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Persecuted Uzbek Evangelicals Wish Their Story Told

Anonymous

Editor's note: The names of Uzbek Christians in this report are used with their permission. The 2013 Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom designates Uzbekistan as a country responsible for "particularly severe" violations of religious freedom (<http://www.uscirf.gov/reports-and-briefs/annual-report/3988-2013-annual-report.html>).

Religious Repression

When for the first time one visits Uzbekistan in Central Asia, with its population of 30 million, one is not likely to think of oppression. Attractive scenes in the capital city of Tashkent, including well-groomed lawns and massive palaces and mosques, make one think of the Orient and an ancient culture -- of everything but persecution. Nevertheless, what is hidden behind a beautiful facade is the reality of persecution of Christians.

In 1991, many in Uzbekistan were enthusiastic about the break-up of the U.S.S.R. and the country's newly acquired independence. In spite of initial joy, Christians saw the period of freedom of worship, for which they had prayed during Soviet times, quickly come to an end. Uzbek authorities observed rising numbers of indigenous Uzbek converts to Christianity and considered them to be a threat to the regime. President Islam Karimov and his government quickly curbed all freedom of worship for Evangelical Christians and denied believers the right to evangelize the indigenous population. Mission organizations and Western missionaries were forced to pack their bags and go home.

Further Restrictions Likely

At the present time, Evangelical communities in Uzbekistan that number less than 100 members are denied state registration and are forced to worship in secret ("Zakon Respubliki Uzbekistan o svobode sovesti i religioznykh organizatsiiax # 618i, Article 8," 1 May 1998; http://lex.uz/Pages/GetAct.aspx?lact_id=65089). Evangelism among ethnic Uzbeks is prohibited. Uzbek authorities are working on a law that will restrict the possession of the Bible to one per household. "My impression is that authorities are not going to stop there," stated S., one of Tashkent's persecuted Christians who is a lawyer by training. "They are likely to require that Bibles be kept only in officially registered church buildings and not in homes." Thus, individuals would be prohibited from owning copies of Scriptures and could read them only in private ("V Uzbekistane nachali shtrafovot' za Bibliiu v dome," 30 April 2013, Ridus; www.ridus.ru/news/81369).

Holding Fast In Spite of Arrests and Threats

According to *Forum 18 News Service*, Sharofat

Allamova, a Protestant from Urgench in north-western Uzbekistan, has been given a one-and-a-half year sentence of corrective labor, following her conviction under criminal charges brought for the "illegal production, storage, import, or distribution of religious literature" ("Uzbekistan: Criminal Conviction, Fines for Meeting at Home and Carrying Bible," *Forum 18 News Service*, <http://www.forum18.org/>).

This punishment, however, is not likely to stop Christians from worshipping God. They gather in privately owned homes, apartments in Soviet-style high rise buildings and in the open air for prayer, and Scripture reading. A., pastor of a house church in the Uzbek capital, shared: "When we gather together, we try to do it as carefully as possible, not to attract attention of neighbors and informers. We abstain from loud singing and, rather, devote time to Bible reading and prayer." A. believes his place of ministry is in Uzbekistan. For the time being he does not consider moving his family of three to another country.

Believers Under Seige Going Public

In spite of oppression, Uzbek Evangelicals want to feel at home in their own country. They believe they should be allowed to possess Bibles and worship God freely and are ready to make the facts of persecution known to the rest of the world. Some do not mind their names being mentioned for, as they say, "We have nothing to lose."

Shakar Dosov is pastor of an Evangelical church in Gulistan, Syrdar'yinskaia Oblast', which meets under a tent in the courtyard of his home at 61 Al'-Kharazmii Street. He openly declares, "We are so tired of being arrested, charged with religious extremism and possession of 'extremist literature'." For belonging to the Christian community authorities interrogated and beat both his wife Tamara and their 18-year-old daughter Ruth. Police brutality resulted in Ruth sustaining a head injury, a fact that has been documented. The local hospital refused to treat her because she was a Christian ("Spravka #298 vydannaia Ruffi Dosovoi: Zakrytaia cherepno-mozgovaia travma, sotriashenie mozga," 29 May 2011).

Shakar and Tamara Dosov's 26-year-old son Sayidbek and 29-year-old daughter Sayora Khudayberganova were forced to flee Uzbekistan because of beatings and repeated interrogations. They were charged with illegal possession of Christian literature. According to Tamara Dosova, authorities threatened to take Sayora's child from her. They tortured her husband, who, as a result, turned against her and threatened to place her in a psychiatric ward, a well-known practice during Soviet times when believers were considered mentally ill for having faith in God.

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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 Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Yugoslavia (Serbia/Montenegro). See 21 (Winter 2013), 4, for explanatory notes.

Macedonia	Three Major Beliefs	2001	2010	Sources used with permission: Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, <i>Operation World</i> , 6 th ed. (Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 2001) and the Excel format of Jason Mandryk, <i>Operation World</i> , 7 th ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: GMI, 2010).			
		Christian	63.43				
	Muslim	25	31				
	Non-Religious/Other	11.52	3.49				
Churches		Congregations		Members		Affiliates	
		2001	2010	2001	2010	2001	2010
Macedonian Orthodox		1,100	1,150	843,537	850,340	1,240,000	1,250,000
Albanian Orthodox			11		6,643		9,500
Bulgarian Orthodox			2		4,406		6,300
Other Orthodox [2]		13		11,000		16,000	
Roman Catholic		26	26	13,000	12,903	20,000	20,000
Evangelical (Pentecostal)		12	8	403	1,056	1,136	1,500
Pentecostal & Charismatic		12	13	165	333	400	600
United Pentecostal			3		27		40
Church of God		4	16	118	100	180	250
United Methodist		13	15	1,300	567	1,500	1,700
Pioneers (Gypsy)			6		214		300
Congregational		3	4	180	200	400	420
Anglican			1		150		200
Baptist		4	7	110	147	160	250
Seventh-day Adventist		10	19	411	750	633	1,155
Other Denominations [3]		15		1,173		2,940	
TOTALS		1,212	1,281	871,397	877,836	1,283,349	1,292,215

Poland	Three Major Beliefs	2001	2010				
		Christian	90.29				
	Non-Religious	9.58	10.13				
	Other	0.13	0.10				
Churches		Congregations		Members		Affiliates	
		2001	2010	2001	2010	2001	2010
Roman Catholic		9,500	9,900	19,737,000	21,394,737	30,000,000	32,520,000
Byzantine (Eastern Rite) Catholic		84	23	140,000	37,500	280,000	75,000
Old Catholic Mariavite		53	51	14,286	13,789	23,000	22,200
Mariavite Church of Ancient Catholic Rite			10		1,541		2,050
Independent Autonomous Roman Catholic Parishes		1	1	6,579	5,921	10,000	9,000
Polish National Catholic		100	46	28,571	9,153	54,000	17,300
Orthodox		312	273	343,750	300,000	550,000	480,000
Other Orthodox			240		24,000		60,000
Old Believers (Priestless)			7		4,311		7,200
Pentecostal			117		12,389		22,300
Church of God (Cleveland)			10		708		850
Assemblies of God		180	313*	12,079	14,830*	19,474	24,560*
Other Pentecostal			88		6,169		9,500
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran)		284	270	64,000	59,600	80,000	74,500
Baptist		64	81	4,107	4,312	6,500	6,900
Church of Christ		65	38	6,500	3,802	8,500	6,350
United Methodist		46	40	4,500	3,008	6,000	4,000
Reformed Evangelical		10	9	2,500	2,797	4,000	4,000
Free Evangelical		33	55	2,300	2,100	4,600	4,200
Free Association of Seekers of Holy Scripture			54		1,198		2,000
Epiphany Lay Mission Movement			52		1,048		1,750
Christian Brethren		40	44	1,500	1,011	4,000	2,700
New Apostolic			28		2,784		4,650
Seventh-day Adventist		123	117	5,542	4,482	8,500	9,725
Other Protestant			40		6,040		9,000
Other Marginal			28		4,250		8,500
Other Denominations (39)		242		17,400		29,120	
TOTALS		11,135	11,936	20,390,614	21,921,480	31,087,694	33,388,235

* December 2012 figures from Assemblies of God World Missions Research Department.

