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## Taking Stock of Taking Stock: Post-Soviet Religion Reporting

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### Disheartening Trends

Outside of college classroom responsibilities, most of my professional life has centered around learning all I can and disseminating all I can about church life and Christian ministry in Soviet and post-Soviet states. In 2002, ten years after the breakup of the Soviet Union and ten years after the founding of the *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, I published an editorial on East European missions subtitled “Taking Stock of the First Post-Soviet Decade” (10 [Winter 2002], 20, 19; [www.eastwestreport.org](http://www.eastwestreport.org)). Despite acknowledging the reappearance of government restrictions and cautionary notes addressing mission miscues, the editorial was nevertheless replete with astonishment and wonder at still-abundant new freedoms and new opportunities.

Not so today. Most East European and Baltic states have made a respectable effort at honoring freedom of conscience for religious minorities as well as religious majorities. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for much of the Balkans and most of the former Soviet Union. The mantra of state protection of “traditional” faiths now compromises the free exercise of faith just as Marxist ideology did previously. The irony is that in the long run, secular support for a majority, “traditional” confession undermines rather than strengthens the favored faith. As “Taking Stock” in 2002 put it:

Serious students of church history will stress that state recognition for the church has always been, at best, a mixed blessing. When any church—be it ancient Roman, Russian Orthodox, French Catholic, or German Lutheran—has been privileged rather than persecuted, it has run the risk of conversions of convenience and nominal allegiance. State favoritism predictably weakens established churches by tempting adherents with material and political advantages that undermine spiritual vitality (20).

Today, the increasing discrimination and harassment faced by non-majority religious expressions in Russia, Belarus, and the Caucasus republics and the outright persecution of minority faiths in Central Asia bear resemblance in too many particulars to the Soviet era. Also troubling is my sense of waning international urgency over infringements of religious freedom in post-Soviet space.

### Ceasing Publication

With these unwelcome trends in mind, I was disheartened to learn of the November 2012 demise of *Religion in Eastern Europe (REE)* in its present format

after 32 years of publication ([www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree](http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree)). While in one respect *REE* and the *East-West Church and Ministry Report* have been competitors, I have always considered the two publications complementary. The fact is the story of faith in Eurasia is too big for half a dozen publications. Furthermore, I respect the scholarship of, and have benefitted from friendship with, *REE*'s longtime editors, Paul Mojzes and Walter Sawatsky. In recent years Sawatsky has served as a contributing editor for the *EWC&M Report*, while I have served on *REE*'s advisory editorial board. I also have published a number of my own articles in *REE* that were too long for the *EWC&M Report*'s 16-page format, and both Mojzes and Sawatsky have published articles and reviews in the *EWC&M Report*.

*REE*'s fate has given me pause to reflect upon and “take stock” of the enterprise of reporting on Christianity in Eurasia. First, it is stunning to note how many relevant serials and news services have ceased publication in just over two decades. In addition to *REE*, they include *Religion in Communist-Dominated Areas* (1962-90), Keston Institute's *Frontier* (1986-2006), Keston News Service (1974-2002), Ecumenical News International (1994-2010), Pulse/World Pulse (1965-2011), News Network International (1987?-1996), Russia Intercessory Prayer Network (1997-2003), Christianity in Russia (Yakov Krotov's religious news translation service, 1993?-1997?), and a news forwarding service prepared by Ray Prigodich (1997-2000). Compass Direct News ([www.worldwatchmonitor.org](http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org)), to be renamed World Watch Monitor in 2013, has substantially reduced its coverage of religion in Eurasia, as has *Religion, State and Society* (formerly Keston's flagship publication, previously entitled *Religion in Communist Lands*).

### Other Troubling Signs

Other indicators of declining Western church and academic focus on Eurasia have included significant drops in Western university enrollments in Russian and East European languages, the failure of U.S. Christian colleges to sustain exchange programs with Russian universities, the 1999 closure of the Institute for East-West Christian Studies (a program of Wheaton College's Billy Graham Center), and the 2011 closure of the undergraduate program of Moscow's faith-based Russian-American Institute ([russian-american-institute.org](http://russian-american-institute.org)). Also disappointing from an East European perspective is the news that the International Baptist Theological Seminary ([www.ibts.edu](http://www.ibts.edu)) will be moving in summer 2014 from Prague to Amsterdam.

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## Taking Stock of Taking Stock (continued from page 1)

Growing nationalist hostility to the West and government visa restrictions clearly have reduced missionary numbers in many post-Soviet states. At the same time, it is impossible to document the level of retrenchment because mission agencies working in Eurasia are more skittish today about sharing personnel information than they were in 1988 when I was preparing the *East European Missions Directory* (1989).

On the bright side, compared to ten years ago, though numbers are down, the savvy and effectiveness of missionaries serving in post-Soviet states is arguably much higher on average: more fluency in native languages, more experience, less flamboyance, and more cultural sensitivity. On the downside, it is worrisome that the increasing restrictions they face, along with the region's minority faith believers, do not seem to command the attention or provoke the ire worldwide that they would have done a decade ago. Islam, China, AIDS—any number of today's hot buttons seems to have relegated post-Soviet religious discrimination and persecution to back-page status.

### Signs of Hope

However, all is not lost. Numerous sources for credible information on Christianity in Eurasia remain available, and the Internet is greatly expanding access and dissemination options. Various news outlets, academic entities, and mission consortia continue to document, decipher, and disseminate reliable information about Christianity in post-Soviet Eurasia. The *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year of publication, was added to EBSCO's Academic Search database in early 2013. Since 2005 Oxford-based Keston Institute has posted its *Russkoe reviu* online ([www.keston.org.uk/russianreview-61.php](http://www.keston.org.uk/russianreview-61.php)), with many informative articles by such respected specialists as Sergei Filatov and Roman Lunkin. Especially noteworthy is Keston's seven-volume encyclopedia documenting the diversity of religious life in Russia, *Sovremennaia religioznaia zhizn' Rossii. Opyt sistematicheskogo opisaniia* (2003-08), which has involved its research team of Xenia Dennen, Sergei Filatov, and Roman Lunkin in prodigious field studies across 11 time zones. In addition, Keston's substantive, twice-yearly *Newsletter* deserves wider readership.

### Forum 18

While Keston News Service ceased publication in 2002, its staff was picked up by Norwegian-based Forum 18 ([www.forum18.org](http://www.forum18.org)), which provides excellent and courageous coverage of post-Soviet infringements of religious liberties, especially in Central Asia. Forum 18 staffer Geraldine Fagan has just published *Believing in Russia—Religious Policy after Communism* (Routledge, 2013), arguably the most important Western work on Russian church-state relations and the Russian Orthodox Church since the careful scholarship of Dmitry Pospelovsky (1984), Jane Ellis (1986 and 1996), and Nathaniel Davis (2003). Fortunately, Keston Institute's exceptional archive of Soviet-era religious *samizdat* (self-published protest literature) is now housed in a safe, long-term home at Baylor University, Waco, Texas ([www.baylor.edu/kestoncenter/](http://www.baylor.edu/kestoncenter/)).

### Other News Services

In addition to Forum 18, at least seven no-fee news services focus part or all of their coverage on post-Soviet religion:

- English-language BosNewsLife, Budapest ([www.bosnewslife.com](http://www.bosnewslife.com)), headed by Dutch and Ukrainian journalists Stefan and Agnes Bos;
- Mennonite William Yoder's Moscow-based press releases under the auspices of the Russian Evangelical Alliance, in English and German ([rea-moskva.org](http://rea-moskva.org));
- *Obzor [Media Review]*, [www.rea-moskva.org](http://www.rea-moskva.org), William and Galina Yoder's Russian-language compilation of East European and world religion reportage;
- Paul Steeves' Religion in Russia website of Russian-to-English newspaper translations ([www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/](http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/));
- Hosken-News, an English-language compilation of articles on religion in Eurasia prepared by former Protestant missionary and Orthodox convert Robert Hosken ([www.agape-biblia.org/hosken-news/index.htm-Russia](http://www.agape-biblia.org/hosken-news/index.htm-Russia));
- Swiss-based *Religion & Gesellschaft in Ost und West*, in its 40<sup>th</sup> year of publication ([www.g2w.eu](http://www.g2w.eu)); and
- *Nachrichtendienst Östliche Kirchen* ([www.kirchen-in-osteuropa.de](http://www.kirchen-in-osteuropa.de)), providing materials in German, English, and Russian. For more detail on these German and other sources, see Walter Sawatsky, "Resources for Religion in Eastern Europe," *Religion in Eastern Europe* 32 (November 2012), 47.

### Other Online Resources

This list hardly exhausts online resources, 108 more of which the *East-West Church and Ministry Report* has itemized and annotated in various issues over the years: Volume 6, No. 2; Volume 7, Nos. 2 and 4; Volume 8, Nos. 2 and 3; Volume 9, No. 3; Volume 11, No. 4; and Volume 13, No. 4. In addition, the *EWCM Report* has periodically published bibliographies and website listings on specialized subjects including short-term missions (Volume 2, No. 2), Islam in Eurasia (V2, N3), post-Soviet women's studies (V6, N1), cults (V6, N3), medical ministry (V6, N4), Father Alexander Men (V7, N3), Christian publishing (V8, N2), ministry to children at risk (V9, N2), Roma (V10, N3), and missionary ethics (V20, N1).

### Acta Missiologiae

A welcome, relatively new entry in the field is *Acta Missiologiae* (2009-), published annually by the Central and Eastern European Institute for Mission Studies (CIMS), [kre.academia.edu](http://kre.academia.edu), and edited by Scott Klingsmith, Denver Seminary. Focused on articles and reviews dealing with missiological issues, the serial also includes a helpful "Chronicle" of past and upcoming conferences and consultations, theses, obituaries, and new developments in teaching missiology. The compiler of this section is associate editor Anne-Marie Kool, director of CIMS of Károli Gáspár University, Budapest. A Dutch Reformed church worker of long standing in Hungary, Dr. Kool

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is an accomplished scholar and a preeminent church and missions networker.

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### The Euro-Asian Accrediting Association and ASEC

Besides CIMS, an important institutional source is the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association (E-AAA), [www.e-aaa.org](http://www.e-aaa.org), which, along with encouraging high standards in Protestant theological education, hosts conferences and publishes a Russian-English diglot journal, *Bogoslovskie razmyshleniia/Theological Reflections*. E-AAA also produces affordable CD-ROMs containing valuable collections of Russian Bible translations, biblical studies, Bible commentaries, and Slavic church history texts. With support from Overseas Council International and the Maclellan Foundation, E-AAA's Bible Pulpit Series provided the first Russian-language texts for use in new Protestant seminaries. Ongoing E-AAA editorial projects include a home-grown, Russian-language Bible commentary and research on the Pentecostal movement in Ukraine.

