrest and rebellion as outside Muslim groups jockey for political power and religious dominance. Unlike the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia, no single Muslim group can claim exclusive ties to newly emerging national identities. Therefore, established political actors and emerging religious leaders in Central Asia fight over what it means to be Muslim.

When asked why, as an atheist, he writes so much about religion, Salman Rushdie stated that quite naturally, “atheists are obsessed with God.”⁸ Marxist-Leninists certainly were. Ironically, their obsession with atheism led them to pay too much attention to God. Contemporary social sciences are obsessed with the idea of secularization. The secularization thesis indicates that religion will die out as the world modernizes, but there seems little evidence to support this general hypothesis.

The Soviet regime turned religion into a political enemy through its own fixation with destroying the idea of God. For Marxist-Leninists, it was not enough simply to weaken religious markets; they also wanted their citizenry to be convinced atheists. But in this task they attempted the impossible. First, the idea of God was simply too ubiquitous to erase. The concept of a transcendent God had been used by Russians, Lithuanians, Uzbeks, and other Soviet peoples for centuries to explain their way of life, their conceptions of social justice, their relationships to one another, and their individual purposes and dreams. The historical development of Christianity and Islam throughout the lands that were to become the Soviet Union infused these cultures with the idea of God at every level of social life. Second, the idea of God was too psychologically ingrained to erase. Ancient symbols of God permeated churches, homes, and public spaces.

Religion – An Enduring Reality

Around the world, religious expression is by no means monolithic; it takes numerous forms, and religious commitment varies greatly in its level of intensity. Western Europe, the United States, Communist China, and the Soviet Union all attest to radically differing religious cultures and levels of secularization. However, religious faith endures in all of these societies, and the idea of God in all its multiple forms is one of the most shared beliefs in the entire world.⁹ Regardless of whether one considers the idea of God a nightmare or a dream in today’s world, God remains a persistent and significant aspect of the human experience. ♦

Contemporary social sciences are obsessed with the idea of secularization. The secularization thesis indicates that religion will die out as the world modernizes, but there seems little evidence to support this general hypothesis.

(continued on page 8)

Religious Monopolies versus Pluralism in the Post-Soviet Era (continued from page 7)

Notes:

¹“Gospel and Culture” in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia*, ed. by John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 70.

²Rodney Stark and Laurence R. Iannacone, “A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of the ‘Secularization’ of Europe,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33 (No. 3, 1994), 230-52.

³Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 114.

⁴Stark and Iannacone, “Supply-Side”; Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987); Stephen R. Warner, “Work in the Progress toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States,” *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (No. 5, 1993), 1044-93.

⁵Andrew Greeley, *Religion at the End of the Second Millennium* (London: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

⁶Paul Froese and Christopher Bader, “God in America:

Why Theology is Not Just the Concern of Philosophers,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (2007).

⁷Christopher Marsh and Paul Froese, “The State of Freedom in Russia: A Regional Analysis of Freedom of Religion, Media, and Markets,” *Religion, State and Society* 32 (No. 2, 2004), 137-49.

⁸Salman Rushdie interview with Bill Moyers, 23 June 2006. See transcript at www.pbs.org/moyers/faithandreason/portraits_rushdie.html.

⁹Puppa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

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Social Ministry and Missions in Ukrainian Mega Churches: Two Case Studies

Catherine Wanner

Editor's note: The first portion of this article was published in the East-West Church and Ministry Report 18 (Fall 2010): 12-14.

Love Rehab

The Embassy of God's outreach strategy centers on its drug and alcohol rehabilitation program, which champions faith healing and the efficacy of prayer as a means of overcoming addiction. Its healing programs and the accomplishments of its rehab centers are showcased in an annual march in downtown Kyiv. The church began with recovered drug addicts and former alcoholics, and today nearly half of the church's pastors are graduates of the church's Love Rehabilitation Program. An additional component of the church's membership is grateful family members of former addicts. Although the leaders of the church's Love Rehabilitation Center are not adverse to medical intervention, few of their clients can afford it.¹ On the other hand, prayer and fellowship are offered free of charge to all. The Embassy of God's faith-healing programs mirror in many ways the twelve-step healing programs embraced by such U.S. groups as Alcoholics Anonymous that include surrender to a higher force.²

To date, branches of the Kyiv-based Love Rehabilitation Program have been established in Minsk, Belarus, and Vladimir, Russia. In 2001 the Embassy of God sponsored the March for Life, renamed in 2005 the March for Jesus, as a proselytizing forum to showcase the liberating effects of belief. From its inception, these marches were presented as broad ecumenical actions involving Orthodox priests and other clergy. These marches, involving a broad cross-section of clerical leadership in Ukraine, proved to be important precursors to the united front of religious communities mounted in opposition to the falsified election results that led to the Orange Revolution in 2004. With the notable exception of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, all religious groups supported the Orange Camp and about 4,000 members of the Embassy of God were among the protestors on the *Maidan* every day in late 2004.

A Wary Russia

Unsurprisingly, Russia proved hostile to Adelaja

and his vision for transforming the post-socialist order. On 31 May 2006, when Adelaja flew to Moscow for a television appearance, the Russian FSB, successor to the KGB, refused to grant him entrance. The claim was that he was a security threat. He lost a court appeal to have his entrance visa honored, but it was too late to close the door. In fact, the Embassy of God has been active in Russia since 2000. Alexander Dzijuba, senior pastor of the Moscow Embassy of God Church, has been quite vocal in his assertions that he would like to see an Orange Revolution in Russia. As in Ukraine, the Embassy of God's strategy in Russia is twofold: 1) to affect change by offering spiritual solutions to social ills; and 2) to convert entrepreneurs with the hopes of putting godly people in public office. So, although it is possible to shut out the foreign face of the Embassy of God in Russia, in so many places it already has a native face beckoning people of all nations to join.