Romania	Three Major Beliefs	2001	2010
	Christian	87.85	96.96
	Non-Religious/Other	11.08	2.39
	Muslim	1.00	0.58

Churches	Congregations		Members		Affiliates	
	2001	2010	2001	2010	2001	2010
Romanian Orthodox	12,420	12,400	11,888,000	12,629,371	17,000,000	18,060,000
Ukrainian Orthodox	20	23	23,308	30,075	31,000	40,000
Serbian Orthodox		22		17,266		24,000
The Lord's Army	300	300	150,000	150,000	300,000	300,000
Armenian Apostolic		11		1,678		2,400
Other Orthodox		29		28,571		38,000
Old Believers	93	46	36,913	20,805	55,000	31,000
Roman Catholic	1,200	1,080	960,000	676,619	1,350,000	940,500
Byzantine (Eastern Rite) Catholic	60	60	167,665	106,587	280,000	178,000
Pentecostal Apostolic Church of God	2,335	2,700	150,000	210,180	250,000	351,000
Reformed Pentecostal		62		3,700		6,179
Reformed	777	890	550,000	451,299	725,000	695,000
Evangelical Lutheran Synod Presbyterian	45	46	16,000	16,500	32,000	33,000
Romanian Baptist	1,510	1,770	88,200	67,714	115,000	118,500
Hungarian Baptist	140	240	9,078	8,500	15,160	10,000
Gypsy Evangelical Movement	100	483	15,000	29,000	30,000	58,000
Christian Brethren	871	870	55,657	22,550	150,000	45,100
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran)	150	140	11,810	9,860	16,889	14,100
Anglican		4		250		500
New Apostolic		104		3,118		5,300
Seventh-day Adventist	1,056	582	71,544	72,143	100,000	101,000
Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement		3		275		550
Other Protestant		100		15,000		22,500
Other Independent	400	650	20,000	32,500	40,000	65,000
Other Denominations [23]	267		64,700		95,000	
Doubly Affiliated					-1,120,000	-789,000
TOTALS	21,744	22,616	14,277,875	14,603,561	20,585,049	19,956,129

Slovakia	Three Major Beliefs	2001	2010
	Christian	82.94	93.34
	Non-Religious	17.00	6.53
	Other	0.03	0.05

Churches	Congregations		Members		Affiliates	
	2001	2010	2001	2010	2001	2010
Romanian Catholic	1,350	1,075	2,000,000	2,546,875	3,200,000	4,075,000
Byzantine (Eastern Rite) Catholic	108	115	100,000	172,143	162,000	241,000
Old Catholic		4		1,706		2,900
Orthodox	12	159	14,667	39,667	22,000	59,500
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran)	329	176	152,381	176,190	320,000	370,000
Reformed	327	719	92,308	87,692	120,000	114,000
Baptist	17	23	2,014	1,933	3,600	3,480
Evangelical Church of the Brethren	35	37	1,250	1,636	2,200	3,600
Hussite		13		1,278		2,300
Christian Fellowship	11	15	700	840	1,600	2,100
United Methodist	5	4	320	450	1,500	900
Christian Assemblies	27	27	400	400	800	800
Moravian		1		47		80
Apostolic (Assemblies of God)	25	27	1,650	2,250	5,050	7,200
United Pentecostal		4		28		76
New Apostolic		1		115		230
Seventh-day Adventist	43	20	2,145	977	4,600	2,100
Other Protestant	35	38	2,450	2,650	4,900	5,300
Other Denominations [5]	10		1,118		2,000	
TOTALS	2,334	2,458	2,371,403	3,036,777	3,850,250	4,890,566

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

Slovenia	Three Major Beliefs		2001	2010
	Christian		85.16	54.18
	Non-Religious/Other		13.29	43.79
	Muslim		1.55	1.95

Churches	Congregations		Members		Affiliates	
	2001	2010	2001	2010	2001	2010
Roman Catholic	1,000	945	1,117,241	557,241	1,620,000	808,000
Old Catholic		2		475		950
Orthodox	6	5	27,500	25,312	44,000	40,500
Lutheran	30	31	7,600	7,720	19,000	19,300
Pentecostal	16	13	700	497	1,521	830
Reformed	3	3	200	200	400	400
Baptist	4	8	150	165	330	248
Christian Brethren		1		35		70
Seventh-day Adventist	13	13	498	530	700	775
Other Denominations [2]	5		900		1,700	
TOTALS	1,077	1,021	1,154,789	592,175	1,687,651	871,073

Yugoslavia (Serbia/ Montenegro)	Three Major Beliefs		2001 (Serbia & Montenegro)	2010 (Serbia)	2010 (Montenegro)
	Christian		67.87	80.37	77.05
	Muslim		16.20	16.10	15.00
	Non-Religious/Other		15.90	3.51	7.79

Churches	Congregations	Members		Affiliates			
		2001	2010*	2001	2010*		
Serbian Orthodox		1,783	1,898/587	3,655,172	3,891,034/234,667	5,300,000	5,642,000/352,000
Romanian Orthodox			197/0		33,500/0		67,000/0
Bulgarian Orthodox		30	42/0	20,000	27,273/0	35,000	39,000/0
Montenegrin Orthodox		341	32/55	132,500	12,500/18,182	265,000	25,000/40,000
Russian Orthodox			1		726		2,200
Other Orthodox			4/12		4,333/37,333		7,800/56,000
Roman Catholic		176	165/13	344,828	256,552/21,000	500,000	372,000/33,000
Old Catholic			3		910		1,820
Byzantine (Eastern Rite) Catholic		50	9	31,034	4,459	45,000	16,500
Slovak Evangelical Christian (Lutheran)		51	64	32,867	34,965	47,000	50,000
Evangelical Church in Serbia (Lutheran)			8		2,400		4,800
Evangelical (Pentecostal)		65	96/2	6,200	8,000/50	9,000	11,400/80
United Pentecostal			33		800		1,200
Church of God		17	16	500	500	900	770
Reformed		39	20/2	12,000	6,680/35	17,000	16,700/58
Gypsy Evangelical Movement		160	19	8,500	2,800	17,000	7,000
Baptist		55	55	1,780	2,300	3,500	4,370
Church of the Spirit		92	11	41,500	2,000	83,000	4,000
Church of the Nazarene			3		1,880		4,700
Kosovo Indigenous			35		1,750		3,500
Church of the United Brethren			12		1,071		1,650
Christian Brethren		13	14/1	450	475/35	693	731/58
Anglican			3		188		300
United Methodist		28	18	1,437	539	2,400	900
Seventh-day Adventist		171	175/3	6,959	4,870/250	10,000	7,500/450
Other Protestant			8		629		1,050
Other Independent			15		1,500		3,000
Other Denominations [65]		432		118,900		222,400	
TOTALS		3,503	2,991/675	4,414,627	4,306,384/311,552	6,557,893	6,300,391/487,646

* Serbian/Montenegrin figures noted separately.

Critiques of Post-Soviet Church Statistics

Editor's note: This fall issue of the East-West Church and Ministry Report completes the publication of comparative 2001/2010 statistics derived with permission from Operation World, 6th and 7th editions, giving estimates of congregations, members, and affiliates for all Christian confessions and denominations in all post-Soviet states (East-West Church and Ministry Report 21 [2013], Issues 1-4). Following are critiques and analyses of these statistics by scholars, journalists, church workers, and missionaries. The East-West Church and Ministry Report welcomes letters to the editor giving additional comments and evaluations of these church statistics. ♦

Comments on Church Statistics

Mark R. Elliott

In the first decade of the 21st century a number of significant shifts occurred in levels of Christian affiliation in post-Soviet states. Based on *Operation World* estimates, states posting the greatest percentage increases in Christian affiliation were Georgia (+16.2), Russia (+12.8), Serbia (+12.5), Slovakia (+10.4), Armenia (+9.4), Lithuania (+9.2), Montenegro (+9.2), and Romania (+9.1). States posting the largest percentage declines in Christian affiliation were Slovenia (-31), the Czech Republic (-27.3), Moldova (-22), Kazakhstan (-14.5), Albania (-11), Ukraine (-9.1), and Belarus (-8.2). The positive shifts toward greater Christian affiliation paralleled countervailing declines in population percentages for the category “non-religious/other,” except in the case of Georgia where Muslim decline (-8.7) was greater than “non-religious/other” decline (-6.8).

The states with the greatest percentage increases in Christian affiliation all have majority Christian confessions closely associated with national identity—all Orthodox or Armenian Apostolic except for Catholics in Slovakia and Lithuania. Some of the states with the greatest percentage decreases in Christian affiliation have been increasingly affected by secularization (Slovenia and the Czech Republic) or resurgent Islam (Kazakhstan and Albania). One could assume that government repression has negatively affected Pentecostals in Belarus (-26,009; down 22 percent) and Moldova (-19,700; down 32.9 percent). However, no ready explanation is at hand to account for the significant percentage decline in Christian affiliation in Ukraine (-9.1). Would it be more plausible that *Operation World* figures may not be defensible in the case of Ukraine than to assume an actual Christian affiliation decline there for 2001-2010?

Taking post-Soviet states as a whole, several of the largest Protestant denominations experienced decline in the first decade of the 21st century. Lutherans decreased 4.3 percent (from 1,909,639 to 1,828,347), and Baptists were down a startling 19.6 percent (from 1,145,341 to 921,358).

Lutheran gains in Latvia (+ 50,000; up 12.5 percent) and Slovakia (+50,000; up 15.6 percent) were more than offset by the loss of close to 200,000 in Hungary (-140,000; down 32.6 percent), Kazakhstan (-20,000; down 50 percent), Croatia (-16,900; down 84.5 percent), and Ukraine (-16,500; down 41.3 percent). Similarly, substantial Baptist gains in Ukraine (+ 72,000; up 17.8 percent) and Moldova (+17,000; up 26 percent) were more than offset by major losses in Russia (- 240,070; down 68.4 percent), Kazakhstan

(-43,950; down 85.4 percent), and Latvia (-26,400; down 66 percent).