Dr. Bradley Nassif's pathbreaking Society for the Study of Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism no longer functions. Compensating in some respects are the biennial conferences of the U.S.-based Association for the Study of Eastern Christianity (ASEC), which provide an ongoing forum for students of East European church history and church life.

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### A Steady Stream of Dissertations

An altogether new source in the post-Cold War era for the study of Christianity in Eurasia is the steady stream of dissertations now being written by missionaries and indigenous believers. The *East-West Church and Ministry Report* regularly excerpts portions of these works in its pages, while *Acta Missiologiae's* "Chronicle" carries reviews of them. Two outstanding examples are Insur Shamgunov, "Listening to the Voice of the Graduate: An Analysis of Professional Practice and Training for Ministry in Central Asia," Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 2009; and Alexander Kashirin, "Protestant Minorities in the Soviet Ukraine, 1945-1991," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 2010. Romanian evangelicals in particular have been adept in doctoral studies. Danut Manastireanu gives the authors and titles of 49 dissertations completed by Romanians in the *EWC&M Report* 15 (Winter 2007), 7-12.

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### Surveying the Coverage

Beyond dissertations, magazine publication trainer Sharon Mumper has written on East European Christian magazine development, including a listing of 41 serials published in 13 post-Soviet states (*EWC&M Report* 5 [Summer 1997] and 12 [Winter and Fall 2004]). Librarian Katharina Penner has published an excellent and comprehensive update on the same subject in *The Asbury Journal* 67 (Fall 2012). Orthodox priest, historian, and journalist Yakov Krotov has done the same for religion coverage in Russia's secular press, including descriptions of 20 newspapers and 44 journalists (*EWC&M Report* 10 [Spring and Summer 2002]), while Anna Briskina-Müller critiques Russian Orthodox journalism favorable to and critical of the Moscow Patriarchate, covering both print and online sources (*EWC&M Report* 20 [Fall 2012]).

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### International Religious Freedom Reports

Two additional institutional efforts to protect religious freedom deserve commendation: The U.S. Department of State and a Moscow-based NGO, the Slavic Center for Law and Justice. In 1998, the U.S. Congress passed the International Religious Freedom Act, which established the post of U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom and required the publication of an annual report on the state of religious liberty worldwide. As a result, the *International Religious Freedom Report* has been produced yearly since 1999, with the full text of *Reports* from 2001 to 2011 available online at [www.humanrights.gov](http://www.humanrights.gov). The *Reports* serve a valuable function in publicizing infringements of freedom of conscience around the globe, including post-Soviet states. Regrettably, the *Reports'* perception of fair-mindedness is compromised to some degree by their failure to include any accounting of religious liberty issues in the United States.

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### The Slavic Center for Law and Justice

In Moscow in 1993 Baptist attorney Anatoly Pchelintsev, JD, and Pentecostal attorney Vladimir Ryakhovsky founded the Christian Legal Center, later renamed the Slavic Center for Law and Justice ([www.sclj.ru](http://www.sclj.ru)), to provide legal assistance in cases of violations of freedom of conscience. Today its two branches, the Slavic Legal Center and the Institute of Religion and Law, focus on litigation and research and education respectively. The Slavic Legal Center has successfully defended dozens of religious clients before Russian regional courts, Russia's Constitutional Court, the Russian Supreme Court, and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The Institute of Religion and Law, headed by Roman Lunkin, Ph.D. and research fellow of the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences, promotes religious tolerance and broad respect for religious rights through public speaking, conferences, research, and publications. Its journal, *Religiia i pravo [Religion and the Law]* (1997-), provides comprehensive coverage of Russian church-state and religious liberty issues. The Institute has also published over 20 Russian-language volumes in support of religious liberty, including a fourth edition of a handbook of Russian religious regulations and court practice, *Religioznye ob"edineniia, svoboda, sovesti i veroispovedaniia* (2012); *Zashchita prav religioznykh organizatsii [Protecting the Rights of Religious Organizations]* (2010); *Praktika Evropeiskogo suda po pravam cheloveka po delam o svobode sovesti [Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights on Freedom of Religion and Belief]* (2009); and an account of the pivotal legal defense of the Salvation Army in Russia, *Armiia spaseniia v Rossii* (2008). It should be underscored that the work of the Slavic Center for Law and Justice is both unique and invaluable.

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### Encouragement from the Next Generation

Closing on a personal note, I cannot but reflect with pride on former students and former student workers of the *East-West Church and Ministry Report* who shared twin passions for the gospel and for documenting threats to believers' rights in post-Soviet states. Countering any discouragement derived from

The Slavic Legal Center has successfully defended dozens of religious clients before Russian courts.

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Countering any discouragement derived from the demise of certain institutions or publications are representatives of the next generation whom I have had the privilege to mentor.

## Taking Stock of Taking Stock (continued from page 3)

the demise of certain institutions or publications are representatives of the next generation whom I have had the privilege to mentor to some degree. Viktor Hamm was a student in my Russian church history class the first opportunity I had to teach it as a regularly scheduled course. This Russian-German émigré has gone on to become one of Russia's most effective evangelists. Later, I assisted student worker Gregory Nichols with his M.A. thesis on Russian evangelical leader Vasilii Pashkov. Now teaching at the International Baptist Theological Seminary, he has recently published an outstanding biography of Russian theologian Ivan Kargel under the title *The Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality* (Pickwick Publications, 2011). (See *EWC&M Report* 20 [Fall 2012], 13-16.) I also was able to assist Matthew Miller with his M.A. thesis on the YMCA in Russia, which he later expanded for his dissertation and recently published as *The American YMCA and Russian Culture* (Lexington Books, 2012). (See *EWC&M Report* 15 [Summer 2007], 2-4, and [Fall 2007], 9-11.) After many years of ministry in Moscow Dr. Miller is now assistant professor of history at Northwestern College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Another former student and *EWC&M Report* student assistant, Sharyl Corrado, also completed an M.A. thesis on Vasilii Pashkov which has been published in Russian (*Filosofia sluzheniia polkovnika*

*V. A. Pashkova* [Bibliia dlia vsekh, 2005]). Over several years we collaborated on a number of articles for the *EWC&M Report* and one for *Religion, State and Society*. Through her doctoral research Dr. Corrado has become quite an authority on Sakhalin Island and now is assistant professor of history at Pepperdine University, Malibu, California. Finally, former student and *EWC&M Report* student assistant Oleg Turlac now regularly preaches and teaches in the Caucasus and Central Asia. This promising young Russian Moldovan also edits an online magazine, *Khristianskii megapolis* (www.christianmegapolis.com), assists victims of human trafficking with the help of his wife Natasha, and recently published *Nashe poniatnoe i neponiatnoe khristianstvo* [*Our Understandable and Complicated Christianity*] (TFM, 2012), a popular treatment of the essentials of Christian faith in a post-Soviet context.

Summing up, in taking stock of post-Soviet religion reporting overall, I find more justification for encouragement than alarm. Fortunately, today many capable people, publications, and programs are dedicated to telling the truth about Christian faith and threats to its free exercise in post-Soviet states. ♦

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## House Church Planting in Bashkortostan, Russia

Chris Carr

The present study outlines nine three-hour training sessions designed to encourage and prepare Russian evangelical leaders and believers in Russia's semi-autonomous Republic of Bashkortostan to adopt house church models for church planting, models that also may be described as organic or cell churches. Implementation began before completion of the study, with 20 new house and cell groups and churches launched by the end of the nine-week project.

### Ufa Demographics

The study was undertaken in Ufa, Bashkortostan's capital, located 725 miles east-southeast of Moscow and just west of the Ural Mountains, which divide Russia between Europe and Asia. The city has a population of over 1.1 million, which is approximately one quarter of the region's four million people.<sup>1</sup> Bashkortostan's capital consists of 48 percent Bashkir and Tatar (528,000), 39 percent Russian (429,000), and 13 percent divided among smaller minorities including Chuvash, Udmurt, Mari, Mordvinian, and Ukrainian (143,000). Over 100 ethnic groups are represented in Ufa's population.

### Church Demographics

Ufa is home to approximately 2,500 evangelical believers. In 2009 Evangelical Christian-Baptist (ECB) representation in Bashkortostan included 15 churches and 5 small group fellowships, of which 7 were in Ufa, with a membership of 940, including 387 in Ufa, and 15 Bible study groups, including three in Ufa. Churches that are part of the Russian ECB Union in Bashkortostan include Good News, House of Prayer for All Peoples, Grace, Holy Trinity, Light of the Gospel, Resurrection, and two Baptist churches

both named Grace. ECB pastors in Bashkortostan number 15, with 7 in Ufa, but with only 4 serving in specific church-type buildings, one of which is in Ufa. Nineteen churches meet in other structures (houses, apartments, cafes, and theaters), including 6 in Ufa. Twenty Southern Baptist missionaries have served in Bashkortostan since 2000, with most of this number serving in the capital.<sup>2</sup> Also, ECB evangelistic Bible study groups meet regularly in Ufa and may emerge as churches in the near future.

Charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Ufa include Life of Victory, Rock, Union of Christians, Light of Truth, Vineyard, Bethel, Central Pentecostal, and one additional unnamed congregation.<sup>3</sup> All combined, Ufa, then, is served by nine Baptist churches and multiple evangelistic Bible study groups, ten charismatic and Pentecostal churches, plus one Lutheran and one Catholic congregation.

### Church Site Restrictions

In light of the fact that most Protestants, at least for the foreseeable future, do not have resources to purchase or build churches, pragmatically speaking they must reappraise church planting and evangelism and actively consider using house church models. Because of Ufa's unique position as one of the main centers of *Sunni Hanafi* Islam in Russia, thus presenting serious impediments to the purchase of land and buildings for churches, it would appear that the house church model will best fit church planting needs in Ufa and Bashkortostan for years to come.

### Training Preparations

Of the 25 project participants, 15 completed a basic values survey, a measurement tool adapted from

Sherwood G. Lingenfelter's and Marvin K. Mayer's *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2003). Participants also completed a theological values instrument adapted from *The Gallup Guide: Reality Check for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Churches* by D. Michael Lindsay and George Gallup, Jr., (Omaha, NE: Gallup Organization, 2002).