Rock 'n' Roll Religion

Hillsong's experiences in Australia have tremendously affected the way it functions in Ukraine and Eurasia. Institutional religious participation in Australia has been waning steadily for decades, suggesting that it is on a path to European-like secularization.³ Countering this longstanding trend, Hillsong members, even if they are entirely non-practicing religious believers, participate in charitable initiatives. In other words, Hillsong uses participation in social service initiatives as an opening to middle class young people who perhaps have little interest in institutional religion, but who nevertheless are willing to engage in social services because of their concern for justice, fairness, and morality.

In Australia, two-thirds of Hillsong's 20,000 members are under 30 years of age. In Kyiv, three of the seven services offered every weekend are specially designed to appeal to the 2,000 young people who attend. Music has been the signature vehicle that Hillsong has used to deliver its message of salvation to young people. The house band of Hillsong's Sydney

Half of the church's pastors are graduates of the church's Love Rehabilitation Program.

Church, the Bayca Boys (Believe And You Can Achieve), has released CDs that have topped the music charts in Australia and given the church enormous visibility—and profits.

Hillsong Kyiv meets in a rented theater in the historic center of the city, wedged between a Chinese restaurant and a kickboxing studio. The head pastors of the church, Zhenia and Vera Kasevich, both 30 years old, assert that sermon-based services are ineffective in reaching youth. Instead, they use the appeal of rock music as a first step to introducing young people to the church. As its main means of outreach Hillsong Kyiv features a series of Saturday night Christian rock concerts, called *Iybukh* [explosion], celebrating personal empowerment and fulfillment. These concerts are recorded live and sold in CDs and cassettes at weekly services.

Hillsong Social Ministries

Sixty percent of the budget of Hillsong Kyiv is spent on social ministry, with the Teen Challenge drug rehabilitation program as its most successful initiative. Hillsong outreach is oriented to the most vulnerable members of society who, not surprisingly, because of feelings of powerlessness and isolation, are often the most open to supernatural experiences and to conversion. Hillsong Kyiv offers such initiatives as the “Tribe X” youth movement to evangelize the over 100,000 orphans in state institutions. A 2006 Tribe X CD entitled “Salvation” featured such hits as “Awesome God” and “Shout Unto God,” all performed in an exuberant style of worship appealing to youth. In this way, via music, Hillsong draws in young people and celebrates the glories of becoming a person of faith and of participating in charitable endeavors to help other young people.

A Global Versus a European Focus

The Embassy of God is just as active as Hillsong in terms of its public witness. But whereas the Embassy of God aims to plant churches in the U.S. as well as Europe and other locales, Hillsong is focusing its efforts on Europe as one of the most unreached parts of the world. One of Hillsong’s goals is to establish sister churches in London, Kyiv, Paris, and Moscow using a variety of media, especially “praise and worship music,” to reach all of Europe for Christ.⁴

From Ukraine to Uganda

Just as the Embassy of God undertakes charitable outreach programs in Adelaja’s native Nigeria, so Hillsong Sydney’s long-standing commitment to missions in Africa has prompted Hillsong Kyiv to launch efforts to support and save Uganda’s “child soldiers.” The Australian church currently sponsors over 3,000 Ugandan children, while the Kyiv church is now undertaking a parallel outreach to sponsor orphans in a neighboring village to complement the efforts of Hillsong Sydney. Thus, both of these churches tie Ukrainians to other parts of the world where historically they have had limited economic and political engagement.

Conclusion

The global reach of transnational mega churches such as the Embassy of God and Hillsong call into question such common notions of missions as West to East, North to South, and core to periphery. Even longstanding notions of the expected relationship between missionaries and their converts and between colonizers and colonized must be abandoned. For, as I have suggested, through their impulse to spread the gospel, Ukrainians have embarked on their own “civilizing mission” to their former colonizer, to Europe, and to the United States. Local Ukrainian congregations

furnish missionaries who travel the world, but they also tie these local congregations into global organizations, thereby bringing the world to Ukraine. The far-reaching global connections of the Embassy of God and Hillsong Kyiv enhance the appeal of these mega churches, especially for those who perceive themselves to have been on the forgotten margins of the world “behind the Iron Curtain.”⁵ The charitable impulses and missionary activities of these communities connect their members to fellow believers on multiple continents. In doing so, these local religious communities become the sites of social relations that span great distances and increasingly interlock the local and the global in powerful ways that shape the consciousness, everyday practices, and identities of individual believers.

In closing, I would like to suggest that the spectacular and rapid success of global churches that promote renewal, such as the Embassy of God and Hillsong, are catalysts for change in other churches. The commitment of charismatics to charitable services for the needy, for example, pressures traditional churches in Europe and Eurasia to do likewise.

Charismatic churches, such as the two profiled here, shift the burden of caring for the needy away from the state and recast it as a moral obligation of believers, as a means of witnessing to their faith and demonstrating conviction. These charismatic mega churches challenge the historic patterns of church-state interdependence and the concept of particular churches serving particular nations. Furthermore, transnational charismatic mega churches have become a formidable force transforming the lives of individual believers. Their missionaries are committed to equally formidable social transformation. In the process they also combat secularizing tendencies wherever they find them, be it Eurasia, Europe, or the United States. ♦

Editor’s note: This article is published from a presentation given by Dr. Wanner in Edinburgh, Scotland, 30 May-2 June 2010, at the second research consultation of the Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, funded by the Henry Luce Foundation.

