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Romanians in the Global Missions Movement

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Evangelical Growth in Romania

Almost immediately after the fall of Nicolae Ceaucescu in 1989, Romania saw an influx of foreign missionaries. The need for evangelism throughout the country was great. It was not rare for Romanians to fill the *Casă de Cultură* (cultural palaces/theaters) in cities across the country in order to hear a Western pastor or missionary share the Gospel. When Billy Graham visited Romania in 1985, people lined the streets and climbed on top of Communist bloc apartments in order to hear him speak. Needless to say, God had opened doors for the Gospel to be preached in Romania, and for the most part, Romanians were listening. Many mission organizations also partnered with local denominations, for example, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the Romanian Baptist Union, in church planting and evangelism. According to statistics compiled by One Challenge International (OCI), in collaboration with *Operation World*, over 300 foreign missionaries worked in Romania between 1990 and 2000.

By 1998 Romania had over 500,000 evangelicals, making it the largest population of evangelicals in all of Eastern Europe. In fact, Romania had more evangelicals than the rest of Eastern Europe combined.¹ Moreover, current church statistics in Romania put the percentage of evangelicals at 4.2 percent, making Romania the European nation with either the second- or third-most evangelicals, depending on the accuracy of findings from the United Kingdom and Ukraine.² The church did grow, according to most observers, at a fast and healthy rate during the 1990s. Two major factors appear to explain the growth: 1) the readiness and eagerness of Romanians to grasp the hope of the message of the Gospel (after all, the Gospel was something new and exciting from the outside); and 2) the partnership between foreign missionaries and local evangelical denominations in Romania.

From Receiving to Sending

By 2000, the number of foreign missionaries in Romania was roughly 150 (less than half the number of 1992).³ Among the reasons for the departure of many foreign missionaries was, first and foremost, missionaries' frustration with Romanian bureaucracy and the East European way of doing things. Moreover, as the church in Romania grew, some foreign mission agencies decided to focus efforts on other formerly closed countries where new doors were opening for the Gospel. The departure of these foreign missionaries was seen by some Romanians

as a lack of commitment and follow-through on the part of the mission agencies, while others felt it was time for Romanians to play a larger role in the Great Commission.

Those mission agencies that continue to work in Romania now see major potential for the country's evangelicals to play a crucial role in the global missions movement. From 1990 to 2000, Romania was a mission-receiving nation, resulting in a major impact upon the Romanian church. On the positive side, cross-cultural workers helped Romania spread the Gospel and train more pastors. Unfortunately, a negative impact involved the creation of a mentality of dependence upon Western assistance. As a result Romanian churches struggle to raise their own support, instead constantly fundraising in the West for building projects and relying on foreigners to train and equip lay leaders for ministry.

It was not until 2000 that Romania began the transition to becoming a major mission-sending country. Church growth in Romania provided the impetus for the formation of several mission organizations focused on recruiting and sending Romanians abroad to share the Gospel. Currently at least 189 Romanians serve as career missionaries around the world, including over 70 with the Romanian Pentecostal mission agency (APME), over 40 with the Baptist Union, 20 with the Brethren Union, 24 with Operation Mobilization, and 12 with Wycliffe.⁴ Smaller numbers of Romanian missionaries serve with Campus Crusade (Alege Viata), OCI, Pacea Mission, Frontiers, and Pioneers.⁵ Countries in which Romanians serve include (and this is not an exhaustive list): Norway, the Netherlands, England, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Czech Republic, Russia (especially Siberia), Ukraine, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, India, Turkey, the Middle East (countries not specified for reasons of security), North Africa, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Namibia, South Africa, Kenya, Cameroon, Sudan, Tanzania, and Bolivia. The largest Romanian missionary contingents serve in the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, India, and Russia.⁶

The number of Romanians working as missionaries within their homeland, particularly in more unreached areas such as Oltenia and Dobrogea, is hard to measure. However, OC International is conducting research on this subject which should be completed by the end of 2016.

Positive Impact of Romanian Missionaries

Romanian missionaries have generally been well

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received as they serve cross-culturally. Physically speaking, Romanians have darker, sharper features than most East Europeans, which allows them to blend in easily in areas like the Middle East. In addition, Romanians are not burdened with many of the stereotypes and stigmas attached to missionaries from the West. Romanians have grown up with more modest living standards that have allowed them to adapt to harsher living conditions than missionaries from the West. Simply put, Romanians are often able to live on less financial support and accept more humble surroundings.