In marked contrast, from 2001 to 2010, Pentecostal and charismatic affiliation in post-Soviet states increased 34.2 percent (from 1,864,176 to 2,500,918). Pentecostal/charismatic setbacks were registered in Belarus (-26,009; down 22 percent), Moldova (-19,750; down 32.9 percent), Armenia (-11,860; down 21.6 percent), Georgia (-4,720; down 27.8 percent), and Slovenia (-4,691; down 85 percent). However, these and other minor losses pale before dramatic Pentecostal/charismatic growth, including exceptional increases in Russia (+268,282; up 90.1 percent), Ukraine (+164,520; up 21 percent), Romania (+107,179; up 42.9 percent), Bulgaria (+76,734; up 57.7 percent), and Poland (+37,736; up 193.7 percent). In addition, Pentecostal/charismatic churches saw major percentage increases in Albania (188.4 percent), Tajikistan (149 percent), Kyrgyzstan (109 percent), and Croatia (95.3 percent), although from very low bases.

Much more work needs to be done in analyzing the causes of positive and negative shifts in Christian affiliation in post-Soviet states: 1) for Eurasia as a whole; 2) in individual states; and 3) in individual confessions and denominations. I, for one, believe much greater attention should be devoted to the under-reported phenomenon of Pentecostal/charismatic growth and declines in Christian affiliation due to immigration, both out of Central Asia and from Eurasia to the West. In some cases, Protestant denominations have been true to their commitment to evangelize and bring new converts into the fold, only to see church membership decimated by the lure of the West. (See Vyacheslav Tsvirinko, “Russian Evangelical Emigration: For Better or Worse,” *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 8 [Spring 2000], 11; Wally C. Schoon, “The Lure of the West,” *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 4 [Spring 1996], 1-2; and Susan W. Hardwick, *Russian Refuge: Religion, Migration, and Settlement on the North American Pacific Rim* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993]). Other factors affecting church statistics also deserve greater analysis including 1) various methods used to establish church affiliation totals; 2) government repression, especially restrictive measures taken against non-majority faiths; 3) secularization; 4) the growth of Islam; and 5) in the case of Protestants, the degree to which residual siege mentality isolationism and social conservatism have led to disaffection among post-1989 converts. ♦

Mark R. Elliott is editor of the *East-West Church and Ministry Report*.

A Critique of Russian and Belarusian Church Statistics

Geraldine Fagan

Regarding religious observance and statistics in Russia, I would direct readers to the abridged extract from my book, *Believing in Russia*: “How Orthodox is Russia?” in the *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 21 (Summer 2013), 3-5, particularly the point that very few Russians are practicing Orthodox according to the Orthodox Church’s own idea of what that means: 4-5 million would be a generous figure.

The *Operation World* figures for Protestant

congregations tally very roughly with government statistics I have seen for registered religious organizations. Overall, however, my sense is that the discrepancy between government and larger Protestant organizations’ own figures is growing significantly. For instance, the combined *Operation World* figure for Pentecostal congregations in 2001 is 1,648; the government figure I’ve seen for January 2001 is 1,323.¹ For 2010 the *Operation World* figure

Much greater attention should be devoted to the under-reported phenomenon of Pentecostal/charismatic growth and declines in Christian affiliation due to immigration.

Very few Russians are practicing Orthodox according to the Orthodox Church’s own idea of what that means: 4-5 million would be a generous figure.

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Comments on Church Statistics (continued from page 5)

is over 2,000, while the government figure I've seen for January 2009 is only 1,335. I recently spoke with representatives of the two largest Pentecostal unions: according to their estimates, the combined total of the unions' congregations would be around 5,000.

These figures suggest to me that such congregations are increasingly either unable to register, or are avoiding the bureaucracy associated with it. Of course, the number of people in these congregations is another, much trickier question.

For what it is worth, the government totals for registered Russian Orthodox Church congregations in January 2001 and January 2009 respectively are 10,912 and 12,727. The corresponding figures for Roman Catholic congregations do not suggest a dramatic fall, as *Operation World's* do: 258 and 232.²

For Belarus, *Operation World* figures tally roughly with January 2000 government figures for all religious organizations I was shown in Minsk in 2001. However, government figures had 1,139 Orthodox churches. (*Operation World* has 799.)

Operation World's Belarus figures for 2010 are also close to official government figures for September 2009,³ except that the government figures have 470 Roman Catholic churches. (*Operation World* has 400.) As for Russia, *Operation World* figures for Baptists (325) and Pentecostals (nearly 600) are significantly higher than official government congregational figures (271 and 501). I think this is again likely due to the difficulty of registering new Protestant congregations.

Belarus is often wrongly assumed to be a cultural extension of Russia. Unfortunately, little research on religiosity has been possible in Belarus, but what is available suggests proportionally greater religiosity, and more significant Catholic and

Protestant minorities than in Russia. In a 2000 poll, 37 percent said they were Orthodox, four percent Catholic, and six percent "other" – the majority surely Protestant.⁴ In a 2006 poll, 66 percent said they trusted the Orthodox Church, 37 percent the Catholic Church, and 17 percent the Protestant Church. (Some evidently trusted more than one.) At Christmas 2011, 254,000 Orthodox were recorded attending church worship, only 14,000 more than the Catholic total.⁵

Also in 2006, 25 percent said they attended church at least once a month.⁶ Strikingly, this is more than double the equivalent figure in Russia, 11 percent.⁷♦

Notes:

¹ http://www.archipelag.ru/ru_mir/religio/statistics/said/statistics-2001/.

² <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=news&id=69222>.

³ <http://www.president.gov.by/press23736.html>.

⁴ Jan Zaprudnik, "Belarus: In Search of National Identity between 1986 and 2000" in Elena A. Korosteleva, Colin W. Lawson, and Rosalind J. Marsh, eds., *Contemporary Belarus: Between Democracy and Dictatorship* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 118-19.

⁵ Siarhei Bohdan, "Orthodox Church is Losing Belarus," *Belarus Digest 1 March 2012*: <http://belarusdigest.com/story/orthodox-church-losing-belarus-8036>.

⁶ ISEPS survey, 23 October -3 November 2006.

⁷ D. E. Furman and K. Kaariainen, *Religioznost' v Rossii v 90-e gody XX – nachale XXI veka* (Moscow: OGNI TD, 2006), 54.

Geraldine Fagan is a correspondent with *Forum 18 News Service, Moscow*.

Belarus research suggests proportionally greater religiosity, and more significant Catholic and Protestant minorities than in Russia.

Thoughts about Religious Statistics in Russia

Lawrence A. Uzzell

Here is a radical suggestion. Rather than trying to produce precise numbers nationwide for various religious confessions and denominations, scholars should hire a large but very short-term team of pollsters, perhaps students. The team could descend – tactfully – on a small city not far from Moscow on the Volga River, spending an extended weekend (Friday-Sunday) there. The weekend should *not* be within a special holiday period such as Nativity (Christmas) or Pascha (Easter). On Friday teammates would physically visit inside every – literally *every* – mosque or building rented for Muslim services in that city. Similarly, on Saturday teammates would attend every synagogue or building rented for Jewish services – and also every church or building rented for Seventh-day Adventist services. Then on Sunday the team would attend every church or building rented for Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, or other Christian services. The task would be to do literal nose-counting in order to produce genuinely precise numbers. Such a face-to-face project could be far more revealing than current guesswork. Of course, the project would not produce nationwide numbers, but it would be quite helpful in trying to analyze the claims of both supporters and foes of the various religions in

Russia.

As far as I know, no pollsters have attempted what I propose above. However, two Russian scholars (Nikolai Mitrokhin and Olga Sibireva) did some fascinating, detailed fieldwork concentrating on one province, including not only Ryazan city (about 120 miles southeast of Moscow), but also the province's rural villages. They repeatedly visited various churches at different seasons. Unfortunately, they covered only the mainstream Russian Orthodox Church. The bottom line: On a typical Sunday, 0.9 percent of the province's population attended Divine Liturgy. ("'Ne boisia, maloe stalo!' Ob otsenke chislennosti pravoslavnykh veruiushchikh na materiale polevykh issledovaniy v Riazanskoj oblasti," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, No. 1 [2007], 51; <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2007/1/mi24.html>. Geraldine Fagan considers this sociological study as "likely the most systematic to date": *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy after Communism* [London: Routledge, 2013], 25.)

Unfortunately, I have difficulties trusting religious statistics in Russia today. Under current conditions, are members of marginal groups (such as Old Believers or unregistered Protestants) really willing

to talk about their religious beliefs with a stranger? The true numbers, available only to God, might be larger than the numbers estimated by journalists and scholars forced to engage in guesswork. On the other hand, the true numbers might be smaller than the claims of organizations (either religious or non-religious), tempted to inflate numbers for the sake of public relations or fund-raising. Certainly, Gallup-style polling methods have their value. Without such surveys we would be even more ignorant about Russia. Nevertheless, it bears repeating that polls may be problematic in a less-than-free country. A Pew Research Center report cautioned that “government and academic researchers have found evidence that Christians in general, and members of unregistered Christian groups in particular, are less likely than Chinese as a whole to participate in public opinion surveys” (*Global Christianity: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World’s Christian Population*, [2011], p. 102). The same is likely the case in Russia.

Another problem with polls is the method of self-identification, probably inevitable in mass surveys attempting to compare various religious, non-religious, and anti-religious groups with dramatically different criteria of “belief” or “membership.” Geraldine Fagan’s wonderful book pinpoints the dubious claims of Russia as a “truly Orthodox” society. She correctly emphasizes how hugely important are the sacraments in the Orthodox Church, the core of Orthodox life. However, “Few of Russia’s majority who identify as Orthodox conform to the

Church definition. The recent surveys reveal that while some 80 percent are baptized, over 70 percent have never taken communion in their lives” (*Believing in Russia*, 24-25).