Notes:

¹Although the core membership shares a history of overcoming addiction, it would be wrong to conclude that the church appeals uniquely to the down and out. Some members of the church are so wealthy that they single-handedly finance entire charitable endeavors, such as homeless shelters or business counseling centers.

²For an extended discussion of the Embassy of God’s faith healing programs, see chapter six of Catherine Wanner, *Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).

³Philip Hughes of the Christian Research Association claims that nine percent of the Australian population attended church in 2001. Because the number of attendees over 60 years of age is so high, within 20 years the percentage of the population attending church is expected to drop to six. See Barney Zwartz, “We’ve Got to Have Faith,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 April 2006.

⁴<http://www.hillsong.com.ua/transforminglives/index.php?pageLang=en>.

⁵Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 87.

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The commitment of charismatics to charitable services for the needy pressures traditional churches in Europe and Eurasia to do likewise.

International Religious Freedom Advocacy

H. Knox Thames, Chris Seiple, and Amy Rowe

Around the world, persons of faith continue to face serious obstacles to the full and free enjoyment of religious freedom. Some authorities estimate that more than half of the world's population cannot fully enjoy this cherished fundamental freedom. At the same time, religious freedom protections are well established in international law which recognizes it as a universal human right. Of course, despite states pledging to uphold and defend these norms through treaties and international agreements, implementation is inconsistent, even among European countries.

Advocacy 101

By pressing for governmental compliance, religious freedom advocacy saves lives, frees prisoners, and increases religious liberties. Within the international system, religious freedom advocates push for change by conducting direct advocacy, meeting with governmental and international policymakers, publicizing abuses, reporting on compliance to monitoring bodies, and using international complaint mechanisms. To be effective, advocates generally undertake these activities by joining or working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) committed to religious freedom. Advocates should concentrate on engaging international institutions and mobilizing their political leverage toward a government that is violating religious freedom. NGOs often act as the vital catalyst and go-between.

It is important for religious freedom advocacy groups to speak out against all forms of religious persecution and repression, even if their coreligionists are not affected or persons of no faith are targeted. Strength resides in numbers, and often a positive conclusion in one case will be useful to others in similar situations. Governments try to “buy” the silence of groups by providing benefits or freedoms exclusive to their communities. Advocates should avoid this temptation.

Advocates must also be very careful about the facts. If they are found to exaggerate or misrepresent, or to be ill-informed, then they will have a difficult time persuading persons of power and influence. One key issue is the use of vocabulary. Sometimes, in an attempt to induce a faster international response, advocates are tempted to exaggerate to make a situation sound more compelling. For instance, the word *persecution* is often carelessly thrown around without any thought as to its true meaning. This overuse only cheapens the term and lessens the impact when describing an actual situation of persecution, hindering an advocate's effectiveness. It is an issue of trust. Once policymakers and monitoring bodies become aware of the loose usage of terminology, they will be much more difficult to persuade and motivate to action.

The Development of Human Rights

Originally, international law was about relations between states whose rights trumped individual rights. Thus within its borders a state could act as it wished and be immune from outside pressures. However, as the international system matured and developed from the 1700s to the 1900s, states gradually recognized individual rights. The major transition from the state-centric focus to a more individualistic approach came after the atrocities of World War II and the Nuremberg Trials of Nazi war criminals. Establishment of the United Nations (UN) provided the architecture for a human rights system protecting an array of individual

rights, including religious freedom.

Religious freedom is protected through a variety of international agreements and human rights treaties, which recognize personal freedoms and limit the actions of governments. These protections come in a variety of forms, with the most common being a treaty. Human rights treaties usually create individual rights and state obligations, and are sometimes called covenants, conventions, or charters. A treaty can be amended through a protocol, which often adds additional rights or introduces new mechanisms to enforce the treaty. In addition to the United Nations, groups of countries have developed regional organizations, similar in structure to the United Nations but limited in geographical scope.

The International Religious Freedom Act, passed by the U.S. Congress in 1998, provides a useful explanation of what can constitute a violation of religious freedom in Section 3(13)(A): arbitrary prohibitions on, restrictions of, or punishment for 1) assembling for peaceful religious activities such as worship, preaching, and prayer, including arbitrary registration requirements; 2) speaking freely about one's religious beliefs; 3) changing one's religious beliefs and affiliation; 4) possessing and distributing religious literature, including Bibles; and 5) raising one's children in the religious teachings and practices of one's choice. Examples of infringements on religious liberty include stringent registration requirements, favoring particular religious expressions, arbitrary thresholds, free speech limitations, and misuse of national security concerns.

Registration Schemes—Too Much Information

Registration schemes that fall outside of international standards seek to control rather than facilitate the enjoyment of religious freedom for all. In many countries, registration with the government is required for a group to practice “legally” or to enjoy a corporate status. Often, these systems require special governmental bodies to review doctrines. This is problematic because it places the state in the inappropriate position of determining what constitutes a religion, and it can lead to discrimination against new or minority religious communities.

Tiers—Some Are More Equal Than Others

Problematic religion laws often establish *de facto*, if not *de jure*, tiers for religious communities. In these systems, tiers can take the form of different levels of religious community status. They can also come in the form of recognizing one or a few religious groups as “traditional,” thereby discriminating against all other groups and placing them in a permanent second-class status. Usually favored status comes with benefits: state funding, avoidance of registration, and tax breaks.