### Published Training Resources

In addition to the Bible, the writings of Neil Cole, Bruce Carleton, and Frank Viola provided the rationale for the Bashkortostan house church training project. Church planter and pastor Neil Cole is founder and executive director of Church Multiplication Associates and is also part of Leadership Network. His seminal work, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), is now also available in Russian. It is one of the most influential books among Southern Baptist International Mission Board church planters in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia. One of Cole's key theses is that the Lord's church should bring God's message to people where they are rather than expect people to appear in church. His approach is also in keeping with the message of Jesus who lived among the people. According to Cole, "If you want to win this world to Christ, you are going to have to sit in the smoking section."<sup>4</sup>

Bruce Carleton, a former Southern Baptist International Mission Board church planter and currently professor of cross-cultural ministry at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Oklahoma, has written a church planting training manual, *Acts 29: Practical Training in Facilitating Church-Planting among the Neglected Harvest Fields* (Radical Obedience Publishers, 2003). (Carleton's material is not to be confused with the Acts 29 Network, an association of emergent, postmodern churches that espouse "Christian freedom" in connection with the use of alcohol.) Each trainee received Carleton's Acts 29 materials with instructions to complete the reading in advance of nightly training sessions.

Frank Viola provided a third, major influence upon the Ufa training program. Project participants received two of his books translated into Russian: *Rethinking the Wineskin: The Practice of the New Testament Church* (Gainesville, FL: Present Testimony Ministries, 2011) and *Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2008).

### Other Training Resources

Time was also allocated for a handout describing POUCH, an acronym representing a specific approach to house church development: **P**articipative Bible study; **O**bedience shown daily on the basis of what Scripture teaches (not to a leader, church, or tradition); **U**npaid lay leadership; **C**ell groups or small congregations; and **H**ouse churches. After a 30-minute discussion led by group member, Maxim M., regarding Frank Viola's texts, *Reimagining Church* and *Rethinking the Wineskin*, this author previewed for the group a document entitled, "A Jesus Manifesto," co-written by Leonard and Frank Viola, stressing its implications for the house church planting model and an overall definition for church.

Another program resource, a film clip, "Corpus Christi," illustrated the concept that believers and God's church are like a lifeboat throwing out a lifeline to those drowning, rather than a cruise ship devoted to creature comforts and entertainment for its passengers.<sup>5</sup> Each trainee also received a copy of the evangelistic tract, "I'll Do It Later," as an example of a tool to use in witnessing, especially because of the pattern of procrastination among many Ufa citizens.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the author presented the discipleship model, Training for Trainers (T4T), and gave copies in Russian to those present and also within a few days to regular attendees who could not be present because of sickness or their own group's meeting.

As a means of encouraging a continuing witness to atheists, intellectuals, and university students, training sessions also made use of Volume 15 of *Intelligent Design*, a bimonthly journal published by Dimitri Kurovsky, Kyiv, Ukraine.<sup>7</sup> Other resources for the project included Thomas Wade Akins, *Pioneer Evangelism* (Rio de Janeiro: Home Mission Board, Brazilian Baptist Convention, 1999); David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004); and *Caring Via Mutual Discipleship*, developed by Biblical Education by Extension (BEE). Seminar proceedings were videotaped and DVDs were prepared for future training sessions.

### A Change of Plans

Original project plans called for Bruce and Gloria Carleton to lead an entire week of hands-on Acts 29 training. Unfortunately, they were unable to come. Two additional and unexpected supplementary training opportunities came to light quite soon. First, I learned of the house church planting work of Pavel S., assistant to the senior pastor for missionary work for the northwest Baptist region based in Saint Petersburg, Russia. He accepted an invitation to share his experience as one component of the training project. Pavel led an entire day of training based upon his experience planting house churches in Kazakhstan and across Russia. In addition, three Moscow believers (Brad S., Gennadi K., and Dima S.) led a day-long training session regarding the biblical basis for cell groups and cell churches, sharing their practical experience from two years of practice in Moscow.

### First Fruits

Surprisingly, many of the project group participants themselves began asking how to continue the group, its energy, and the emerging movement, before the final training session. Moving the training sessions' venue from an office setting to the author's apartment created an environment that turned out to be conducive to the effectiveness of the training project. The initial intent of using the apartment was not for the goal of modeling a house church, but that is how the situation progressed.

Some of the early skeptics emerged as enthusiastic supporters and practitioners of house church planting. Three project participants (Timur Y., Vatali S., and Marcel K.) started new house groups on Wednesday evenings near the end of training sessions, precluding their involvement in the project to the very end but providing a real-time example of the fulfillment of church planting.

If you want to win this world to Christ, you are going to have to sit in the smoking section.

Some of the early skeptics emerged as enthusiastic supporters and practitioners of house church planting.

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## House Church Planting *(continued from page 5)*

The eighth session began with a time of sharing victories and prayer needs, including one person (Marcel K.) relating that his unbelieving relatives in a village about three hours from Ufa had invited him to come start a new group in their living room. By this time in the project, every trainee was either leading or directly participating in new house groups or house churches, with four participants (Andrei D., Ilgam M., Naeel A., and Maxim M.) having started and/or leading two or three new groups.

### **Pavel S.**

The participation of Pavel S. proved invaluable to the overall project's effectiveness. His extensive prior experience planting house churches, coupled with his ministry responsibility for missional work for an extensive region of Russia, including the mega-city of Saint Petersburg, brought critical credibility to the project. His involvement and leadership cannot be overestimated. His effectiveness with house groups, along with his ability to communicate the scriptural basis for such an approach and endorse it in a culturally appropriate and challenging way, provided one of the key moments in nudging church leaders, such as Peter Z., to a more supportive position regarding the project. Having the determined involvement of a national believer of Pavel's stature and influence helped to "de-Americanize" the project further and to insure more enthusiastic acceptance and relevance of the training project. Pavel's presence took on especially vital importance since Bruce and Gloria Carleton were not able to come to Ufa for the planned Acts 29 segment of the project.

### **Other Russian Trainers**

The involvement of national believers from the capital of Moscow also added weight and value to the training project experience. They brought their practical experience of real-life, cell church planting to bear upon the training needs of Ufa believers. They found a willing audience with not only project group participants, but also among more than a dozen other Ufa believers who participated in a day-long presentation regarding the efficacy and place of cell groups and cell churches in church planting. Their involvement built upon the strategic input of Pavel S. and added further impetus to prod local leadership into deepening involvement and blessing of the overall training project. The participation of the Moscow cell church planters served as a further tipping point that contributed to the paradigm shift that eventually led to the emergence of new house groups by the official end of the project. Twenty-one new house groups and churches were launched in Ufa and Bashkortostan as of late December 2009, as well as many new believers and a growing number of longer-term believers involved in the emerging movement.

### **Resistance**

The project has not been accomplished without disagreement or tension. As mentioned previously, the ECB senior pastor for all of Bashkortostan, Peter Z., was not substantially supportive of the project and the principles and philosophy behind it. Thankfully, he did not try to obstruct it, instead leaving it to individual churches and pastors to decide whether or

not to pursue house groups as tools for church growth. Unfortunately, at a meeting just before Christmas 2009, Peter Z. spoke strongly against much of what various Western contemporary church planting practitioners and researchers propose, including Neil Cole, Frank Viola, and George Barna. He stated that much of what they wrote was incorrect. On 26 December 2009 project member Maxim M. wrote to the author on furlough:

The meeting was very difficult. Andrei and I, especially me, made a mistake in citing books which you gave us to read. Peter Z. does not agree with most of their arguments; he almost announced a ban especially on the books by Frank Viola. He does not want us to give these books to our believers to read. But all the brothers supported house churches themselves as a mission project. Therefore, we will carefully and quietly work and cite only Scripture. Otherwise it will take 100 years to experience support for this.

It is the author's hope that Pavel S. will be able to return to Ufa annually for the next three to five years for one- or two-day training seminars to help keep the project group (and its expanded circle of influence through new trainees and new disciples) focused, forward-looking, and risk-taking in the areas of evangelism, discipleship, and house church planting.

In future meetings and presentations regarding house churches and the biblical philosophy behind them, the author will instruct group participants to avoid citing heavily from the writings of Western church planting practitioners. Although this author believes strongly that such writers have made a solid, biblical case for the validity of house church planting models, it became evident by the end of the project that quoting from such authors created a stumbling block, especially for older Russian Evangelical Christian-Baptist leadership in Ufa. A wiser approach will build a strong biblical case and show from experience that house churches work, rather than relying heavily on Western authors.

### **In Summary**

The inability of one expert to participate initially caused the author to start rethinking the training session schedule. Within two days of the cancellation, the Lord orchestrated a series of events leading to an invitation for experienced and respected Russian house church planters to assist the author during two training sessions. Funds miraculously became available to cover travel and lodging expenses to the glory of God.♦

*Edited excerpts published with permission from Chris Carr, "Training and Encouraging Key Russian Evangelical Leaders and Believers in Ufa and Bashkortostan, Russia, to Adopt House- and Cell-Church Models and Methods as Viable Possibilities for Church Planting," Doctor of Ministry dissertation, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri, 2010.*

*Editors's note: The author updated statistics as of January 2013.*

Having the determined involvement of a national believer of Pavel's stature and influence helped to "de-Americanize" the project.

Twenty-one new house groups and churches were launched in Ufa and Bashkortostan as of late December 2009.

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> “About the City of Ufa,” <http://www.ufacity.info>.

<sup>2</sup> “2009 Russian Baptist Union Statistical Observations for Bashkortostan,” email from Arkadi L., administrative assistant for the senior pastor for Russian Baptists in Ufa and Bashkortostan, 6 May 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Email from Stas K., 2 May 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Cole, *Organic Church*, xxvii.

<sup>5</sup> Produced by Reinhard Bonnke, Full Flame Film Series, <http://www.bonnke.net/fullflame/>.

An English-language version may be viewed at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7945138045913570814&ei=6KRfS8KBCJ-QqALvsZnVBw&q=full+flame+video#>.

<sup>6</sup> Published by Fellowship Tract League, a ministry of Fellowship Baptist Church, Morrow, OH, [www.fellowshiptractleague.org](http://www.fellowshiptractleague.org). An English-language version may be viewed at this website.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.origins.org.ua/index>.