Among success stories of Romanians serving in cross-cultural missions is that of Alina Voda of Targoviste, Romania. Supported by several Baptist churches in Romania, Alina is a registered nurse who serves as a medical missionary in the Philippines. Fluent in several of the tribal languages in addition to the main language of Tagalog, she has helped open a number of clinics in the Philippines and leads several Bible study groups with her patients.

Another Romanian success story is that of Petru and Mirela Paccalau who serve with Wycliffe in Ethiopia. They have learned the Amharic language and have translated the Bible in order to reach a tribe of over 600,000 people who were previously illiterate. The Paccalau family has taught reading and writing to the Amhara people while also teaching them Bible stories and ethics through storytelling and oral exposition.

Struggles of Romanian Missionaries

Perhaps the greatest struggle for Romanians currently working in cross-cultural missions, or preparing to do so, is fundraising. Even Romanians with years of missionary service struggle to maintain a sparse existence. Minimal funding is partially due to difficult economic conditions in Romania where the average monthly salary is only 350 euros (\$389) a month, in the bottom 20 percent tier of all European nations.⁷ Romania's economic woes, coupled with a church culture that is used to receiving rather than giving, make the task of fundraising especially challenging for missionaries. Unfortunately, too many Romanians also perceive missions as a "glorified vacation" funded by others. A mentality exists, too common in the West as well, that says, "Why provide money for a missionary family working abroad when so many glaring social needs persist at home?" The high cost of living in Western Europe in particular inhibits missionary service there despite the fact that the Romanian diaspora is the largest immigrant population in such Mediterranean nations as Spain and Italy.

As is often the case in Latin cultures, when Romanians are passionate about something, they press on, sometimes without sufficient planning. In the early 2000s quite a few Romanians began missionary service abroad without proper church funding, pastoral support, or member care. Between 2000 and 2010, Romanian missionaries serving with the benefit of little or no member care led to several families returning home after only one or two years. In 2011, representatives from each of Romania's evangelical denominations and 14 mission organizations working in Romania met in Sibiu for a roundtable discussion on missionary

member care. Through this initiative came a National Romanian Member Care Team, a partnership of Romanian evangelical denominations and leading mission organizations. The Team works under the umbrella of Partners in Mission (PIM) and has held national conferences and training related to missionary member care. The Team also hosts annual rest and renewal camps for furloughing Romanian missionaries. Hopefully, providing for the needs of missionaries through such efforts will overcome the fact that the number of Romanians serving in missions has remained fairly stagnant in recent years.

Romanian Missionary Pros and Cons

By and large, Romanians are seen as talented and capable missionaries. They are known for having a good grasp of the Bible and a nuanced understanding of what it means to live under both oppression and economic privation. Romanians are seen as creative, outgoing, highly relational, and extremely gifted in music and language acquisition.

Nevertheless, Romanian missionaries also carry some cultural baggage. One of the major negative critiques of Romanian missionaries is that they preach and practice a gospel of legalism. Romania's evangelical churches are arguably among the most conservative and legalistic in Europe. Examples include: 1) dress—head coverings and dresses for women and suits and ties for men; 2) limited roles for women in the church; 3) lengthy and frequent church services; 4) conservative stances on most social issues; and 5) traditional prayer and conservative worship. Some Romanian missionaries have found that their manner of worship clashes with the cultural sensitivities of those they are seeking to serve.

Still, Romanian missionaries have great potential to reach new areas with the Gospel. Countries throughout Europe continue to look to Romania as pioneers in bringing the Gospel from Europe to the ends of the earth. ♦

Notes:

¹ OC International missionary Russ Mitchell noted that the 1992 census recorded 220,051 Romanian evangelicals: 49,392 Pentecostals and Brethren. In 1996 the Baptists had 110,000 registered members. The combined sum is 379,443. Patrick Johnson in *Operation World* (1993) gave a figure of 300,000 Christians in the Lord's Army (an evangelical movement in the Romanian Orthodox Church). Since the 1992 census showed that the Reformed Church had 801,557 members, the Lutheran Church S.P. had 21,160 members, and the Lutheran Church C.A. 39,552 members, it seems reasonable to assume that there are still at least 120,000 evangelicals in the Lord's Army, plus evangelicals in Hungarian, German, and other groups. Another approximation of the number of evangelicals in Romania is 1,100,000 (Operation World Database).