Thresholds—The Numbers Game

Thresholds often accompany tiered systems and utilize numerical criteria for placing groups on different levels. In these situations, religion laws require congregations to have a certain number of adult members. If this number is below 100, the requirement is generally viewed as benign. However, if it reaches into the thousands, then the threshold is discriminatory. Laws can also establish time-framed restrictions, requiring religious groups to operate in the country for a certain period of time before qualifying for registration or a higher level of recognition. These schemes prevent minority religious communities from enjoying the same

By pressing for governmental compliance, religious freedom advocacy saves lives, frees prisoners, and increases religious liberties.

status as traditional groups and from having access to certain legal protections and benefits.

Free Speech Limitations—The Gag Rule

An increasing number of countries have placed limitations on free speech, regulating public sharing of religious belief that intends to persuade the listener to another point of view. States increasingly use the concept of “proper” and “improper” proselytism: It is deemed improper if individuals are pressured to convert or monetary or material gain is offered to induce conversion.

National Security—False Justification

Many times, governments cite national security as a reason to limit religious freedom. International agreements protecting religious freedom do not recognize national security as a permissible justification to limit religious manifestations, but only “public safety, order, health, [and] morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others”—ICCPR art.18 (3). Jurists have also firmly established that this is a narrow list of limitations, for employment only in rare occasions.

The United Nations

Created out of the ashes of World War II and the Holocaust, the United Nations is the world’s preeminent international organization. While often criticized for its bureaucracy and slow response, the UN performs many positive functions. Its 1948 founding charter declares one of its primary goals to be the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This simple but momentous reference for the first time recognized world consensus that human rights were of global concern. Building on this recognition, subsequent UN conventions and covenants have enumerated these rights and concretely established religious freedom as a fundamental freedom.

UN religious freedom commitments are found in the so-called “International Bill of Rights,” comprised of three documents—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. In 1948 the UN General Assembly approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights without any objections. This foundation document of the international human rights system was drafted under the supervision of Eleanor Roosevelt as Chair of the Commission on Human Rights. It was the first attempt by the world community to codify human rights standards.

While General Assembly resolutions are nonbinding, the Universal Declaration is viewed as a “common standard of achievement” against which to measure government actions. Several provisions of the Universal Declaration are not recognized as universal rights by many countries, such as the right to work or to leisure. However, Article 18 on religious freedom is widely supported. Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights speaks directly to religious freedom. It recognizes that “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance” (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR>). Other parts of the Universal Declaration speak to religious freedom. Article 2(1) condemns religiously based discrimination that would limit the enjoyment of these rights while Article 19 protects all forms of speech, including religious

expression.

The 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, focusing on political rights, provides a more elaborate enunciation of the right to religious freedom than the UDHR. Since it is a treaty, its provisions are also legally binding, unlike the declaratory UDHR. Article 18 of the ICCPR that deals directly with religious freedom requires governments to recognize the right of individuals to freely follow the religion of their choice and declares that no one may be coerced into joining a religion.

The Human Rights Committee, established by ICCPR Article 28, is the primary treaty-based body of concern to religious freedom advocates. Its role is to monitor the implementation of the ICCPR (<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/hrc.htm>). The committee was given a complaint recourse mechanism through the approval of the First Optional Protocol to the Covenant in 1976. Expanding the committee’s role significantly, the Protocol empowered the committee to receive communications from individuals from those countries ratifying the Protocol who assert a violation of their ICCPR rights. Countries may also file complaints against other state parties. One hundred and five countries have now ratified the First Optional Protocol. Human Rights Committee decisions are nonbinding, but they nonetheless provide a high-profile, public venue to raise concerns. Any committee ruling against a state places increased international pressure on a government to reform its policies and practices.

The European Union

The European Union (EU) is a supranational and intergovernmental organization bringing together 27 member countries from across Europe. With over 500 million citizens living across roughly 1.6 million square miles and speaking 23 languages, the European Union is becoming more and more of an international force. Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, the EU is built around the principles of human rights, democracy, and rule of law.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights outlines the political rights of all EU citizens. Article 10 parallels what is found in the Universal Declaration and the International Covenant, while also expressly providing for the right to change one’s religion. The Charter’s status is unique, as it is not considered a treaty or legally binding document, but rather a proclamation of human rights that all EU member states should uphold. Until all 27 states agree on the form of the European Constitution, the Charter will remain an important nonbinding agreement on states that reflect European standards on human rights and religious freedom.

The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe (CoE) is the oldest regional organization in Europe, established in 1949 by the Treaty of London with ten founding members. Open to all European democracies, the CoE expanded significantly after the end of the Cold War, and its membership overlaps with both the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The CoE now stretches into Eastern Europe and beyond, with members including the Russian Federation, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Today, the number of participating countries totals 47. Headquartered in Strasbourg, France, the purpose of the CoE is to promote human rights, democratization, and rule of law in all member countries. Considering the wide array of countries and traditions brought into

Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights speaks directly to religious freedom. It recognizes that “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief.”

(continued on page 12)

The European Court of Human Rights represents the most advanced and developed international human rights judicial system in the world. In its various rulings, the Court has repeatedly emphasized that freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is one of the foundations of a democratic society and must be protected.

Americans frequently place a higher value on personal achievement than on relationships. In contrast, in more collectivist Romanian culture, relationships are much more highly prized.