**Author's Postscript, January 2013**

I have learned by experience since the completion of my doctoral dissertation that we should have appointed a coordinator for the emerging house church network. At least a dozen evangelistic Bible groups still meet in and around Ufa, with many more spawned farther afield in cities and villages across

Bashkortostan. I also see now that not providing consistent, ongoing training was a weakness. Still, several key churches that participated in the doctoral project and which are now in more strategic leadership positions are jointly coordinating ongoing training. We are having a follow-up house church training event in March 2013 in Ufa at the House of Prayer ECB Church, and other similar training events in fall 2013. Grace ECB Church, of which I am co-pastor with Zhenya Vasileev, a former drug addict, is quite active in outreach, including evangelistic Alpha courses, English-language evangelistic clubs, men's and women's monthly evangelistic picnics from April to October, holiday parties, rehab recovery groups, weekly street kid meetings, and special-needs projects. Believers from Grace Church, House of Prayer Church, and Ufa Bible Church go on monthly trips to outlying villages and small towns to start new Bible study and outreach groups. A zeal exists within these churches. For some, it is a new zeal; for others, it is a recovery of the zeal triggered during the doctoral project by God's grace, and for others, it is a steady continuation of what God began in fall 2009 here in Ufa. We are expecting a leadership transition by March 2014 and are cautiously optimistic that the new ECB presbyter will be supportive of Bashkortostan's house church movement. ♦

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**Letter to the Editor**

I have been concerned and thought about the dependency issue over the years, but my experience in Far East Russia has been quite different from the author's [in “Kazakh Church Dependence upon Foreign Support and Ways to Overcome It,” *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 20 (Fall 2012): 1-5]. In the Russian Far East, our mission agency provided financial support for dozens of Russian pastors and missionaries over the years that we served there. But we were able to eventually wean the Russian Baptist churches off regular foreign support for their pastors, and I do not think that anyone has stepped out of ministry for that reason (or switched denominations). The church planting vision has been maintained, and new missionaries have been sent out to start churches, even without any foreign financial support.

One of the reasons was that the financial resources of the churches in the Russian Far East have greatly improved over the last 20 years, and so they are now able to support their own ministries and give generously to their own pastors and missionaries, at a much higher level of support than we were ever able to afford. Another key to our success was that we decided to write up “agreements of support”

with local churches where pastors served, rather than making agreements directly with pastors. These agreements stipulated that the primary responsibility for pastoral support rested on the local church, but that our mission organization was willing to assist the local church for a limited period of time (never more than seven years), with the amount of support decreasing each year. The local church had to supply a percentage of support from the very beginning as a condition of our mission's support. Pastors told us that this agreement of support served as an impetus for church boards to finally address the question of pastoral support. Because the church board needed to sign the agreement, the question was finally elevated to a public discussion at the leadership level. This resulted in churches starting to support their pastors, and often they more than compensated for the decrease in support from the mission each year by giving hefty raises to pastors. Our mission organization currently supports no pastors or missionaries on a regular basis, although we do continue to give one-time gifts occasionally to pastors or other Christian workers who have some type of financial crisis.

**Ken Guenther**, *Send International*

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**Christine Chaillot Book Review** (continued from page 16)

authors assume a thorough geographical knowledge of each country. While an atlas would be a useful companion, the real problem lies in the changing borders that have plagued these churches over the centuries. In the 20th century, the dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires after World War I and the domination and then collapse of the USSR have rewritten borders. An index would

also be helpful. These are minor points of criticism, however, easily overcome by serious scholars who will find this volume invaluable in tracing the history of particular churches. ♦

**James Stamoolis** is a consultant to educational and missionary organizations and author of *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*.

**Chris Carr** ([chrcarr@gmail.com](mailto:chrcarr@gmail.com)) is a missionary serving with the Southern Baptist Convention International Mission Board in Bashkortostan, Russia.

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**New Testament References to House-Type Ministry Settings and Churches**

Mark 10: 29-30 (with parallels in Matthew 19:29 and Luke 18: 29-30)  
Acts 2: 46  
Acts 5: 42  
Acts 8: 3  
Acts 10: 1-11, 18  
Acts 11: 24-26  
Acts 12: 12  
Acts 16: 14-15, 40  
Acts 16: 25-34  
Acts 17: 5-9  
Acts 18: 7-11  
Acts 20: 6-12, 20, 31  
Romans 16  
I Corinthians 1: 10-17  
I Corinthians 14: 23-24  
I Corinthians 16: 15, 19  
II Corinthians 1: 1  
Philippians 4: 22  
Ephesians 4: 11-16  
Colossians 4: 15  
I Thessalonians 5: 27  
Philemon 2  
II John 10

# Christian Confessions and Denominations in Post-Soviet States: By the Numbers

Mark R. Elliott and Caleb Conover, compilers

The four issues of Volume 21 (2013) of the *East-West Church and Ministry Report* contain comparative statistical data for 2001 and 2010 for all Christian confessions and most denominations for the 15 independent states of the former Soviet Union and for 12 states in Central and Eastern Europe. The 2001/2010 table for each state provides the name of each church body and its total number of congregations, members, and affiliates (with the affiliates column including members plus adherents who do not hold formal church membership). The present issue carries tables for Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. See 21 (Winter 2013), 4, for explanatory notes.

| Lithuania                       | Three Major Beliefs |               | 2001       | 2010             | Sources used with permission: Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, <i>Operation World</i> , 6 <sup>th</sup> ed. (Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 2001) and the Excel format of Jason Mandryk, <i>Operation World</i> , 7 <sup>th</sup> ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: GMI, 2010). |                  |                  |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                 | Christian           |               | 76.19      | 85.36            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                  |                  |
|                                 | Non-Religious/Other |               | 23.55      | 14.20            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                  |                  |
|                                 | Muslim              |               | 0.14       | 0.14             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                  |                  |
| Churches                        |                     | Congregations |            | Members          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Affiliates       |                  |
|                                 |                     | 2001          | 2010       | 2001             | 2010                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2001             | 2010             |
| Roman Catholic                  |                     | 688           | 606        | 1,497,605        | 1,425,150                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 2,501,000        | 2,380,000        |
| Russian Orthodox                |                     | 31            | 63         | 116,883          | 100,649                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 180,000          | 155,000          |
| Other Orthodox                  |                     |               | 0          |                  | 4,480                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                  | 6,900            |
| Old Believers                   |                     | 27            | 20         | 12,500           | 8,750                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 50,000           | 35,000           |
| Lutheran                        |                     | 55            | 18         | 12,000           | 7,200                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 30,000           | 18,000           |
| Reformed                        |                     | 11            | 9          | 2,200            | 1,200                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 11,000           | 6,000            |
| United Methodist                |                     |               | 19         |                  | 650                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                  | 1,400            |
| Evangelical Christian - Baptist |                     | 8             | 8          | 500              | 500                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 750              | 750              |
| Other Baptist                   |                     |               | 20         |                  | 594                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                  | 950              |
| Church of Christ                |                     |               | 2          |                  | 70                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                  | 140              |
| Salvation Army                  |                     |               | 2          |                  | 50                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                  | 0                |
| Word of Faith                   |                     | 56            | 36         | 2,800            | 1,500                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 4,000            | 2,850            |
| Pentecostal                     |                     | 38            | 26         | 1,800            | 1,333                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2,500            | 2,000            |
| Vineyard                        |                     |               | 3          |                  | 300                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                  | 570              |
| New Apostolic                   |                     | 25            | 27         | 2,545            | 2,727                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 5,600            | 6,000            |
| Seventh-day Adventist           |                     | 21            | 11         | 997              | 820                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2,000            | 1,640            |
| Non-Denominational              |                     |               | 5          |                  | 219                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                  | 350              |
| Other Denominations [11]        |                     | 38            |            | 4,740            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 7,142            |                  |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                   |                     | <b>998</b>    | <b>875</b> | <b>1,654,570</b> | <b>1,556,192</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>2,793,992</b> | <b>2,617,550</b> |

| Moldova                            | Three Major Beliefs |               | 2001         | 2010             |                  |                  |                  |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                    | Christian           |               | 95.39        | 73.36            |                  |                  |                  |
|                                    | Non-Religious       |               | 3.31         | 21.56            |                  |                  |                  |
|                                    | Muslim              |               | 1.10         | 0.13             |                  |                  |                  |
| Churches                           |                     | Congregations |              | Members          |                  | Affiliates       |                  |
|                                    |                     | 2001          | 2010         | 2001             | 2010             | 2001             | 2010             |
| Romanian Orthodox                  |                     | 680           |              | 1,608,392        |                  | 2,300,000        |                  |
| Moldovan Orthodox                  |                     |               | 860          |                  | 682,517          |                  | 976,000          |
| Russian Orthodox                   |                     | 230           | 270          | 489,510          | 447,552          | 700,000          | 640,000          |
| Bulgarian Orthodox                 |                     | 17            | 17           | 39,610           | 38,000           | 61,000           | 58,000           |
| Other Orthodox                     |                     |               | 2            |                  | 1,948            |                  | 3,000            |
| The Lords Army                     |                     |               | 7            |                  | 500              |                  | 1,000            |
| Old Believers                      |                     | 15            | 22           | 6,494            | 9,091            | 10,000           | 14,000           |
| Armenian Apostolic                 |                     |               | 1            |                  | 1,000            |                  | 2,500            |
| Roman Catholic                     |                     | 83            | 35           | 103,593          | 43,000           | 173,000          | 73,000           |
| Byzantine (Eastern Rite) Catholic  |                     | 38            |              | 47,904           |                  | 80,000           |                  |
| Baptist                            |                     | 308           | 500          | 20,000           | 23,000           | 50,000           | 57,000           |
| Baptist (Unregistered)             |                     |               | 90           |                  | 4,800            |                  | 10,000           |
| Salvation Army                     |                     |               | 23           |                  | 2,000            |                  | 4,000            |
| Chisinau Bible                     |                     |               | 6            |                  | 300              |                  | 700              |
| Messianic Jews                     |                     |               | 5            |                  | 150              |                  | 300              |
| Lutheran                           |                     |               | 5            |                  | 100              |                  | 137              |
| Pentecostal                        |                     | 200           | 240          | 28,000           | 13,500           | 60,000           | 32,000           |
| Charismatic                        |                     |               | 30           |                  | 4,000            |                  | 8,000            |
| International Pentecostal Holiness |                     |               | 4            |                  | 130              |                  | 250              |
| Seventh-day Adventist              |                     | 116           | 170          | 10,022           | 13,000           | 25,000           | 32,500           |
| Other Protestant                   |                     |               | 48           |                  | 4,800            |                  | 12,000           |
| Other Denominations [15]           |                     | 29            |              | 9,230            |                  | 19,502           |                  |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                      |                     | <b>1,716</b>  | <b>2,335</b> | <b>2,362,755</b> | <b>1,289,388</b> | <b>3,478,502</b> | <b>1,924,387</b> |