On the other hand, surveys give us a glimpse of those Russians who vaguely consider themselves “believers” but explicitly decline to label themselves as members of any specific religion. Like it or not, many post-moderns now prefer amorphous “spirituality” rather than any rigorous theology. Strikingly, a 2012 survey by Moscow-based Sreda found that 25 percent of respondents chose “I believe in God, but I do not profess any concrete religion” (<http://sreda.org/arena>).

Even more striking for those who follow Protestant life in current Russia: Apparently four times more Russians label themselves as generic “Christians” than call themselves specifically Protestants. Again from the Sreda survey, 4.1 percent of respondents chose “I profess Christianity, but I do not consider myself Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant.” Few respondents chose to label themselves as Protestant, Pentecostal, Catholic, or Old Believer: less than 0.5 percent each.

In sum, are Orthodox and Western forms of Christianity thriving in Russia today? With the possible exception of Pentecostals, the answer seems to be no. ♦

Lawrence A. Uzzell, retired president of *International Religious Freedom Watch*, Fishersville, Virginia

Are Orthodox and Western forms of Christianity thriving in Russia today? With the possible exception of Pentecostals, the answer seems to be no.

Christianity in Ukraine: Commentary on Statistics

Michael Cherenkov

While *Operation World* statistics indicate a continuing Christian boom in Ukraine, more fundamental and far-reaching studies point to slowed growth for new confessions.¹ In fact, Ukrainian analysts document a decrease in church membership and quantity of churches, a loss of confessional identity, and the growth of “mere Christianity.”²

Confessional representatives are silent among sociologists, but boldly inflate their numbers in front of less competent listeners. For instance, Orthodox churches do not measure their membership in absolute numbers but as a percentage of the country’s population. It is easier to measure by subtracting those who “aren’t one of us,” and then simply consider the rest “one of us.”

There also is not much clarity among Protestants. It is often difficult to verify data because of a lack of interest among denominations, whose leaders indulge in wishful thinking. Every neo-Protestant denomination claims to be the most dynamic. Every traditional church tries to show at least slow growth. On the whole, data confirm growth among Charismatic churches and a slowing of growth among Evangelical Christians.

Surprisingly, foreign researchers often rely on unconfirmed statistics of denominations. Therefore, in 2010 the membership of the Baptist Union was measured at 151,000. However, Razumkov Center statistics reveal a decrease in the percentage of Protestants from 2 percent in 2000 to 0.8 percent in 2013.³

In light of Orthodox strength in Ukraine, the number of atheists and non-believers continues to decrease. Apparently a number of freethinkers and agnostics have fit into the overly wide category of “Orthodox.” If, in order to be counted as Orthodox, it is enough simply to be called that, with no need to confirm one’s beliefs, then it is possible to be an Orthodox atheist or an Orthodox occultist. ♦

Notes:

¹ *Christianity in Its Global Context, 1970-2020: Society, Religion, and Mission* (South Hamilton, MA: Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2013); <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/resources/Global-Context-of-Christianity.cfm>.

² “Religion and Authority in Ukraine: Problems in the Relationship,” presented at the roundtable on “Church and State Relations in Ukraine in 2013: A Movement for a Partnership between the State and the Church or towards a Crisis?” 22 April 2013—Kyiv 2013, p. 27.

³ “The Number of Baptists in Ukraine is Decreasing”; <http://www.religion.in.ua/news/vazhlyvo/22490-skorochuyetsya-chiselnist-aptistiv-ukrayini.html>.

Michael Cherenkov works for the *Association for Spiritual Renewal, Irpen, Ukraine*.

If, in order to be counted as Orthodox, it is enough simply to be called that, with no need to confirm one’s beliefs, then it is possible to be an Orthodox atheist or an Orthodox occultist.

Ukrainian Church Statistics

Rich Correll

The Evangelical Christian-Baptist church and membership statistics for Ukraine look correct. We started in 1990 with 988 congregations and more than doubled in the next ten years. However, the affiliate numbers (2001—380,000; 2010—452,000) look suspect, and I wonder how *Operation World* figured

those. My overall impression is that church planting in Ukraine has slowed to a crawl in the last six years, with officials manipulating statistics. ♦

Rich Correll, Church Planters' Training Institute, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Nazarenes in Hungary

Jay Glenn Sunberg

I looked through the *Operation World* statistics, and they are accurate for the Church of the Nazarene except for Hungary. We have never had 28 congregations in Hungary: We have five with 80

members and 120 in attendance. I am not sure where the numbers for Hungary came from. ♦

Jay Glenn Sunberg, Church of the Nazarene, Budapest, Hungary

Comments on Romanian Church Statistics

Danut Manastireanu

1. The percentage of the Romanian population identified as Christian in 2001 (87.85) and 2010 (96.96) is plausible.
2. Totals for the Lord's Army (150,000 members in 2001 and 2010; 300,000 affiliates in 2001 and 2010) are highly subjective. The movement is divided and dwindling.
3. Emigration is the best explanation for the drop in 2001-2010 totals for Byzantine Catholics (from 167,665 to 106,587 members and from 280,000 to 178,000 affiliates) and Reformed (from 550,000 to 451,299 members from 725,000 to 695,000 affiliates).
4. Whereas for 2001 *Operation World* gives figures of 150,000 members and 250,000 affiliates for Romanian Pentecostals, my estimates for 1998 are 300,000 members and 500,000 affiliates (members plus adherents).
5. Most Gypsy Evangelicals are already included in totals for the various Evangelical Protestant denominations.
6. My 1998 estimates for Christian Brethren of 50,000 members and 150,000 members plus adherents is very close to the *Operation World* figures of 55,657 members and 150,000 affiliates. However, *Operation World* does not note the existence of a separate Brethren community, the Tudorists, also known today as the Evangelical Church in Romania, whose members and affiliates totaled some 40,000 in 1998.
7. Is the New Apostolic Church a Christian denomination?

Danut Manastireanu, World Vision Romania

Attendance at Russian Orthodox Christmas Services, January 2013

Location	Churches Holding Christmas Services	Number in Attendance	Percentage of Population
Moscow	348	226,000	1.6-1.9
Bryansk	30	4,500	1.1
Voronezh Region		78,500	3.3
Kostroma Region	74	6,000	.8
Lipetsk Region	187	20,000	1.8
Ryazan Region	293	75,000	6
Tambov Region	117	20,000	1.9
Bashkortostan	141	43,000	1.1
Nizhni-Novgorod Region	348	80,000	2.5
Mordvinia	231	15,000	1.8
Orenburg Region		20,000	1
Perm District (Krai)	132	97,000+	3.7
Samara Region	205	43,000	1.4
Saratov Region	142	17,000	.7
Udmurtia	81	30,000	1.9
Tomsk Region		5,000	.5
Vologda Region		14,000	1.3
Komi Republic	61	17,500	2
Sverdlovsk Region	317	64,500	1.4
Tyumen Region	317	64,500	.3
Adygey Republic	39	6,000	1.4
Rostov Region		100,000	2.3
Cheboksary	7	3,300	.6

Sources: SOVA Center for Information and Analysis: www.sova-center.ru/religion/discussions/how-many/2013/01/d26162/; Paul Goble, "Russians Attending Church Increasingly Diverse but Not More Numerous," *Window on Eurasia*, 12 January 2013.

Is Russia Turning Protestant?

James Brooke

Since returning to the Kremlin last year as president, Vladimir Putin seems determined to restore the Orthodox Church to the official status it enjoyed during the time of the tsars. Nevertheless, increasingly, Protestant churches are expanding rapidly.

In June 2013, President Putin signed into law vaguely worded “defense of religion” legislation. In theory, this law protects from “insults” Russia’s four religions deemed “historic” by a 1997 law: Christian Orthodoxy, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam. In July 2013 any illusion that the law covered Islam disappeared when 263 Central Asians were detained in Moscow for gathering in an informal prayer house and partaking in the traditional “Iftar” dinner to break the Ramadan fast. Although there are about one million Muslims in Moscow today, the city has only four mosques. City officials deny construction permits, saying most Muslims in Moscow are guest workers who will go home.

Instead, official support for the Orthodox Church can be seen everywhere from the restoration of golden-domed churches, to President Putin’s televised attendance at Orthodox Easter services, to the pre-attendance comment last year by Patriarch Kirill that Putin’s leadership of Russia is “a miracle of God.” The patriarch recently was given use of lodgings inside the Kremlin, a unique privilege enjoyed during the time of the tsars.

Meanwhile, Russian Protestants increasingly hold religious services in living rooms as their pastors are routinely denied permits to build churches. Visas for foreign missionaries are rare. Russia’s anti-Protestant actions are regularly chronicled in Forum 18 News Service, based in Oslo, Norway. But out of sight does not mean out of mind. Despite the efforts of Russian police and prosecutors, Protestantism keeps growing in Russia.

Last Easter, as is customary, Russian police were deployed to every Orthodox church in the land. They kept order and conducted a census. According to Interior Ministry statistics, about four million Russians attended Easter services at Russian Orthodox churches. That is 2.7 percent of the population in Russia, a nation where around 65 percent of survey respondents call themselves Orthodox. According to a survey conducted in April 2013 by Public Opinion Foundation, about half of Russians who call themselves Orthodox admit they have never opened a Bible.