International Religious Freedom Advocacy *(continued from page 11)*

the CoE after the post-Communist expansion, the CoE focuses heavily on ensuring that all members uphold their legally binding commitments to human rights and democratization. The CoE has several important bodies with concerns for religious freedom including the European Court of Human Rights.

The essential document for the Council of Europe is the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the European Convention on Human Rights, which was adopted in 1950 and entered into force in 1953. Acceptance has become a prerequisite for applicant countries wishing to join the CoE. Predating the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention represented the first attempt to make legally binding the rights highlighted in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 9 of the Convention protects the religious freedom of individuals residing in CoE countries. Following a similar formula to the UDHR, it specifically recognizes the freedom of the individual to “change his religion or belief.” Many additional protocols have been added to the Convention to expand its scope on a variety of issues. However, the greatest developments (especially for religious freedom) have come through the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, which was established by the European Convention (<http://www.echr.coe.int/echr/>).

The European Court represents the most advanced and developed international human rights judicial

system in the world, as 47 Council of Europe members have submitted themselves to the Court’s jurisdiction. The number of cases sent to the court is very large and increases each year. In 1981, roughly 400 applications were filed, whereas in 2001 close to 14,000 were submitted. The Court is therefore extremely active, hearing a wide range of cases based on the various articles of the European Convention for Human Rights. In its various rulings, the Court has repeatedly emphasized that freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is one of the foundations of a democratic society and must be protected. ♦

Editor’s note: The second half of this article will be published in the next issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report 19 (Summer 2011).

Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from H. Knox Thames, Chris Seiple, and Amy Rowe, International Religious Freedom Advocacy: A Guide to Organizations, Law, and NGOs (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009).

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More American and Romanian Values at Odds

Andrew LaBreche

Editor’s note: Previous portions of this article were published in the East-West Church and Ministry Report 18 (Fall 2010): 6-9; and 19 (Winter 2011): 13-15.

Contrasting Qualities in Choosing Leaders

For American missionaries working in Romania, differences in values between the being-oriented or contemplative thinker and the action-oriented “doer” cause problems, especially in the area of leadership. Americans look for influential youth motivated toward action rather than older people who have gained the respect of the community through relationships they have nurtured over many years. Thus when recommending persons for leadership, Americans often use their economic leverage to support individuals who would not naturally be recognized in Romanian culture.

Americans frequently place a higher value on personal achievement than on relationships. The American stress upon self-fulfillment often trumps concerns for family and friends. When a better job appears elsewhere, Americans often rank family and friends second to career advancement and higher incomes. The results are high mobility and a tendency to limit group activities to superficial relationships in voluntary associations that are easily expendable.¹ In contrast, in more collectivist Romanian culture, relationships are much more highly prized.

Gaining Trust—A Long-Term Proposition

It is often difficult for American missionaries to be accepted into an already established, in some cases, centuries-old group. After 10 years in the country, working with the same Romanians, Americans will still be thought of as “outsiders.” Part of Romanian reluctance to enter into deep interpersonal relationships with missionaries is the fact that the latter are so transient. Many Americans come vowing they will be in Romania for 20 years, only to leave in frustration in

the first couple of years. It is no wonder Romanians are hesitant to invest time in someone who, considering past experience, will simply pack up and go home halfway through the relationship. It was only after we bought land and started building a house that Romanians actually believed we were staying. It is important for missionaries to understand that relationships and especially group membership are a very long and time-consuming process in Romania. Friends are not made overnight.

Americans believe indecisiveness is bad and action is good. From an American perspective, Romanian meetings often appear inefficient and time-consuming with seemingly little progress. What actually is taking place is the relationship building needed to get to the point of discussing a contentious issue. Picking up on subtle communication clues, Romanians, lacking consensus, will often defer a decision until behind-the-scene negotiations (often through intermediaries) can resolve an issue. However, solving problems by means of quiet mediation often strikes Americans as manipulation and subterfuge.

Measuring Ministry by the Numbers

Romanian Evangelicals often complain that missionaries tend to focus only on results and measure ministry success in numbers. Because of potential financial ramifications, Romanians can sometimes feel forced to conform to American expectations and can find themselves in awkward positions when the need comes to report on progress. For their part, American missionaries are confused by the seeming lack of interest by Romanian Evangelicals in instituting bigger and better programs.

Self-Reliance Versus Interdependence

Another recurring cross-cultural conflict repeatedly raised among Americans concerns Romanians “always borrowing things.” For Americans, while friends are expected to help one another on occasion, too many requests by one party may threaten the relationship. This attitude is confusing to Romanians who come from a culture stressing closely knit friendships involving economic and social interdependence.² By way of contrast, for Americans, the goal of self-reliance is paramount for success in life.³ Even being completely aware of this cultural difference does not remove the emotions Americans feel when they think they are “being taken advantage of” and their friendship is being abused.

Based on the strong American concept of private ownership, missionaries often refuse to let nationals use their material possessions freely and thus are considered stingy. Sherwood Lingenfelter points out that the anxiety among American missionaries about personal (or church) property is one of the key obstacles to reaching other cultures. This behavior is often justified based on the biblical principle of stewardship, whereas the American passion for private ownership may actually be the driving force in decisions about the husbanding or sharing of material possessions.⁴

Because of the income disparity, Romanian Evangelicals believe American Evangelicals should give generously to their poorer brothers in Christ. Americans, who are very sensitive to the concepts of self-reliance and good stewardship, are generally offended, and they do not like feeling pressured into giving.⁵ Because Americans place such a high value on gratitude and appreciation, they consider the relative lack of voiced gratitude in Romanian culture to be morally lacking, unfortunately, all the more reason to not want to give. Americans pride themselves on being generous but have the fault of liking to be known and appreciated for it.