## Christian Confessions and Denominations in Post-Soviet States: By the Numbers

| Russia                                                | Three Major Beliefs |               | 2001          | 2010              |                   |                   |                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                                       | Christian           |               | 54.07         | 66.90             |                   |                   |                   |
|                                                       | Non-Religious       |               | 31.08         | 19.15             |                   |                   |                   |
| Muslim                                                |                     | 10.20         | 12.50         |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Churches                                              |                     | Congregations |               | Members           |                   | Affiliates        |                   |
|                                                       |                     | 2001          | 2010          | 2001              | 2010              | 2001              | 2010              |
| Russian Orthodox                                      |                     | 8,000         | 12,300        | 39,000,000        | 56,493,506        | 60,000,000        | 87,000,000        |
| Georgian Orthodox                                     |                     |               | 3             |                   | 33,766            |                   | 52,000            |
| Other Orthodox                                        |                     | 70            | 116           | 140,541           | 90,874            | 260,000           | 150,000           |
| Old Believers                                         |                     | 200           | 260           | 1,063,830         | 668,085           | 1,500,000         | 942,000           |
| Armenian Apostolic                                    |                     | 12            | 63            | 239,521           | 544,910           | 400,000           | 910,000           |
| Roman Catholic                                        |                     | 300           | 51            | 974,026           | 508,442           | 1,500,000         | 783,000           |
| Pentecostal Christians of Evangelical Faith (SkhVEP)  |                     | 1,348         | 1,600         | 115,000           | 207,647           | 187,500           | 353,000           |
| Christians of Evangelical Faith (OtsKhVE) Pentecostal |                     |               | 400           |                   | 60,000            |                   | 180,000           |
| Church of God (Cleveland)                             |                     |               | 155           |                   | 8,000             |                   | 0                 |
| Foursquare Gospel                                     |                     |               | 4             |                   | 525               |                   | 1,402             |
| Greater Grace World Outreach                          |                     |               | 5             |                   | 200               |                   | 280               |
| United Pentecostal                                    |                     |               | 6             |                   | 143               |                   | 200               |
| Pentecostal (Unregistered)                            |                     | 300           |               | 46,000            |                   | 110,000           |                   |
| Other Pentecostal                                     |                     |               | 50            |                   | 13,514            |                   | 30,000            |
| Evangelical Christian - Baptist                       |                     | 1,200         | *1,075        | 85,000            | *72,386           | 243,100           | 110,400           |
| Baptist Bible Fellowship                              |                     |               | 7             |                   | 420               |                   | 630               |
| Evangelical Christian - Baptist (Unregistered)        |                     | 144           |               | 11,500            |                   | 23,000            |                   |
| Independent Baptist Congregations                     |                     | 850           |               | 45,000            |                   | 85,000            |                   |
| Lutheran                                              |                     | 175           | 141           | 149,701           | 143,713           | 250,000           | 240,000           |
| Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia       |                     |               | 82            |                   | 8,824             |                   | 15,000            |
| Association of Christian Churches in Russia (ACCR)    |                     |               | 490           |                   | 58,800            |                   | 105,840           |
| Presbyterian                                          |                     |               | 162           |                   | 13,200            |                   | 22,440            |
| Reformed                                              |                     |               | 4             |                   | 1,796             |                   | 3,000             |
| United Methodist                                      |                     |               | 112           |                   | 7,333             |                   | 22,000            |
| Methodist (Korean)                                    |                     |               | 38            |                   | 1,900             |                   | 2,850             |
| Brethren "Little Flock"                               |                     |               | 167           |                   | 4,500             |                   | 7,200             |
| Salvation Army                                        |                     |               | 10            |                   | 3,200             |                   | 4,800             |
| Anglican                                              |                     |               | 3             |                   | 2,188             |                   | 3,500             |
| Mennonite                                             |                     |               | 124           |                   | 2,000             |                   | 3,000             |
| Christian & Missionary Alliance                       |                     |               | 16            |                   | 1,833             |                   | 3,300             |
| Churches of Christ                                    |                     |               | 55            |                   | 1,760             |                   | 3,520             |
| Christian Brethren                                    |                     |               | 36            |                   | 1,440             |                   | 2,880             |
| Christian Church / Churches of Christ                 |                     |               | 13            |                   | 662               |                   | 993               |
| International Pentecostal Holiness                    |                     |               | 10            |                   | 600               |                   | 900               |
| Church of God (Anderson)                              |                     |               | 6             |                   | 600               |                   | 900               |
| Wesleyan                                              |                     |               | 4             |                   | 360               |                   | 540               |
| Church of the Nazarene                                |                     |               | 13            |                   | 0                 |                   | 0                 |
| New Apostolic                                         |                     |               | 320           |                   | 40,000            |                   | 40,000            |
| Seventh-day Adventist                                 |                     | 502           | 580           | 49,356            | 46,000            | 110,000           | 55,200            |
| Other Protestant                                      |                     |               | 95            |                   | 11,400            |                   | 19,380            |
| Other Marginal                                        |                     |               | 0             |                   | 50,898            |                   | 85,000            |
| Other Denominations [67]                              |                     | 2,244         |               | 416,000           |                   | 678,000           |                   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                                         |                     | <b>15,345</b> | <b>18,576</b> | <b>42,335,475</b> | <b>59,105,423</b> | <b>65,346,600</b> | <b>91,165,155</b> |

\* Figures from ECB Moscow office via journalist William Yoder, 7 January 2013.

| Tajikistan                      | Three Major Beliefs |               | 2001      | 2010          |               |               |               |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|                                 | Muslim              |               | 89.50     | 93.93         |               |               |               |
|                                 | Non-Religious       |               | 9.09      | 5.00          |               |               |               |
| Christian                       |                     | 1.38          | 1.04      |               |               |               |               |
| Churches                        |                     | Congregations |           | Members       |               | Affiliates    |               |
|                                 |                     | 2001          | 2010      | 2001          | 2010          | 2001          | 2010          |
| Russian Orthodox                |                     | 16            | 12        | 49,000        | 34,965        | 70,000        | 50,000        |
| Other Orthodox                  |                     |               | 5         |               | 8,701         |               | 13,400        |
| Pentecostal                     |                     | 7             | 14        | 350           | 700           | 875           | 1,750         |
| Korean Pentecostal              |                     | 4             | 14        | 225           | 691           | 750           | 2,300         |
| Evangelical Christian - Baptist |                     | 20            | 28        | 500           | 800           | 1,000         | 1,600         |
| Lutheran                        |                     | 2             | 2         | 299           | 479           | 500           | 800           |
| Seventh-day Adventist           |                     | 6             | 12        | 583           | 900           | 874           | 1,350         |
| Roman Catholic                  |                     | 3             | 1         | 3,892         | 599           | 6,500         | 1,000         |
| Other Denominations             |                     | 3             | 0         | 3,050         | 533           | 4,700         | 800           |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                   |                     | <b>61</b>     | <b>88</b> | <b>57,899</b> | <b>48,368</b> | <b>85,199</b> | <b>73,000</b> |