² Romanian National Institute of Statistics.

³ Statistics compiled by OC International.

⁴ OC International collected data from the Baptist Union, APME (Agentia Penticostala pentru Misiune Externa, the Pentecostal Mission sending agency), Agentia Kairos (the Brethren missions sending agency), Alege Viata (Campus Crusade in Romania),

Romania's economic woes, coupled with a church culture that is used to receiving rather than giving, make the task of fundraising especially challenging for missionaries.

Wycliffe, OM, OCI, and a survey that was sent out to Partners in Mission (PIM).

⁵ The actual number of Romanians serving in missions with these organizations is difficult to obtain, as many are serving in “closed” countries, and each month some missionaries are leaving and

coming back.

⁶ OC International data as of December 2014.

⁷ Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2015.

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Romanian Cross - Cultural Mission Agencies

Alexander Vlasin, compiler

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The Expulsion of Missionaries from Uzbekistan; An Interview with a Central Asian Missionary

Anonymous

Editor's note: The editor conducted the following interview with a former missionary to Uzbekistan in October 2014.

Editor: What was the focus of your ministry in Uzbekistan?

Central Asian Missionary (CAM): I was involved in discipling new believers and pastoral training.

Editor: When were you and other missionaries expelled from Uzbekistan?

CAM: Between 2005 and 2007.

Editor: How many missionaries were expelled from Uzbekistan in those years?

CAM: At least 50 single and married missionary couples and their families.

Editor: How did Uzbek authorities identify missionaries?

CAM: The Uzbek secret police learned that expatriates who had obtained visas through the NGO, Central Asian Free Exchange, were missionaries, and that led to deportations.

Editor: What were the circumstances surrounding the first expulsion?

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The Expulsion of Missionaries from Uzbekistan *(continued from page 3)*

CAM: In August 2005, a missionary who had left Uzbekistan and who was returning on a valid visa was detained at the Tashkent Airport. Guards took him to a transit lounge where he was held for a day and a half. Soldiers then took him directly from the transit lounge out onto the airfield tarmac and put him on an international flight out of Uzbekistan.

Editor: How much notice did other missionaries have before being forced to leave?

CAM: The length of time varied from a few days to a week to a month.

Editor: What do you believe triggered the expulsions?

CAM: The first missionary expulsion in 2005 occurred on May 16, three days after a massacre of civilians in Andijan in the heavily populated Fergana Valley. People were not receiving their wages, and many were starving. Protesters gathered in the streets, swelling to about 10,000. A false rumor spread that Uzbek President Islam Karimov was coming to address the crowd. Instead, Uzbek security forces fired on the demonstrators at ground level and from a helicopter. As people fled the square troops continued to fire on them. People in white coats pretending to be doctors walked among the fallen protesters asking who was wounded. Those who spoke up were shot to death on the spot.

Editor's note: It is estimated that up to 500 unarmed civilians were killed in the Andijan Massacre ("How the Andijan Killings Unfolded," BBC News, 17 May 2005, news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4550845.stm). The missionary expulsions occurred in a period when President Karimov was imposing an increasingly restrictive authoritarian regime in Uzbekistan. It also was a period of worsening relations between Uzbekistan and Western governments.

Editor: What was the fate of the missionaries deported from Uzbekistan?

CAM: Sadly, most did not continue in missionary service.

Editor: What were the consequences of the missionary expulsions for the church in Uzbekistan?

CAM: It was positive, and it helped the church. In 2002-03 many missionaries began giving greater emphasis in their discipleship training to teaching disciples to themselves become disciplers. So when the expulsions came, many Uzbek believers were prepared to carry on without missionaries. Also, following the expulsions, money from the West for churches in Uzbekistan dried up, and that was a good thing. Missionaries had been giving money liberally to individual believers as well as to churches, and this giving was not always done wisely. This led to unhealthy dependency.

Editor: As a missionary continuing to serve in Central Asia, what overall lesson do you believe can be drawn from the missionary expulsions from Uzbekistan?