Contrasting Concepts of Personal Space and Deportment

Romanians and Americans also have differing concepts of personal space. Physical touching, close body proximity, generous use of gestures, and speaking in a loud voice characterize southern Europeans. In contrast, North Americans typically keep their distance. In personal conversation, Romanians place themselves closer to each other than Americans find comfortable. Conversely, Romanians interpret the distance Americans attempt to maintain as a sign of reluctance to form close personal bonds.⁶

Americans and Romanians also have differing concepts of modesty. Members of one conservative American evangelical missionary family admonished a female Romanian language teacher for wearing pants because they considered such attire to be immodest. For her part the Romanian teacher considered this missionary family to be immodest because it lived in a fancy rented home and drove a new car. Simply put, different cultures have different understandings of modesty. In many conservative Romanian churches, personal distance between the sexes is maintained rigorously. Men often sit on one side of the sanctuary and women on the other. Personal touching is frowned upon. Men and women do not touch in any way whatsoever in church. For Americans who are very informal and often touch freely, this difference can cause great misunderstanding and conflict. What is considered an innocent gesture by Americans can be

misunderstood and can lead to gossip. Hugging, which is common in American culture, is fraught with danger because it is a very rare public expression in Romania.

Ethnocentrism

From a missiological perspective, even a simple awareness of differences can potentially help missionaries avoid unnecessary conflicts. Many Americans are not aware of their unique cultural perspectives. Similarly, American Evangelicals tend to assume their values are biblical and universal rather than culturally conditioned. If Americans and Romanians could view each other’s cultures as mutually valid, but with different means of explaining reality, then many of the cross-cultural conflicts that occur could be avoided. Ethnocentrism, however, can destroy that possibility. As guests in Romanian culture, the onus is on American evangelical missionaries to cross the cultural bridge. Too often American evangelical missionaries working in Romania have been, to use Romanian Evangelicals’ own words, “grossly ignorant” of the cultural differences between themselves and those with whom they work. Some missionaries surveyed considered simply learning the language to be enough, although not all even bothered with that crucial task. Some were totally unaware of fundamental value differences. Other missionaries who were aware of the differences concluded that Romanian values were morally wrong. Obviously, simple awareness of differences is not enough.

Often Americans are also—as I suspect all peoples are—unaware of their own ethnocentrism. Three specific results are an attitude of cultural pride, a propensity toward cultural bias and insensitivity, and perhaps most insidious, a belief in one’s superiority. These three results of ethnocentrism were observed in survey responses regarding what Romanians especially disliked about American missionaries: their “arrogance,” “pride,” and “superior attitude.” Ethnocentrism is clearly a very grave problem for American evangelical missionaries working in Romania. If Romanians’ overwhelming impression of American missionaries is that of pride, arrogance, and a condescending attitude, what are their chances of actually being a help to the Romanian evangelical church, or of having meaningful relationships with Romanians in general?

Ideally it would be helpful if Romanians working with missionaries would meet them halfway across the cultural bridge. But as a practical matter, missionaries must be willing to travel all the way across the cultural bridge whether or not Romanians care to or are able to do so. Standing in the middle hoping Romanians will come halfway across may be pointless. Ultimately, missionaries are called to live cross-culturally, not those they hope to reach. ♦

Notes:

¹Edward C. Stewart and Milton J. Bennett, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, rev. ed. (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1972), 56.

²Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), 248.

³S. A. Grunlan and M.K. Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 211; Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 24; Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Agents of Transformation: A Guide for Effective Cross-Cultural Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 198; Serena Nanda, *Cultural*

Americans pride themselves on being generous but have the fault of liking to be known and appreciated for it.

Missionaries must be willing to travel all the way across the cultural bridge whether or not Romanians care to or are able to do so. Ultimately, missionaries are called to live cross-culturally, not those they hope to reach.

(continued on page 14)

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

Anthropology (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 310; Eugene A. Nida, *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 247.

⁴Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture*, 51-53.

⁵*Ibid.*, Chapter 5; Lingenfelter, *Agents of Transformation*, 87, 92, 242-46.

⁶Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1959); Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966); David J. Hesselgrave, ed., *Theology and Mission: Papers Given at Trinity Consultation No. 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978), 299, 301-06; Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights*, 96; Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 35; Mark L. Knapp, *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972); Lingenfelter, *Agents of Transformation*, 36; Nanda, *Cultural*

Anthropology, 86; Ruth S. Freed, "Space, Density, and Cultural Conditioning," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 285 (1977), 593-604.

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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Editor's note: The final portion of this article will be published in the next issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report 19 (Summer 2011).

Missionaries to and from Selected Former Soviet Republics and Central and Eastern Europe: 2010

Former Soviet Union	Missionaries	
	Sent	Received
Belarus	120	560
Estonia	40	170
Latvia	70	440
Lithuania	240	440
Moldova	120	560
Russia	1,200	20,000
Ukraine	440	4,500
Central & Eastern Europe		
Albania	60	890
Bosnia-Herzegovina	270	610
Bulgaria	120	220
Croatia	340	1,500
Czech Republic	270	1,700
Hungary	270	1,400
Kosovo	30	110
Macedonia	60	170
Montenegro	30	110
Poland	2,700	780
Romania	220	1,200
Serbia	390	800
Slovakia	80	1,200
Slovenia	170	890

Reprinted with permission from Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, Atlas of Global Christianity (Edinburg, Scotland: Edinburg University Press, 2009), 275.