| Turkmenistan                             | Three Major Beliefs |               | 2001          | 2010              |                   |                   |                   |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                          | Muslim              |               | 91.84         | 96.16             |                   |                   |                   |
|                                          | Non-Religious       |               | 5.47          | 2.00              |                   |                   |                   |
| Christian                                |                     | 2.66          | 1.83          |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Churches                                 |                     | Congregations |               | Members           |                   | Affiliates        |                   |
|                                          |                     | 2001          | 2010          | 2001              | 2010              | 2001              | 2010              |
| Russian Orthodox                         |                     | 6             | 5             | 60,000            | 46,154            | 90,000            | 66,000            |
| Other Orthodox                           |                     |               | 0             |                   | 6,783             |                   | 9,700             |
| Armenian Apostolic                       |                     | 3             | 1             | 13,990            | 6,993             | 20,000            | 10,000            |
| Pentecostal                              |                     |               | 5             |                   | 180               |                   | 500               |
| Evangelical Christian - Baptist          |                     | 2             | 6             | 60                | 143               | 130               | 220               |
| Turkmen Union                            |                     | 30            |               | 300               |                   | 500               |                   |
| Seventh-day Adventist                    |                     | 2             | 2             | 100               | 110               | 187               | 240               |
| Independent                              |                     |               | 30            |                   | 471               |                   | 800               |
| Other Denominations [2]                  |                     | 3             |               | 2,200             |                   | 3,150             |                   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                            |                     | <b>46</b>     | <b>49</b>     | <b>76,650</b>     | <b>60,834</b>     | <b>113,967</b>    | <b>87,460</b>     |
| Ukraine                                  | Three Major Beliefs |               | 2001          | 2010              |                   |                   |                   |
|                                          | Christian           |               | 88.12         | 79.01             |                   |                   |                   |
|                                          | Non-Religious       |               | 10.56         | 19.48             |                   |                   |                   |
|                                          | Jewish              |               | 0.75          | 0.30              |                   |                   |                   |
| Churches                                 |                     | Congregations |               | Members           |                   | Affiliates        |                   |
|                                          |                     | 2001          | 2010          | 2001              | 2010              | 2001              | 2010              |
| Ukrainian Orthodox (Moscow Patriarchate) |                     | 7,900         | 11,300        | 21,379,000        | 15,931,034        | 31,000,000        | 23,100,000        |
| Autocephalous Orthodox                   |                     | 1,200         | 1,150         | 389,610           | 414,935           | 600,000           | 639,000           |
| Other Orthodox                           |                     |               | 81            |                   | 181,818           |                   | 260,000           |
| Old Believers                            |                     | 72            | 51            | 284,431           | 248,503           | 475,000           | 415,000           |
| Armenian Apostolic                       |                     |               | 4             |                   | 27,532            |                   | 42,400            |
| Byzantine (Eastern Rite) Catholic        |                     | 3,200         | 3,470         | 3,496,503         | 2,692,308         | 5,000,000         | 3,850,000         |
| Roman Catholic                           |                     | 500           | 920           | 620,000           | 491,558           | 950,000           | 757,000           |
| Evangelical Pentecostal                  |                     | 1,200         | 1,309         | 120,000           | 144,000           | 370,000           | 374,400           |
| Church of God of Prophecy                |                     |               | 54            |                   | 73,810            |                   | 155,000           |
| Pentecostal (Unregistered)               |                     | 530           | 565           | 130,000           | 65,000            | 250,000           | 195,000           |
| Independent Pentecostal                  |                     | 239           | 280           | 30,000            | 37,000            | 100,000           | 99,900            |
| Church of God (Cleveland)                |                     | 26            | 90            | 5,784             | 8,500             | 12,000            | 17,000            |
| Church of Pentecost                      |                     |               | 6             |                   | 180               |                   | 220               |
| Charismatic Groups [6]                   |                     | 300           |               | 29,940            |                   | 50,000            |                   |
| Other Charismatics                       |                     |               | 450           |                   | 62,874            |                   | 105,000           |
| Evangelical Christian - Baptist          |                     | 2,236         | 2,517         | 127,000           | 151,000           | 380,000           | 452,000           |
| Baptist (Unregistered)                   |                     | 90            | 135           | 9,200             | 16,000            | 24,000            | 24,000            |
| Reformed                                 |                     | 95            | 108           | 19,500            | 19,000            | 130,000           | 130,000           |
| Lutheran                                 |                     | 30            | 24            | 25,974            | 15,260            | 40,000            | 23,500            |
| Christian Church / Church of Christ      |                     |               | 16            |                   | 1,900             |                   | 4,180             |
| Church of Christ                         |                     |               | 15            |                   | 700               |                   | 1,400             |
| Mennonite                                |                     |               | 9             |                   | 1,875             |                   | 3,750             |
| Salvation Army                           |                     |               | 20            |                   | 600               |                   | 1,080             |
| Church of the Nazarene                   |                     |               | 25            |                   | 400               |                   | 840               |
| United Methodist                         |                     |               | 3             |                   | 280               |                   | 700               |
| New Apostolic                            |                     |               | 50            |                   | 1,497             |                   | 2,500             |
| Seventh-day Adventist                    |                     | 713           | 218           | 59,263            | 65,300            | 136,000           | 141,000           |
| Other Protestant                         |                     |               | 218           |                   | 36,036            |                   | 80,000            |
| Other Denominations [35]                 |                     | 329           |               | 117,800           |                   | 195,600           |                   |
| Doubly Affiliated                        |                     |               |               |                   |                   |                   | 261,300           |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                            |                     | <b>18,660</b> | <b>23,088</b> | <b>26,844,005</b> | <b>20,688,900</b> | <b>39,712,600</b> | <b>30,627,220</b> |
| Uzbekistan                               | Three Major Beliefs |               | 2001          | 2010              |                   |                   |                   |
|                                          | Muslim              |               | 83.50         | 84.93             |                   |                   |                   |
|                                          | Non-Religious       |               | 14.52         | 13.80             |                   |                   |                   |
|                                          | Christian           |               | 1.28          | 0.75              |                   |                   |                   |
| Churches                                 |                     | Congregations |               | Members           |                   | Affiliates        |                   |
|                                          |                     | 2001          | 2010          | 2001              | 2010              | 2001              | 2010              |
| Russian Orthodox                         |                     | 0             |               | 110,390           | 51,948            | 170,000           | 80,000            |
| Other Orthodox                           |                     |               | 7             |                   | 1,299             |                   | 2,000             |
| Roman Catholic                           |                     | 17            | 1             | 12,575            | 500               | 21,000            | 2,000             |
| Pentecostal Groups (Registered)          |                     | 17            | 217           | 4,300             | 6,500             | 14,320            | 21,645            |
| Pentecostal (Unregistered)               |                     | 30            |               | 2,700             |                   | 9,000             |                   |
| Full Gospel                              |                     | 15            | 150           | 3,000             | 6,000             | 7,500             | 15,000            |
| Charismatics                             |                     | 15            | 162           | 3,000             | 5,333             | 9,000             | 16,000            |
| Korean Baptist                           |                     | 25            | 35            | 2,600             | 3,100             | 5,200             | 6,200             |
| Evangelical Christian - Baptist          |                     | 37            | 28            | 3,800             | 2,500             | 8,000             | 5,000             |
| Korean Presbyterian                      |                     | 30            | 32            | 3,600             | 4,400             | 7,920             | 9,680             |
| Lutheran                                 |                     |               | 4             |                   | 3,333             |                   | 5,000             |
| New Apostolic                            |                     |               | 3             |                   | 300               |                   | 480               |
| Seventh-day Adventist                    |                     |               | 16            |                   | 1,450             |                   | 2,900             |
| Other Protestants                        |                     |               | 68            |                   | 6,765             |                   | 11,500            |
| Other Denominations [14]                 |                     | 90            |               | 27,400            |                   | 43,700            |                   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                            |                     | <b>276</b>    | <b>723</b>    | <b>173,365</b>    | <b>93,428</b>     | <b>295,640</b>    | <b>177,405</b>    |

# Orthodox-Baptist Relations in Romania

Gillian Kimber

*Editor's note: The first portion of this article was published in the previous issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report 21(Winter 2013):1-3.*

## Proselytism Versus Evangelism

Proselytism remains the biggest issue between the Orthodox and other church traditions. Dr. Erich Geldbach, a retired Baptist Professor of Church History and Ecumenical Studies at Philipps University, Marburg, Germany, and a leader in the Baptist World Alliance, contends:

Religious liberty includes the right of people to change their religious affiliation, or to have none at all, without any civil advantage or disadvantage....

Religious liberty refutes the notion that any church or religion has, by tradition, a claim to a geographical area as its own.

This statement, of course, runs directly counter to the Orthodox notion of canonical territory. However, Geldbach is in agreement that proselytism is unacceptable when it is defined as:

an attempt to win converts from another religious community by applying ignoble means promising money,...taking advantage of a person's health situation to secure a conversion,...threatening a person in legal terms,... [and] coercing a person into unwanted religious behavior.

Geldbach further emphasizes this distinction when he concludes that evangelism is a:

special form of Christian witness to the unchurched .... If Baptist evangelists try to proselytize among active members of other Christian churches for the purpose of increasing the numbers of the Baptist denomination, they fail to fulfill their calling (State Department, *Annual Report*, 1999, pp. 25-28).

Although his words appear to offer hope, Romanian Orthodox in practice make no distinction between evangelism and proselytism. The latter term, therefore, comes to mean any activity by other church traditions which might result in Romanians joining that church rather than attending the local Orthodox Church, including Romanians who may not attend any church. Poplăcean, in common with Geldbach, considers that the unchurched are in need of the Gospel, and therefore it is legitimate to evangelize among them, regardless of Orthodox opposition. Consequently, the two churches are at loggerheads before they even begin any mission activity.

Proselytism, at the same time, is by no means one way. Romanian Orthodox, convinced of the authenticity of their faith, and understanding other churches to be, at best, incomplete and, at worst, "the gates of hell," have no compunction about trying to persuade members of other church traditions to convert to Orthodoxy. It is true to say that Orthodox were the only believers who tried to recruit us while we lived in Romania. At a Lenten gathering in the city of Alba Iulia when a visiting American Orthodox told stories of Christians in the United States who had moved from other church traditions to become Orthodox, he was strongly applauded. In conversation with us he commented, "How wonderful to be here as an Anglican—what a wonderful chance to convert

to Orthodoxy." When we discussed his comment with Orthodox friends, they did not accept that this was proselytism, but simply considered it a form of rejoicing because people had come to the light of Orthodoxy.

It is impossible to claim the moral high ground for any one denomination. Because the Romanian Orthodox Church wields dominant power in the country at every level of society, it is able to create much greater pressure on other denominations. At the same time, Protestants, while feeling victimized, have ways of fighting back which rarely include discussion or efforts toward greater understanding.

## Orthodox in Alba Iulia—A Way Forward

In 2005 we were invited to the city of Alba Iulia by Archbishop Andrei Andreicut specifically to help with his church's "mission." We were asked by His Eminence to work with him at his theological faculty. My husband team-taught with Orthodox staff members in missiology, ecumenics, culture, sociology, catechetics, and New Testament, and I taught English. The atmosphere among faculty and staff was remarkably open toward us compared with that in Sibiu, the legacy of an influential friendship between Andreicut and now-retired Anglican Archdeacon the Ven. Granvill Gibson from Durham Diocese in the United Kingdom. In our first conversation the Archbishop asked how the Anglican Church was dealing with the challenges of secularism and whether our experience could help his church. Archbishop Andreicut's permission for both of us to teach on his faculty was a remarkable turn of events since non-Orthodox are not usually permitted to teach doctrine.

Teaching in Alba Iulia was a learning process for us, made possible by the openness of faculty and staff. They were clear about the boundaries of our responsibilities, and staff attitudes varied from vigorous refutation of the Anglican point of view to relaxed discussion.

Archbishop Andreicut is unique among Romanian Orthodox bishops for his multi-faceted and vigorous promulgation of mission. In its cause he has founded both a seminary and a theology faculty where he is dean, a religious publishing house, Reintregirea, and a religious radio station. His quarters house is a pilgrimage center where he has established a monastery dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and his staff relies on a small convent for hospitality for visitors. During Lent he invites visiting speakers to his Casa Cultura, where they speak to packed audiences of young people.

For Andreicut, the goal of mission is the increase of *theosis* (sanctification) among Orthodox faithful. His aim is for people to live more holy lives in order to shed light in the world. For this reason he titled one of his books *Can We Live in a More Beautiful Way? [Mai putem trăi frumos?]* (2004). He begins his book with observations about the evils that have come upon society, but strongly refutes a pessimistic attitude on the grounds that God created the world, it is therefore

Religious liberty includes the right of people to change their religious affiliation, or to have none at all, without any civil advantage or disadvantage.... Religious liberty refutes the notion that any church or religion has, by tradition, a claim to a geographical area as its own.

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## Orthodox-Baptist Relations in Romania (continued from page 11)

beautiful, and human beings are given dignity by God. His premise is that “a person with beautiful and healthy ideas will act correctly. Do not let us forget the old saying: ideas are those which bring light” (p. 9).

Andreicut’s work is an example of a holistic Orthodox mission approach which attempts to penetrate every area of life. At the heart of his understanding of mission is the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, expressed also in his often-repeated remark, “Christ is everything.” The clear impression is of someone whose own spiritual life is devoted to Christ and whose mission activity arises out of this devotion and understanding of the task Christ has given the church, to be sent to “make disciples” as he was sent on his redemptive mission by the Father (Valentin Kozhuharov, *Towards an Orthodox Christian Theology of Mission: Interpretive Approach* [VESTA Publishing House, 2006], 7).