Russia’s Justice Ministry has registered 14,616 Orthodox parishes, 4,409 Protestant parishes, and 234 Catholic parishes. But Anatoly Pchelintsev, a

religion specialist and professor at the Russian State Humanitarian University, estimates that for every registered Protestant congregation, there are at least two unregistered ones. Pchelintsev, who edits the journal *Religion and Law*, concludes that Russia has about 15,000 Protestant congregations, roughly equal to the number of Russian Orthodox parishes. He says the number of Catholic parishes is roughly the same as the official number.

In Siberia, long a land of dissenters and discontents, there are believed to be more Protestants in church on Sunday mornings than Russian Orthodox. On one visit to Khabarovsk, the second largest city of the Russian Far East, I went to a packed Baptist church, only a kilometer from a massive, sparsely attended Russian Orthodox Cathedral that had been built with federal funds.

With the vast majority of contemporary Russians rarely entering churches, many feel the Orthodox Church will have to change or end up with declining demographics. In July 2013 a push for change came from an unexpected corner: Alexander Lukashenko, the archconservative president of Belarus, a country where half the population is nominally Orthodox. “As the world is undergoing change, therefore the Church must change also,” said Lukashenko, who has received awards from the Belarusian Orthodox Church. “I think we are on the threshold of reforms in the Orthodox Church. Our church should begin a reform, step-by-step, beginning with the church language,” he continued, referring to Old Church Slavonic, a 1,000-year-old liturgical language unintelligible to most Russians and Belarusians.

“The prayers, services, and sermons are too long,” Lukashenko continued. “Adults and the elderly just cannot endure them. One should be brief, succinct, and more modern. I am against the practice of people coming in, listening to a sermon standing on their feet and having no opportunity at all to sit,” he said, referring to Russian Orthodox churches that have no chairs or pews. “The practice of building huge cathedrals is no good either. Churches must be cozy and warm, and they must not oppress believers.”

For Russia, the future offers a choice: Will Russia’s Orthodox Church compete with Protestantism, or try to crush it? ♦

James Brooke is Moscow Bureau Chief for *Voice of America*.

Edited excerpts published with permission from a Voice of America website posting: <http://blogs.voanews.com/russia-watch/2013/07/30/is-russia-turning-protestant/>; August 2013.

On one visit to Khabarovsk, I went to a packed Baptist church, only a kilometer from a massive, sparsely attended Russian Orthodox Cathedral that had been built with federal funds.

Persecuted Uzbek Evangelicals Wish Their Story to Be Known

(continued from page 1)

Shakhida Shayimova, an employee of the local bank who also attends worship services at pastor Shakar’s home in Gulistan, reported that she was interrogated by officers of the State Security Service (*Sluzhba natsional’noi bezopasnosti*) who threatened to have her fired because she belonged “to the ‘extremist sect.’” Shakhida had to flee her home because her father, who is Muslim, was beating her for attending Christian fellowship.

Uzbek Persecution Overlooked

One of the most troubling issues for Uzbek Christians is the attempt of the State Security Service to plant informers in their congregations. “At no time can we be sure that someone from within our house church would not report our activities to state authorities,” says pastor A. Informers within churches sow discord and foster suspicion among believers. At a

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Uzbek Evangelicals are ready to make the facts of persecution known to the rest of the world.

Persecuted Uzbek Evangelicals Wish Their Story Told

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time when persecution of believers in Middle Eastern countries receives the attention of the Western press, Uzbek Christians consider their story is being largely ignored. While being aware of persecution underway in China and Iran, substantial numbers of Christians in the West do not even know where Uzbekistan is located on the Map. “We want more contact with churches outside of Uzbekistan. We often feel like we

are left alone. The Soviet Union with its repressive anti-religious system collapsed, but persecution of Christians continues,” says Z., leader of another house church in Tashkent. Perhaps it is time for the church in the West to become better acquainted with the persecuted church in former Soviet Central Asia and to be involved in helping fellow Christians who endure hardships for Christ’s name. ♦

Group Discipleship in Bulgaria: Wesley’s Class Meeting Meets Social Media

Jay Glenn Sunberg

Introduction

The Sofia Discipleship Project rose out of the painful realization that attempts to encourage discipleship among Nazarene church leaders in Sofia, Bulgaria, had largely failed. The project was conceived to address the discipleship needs of the Sofia leadership team amid the challenges of contemporary society and ministry, following in particular David Lowes Watson’s adaptation of Wesley’s “works of mercy” and “works of piety” in a covenant discipleship format. Instead of physically meeting together each week, the project explored the effectiveness of being connected through social media.

The Realities of Contemporary Life

The realities of contemporary life are numbing. Rapid technological change makes yesterday’s cutting edge gadgets outdated and obsolete today. New technologies arrive promising to simplify our lives, connect us with others, and make life more convenient, yet, too often the results are just the opposite: further isolation from others and additional complications in everyday life.

For those living in cities, substantial energy is also required to keep up with the demanding pace of life. Moving from point to point requires choosing between public transportation, often involving numerous inconvenient connections on overcrowded buses, trolleys, or trams, or traveling in one’s own vehicle, enduring traffic congestion and inadequate parking. Thus, it is no surprise that many city dwellers are reluctant to make commitments of time and energy beyond the basic requirements of life and work. It is a major accomplishment to convince the contemporary urbanite that an additional event in the week is worth the time and energy it will demand.

Another complication in contemporary life is its increasing mobility. People tend to relocate away from the place of their birth. The pursuit of education and jobs compels many to abandon familiar surroundings. In doing so, they lose the network of family and friends on which they have depended for support, a loss that is not easily re-established in a new and unfamiliar location. As a result, displaced people often remain disconnected or establish a patchwork of weaker relationships.

In this ever-changing environment, will traditional methods of Christian discipleship be appropriate and adequate, or do the realities and challenges of urban living call for new approaches to discipleship? Are contemporary urban Christians willing to invest the time required for discipleship, or are the realities and challenges of contemporary life incompatible with

living a consistent, disciplined life of discipleship?

Certainly every generation of believers is presented with its own obstacles and challenges to discipleship. It is never easy or convenient, nor is it meant to be. We cannot expect that the demands of life in any era, for any generation, will easily lend themselves to a life committed to the discipline of discipleship. It is the charge of every generation, therefore, to develop new strategies for discipleship. The Sophia Discipleship Project is an attempt to do just that: to recover valuable spiritual disciplines of the past and implement them in the light of the realities of the present. It seeks to restore a proper balance between discipleship practices that develop love for God with those that develop love for neighbor.

The project also rejects the notion that discipleship is an individual endeavor and replaces it with the conviction that discipleship is best achieved in community. To do so in the current mobile society with its weaker connections, the Sophia Discipleship Project utilizes new social media that have the potential to connect people in a way that addresses the contemporary, urban challenges of time and distance. This discipleship project is specifically an adaptation of the accountability found in John Wesley’s class meeting in the form of covenant discipleship through the medium of a social network.

The Context

The context for the Sofia Discipleship Project is the Sofia First Church of the Nazarene, Sofia, Bulgaria. According to a congregational analysis published in Nancy T. Ammerman *et al.*, *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), the average participant in the Nazarene Church in Sofia is a woman (86 percent) over the age of 75 (50 percent), retired (72 percent) and widowed (42 percent). She earns less than 150 Leva (\$100.00) a month (42 percent). The typical attendee comes to church every Sunday (79 percent) by multiple lines of public transportation (84 percent), traveling more than 45 minutes (60 percent) one way. She began coming to the Nazarene Church for a variety of reasons and continues to come to the church because she feels the presence of God and because she likes the pastor. She has been attending the church for approximately eight years.

Most attendees have completed membership classes (71 percent), are members of the church, and were not members of another denomination previously (71 percent). The average attendee indicates that she is happy with the church (73 percent) and feels that her opinions are heard and valued (100 percent). She

The Sophia Discipleship Project is specifically an adaptation of the accountability found in John Wesley’s class meeting.

would like to invite someone else to her church in Sofia (93 percent) and would describe the church to a friend as one with good people, good preaching, and love among members. The average attendee would like to see the church have better facilities with more people attending, especially young people. What she values most in the church is the people, the love among them, and the preaching of the Word.

The Sofia Discipleship Project sought to answer five key questions.

Question 1: Can the 18th century Wesley class meeting be effectively adapted to meet the discipleship and spiritual formation needs of the Sofia First Nazarene Church leadership team? Obviously it cannot be assumed that a discipleship approach developed to meet the needs of 18th century England will automatically transfer to the 21st century Bulgarian context. What aspects of the class meeting can transfer to present realities, and what aspects need to be adapted?

Question 2: Will a combination of compassion and holiness result in more effective discipleship formation in the life of participants? James 1:27 teaches that pure religion (also read discipleship) is the combination of holiness and compassion, where the two exist in the same space. Too often these essential aspects of discipleship have been separated, with one taking prominence over the other. Can these essential aspects be brought back into balance, and will the balance of the two result in noticeable improvements in “pure religion” (or discipleship)?