CAM: Missionaries too often are the cause of Central Asian believers and churches becoming dependent upon Western money and expecting it as a matter of course. When missionaries had no choice but to leave Uzbekistan, believers and churches there became more self-reliant. All over Central Asia today old gatekeeper missionaries advise new missionaries to follow their example, which too often means unhealthy expectations of ongoing Western financial support. Also, longtime missionaries in Central Asia convince too many new missionaries that to get anything done they have to accept widespread bribery and other forms of official corruption as a fact of life. The best thing that could happen would be for all missionaries serving in Central Asia to leave and for new missionaries to come in who would not foster dependency and would not compromise in the face of corruption. ♦

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Planning for Crises in Eastern Europe

Evan Parks

A professional colleague in the United States mailed me a seminar notebook on *Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)* in 2003 (Mitchell and Everly, 2001). I previously had discussed with him my work of intervention in crisis events across Eastern Europe and Eurasia when he suggested I look at the CISM material.

In this brief case study, I recount the process of moving from a western, American mindset to a growing understanding and appreciation of the life, history, and culture of East Europeans. A critical element of effectiveness in mental health work is credibility. Arriving in Hungary in 2001, I was met with deep suspicion by neighbors and acquaintances. Obviously I lacked important elements of credibility that were going to be necessary for me to work in a cross-cultural context. I would need to overcome the perception and historical fact that psychologists were

a part of the former oppressive regime, used to break political prisoners and extract false confessions from innocent victims.

The Cultural Context

Since 2001, I have been living and working in Hungary providing mental health services to religious and humanitarian organizations, as well as national churches in Eastern Europe and throughout Eurasia. Helping people traumatized by war and political unrest has been a regular and ongoing aspect of my work. But psychological injury caused by war is just one of many sources of trauma in this region.

Tragedy often finds a way into people's lives through the impact of suicide. Lithuania, Slovenia, Hungary, Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, Croatia, Russia, Moldova, and Poland are European countries that lead the world in suicide (World Health Organization, 2014). In Eastern Europe, alcohol use often starts

early in the teen years and leads to an increased risk of violence, illness, and suicide (Felson *et al.*, 2011; Alström and Östweberg, 2005; Landberg, 2008). According to the World Health Organization (Lynch, 2014), the countries with the highest annual consumption of alcohol among those 15 years old and older consume more than twice the world average of 6.2 liters of pure alcohol. Of the top ten alcohol-consuming countries, eight are former Soviet Union republics and former Soviet-bloc East European states: Belarus (17.5 liters); Moldova (16.8 liters); Lithuania (15.4 liters); Russia (15.1 liters); Romania (14.4 liters); Ukraine (13.9 liters); Andorra (13.8 liters); Hungary (13.3 liters); Slovakia (13 liters); Portugal (12.9 liters).

It has been my experience in meeting people from throughout this region that almost every family, village, and city has its own story of struggle, hardship, and tragedy. As I began to know East Europeans on a personal level, they willingly shared their family stories of trauma. Individuals suffered for multiple reasons besides the obvious harm caused by war and political unrest. Some encountered abusive teachers, religious persecution by school administrators, police harassment, deportation, sexual abuse, and loss of jobs and property. Others experienced daily verbal abuse, discrimination, and hatred by people from different ethnic groups.

The breakdown of society and the loss of stability in communities are intimately related to the political structure or the lack thereof. Political unrest has led to a great deal of instability, fear, and hatred in the region. The values, traditions, and relationships that held families and communities together for generations have been torn apart. Jochen Neumann (1991) writes about Eastern Europe: “Values that were binding and predictable in the past are gone without the establishment of new equivalents. Fear of poverty and unemployment weigh heavily on many people. The ‘biologically’ strong often dominate the weak, and unscrupulous profiteers abuse this time of transition for their own benefit” (p. 1387).

While Neumann’s observation was about a particularly unstable time period in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, little has changed since that time in terms of a collective sense of hope or optimism for the future. There is greater political stability in some regions, but ongoing corruption, high taxes, and poor government services eat away at public confidence. Among our friends we repeatedly hear stories of being taken advantage of in the workplace, such as working 60 to 80 hours a week only to be paid for less than half the time worked, or not paid at all. People are afraid to speak up for fear of losing what little they have. One individual I spoke with believes that instability and fear in the workplace lead to self-protection and the desire to undermine others. She explained the mindset this way, “It is not important whether or not I get ahead. What is important is that you don’t get ahead.”

The economic situation varies greatly across Eastern Europe. What we see in Hungary is an exodus of friends and neighbors, people wanting to find work, hope, and a future somewhere else. Across Eastern Europe, people of all ages are leaving every day, looking for a better life in Western Europe, Canada, and the United States.