Editor's Note: Four previous issues of the East-West Church and Ministry Report have included missionary statistics; 2 (Winter 1994), 5; 3 (Spring 1995), 10; 5 (Spring 1997), 10; 10 (Winter 2002), 15. With growing restrictions on missionary service in many post-Soviet states, ministries have become more reticent to share data with the East-West Church and Ministry Report, making it harder to calculate the size of the missionary force. Nevertheless, based on conversations and correspondence with mission personnel, it would appear that some of the missionary estimates in the Atlas of Global Christianity for post-Soviet states are high. For example, the East-West Church and Ministry Report 5 (Spring 1997), 10, gave a figure of 5,606 Protestant missionaries working in the former Soviet Union in 1996. Despite abundant anecdotal evidence of retrenchment in the past 15 years, the Atlas still reports 20,000 missionaries in the Russian Republic alone in 2010. Similarly, it seems questionable that the number of missionaries serving in Romania has grown from 453 in 2001, the figure published in the East-West Church and Ministry Report 10 (Winter 2002), 15, to 1,200 in 2010.

Book Review

Bruce R. Berglund and Brian Porter-Sucz, eds. *Christianity and Modernity in Eastern Europe*. Budapest-New York: Central European University Press, 2010. Reviewed by Paul Mojzes.

The satisfaction of reading some books would be better if the introductory claims made for them were more temperate. Pages one to three of this edited volume reflect a degree of dismissiveness of earlier historical studies of religion in Eastern Europe, but it is unclear who is being criticized: earlier studies undertaken under dramatically different circumstances or academics from other disciplines who are unappreciative of historians? Here works by Robert Tobias, Trevor Beeson, Stella Alexander, Thomas Bremer, and many others are not mentioned. Only Bohdan Bociurkiw's studies of Ukraine are acknowledged.

References to this volume's alleged greater sophistication and major advances in the study of Eastern Europe sound like self-serving marketing claims. Porter-Sucz speaks of the need to deconstruct the word "religion" as an inappropriate academic abstraction (10-11), but he and other authors in the volume proceed to use the term (23). No similar critique is made of modernity, which some authors seem to equate with secularism, while others mean by it post-Reformation and post-Enlightenment developments. And, despite claims of a strong unifying theme, this book, based on two conferences for the contributors and others in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Warsaw, Poland, encompasses topics so diverse that it is difficult to discern the encounter of East European Christians with modernity uniting the various chapters.

As in most symposia, individual contributions vary in quality. Paul Hanebrink very helpfully traces the attempted synthesis of Christianity and nation in Hungary between the two world wars, resulting in a sharp right-wing tilt by many major players. This chapter helps set the stage for the trauma of Hungarian churches under Communism resulting in categorical non-cooperation by some church leaders and collaboration by others.

Martin Putna's "The Search for a 'Fourth Path': Czech Catholicism between Liberalism, Communism, and Nazism" is somewhat mistitled because the author only investigates several Catholic literary figures who were not necessarily representative either of the clerical leadership or Czech Catholic laity. His findings cannot be automatically extended to the entire Church, though some insights surely apply to a wider circle.

The equation Polak-Catholic is inaccurate on many counts according to James Bjork. Rather than uniformity within a Polish Catholic bulwark, he finds a patchwork of major regional differences as regards the degree of Catholic Church influence. Apparently to the present day the Prussian-Russian-Austrian partitions of Poland left lasting but varying imprints on the degree of Polish attachment to Catholicism. The level of devotion to Catholicism varies across Poland from a degree vastly exceeding that of Western Europe in some regions to, in other parts of Poland, a much lower degree compared to most of Western Europe.

James Ramon Felak researched the Catholic dilemma in Slovakia between 1945 and 1948. Because of the disastrous pro-Nazi stance of the anti-semitic Monsignor Jozef Tiso, ascendant Communists in postwar Slovakia considered Catholics politically unreliable. Many Catholics supported the Communists, others attempted to create Catholic political parties, but the majority, including the bishops, supported the Protestant-oriented Democratic Party. Of course, these multiparty efforts all came to naught after the 1948 Communist *coup de etat*.

The fate of Ukrainian Greek (Byzantine) Catholics forcibly "re-united" with the Russian Orthodox Church is well known. Natalia Shlikta provides a very competent and nuanced treatment of the various responses and interpretations of the meaning of this act among Western Ukrainian Christians, the Soviet government, Ukrainian and local officials, and Russian Orthodox hierarchs. While some West Ukrainians accepted this homecoming to Orthodoxy, others could barely wait for *perestroika* and the fall of Communism to reestablish their Church.

Those interested in theological reflections on human rights will appreciate Katharina Kunter's study of the different ways in which East German and Czech Protestant theologians defined priorities in human rights. Kunter seems to think that Czechs, who generated the pro-democracy Charter 77 Movement, more readily defended individual expressions of human rights while some East German theologians favored collective human rights, which were typically touted by Communist apologists.

Patrick Hyder Patterson authored the sole chapter dealing with Christian-Muslim relations. In one of the volume's most thought-provoking chapters, Patterson notes that East Europeans have had a longer historical experience with Islam than West Europeans. In addition, he highlights the diversity of European responses ranging from alarmist and confrontational to the idea of a Christian-Muslim united front against secularism.

Space does not permit mention of every chapter in this interesting compilation. The authors make fairly frequent references to one another's work, as does Bruce Berglund in the concluding chapter, which maps out an historical/religious geography of Eastern Europe. Berglund's discussion of East European contributions to a united Europe is helpful, although those of us who hail from Eastern Europe find the obligation to defend the region's European bona fides tiresome.