Question 3: Will the change in approach in discipleship and spiritual formation from individual effort to a group project increase the effectiveness of discipleship for each of the participants? Possibly the most all-encompassing encroachment of western culture upon religious experience is individualism. Taking the Reformation’s claim of universal priesthood of believers to an extreme, many western Christians believe their discipleship is an individual’s personal responsibility. Yet isolated individuals have an uncanny ability to overlook their shortcomings. Without the accountability of others, believers can even justify the remaining presence of outright sin in their lives. The result is stunted or no spiritual growth year after year. It is time, then, to recover an understanding that Christians really are responsible for each other.

Question 4: Will reliance upon social media assist in maintaining the necessary connectedness of the group? Because of the realities of contemporary life, people are disconnected and are slow to make commitments of time, posing significant challenges to discipleship formation in contemporary society. Can the utilization of social media effectively address these challenges?

Question 5: Can the Wesley class meeting be appropriately adapted within an Orthodox cultural context? Wesley was heavily influenced by the 4th century Desert Fathers and incorporated a significant amount of their thought into his own theological understanding. What of Wesley’s class meeting is appropriate in an Orthodox context, and what needs to be adapted to better connect in an Orthodox environment?

Research Methods

The Sofia Discipleship Project employed research

methods as outlined by William R. Myers in *Research in Ministry: A Primer for the Doctor of Ministry Program* (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1993, 25), including the establishment of a baseline of data through questionnaires, interviews, weekly activity logs, and the writing of spiritual autobiographies. At the end of the ten-week project the interviews, questionnaires, and weekly activity logs were repeated and compared with initial baseline data.

Four Influences Shaping the Sofia Discipleship Project

Four streams of thought influenced the formation of the Sofia Discipleship Project. First, Eastern Orthodox theology and spirituality form the cultural and theological background of most of those invited to participate in the project. Second, John Wesley and his class meeting provide an historical example of what can be accomplished through intentional, communal attention to discipleship and spiritual formation. Third, recent approaches to discipleship, with close attention to David Lowes Watson’s work in the area of covenant discipleship, helped to adapt Wesley’s centuries-old methods for the current day. (See the following titles by Watson published in Nashville, TN, by Discipleship Resources: *Accountable Discipleship* [1984]; *The Early Methodist Class Meeting* [1985]; *Covenant Discipleship* [1991]; *Forming Christian Disciples* [1991]; and *Class Leaders: Recovering a Tradition* [1991].) Fourth, social networking was the media format chosen for the project to keep participants connected for the purpose of encouragement and accountability.

While it is true that none of the participants of the Sofia Discipleship Project ever considered themselves devout adherents to Eastern Orthodoxy, the influence of Orthodox values and worldview on Bulgarian culture and people should not be underestimated. Most Bulgarians readily agree with the frequently heard phrase, “To be Bulgarian is to be Orthodox.” For a country situated on a small peninsula between expansion-hungry empires to the West and to the East, the greater significance of this phrase is its implied, converse meanings: “To be Bulgarian is NOT to be Muslim,” or “To be Bulgarian is NOT to be Catholic or Protestant.” Remaining Orthodox has been a matter of national pride and cultural identity against external pressures on Bulgarians to convert to Islam or western Christianity. The unbroken identification of the Bulgarian people with Orthodoxy for over 1200 years underscores its significant influence on the Bulgarian people.

At the same time, Orthodox and Wesleyan theologies bear marked affinities. Methodist scholar Albert C. Outler articulated the close connection between Wesley and the Eastern Church in the area of perfection: “If Wesley’s writings on perfection are to be read with understanding, his affirmative notion of ‘holiness’ in *the world* must be taken seriously—active holiness in *this* life—and it becomes intelligible only in the light of its indirect sources in early and Eastern Spirituality” (Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1964], 252). Wesley agreed with the Eastern Church that overcoming the effect of sin is attainable in this life. (Outler also notes that Wesley avoided the term “sinless perfection.”) Perfection for Wesley was not just juridical but moral,

Wesley was heavily influenced by the 4th century Desert Fathers and incorporated a significant amount of their thought into his own theological understanding.

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Group Discipleship in Bulgaria:

the perfection of love.)

Although the sanctified believer's performance will continue at times to miss the mark (due to human frailty) and fall short of God's perfect will, Wesley's understanding of sin holds that perfect love can overcome it. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer empowers the believer to willfully resist breaking and disobeying the known laws of God and to live a life of love that pleases God. Similarly, Orthodox theologian Dmitry Staniloae identifies perfection as the goal of Orthodox spirituality which "aims at the perfection of the faithful in Christ. This perfection [cannot] be obtained in Christ, except by participation in His divine-human life. Therefore, the goal of Orthodox spirituality is the perfection of the believer by his union with Christ." In order for union with Christ to be possible, the passions must be defeated and replaced by virtues. As in Wesleyan spirituality so also in Orthodox spirituality, the problem of sin can be overcome in this life. For Orthodoxy, however, sin is not seen and defined in legal, juridical terms, but rather seen as a sickness of the soul. Father Valentin, the head priest of Sofia's Cathedral of the Dormition of the Theotokos of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church Old Calendar Synod states, "Sin is a sickness of the soul. Like a physical ailment, the soul requires treatment to overcome its infirmities. Sometimes healing is accomplished quickly through taking medicine, but at other times more drastic and prolonged procedures like surgery and rehabilitation are required to return health to the soul" (Personal interview with Father Valentin, 14 April 2008). The healing of the affliction of sin for Orthodox and Wesleyans is to be undertaken in this life.

In addition to the influences of Sofia's Orthodox theological context, the compatibility of Wesleyan theology to that context, and practical benefits of Wesley's class meetings for spiritual formation, modern social media proved their value in adapting Wesley's class meeting to a contemporary urban setting. Shane Hipps probes deeply into the realm of media usage and how it affects the message, the messenger, and the recipient. Offering thoughtful insight, he advances a cautious but balanced view of the benefits and pitfalls of social media. In *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009, 7) Hipps advocates the application of "insights about media and technology to some of the basic issues of faith and life." *Flickering Pixels* notes that Christianity fundamentally is a matter of communication:

God wants to communicate with us, and his media are many: angels, burning bushes, stone tablets, scrolls, donkeys, prophets, mighty voices, still whispers, and shapes traced in the dirt. Any serious study of God is a study of communication, and any effort to understand God is shaped by our understanding—or misunderstanding—of the media and technology we use to communicate (*Flickering Pixels*, 13).

Hipps argues further that the various media through which we acquire information are not neutral. Instead they have power to shape us, regardless of content, and we cannot evaluate them based solely on their content. Technology both gives and takes away, and each new

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medium introduced into our lives must be evaluated with that caution in mind.

When viewing the value and effect of social media, we often have a problem with depth perception; we are able to see, but we have great difficulty perceiving. The task before us requires an entirely different approach to analyzing media, recognizing them not simply as conduits or pipelines (i.e., neutral purveyors of information), but rather as dynamic forces with power to shape us, regardless of content (Shane Hipps, *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005], 24 and 27).

The Project's Volunteers

Participant 1 (P1) is a Bulgarian male in his late 20s. He and his wife, Participant 2, currently live in another country. P1 studied computer science in high school and is very proficient with computers. After a period of disappointment and disillusionment with the church and college, P1 completed a BA in religion and currently holds a district minister's license. He works as a photo editor for an online company and has a demanding but flexible work schedule. He has expressed a call to ministry and has served in the local Sofia church in various ways. P1 noted that the biggest need in his life is consistency in his discipleship practices, recognizing that he often was able to begin well, but consistently failed to persevere for an extended period of time.

Participant 2 (P2), a female in her late 20s married to P1, also holds a BA in religion. She currently works as a nurse. While she has not expressed a definite call to ministry, she does have a strong desire to serve in the local church. P2 confessed that her spiritual life at the beginning of the project was not as good as she would have liked it to be. She considers herself to be a lukewarm Christian in many ways and unworthy to be loved by God because she has let Him down so often. She expressed a desire to be closer to God again.

Participant 3 (P3), a female in her late 30s, has a master's degree in chemistry. She holds a district minister's license and is currently completing a Christian ministry certificate. Sensing a call to ministry, she first served in the Sofia Nazarene Church and later was sent out to start a new church. She is single and has served alone in a remote place among people who are significantly different from her own culture, educational background, and spiritual development. She was interested to discover whether participation in the discipleship project could provide her with needed support in her isolated location.

Participant 4 (P4), an ordained elder (pastor), is a single woman in her late 30s who has completed an M.Div. degree. She has served in the local Sofia Nazarene church. Other project participants described her as energetic and passionate about her beliefs, a self-starter who accomplishes much in the church.

Participant 5 (P5) is a woman in her early 40s, married to P6. She has a BA in English as well as a master's degree in missional leadership. She has served in the local Sofia Nazarene church and is in the process of completing the educational requirements for ordination. Other project participants described her as a warm and caring person who loves to be surrounded

Modern social media proved their value in adapting Wesley's class meeting to a contemporary urban setting.

by people.

Participant 6 (P6) is a male in his early 40s who has completed an M. Div. degree and is an ordained elder. He has been involved in the Sofia Nazarene Church whose ministry now requires extensive travel. Other project participants described him as a wise pastor who leads with love and care. He is considered to be a good listener and generous helper who makes sure that everyone around him feels cared for and loved. ♦

Editor's note: The concluding portion of this article will be published in the next issue of the East-West

Church and Ministry Report 22 (Winter 2014).