Andreicut is concerned not only with local issues. He and his theological faculty have a lively interest in Europe and a clear vision of the place Romanian Orthodoxy can play in its future. Each year he organizes an international symposium of European scholars, in which my husband was invited to take part, with a theme reflecting current European concerns. Andreicut consciously works within the bigger picture of Romanian Orthodoxy, both within and outside the country. For example, the Orthodox Diocese of Alba Iulia has an inter-confessional relationship with Lutherans and Roman Catholics, which jointly run more than 30 social projects.

At the same time, evangelical social work adds fuel to the flames of division. In Alba Iulia we made contact with Baptists and their Mennonite missionary associates, but unfortunately never received any invitations, possibly because their deep suspicion of Romanian Orthodox extended to Anglicans, particularly as we were known to be working with the Orthodox.

### Building Relationships: Diakonia

All confessions believe that caring for the needy is a necessary outworking of the nature of the church in the task of mission. With the advent of Romanian membership in the European Union (EU) in January 2007, the country found that it needs to work more closely with the social projects of other confessions in order to access EU funding. The long dark night of Communism robbed Romanian churches of training and expertise in many areas of social ministry, and in this context Romanian Orthodox are willing to learn from Western experience. The financial support of Anglicans and Lutherans for Orthodox social projects is proving positive in building good relationships through shared concerns. Protestants and Orthodox are finding common spiritual ground while holding to their distinctives.

AIDRom, a partnership among Orthodox, Lutheran, and Reformed churches set up in 1991 in the wake of the 1989 Revolution (<http://www.aidrom.ro>), is chief among these ecumenical projects. With a wide brief, AIDRom includes not only social care but also the development of good ecumenical relations, the provision of education for reconciliation,

theological dialogue, and church cooperation. Its conferences, as well, tackle some of Romania’s major social challenges.

Notable by their absence from these ecumenical activities are Baptists who, on theological grounds, do not belong to ecumenical groups of historic churches. Baptists, however, do work ecumenically with other evangelical churches, notably Brethren and Pentecostals, creating a second ecumenical stream in Romania. Such evangelical relationships are not easy and often break down where theological distinctives often trump Christian unity.

### World Vision

World Vision is an evangelical Christian humanitarian organization working among needy children in Romania, in partnership with government agencies as well as with Orthodox and Baptists. Its creative approach to ecumenical relationships has led to the project “Gospel Light” that develops religious instruction materials for Orthodox parishes and trains priests and religious instruction teachers. World Vision also agreed in October 2009 to support the publication, translation, and dissemination of “The Way,” an Orthodox introduction to the Christian faith written by members of the Institute for Christian Orthodox Studies, Cambridge, United Kingdom. Such Evangelical-Orthodox collaboration is rare, if not unique. It works because those involved in “Gospel Light” are willing to assist the Orthodox in their own mission to re-catechize their people, because they respect Orthodox ecclesiastical authority, and because they have the formal support of the Patriarch (<http://gospelightworldwide.org/?cat=19>). The success of this partnership is evidence that Evangelicals and Orthodox can work together in mission, provided Evangelicals are prepared to contribute to the Orthodox agenda. Although cooperation works for an inter-confessional evangelical parachurch organization like World Vision which has established trust, it is a different story for indigenous Protestant churches that feel they would have too much to lose.

### Caritas and Diakonia

The Diocese of Alba Iulia also works ecumenically in social welfare with the Roman Catholic charity *Caritas* and the Lutheran charity *Diakonia*. Catholics and Lutherans assist Orthodox through the charitable organization *Filantropia*, established by Archbishop Andreicut, which oversees more than 30 social projects for children and the elderly. Again, it should be noted that this charitable cooperation is among members of the historic churches and not with Evangelicals, whose charitable efforts are seen as proselytism.

### Building Relationships: Bible Translation

Although Romanian Baptists do not believe that Romanian Orthodox honor the Bible, in fact, Baptists and Orthodox do work together on Bible projects. The inter-confessional Bible Society of Romania has 13 partners, including Baptists and Orthodox. As well as working on translations, the Bible Society is active in promoting the Romanian Bible in the army, prisons, schools, among children and the elderly, and in Braille.

The Orthodox Diocese of Alba Iulia has an inter-confessional relationship with Lutherans and Roman Catholics, which jointly run more than 30 social projects.

However, the Bible can also be a source of conflict. Orthodox and Evangelicals use different translations, with Orthodox insisting that their own translation is truer than the one used by neo-Protestants, and pointing to some evangelical versions in which the word for *idols* is translated by the word for *icons*.

### **Building Relationships: Theological Inquiry**

Theological inquiry is a lively arena in Romania, where the Lutheran church works tirelessly for better ecumenical relations. It takes the lead in creating ecumenical opportunities by investing German money in buildings and projects with the ecumenical purpose of theological study of subjects of common concern. Dr. Stefan Tobler's Institute for Ecumenical Research brings together post-graduate students studying the theology of confessions other than their own, thus creating greater mutual understanding. Signs of a new spirit of ecumenical inquiry in Eastern Europe may be seen in ecumenical syllabi in confessional theological faculties, a more positive interest in inter-confessional relationships, and a new network for ecumenical theological education which arose out of an ecumenical conference in 2007 in which Tobler was a contributor.

It is noteworthy that evangelical churches did not participate in the 2007 conference, but theological study between Romanian Baptists and Orthodox does exist. For a number of years *Areopagus*, a Baptist foundation in Timisoara, has been sponsoring courses on theological and cultural matters with an inter-confessional staff that includes an Orthodox theologian (<http://www.areopagus.ro/>). However, it is not known how acceptable *Areopagus* is to the Orthodox hierarchy.

Also, a number of Romanian Baptist theologians have made a study of Orthodox theology, for example, *Deification in Eastern Orthodox Theology* by Emil Bartos (Paternoster, 2002). Unfortunately, such studies have not necessarily led to better relations. Paul Negrut's Christian Research Institute paper, "What Evangelicals Should Know about Eastern Orthodoxy" (1998), which questions the theological understanding of Evangelicals entering the Orthodox Church in the West, has met with angry Orthodox responses. (See Joel Kalvesmaki, "What Evangelicals Should Know about Negrut's Assessment of Eastern Orthodoxy," 2003, <http://www.kalvesmaki.com/CRJ.htm>.)

Less abrasive was the 2005 publication, *Baptists and the Orthodox Church: On the Way to Understanding* (Prague, Czech Republic, International Baptist Theological Seminary). Three Romanian Baptist theologians took part, looking at the topics of the Bible, the meaning of tradition, and salvation in the Orthodox Church. At the same time, it is significant that no Orthodox contributed to this publication, and it would be difficult to find a Romanian Orthodox theologian who would think it worthwhile to study Baptist theology.

### **Building Relationships: the Necessity of Reconciliation**

AIDRom has created an ecumenical commission which has taken the lead in establishing country-wide ecumenical events such as an annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and includes a Women's World Day of Prayer. In Sibiu, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has been an interesting example of the outworking of AIDRom's approach. An inter-confessional service is held every evening in a church of each tradition in rotation including Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Hungarian Reformed, Saxon Lutheran, and even Greek Catholic. After the service clergy eat together, hosted by the various churches. By this means church leaders get together socially and are able to form personal relationships rather than seeing each other merely as confessional representatives. This interaction does not mean that church relationships in Sibiu are always good; rather, an uneasy truce exists as long as Saxon Lutherans and Hungarian Reformed confine their activities to their own ethnic groups.

Ecumenical prayer does not happen frequently. Orthodox priests are forbidden to worship in the churches of other confessions. Orthodox leaders who break ranks in a bid to form closer ecumenical ties face discipline. As far as worship is concerned, an Orthodox priest wishing to take part in an evangelical service cannot do so officially, and Orthodox lay people visiting other countries are forbidden to worship in churches of other confessions.

### **Healing of Memories**

The damage caused by the Communist regime and the history of aggression among church traditions have created a need for healing of past conflicts. Steps toward the healing of memories have in fact begun to take place in Romania. In addition to AIDRom's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, an inter-confessional, interdisciplinary project is now underway involving the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, the Conference of European Churches, and the Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, and Orthodox Churches in Romania (<http://www.healingofmemories.ro/>). In 2008 this collaboration led to the creation of the Foundation for Reconciliation in South-East Europe (RSEE) as an outcome of the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Conference in Sibiu in 2007. In May 2009 RSEE organized an international conference of Healing of Memories Church Initiatives. This foundation also plans to establish courses in the Greek Catholic seminary at Blaj and the Orthodox theology faculty in Cluj. Church leaders trained through these courses are then to moderate local seminars on healing of memories throughout the country, a project that got underway in 2010. This initiative is to be welcomed for its serious efforts to bring church leaders together across confessional divides to discuss openly the wounds of history.

The deep antipathy between Orthodox and Baptists in Romania is a reality. Part of the challenge is that Baptists, for their part, put evangelism ahead of building good relationships, while Orthodox, for their part, put Orthodoxy first. Both traditions need to take a more responsible and constructive attitude toward

Dr. Stefan Tobler's Institute for Ecumenical Research brings together post-graduate students studying the theology of confessions other than their own, thus creating greater mutual understanding.

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the other in order to heal long-standing hostility. As theologian Bradley Nassif writes:

Nothing less than courageous initiatives by Orthodox leaders, lay and ordained, can break decades of hatred, fear, and ignorance toward Evangelical Christianity which continue to dominate the perceptions of Romanian Orthodox peoples. Similarly, nothing less than bold initiatives by Evangelical leaders, lay and ordained, that may risk offending their Protestant constituency will be able to move Evangelicals beyond the misconceptions and popular abuses of Orthodox faith (“Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism: The Status of an Emerging Global Dialogue,” *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 1 [Spring 2000], 4).

Baptists should try to understand the meaning of the Orthodox liturgy and be willing to invite Orthodox priests to pray on suitable occasions. Orthodox, in turn, should be willing to accept the reality and power of the Baptist practice of extemporaneous prayer.

### The Language of Salvation

A constant stumbling block for Romanian Evangelicals is the apparent lack of insistence in Romanian Orthodoxy on the need for the sort of personal relationship with Christ that is non-negotiable in Evangelicalism. The vocabulary of personal relationships can be very different according to tradition and is an area of major importance for dialogue. What do Evangelicals really mean when they speak of “having a personal relationship with Christ”? Is it fair for Orthodox to consider this unduly individualistic? Evangelicals insist that a relationship with God depends upon a personal commitment to Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. But this is only half the story. The personal nature of this commitment joins the believer not only to the Trinity, but also to others in all Christian churches who believe. If this step is not taken, then the personal nature of the relationship does indeed become individualistic.