Usually endnotes are considered marginal, but the very voluminous documentation of this volume is a real treasure of information that constitutes an integral part of the work. My judgment is that this book is likely to be more useful to academia than to the church. ♦

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We'd Better Give Up Tolerance

We'd better give up tolerance, a well-known religious expert believes. Roman Silantsev, head of the Center for Geography of Religions at the [Moscow Patriarchate] Synodal Department for Church and Society Relations, urged the public to give up the term *tolerance*.

"*Tolerance* is the term which recently society has been trying to fill with a new sense of meaning; but the word failed to comply with expectations in the sense of tolerance to evil and destructive pacifism," he said in Cheboksary at a round table conference, "Tolerance as Imperative in Dialogue of Civilizations, Cultures, and Confessions."

Silantsev said he visited a youth camp in September 2010 where a lecture on tolerance was delivered. Participants "trained to use the Internet" told him that they had looked up the word *tolerance* and found that it was a medical term meaning a diminution in the physiological response to disease. Thus, "the most

tolerant of us is an AIDS patient who has no immunity to anything at all."

"*Tolerance* has a Western origin and is a great step forward compared with racial theories, concentration camps, and apartheid, but compared with peace among peoples inherent to Russia it is a step backward," Silantsev believes. According to him, "Europeans have no reason to teach us tolerance. Moreover, we should teach them the right patterns of peace among peoples and religions."

"The propaganda of tolerance seems irrelevant while the Western tolerant and multicultural society is in collapse, and even European leaders refer to the failure of this model," he noted. Silantsev urged the public to give up this term "as there is no practical benefit in its use." ♦

Source: Interfax (<http://www.interfax-religion.com>), 23 November 2010. Reprinted with permission.

On (In)Tolerance in Russia: Response to Roman Silantsev

Paul Mojzes

At first when I read the anti-tolerance statements attributed to Roman Silantsev I thought that some substance may have been impairing the poor man's judgment. Otherwise, he is a woefully undereducated person who seems to need an internet-savvy teenager to explain to him the meaning of the term *tolerance*. Unfortunately, Silantsev (mis)uses the medical definition of *tolerance* by (mis)applying it in the realm of the social sciences.

Internet sources suggest that Silantsev is a rather controversial Russian Orthodox sociologist who is considered a specialist on Islam, but from whose work both Muslim and Orthodox authorities distance themselves. Currently he holds a minor post in the Russian Orthodox Church.

When Silantsev declares that, unlike in the West, peace is inherent among the peoples of Russia, he is clearly suffering amnesia. One only needs to mention Russian state persecution of Old Believers, Russia's conflict with Muslims in Chechnya and elsewhere,

rampant Russian anti-Semitism, including pogroms, Russia's turbulent relationship with Eastern-Rite Catholics, and Russian repression of what Silantsev calls "destructive pacifists" to realize that he has no historical memory.

If Silantsev were an isolated case, it would not be worth writing this piece. But if he reflects a significant constituency among Orthodox hierarchs and opinion-makers, then his intolerance of tolerance is a serious concern. All those who demean tolerance need to recall the painful and tragic consequences of intolerance during the Soviet period. We know that those who have been abused tend to become abusers. Analogously, those who were not tolerated tend to become intolerant in turn.

Nearly two decades ago, in *Religious Liberty in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.: Before and After the Great Transformation* (Boulder, CO: Eastern European Monographs, 1992), I developed a four-fold typology regarding religious liberty in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: Type A – ecclesiastic absolutism (total control by the majority church, repressing all others); Type B – religious toleration (considerable expansion of freedom for most, but not all); Type C – secularist absolutism (total control of all religions by atheists); and Type D – pluralistic liberty (a maximum of collective and individual liberties). With the fall of the tsarist regime and the emergence of the Soviet Union, Russia moved from Type A to Type C, accompanied by nearly incomprehensible violence toward religious people.

After the collapse of Communism some of us were hoping that Russia would move from Type C to Type D or at least to Type B. Regrettably, Russia seems to be moving full speed in reverse to Type A. It could be that Silantsev and his ilk are expressing the true sentiments of Russian Orthodox leadership. I pray this is not the case. My former professor, the late Fr. Georges Florovsky, shared with me, his Protestant student, a much more charitable vision of Russian Orthodox Christianity. Paradoxically, if, by the 20th century, the West had not evolved the practice of tolerance, millions of Russian Orthodox in diaspora in the West would not have flourished unimpeded in the exercise of their faith at a time when their coreligionists were not granted tolerance in their own country. ♦

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The quarterly *East-West Church & Ministry Report* examines all aspects of church life and mission outreach in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe as a service to both church and academia. Letters to the editor are welcomed. Annual subscription rates are \$49.95 (individuals, U.S. and Canada); \$59.95 (individuals, international); \$53.95 (libraries, U.S. and Canada); \$63.95 (libraries, international); and \$22.95 (e-mail). Reprint and photocopy policy: 1) Quantity photocopies or reprints of up to three articles from a single issue may be distributed or reprinted at no charge. 2) Written permission is to be secured for each distribution or reprinting. 3) The following statement is to be carried on each photocopied article reproduced and each article reprinted: Reproduced (or Reprinted) with permission of the *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT*. Currently indexed by American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies (ABSEES), OCLC Public Affairs Information Service (formerly PAIS), Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), Zeller Dietrich (formerly Zeller Verlag), and Christian Periodicals Index.



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