Edited excerpts published with permission from Jay Glenn Sunberg, "The Sofia Discipleship Project: A Contemporary Adaptation of the Wesley Class Meeting to Meet the Discipleship Formation Needs of the Leadership Team of the Sofia First Nazarene Church," D. Min. dissertation, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri, 2012.

Jay Glenn Sunberg, based in Budapest, Hungary, is Central Europe field strategy coordinator for the Church of the Nazarene.

The Association of Christian Psychologists and Psychotherapists in Ukraine

Vyacheslav Khalanskiy

Ukraine's Association of Christian Psychologists and Psychotherapists (ACPP), established in Dnepropetrovsk in 2011, aims to render practical help to people in church and society through the integration of Christian faith and psychology. ACPP's founding conference, 28-29 May 2011, organized under the direction of ACPP coordinator Anna Lianna on behalf of the Alliance of Christian Professionals, was attended by psychologists and psychotherapists who profess faith in God and base their practice on Christian principles and values. This landmark event, the first of its kind in Ukraine, assembled practicing psychologists from Ukraine, Russia, and the United States. The conference resulted in efforts to establish and register the Association of Christian Psychologists and Psychotherapists. Finalization of the registration of the Association, delayed by frequent changes in the law and other juridical complications, should be completed by the end of 2013.

In addition to its founding conference, the Association has organized an academic conference in Kyiv, 24-25 November 2013 (<http://slavahalanskiy.blogspot.com/2013/01/report-christian-psychology-conference.html>); two practical forums for Christian psychologists, counselors, church leaders, and parishioners on the themes: "Healing as a Way to Mature Personhood in Christ" (Donetsk, 2-3 March 2012) and "Family: Life or Survival?" (Odessa, 1-2 May 2013); <http://slavahalanskiy.blogspot.com/search?q=christian>); and a roundtable addressing "Psychology as the Science of the Soul in the Christian Paradigm: the Way to Integrate Theory into Practice" (Kyiv, 10 September 2011). At the roundtable meeting Eastern Rite Catholic Ph.D. Lyudmila Grydkovets introduced "The Concept of the Association of Christian Psychologists and Psychotherapists," which was slated for further discussion at future meetings.

Association members have been active in publishing academic articles devoted to Christian psychology and have participated in the European Symposium of the World Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology, and Psychotherapy (Warsaw, 3-6 September 2012). The Association has also organized an educational program, "Fundamentals of Pastoral Care and Psychological Counseling," at Donetsk Christian University and the Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary in Kyiv. This specialized course provides the basics of pastoral care and psychological counseling grounded in a biblical worldview.

A statement of the Association's objectives, approved 21 November 2012, summarizes its goals as follows:

The Association unites psychologists, psychotherapists, and Christian counselors who work in accordance with the Christian approach in which the objectives, methods, and expected results of counseling and therapy correlate with the Christian faith...with due account taken of Christian anthropology (understanding that a human being is created in the image and likeness of God. [With]...respect for the freedom and value of every person...), Christian psychotherapy [works]...within the framework...of various psychotherapeutic schools that do not contradict the Christian understanding of a human.

Until a permanent headquarters is secured, the Association maintains an office at the Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary in Kyiv (<http://www.uets.net>). The Association's fulltime coordinator, Anna Lianna (liannanna@gmail.com; +38-097-989-2327), directs a staff of eight volunteers.

The Association of Christian Psychologists and Psychotherapists cooperates with a host of professional organizations including the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association (<http://www.e-aaa.info>), the Eastern European Leadership Forum (www.forumeast.eu/), the Association of Christian Psychologists in Poland (www.spch.pl), the Association of Russian Christian Scientists (<http://baptist-scientist.blogspot.com>), and, through ACPP member Lyudmila Grydkovets, with the Council for Social and Psychological Issues of the National Expert Commission of Ukraine.

Farther afield, ACPP has established ties with Dr. Werner May, president of the European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology, and Psychotherapy (<http://www.emcapp.eu>) and Dr. Michael Gillern at New York-based Nyack College and Alliance Theological Seminary (www.nyack.edu). ACPP also is seeking to collaborate with the Academy for Christian Psychology (IGNIS; www.ignis.de) in Western Europe, the U.S.-based Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS; www.caps.net), and the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF; www.ccef.org).

ACPP members participate as experts on Ukrainian television programs including "Diary for Parents," "Morning Espresso," "Rules of Life," and "Breakfast with 1+ 1" and radio programs including "Promin," Navigator," and "Family Hours." ACPP members also speak at conferences held at churches

Ukraine's Association of Christian Psychologists and Psychotherapists aims to render practical help to people in church and society through the integration of Christian faith and psychology.

(continued on page 14)

Despite the fact that church leaders are wary of Christian psychology, ACPPP hopes to overcome misunderstandings through dialogue.

in Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. Perhaps the Association's most ambitious undertaking to date has been courses of study in counseling and pastoral care. These include two hosted by Kyiv's Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary: Natalya Prostun, "Psychological Counseling and Psychotherapy of Children and Adolescents" (18 months) and Julia Patyuk, "Introduction to Pastoral Care and Psychological Counseling" (12 months), and, in cooperation with Donetsk Christian University, Vyacheslav Khalanskiy, "Pastoral Care and Psychological Counseling" (three years). ACPPP member Yana Vasilenko also directs a church-based program, "Emotional World." Participants in these programs have come from Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and Belarus.

Association plans for the future include a variety of initiatives:

- a theoretical and practical conference in March 2014 and a practical forum in Odessa in May 2014;
- an interdenominational, academic conference in Moscow in the summer of 2014 devoted to the development of methodology in Christian psychology, to be organized in conjunction with the Catholic Institute in Moscow;
- monthly meetings open to the public with presentations by ACPPP members and the opportunity to dialogue with psychologists, receive consultations, and ask questions;
- practical forums for psychologists, counselors, priests, and church leaders, the goal of which will be to provide participants with a wide spectrum of tools for working with the dying, helping people cope with divorce, assisting abused children and their families, working with homosexuals, resolving family conflicts,

and dealing with clergy burnout;

- efforts to secure financial resources to enable five members of the Association to pursue degrees and specialized education in the field of psychotherapy; and
- plans to translate the book *Psychology and Christianity: Four Views* by Eric L. Johnson and Stanton L. Jones. This book is important because 1) it gives an overview and examination of four approaches to counseling in the American evangelical community represented by Gary R. Collins, David G. Myers, David Powlison, and Robert C. Roberts; and 2) it facilitates a broadening understanding of the integration of psychology and theology for the evangelical community.

The Association of Christian Psychologists and Psychotherapists in Ukraine provides important and relevant help to local churches, social organizations, and society as a whole. Despite the fact that church leaders are wary of Christian psychology, ACPPP hopes to overcome misunderstandings through dialogue. We know that our brothers and sisters in Western Europe and America had to overcome the same mistrust of psychology. At the same time, the demand for qualified psychological assistance and spiritual direction is increasing among Christians. We are grateful to God for the assistance of our partners and for the opportunity to develop the Association of Christian Psychologists and Psychotherapists. ♦

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Selected Publications of Members of Ukraine's Association of Christian Psychologists and Psychotherapists

Bowen, Dennis and O. M. Kononenko. "Mozhet li kratkosrochnaya terapiya byt' effektivnoi na Ukraine? [Can Short-term Therapy Be Effective in Ukraine?]." *Christian Psychology: Difficulties and Perspectives*, No. 3 (2012): 68-75.

Khalanskiy, Vyacheslav. "Khristianskoe konsul'tirovanie i missiya tserkvi: skhodstva i razlichiya [Christian Counseling and the Mission of the Church: Similarities and Differences]." *Forum 20. Dvadtsat' let religioznoi svobody i aktivnoi missii v postsovetskoj obshchestve. Itogi, problemy, perspektivy evangel'skikh tserkvei. Materialy k diskussiyam [Forum 20. Twenty Years of Religious Freedom and Active Mission in Post-Soviet Society; Summation, Problems, and Prospects for Evangelical Churches; Materials for Discussion]*. Kyiv: "Dukh i Litera," 2011.

Khalanskiy, Vyacheslav, Marta Bilyk, and Iryna Gorbal. "Khristianskaya psikhologiya kak integrativnaya paradigma [Christian Psychology as an Integrative Paradigm]." *Ukrains'ka psikhoterapiya u noshukakh svogo mistysya v suslil'nikh stosunkakh [Ukrainian Psychotherapy in Search of Its Place in Social Relations]*. (Lviv: 2013): 43-48.

Khalanskiy, Vyacheslav. "Tselostnoe izuchenie lichnosti kak integral'naya paradigma v psikhologii [Holistic Study of Personhood as an Integrative Paradigm in Psychology]." *Vektory psikhologii [Psychological Vectors]* (April 2010).

Kononenko, O.M. "Predposylki dlya integratsii psikhologii i teologii [The Main Prerequisites for the Integration of Psychology and Theology]." *Christian Psychology: Difficulties and Perspectives*, No. 3 (2012): 25-31.

Mykolaichook, Maryanna, Marta Bilyk, and Iryna Gorbal. "Psikhoterapiya i religiya: aktual'nost' dialoga v usloviyakh sovremennogo dialoga i kak aspekt integratsii [Psychotherapy and Religion: The Actuality of a Contemporary Dialogue and Its Integrative Aspects]." *Ukrains'ka psikhoterapiya u noshukakh svogo mistysya v suslil'nikh stosunkakh [Ukrainian Psychotherapy in Search of Its Place in Social Relations]*. (Lviv: 2013): 49-58.