In contrast, Orthodox do not always seem to realize fully the personal implications of the relational nature of the believer with God in the church. They can be scornful of Evangelical insistence on “personal relationship” as superficial. The primary relationship in Orthodoxy is with the triune God who is indeed personal, but it is possible to share the life of God only through the Orthodox Church, which supersedes and often seems to replace the personal element in the relationship of the believer with God.

### Semantics as Relevant as Theology

Thus, semantics can be as relevant as theology in explaining Evangelical-Orthodox misunderstandings. Where Evangelicals talk of a personal relationship with God, Orthodox speak in terms of a holy intimacy

with God, as a child with its father. As Orthodox theologian Dmitri Stăniloae notes, “Through the incarnate Son we enter into filial communion with the Father, while through the Spirit we pray to the Father or speak with Him as sons” (*The Experience of God*, Vol. I, *Revelation and Knowledge of the Triune God* [Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998], 248). This filial relationship is central to both church theologies. Orthodox concerns about nominal faith and the need to re-catechize their people in the faith to lead holy lives can surely be acknowledged by Evangelicals as a genuine way of understanding the mission task of bringing people to a transformed personal faith in the Holy Trinity through Christ.

Although Orthodox are prepared to work with others on such projects as Bible translation, which is considered fundamental to mission in all confessions, their fear of confessional contamination is never far away. Unless Orthodox are in charge of the project, cooperation is often pragmatic and short-lived. Thus, all missional efforts with Orthodox must take place under their jurisdiction. Baptists, similarly, are not comfortable working with Christians from other confessions, apparently from a fear that their understanding of the Gospel will be misrepresented or contaminated in some way. As a result, the creation of personal friendships as well as greater understanding of each other’s theology are key elements in overcoming fears and making cooperation possible.

Baptists should be sympathetic to Romanian Orthodox concern for the re-catechization of parishioners. In addition, they should be willing to concede that a personal relationship with Christ can happen in different ways with different people, that in the Orthodox Church one may find believers for whom Christ is central, who seek to follow him in humility and repentance, and who possess authentic Christian faith.

The hope, then, is that both church traditions will begin to identify what they have in common, in particular their understanding of the Trinity, so that, inspired by divine love and obeying the command of Jesus Christ to be one, they can begin the task of creating more constructive attitudes toward each other. Each tradition should work toward an agreement that authentic Christianity is found in both traditions. In turn, this understanding should lead to an acceptance of the fact that people may genuinely know Christ in both traditions. ♦

*Edited excerpts published with permission from Gillian Kimber, “Mission Impossible: Developing an Understanding of the Task of Interconfessional Mission with Reference to the Romanian Orthodox Church and Romanian Evangelical and Baptist Churches in Transylvania,” master of philosophy thesis, University of Nottingham, 2010.*

Where Evangelicals talk of a personal relationship with God, Orthodox speak in terms of a holy intimacy with God, as a child with its father. The filial relationship is central to both church theologies.

## Correction

In the previous issue, the editor regrets errors in the summary percentages for major beliefs in Azerbaijan: *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 21 (Winter 2013), 4. The correct percentages are Muslim— 83.67 (2001) and 87.58 (2010); and Christian— 4.63 (2001) and 2.74 (2010).

# English-Language Online Newspapers in Post-Soviet States

Wesley Wilson and Mark R. Elliott, compilers

| Title (Frequency)                | Telephone/Fax                                   | Percentage of Political/Economic/Social Coverage | Email; Website                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Russia</b>                    |                                                 |                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                |
| English Pravda.ru (D)<br>(D)     | +7-499-641-41-69                                | 50/20/30                                         | dmitry.sudakov@pravda.ru;<br><a href="http://english.pravda.ru/">http://english.pravda.ru/</a>                                                                 |
| ITAR-TASS World Service Wire (D) | +7-495-692-3609<br>692-1503/<br>+7-495-203-2378 | 40/30/30                                         | glav@itar-tass.com;<br><a href="http://www.itar-tass.com/en;">http://www.itar-tass.com/en;</a><br><a href="http://www.tass-online.com">www.tass-online.com</a> |
| Moscow News (W)                  | +7-495-645-6565/<br>+7-495-637-2746             | 34/33/33                                         | info@mnweekly.ru;<br><a href="http://www.mnweekly.ru/">http://www.mnweekly.ru/</a>                                                                             |
| Moscow Times (D)                 | +7-495-232-4774/<br>+7-495-232-6529             | 45/35/20                                         | mcchesney@imedia.ru;<br><a href="http://www.themoscowtimes.com/index/htm">http://www.themoscowtimes.com/index/htm</a>                                          |
| The Other Russia (D)             |                                                 | 70/20/10                                         | <a href="http://www.theotherussia.org/">http://www.theotherussia.org/</a>                                                                                      |
| Regnum News Agency (D)           |                                                 | 40/30/30                                         | info@regnum.ru;<br><a href="http://www.regnum.ru/english">http://www.regnum.ru/english</a>                                                                     |
| RIA NOVOSTI (D)                  | +7-495-645-6470/<br>+7-495-637-4545             | 50/20/30                                         | pressclub@rian.ru;<br><a href="http://en.rian.ru/">http://en.rian.ru/</a>                                                                                      |
| Russia Beyond the Headlines (D)  | +7-495-775-3114/<br>+1-202-330-5332 (U.S.)      | 50/30/20                                         | rbth@rg.ru;<br><a href="http://rbth.ru/">http://rbth.ru/</a>                                                                                                   |
| Russia Profile (D)               | +7-495-645-6486/<br>+7-495-637-3071             | 34/33/33                                         | info@russiaprofile.org;<br><a href="http://www.russiaprofile.org/">http://www.russiaprofile.org/</a>                                                           |
| St. Petersburg Times (W)         | +7-812-325-6080/<br>+7-812-325-6080             | 35/30/35                                         | rogova@sptimes.ru;<br><a href="http://www.sptimesrussia.com/">http://www.sptimesrussia.com/</a>                                                                |
| Vladivostok News (W)             | +7-4232-415-590/<br>+7-4232-415-615             | 25/35/40                                         | sergeant@vladnews.ru;<br><a href="http://vn.vladnews.ru/">http://vn.vladnews.ru/</a>                                                                           |
| <b>Ukraine</b>                   |                                                 |                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                |
| Kyiv Post (W)                    | +380-44-591-3344<br>+380-44-496-4563            | 34/33/33                                         | news@kyivpost.com;<br><a href="http://www.kyivpost.com/">http://www.kyivpost.com/</a>                                                                          |
| Ukrainian Journal (D)            | +380-50-733-1023/                               | 50/50/0                                          | ukrajournal@ukr.net;<br><a href="http://www.ukrainianjournal.com">http://www.ukrainianjournal.com</a>                                                          |
| <b>Baltic States</b>             |                                                 |                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                |
| Baltic Review (D)                | +370-5-278-47-81                                | 40/30/30                                         | info@baltic-review.com;<br>dr.lotts@baltic-review.com;<br><a href="http://baltic-review.com/">http://baltic-review.com/</a>                                    |
| Baltic Times (W)                 | +371-6722-9978<br>+371-6722-6041                | 34/33/33                                         | subscription@baltictimes.com;<br><a href="http://baltictimes.com/">http://baltictimes.com/</a>                                                                 |
| City Paper (M)                   | +371-6735-7955/<br>+371-6722-6041               | 25/35/40                                         | editor@citypaper.lv;<br><a href="http://www.citypaper.ee">http://www.citypaper.ee</a>                                                                          |
| <b>Poland</b>                    |                                                 |                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                |
| New Poland Express (W)           | +48-58-555-9818/<br>+48-58-555-0831             | 45/35/20                                         | editor@newpolandexpress.com;<br><a href="http://www.newpolandexpress.pl">http://www.newpolandexpress.pl</a>                                                    |
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| Title (Frequency)          | Telephone/Fax                                                   | Percentage of Political/Economic/Social Coverage | Email; Website                                         |
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Key: D-daily; W-weekly; M-monthly

Editor's note: The great majority of listed newspapers are free online. For print subscription information, see websites.

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## Book Review

Chaillot, Christine, ed. *The Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2011.

For those of us interested in the various Orthodox Churches, this volume is a real blessing. Densely packed with information, it provides a road map for understanding the course of the national expressions of the Eastern Orthodox family of churches. Each chapter describes the circumstances of the Orthodox Church in a country or geographical area.

The political entanglements that made the past century a difficult one for the Orthodox churches are well documented in this volume, which gives the impression one is reading a political, rather than religious, history. Because of the penetration of the Orthodox faith in culture, a close relationship exists between church and state. In countries where a majority of the population is Orthodox, national identity became linked with religious identity. An

example is the demonstrations by the populace in 2000 when the Greek government removed religious affiliation from citizens' ID cards.

In a lively introduction, Kallistos Ware discusses the troubled history of the 20th century. Citing Vladimir Lossky, "the only true Tradition is living and creative, formed by the union of human freedom with the grace of the Holy Spirit," Ware asks what the open doors are before the Orthodox Church. He points out that all Orthodox churches faced radical changes from the beginning to the close of the century. The political climate remained the same in none of the countries surveyed. In Russia, it went from tsarist favor to clamor for church reform to the Bolshevik revolution to the current post-communist regime. These dramatic changes produced incredible tensions within the church. I was surprised that the chapter on Russia included no mention of Father Alexander Men or other pre-*glasnost* era priests who defied authorities, but these are forgivable omissions given the history that needed to be covered.

Those acquainted with contemporary Orthodox history will not be surprised to find familiar themes: the status of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey, the increased pressure of secularization, and the lack of inter-Orthodox unity in the area of church administration and jurisdiction. Those not familiar with this latter Orthodox problem may be surprised to see that the main areas of contention are not doctrinal but interchurch conflicts. This tension is repeated in almost every chapter with national churches struggling for autocephaly (the right to select their own primate). Also repeated are difficulties with political rulers and the struggle for ecclesiastical independence.

Because this one-volume collection is an unparalleled resource and has information not easily available elsewhere, I suspect it will be used as a reference in many scholarly publications. In particular, the individual bibliographies are a treasure of primary source materials, albeit in various national languages. The work would have been helped by maps, as the

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