Yaremko, E.V. and O.M. Kononenko. "Integrativnaya khristianskaya psikhoterapiya: osnovnye polozheniya psikhoterapevticheskoi shkoly [Integrative Christian Psychotherapy: Fundamentals of the Psychotherapy School]." *Christian Psychology: Difficulties and Perspectives*, No. 3 (November 2012): 48-68.

Miller, Matthew Lee. *The American YMCA and Russian Culture: The Preservation and Expansion of Orthodox Christianity, 1900-1940*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013.

This book, drawing on archives in Moscow, Paris, and the United States, surveys the activities of the Young Men's Christian Association in Russia in the first half of the twentieth century. It is hard to imagine American-style individualism and entrepreneurship encountering four more different, or more important, successive decades in Russian history: rapid industrialization and burgeoning university culture, the 1905 revolution and ensuing religious and political reforms, the First World War, the revolutions of 1917, the Civil War, the New Economic Policy, and the worst of Stalinism. Remarkably, the YMCA soldiered on in the face of all these changes.

Matthew Miller situates the YMCA's Russian involvement in a number of important contexts: the interaction of Russian and American cultures, global philanthropy, and the interaction of Orthodox and Protestant thought. He also considers the internal debates within the YMCA as it encountered new, puzzling contexts. It is fascinating to ponder, for example, how an organization explicitly created to counter the feminization of evangelical Christianity by embracing a "muscular" form of the same religion, encouraging boys and young men "to control their wills in order to lead a life of assertiveness and integrity," fared in a Russia still focused on the communal values of the extended family and home village. Not surprisingly, the YMCA was most successful among white-collar and middle-class men in the cities, particularly in St. Petersburg. Mayak, the short name for the YMCA-sponsored Committee for the Promotion of Moral and Physical Development founded in St. Petersburg in 1900, enjoyed the support of figures as illustrious as the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna and Prince Mikhail Khilkov. During the First World War, the YMCA focused its energies on POW soldiers within the territory of Russia. After the October Revolution, YMCA opinions for further activity split. After supporting joint relief work with the American Red Cross and civilian programs in central Russian cities, the YMCA ultimately worked with the Allied intervention, thereby earning Soviet denunciation for a lack of neutrality.

One of the book's particular strengths, and one of

its central themes, focuses on the role of the YMCA in the Russian diaspora. Miller notes correctly that "through its support of the émigré student movement, publishing house, and theological academy, the YMCA played a major role in preserving an important part of prerevolutionary culture in western Europe during the Soviet period until the repatriation of this culture following the collapse of the Soviet Union" (2). By working together with the Russian Student Christian Movement (RSCM), including Vasily Zenkovsky, Lev Zander, Nicolas Zernov, Nicholas Berdyaev, and the recently canonized Maria Skobtsova, the YMCA earned a permanent place in Russian intellectual and religious history. It is little exaggeration to say that the YMCA Russian publishing house, which for decades remained the oldest and most important publisher of Russian books outside of Russia, made it possible for post-1917 Russian theological, philosophical, and literary life to extend worldwide. As Miller notes, an originally Protestant leadership made it possible to produce Russian Orthodox religious literature. YMCA financial and administrative support also undergirded the influential St. Sergius Theological Academy.

But the book does not limit itself exclusively to relations between Russians and America. Miller's comparison of the YMCA's activities in four other traditionally Orthodox countries—Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia—suggests what was specific about the Russian case. By doing so he contributes to the recent trend in scholarship of not studying the Soviet Union in isolation, but situating it within an international context—which includes the émigré community. In short, everyone interested in Protestant-Orthodox inter-confessional cooperation, in Russian-American relations, in Russian religious thought, in émigré history, and in interwar Europe, will benefit from reading this important book. ♦

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Editor's note: Excerpts from The American YMCA and Russian Culture were published in the East-West Church and Ministry Report 15 (Summer 2007): 1-4; and (Fall 2007): 9-11.

Everyone interested in Protestant-Orthodox inter-confessional cooperation, in Russian-American relations, in Russian religious thought, in émigré history, and in interwar Europe, will benefit from reading this important book.

Letter to the Editor

Russia already has the gospel... Leave the people... as an Orthodox convert from the disease of holly [sic] rollers I thank God I'm not Protestant. Orthodoxy is

the fastest growing church in the US... keep your heretical teachings to yourselves.

Tom Doan

Corrections

In Mark R. Elliott and Caleb Conover, compilers, "Christian Confessions and Denominations in Post-Soviet States: By the Numbers," *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 21 (Spring 2013), p. 10, the Ukraine affiliates total should be 30,613,570, and a minus sign should have been placed before the "doubly-affiliated" figure of 261,300. Likewise, for Bulgaria, *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 21 (Summer 2013), p. 13, the affiliates total should be 6,138,539, and a minus sign should have been placed before the "doubly-affiliated" figure of 155,500.

In the previous issue of the *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 21 (Summer 2013), p. 11, the reprint permission should have read: *Edited excerpt reprinted with permission from Jonathan Crane, "Restitution Bill Leaves Church Leaders Struggling to Avoid the Corruption Trap," The Prague Post, 2 January 2013.*

De Wolf, Koenraad. *Dissident for Life: Alexander Ogorodnikov and the Struggle for Religious Freedom in Russia*. Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 2013.

This is an important book: a chronological account of the life of a Soviet-era dissident set firmly in its political and social context. There are few such works. Alexander Ogorodnikov stands out as a man of integrity and courage; as a former KGB official told him in 1992: "You and Vladimir Bukovsky, you are the only dissidents who never made concessions."

Ogorodnikov has always been concerned with the practical needs of ordinary people. As a young man he was an idealistic communist but gradually became aware of corruption. At first he put this down to local problems, but then became disillusioned with the Soviet system itself. In 1971 he moved from the provinces to Moscow where he registered at the VGIK film institute. He studied Pasolini's film *The Gospel According to St Matthew* which "showed him the way from an abstract notion of God to the living Christ."

The official Orthodox Church was allowed only to celebrate the liturgy, and its hierarchs collaborated with the authorities. Notwithstanding these limitations and compromises, Ogorodnikov founded the Christian Seminar in 1974 free of church and state controls. I was at Moscow University that year, and I went to meetings of the Seminar; young men and women would talk fervently about faith and how to act on it in the Brezhnev "years of stagnation." Koenraad De Wolf notes how remarkable it was that Ogorodnikov succeeded in building up a network of a few thousand individuals in a wide range of towns and cities, in contrast to most dissident movements at the time, "which consisted of isolated groups of intellectuals who had almost no contact with the population for whom they wished to obtain more rights and freedoms." Also remarkable was the Seminar's inclusive ecumenism in action. Its members were mostly Orthodox, but they welcomed Catholics and Protestants, and they questioned me as an Anglican

about the religious situation in England.

Ogorodnikov was arrested in 1978 and spent 99 months in the Gulag. About a third of the book describes the appalling physical, psychological, and spiritual torment he and his fellow-prisoners endured. He was released in 1987 as Gorbachev's reforms began to take hold. De Wolf says that during the Gorbachev period there was "no role of significance" for former dissidents; Ogorodnikov nonetheless set to work. He was by now well known in the West among journalists, politicians, and human rights organizations. Keston College, where I was head of research, had been publicizing his activities and imprisonment since the 1970s. He built on these contacts. In July 1989, accredited to a Dutch newspaper, he was the only independent Soviet journalist to attend the Moscow meeting of the World Council of Churches, and first travelled abroad in the same year.

In 1989 he founded the Christian Democratic Union of Russia, not as a political party but as an umbrella organization for social activities. It ran soup kitchens and set up the first private school in the Soviet Union and a shelter for homeless girls. In 1995 it founded the Island of Hope Center in Moscow for street children, the only shelter in Moscow not run by the state. Island of Hope was constantly raided and its activities impeded by the police, now mainly for economic rather than ideological reasons.

In the book's conclusion, British parliamentarian David Alton states, "We must tell this story to all generations," and certainly it is very important that the truth should be told about the cruel oppression of the Soviet system; for this reason Koenraad De Wolf is to be congratulated. However, there are a few critical points to be made. The historical background from the nineteenth century is somewhat hit-and-miss: for example, the assertion that charity "simply had never been an inherent element in the Orthodox soul." There are also numerous errors of fact: Vadim Bakatin, not Batakin, was minister of internal affairs, not foreign minister; and the scholar Jane Ellis was English, not American. Such errors, as well as inconsistent Cyrillic-to-Roman alphabet transliterations, of which there are a good many, unfortunately somewhat compromise the scholarly reliability of the book. Also, the tone of the narrative sometimes tends toward hagiography. This is a temptation when writing about Soviet times when atheism was militant and active believers brave and few, but it is best avoided in the interests of historical objectivity. Dissidents needed to be strong personalities to stand up against the Soviet system, but a corollary was that they frequently fell out with each other as well: they were only human. In the interests of narrative flow the author has also decided not to use footnotes, which makes it hard to identify sources. This is a pity because Ogorodnikov's story deserves to be widely read and pondered by a new generation for whom the Soviet period is already history. ♦

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



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