A Hungarian Case Study

Having described a few aspects of the culture, atmosphere, and ongoing struggles of the people in this part of Europe, I will briefly outline one model of working with critical incidents that I have recently found effective. I received a call from a Hungarian minister asking me to come to his church to meet with the leadership team. A church staff member had just killed himself. As I sat down with the leadership, it was clear that they were struggling to understand what had happened and how to respond. There was no prepared protocol to follow, but I was not expecting that there would have been such a plan. Immediately it was clear that there were a number of decisions that needed to be made, but the leaders were in crisis themselves. Without a protocol to follow, the situation was even more stressful.

One key element of any crisis management response is having a comprehensive crisis response plan in place before a crisis occurs. This plan takes time and energy to develop, and people in busy organizations often do not see this as a high priority. Not having a plan in place creates an additional stress as a crisis event begins to unfold.

The crisis plan should include specific information about who will communicate with the public, and who will communicate with the church membership. The plan needs to address how legal or police matters will be handled and by whom, the description of a team that is trained and in place to work with grieving family and church members, and the designation of who will coordinate community resources such as medical, mental health, pastoral care, and humanitarian aid. The makeup of the death notification team should also be in place.

Since my work began in 2001 in Europe, I have yet to respond to a crisis situation at a church, school, NGO, or Christian mission organization where there was a specific protocol already in place to handle the crisis. This means as I enter a crisis there are some basic structural and organizational steps that I outline for the leadership. This simple framework is always well received by the local leadership, except in situations where there is no clear leader or leadership structure. In these situations, I attempt to recruit a co-leader from the organization to work with me to implement a crisis response plan.

Without a plan and structure in place for how communication takes place, to whom information is communicated, and what part of the leadership structure has final authority in decision-making, the ensuing chaos eventually creates significant stress for everyone involved. The fallout from lack of planning results, in turn, in burnout, depression, and anxiety for those who are trying to manage the crisis.

Laying the Foundation

As I began to live and work in Eastern Europe,

Throughout this region almost every family, village, and city has its own story of struggle, hardship, and tragedy.

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Planning for Crises in Eastern Europe *(continued from page 5)*

I saw value in providing basic education about mental health to churches, mission organizations, schools, and hospitals. There was very little available knowledge of how mental health problems developed. I presented lectures, seminars, and papers on depression, anxiety, shame, sexual abuse, trauma, family life, parenting, marriage, crisis counseling, addictions, and forgiveness.

The CISM Model

As I approached the situation in the church where a staff member committed suicide, I followed the basic structure of crisis management outlined in the Critical Incident Stress Management Model. This model provides a clear outline of what needs to be done in a crisis, when different interventions need to be employed, and how to assist various groups and individuals. There are four specific goals in Critical Incident Stress Management work. These include: 1) stabilization to reduce the distress and keep the situation from getting worse; 2) reduction of the acute signs and symptoms of distress, dysfunction, or impairment; 3) restoration of adaptive independent functioning; and 4) facilitation of access to a higher level of care (Everly and Mitchell, 2003).

Implementation

As I worked with the church minister and his staff, several elements of the CISM Model were implemented. I first began to work with the staff, briefly educating them on their reaction to the crisis. I also provided them with information on suicide and gave a summary of how family and friends may respond to the crisis. We then worked together on planning the large group, small group, and individual meetings that would take place in the days that were to follow. A brief training was provided to help small group leaders facilitate discussions. We assigned responsibilities to each team member for communicating information, relating with the deceased's family, coordinating activities, and interacting with the police. With these steps in place, we then implemented the plan over the following two weeks. Both community and church members participated in group meetings. Discussion groups were held after the main group meetings and individual people, couples, and families were assisted as needed. Referrals were made for people who needed ongoing mental health care.

The CISM Model provides a standard for what should be included in the response to a crisis and a structure that helps individuals and organizations respond effectively. For this model to be implemented in Eastern Europe, training in the local language needs to be provided to emergency service workers, mental health professionals, and community leaders.

Teams also need to be formed that will be ready to respond to crisis events. Based on the counseling and crisis intervention training that I have provided over the past 13 years, I have already witnessed the development of national initiatives to deliver mental services and crisis intervention in a variety of settings. It is my hope that as I come in contact with emergency services (police, ambulance, and fire department), and provide training to ministers, doctors, school administrators, and mental health professionals, I will be able to encourage national leaders to implement CISM in their country, community, workplace, and church. ♦

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The Critical Incident Stress Management Model provides a clear outline of what needs to be done in a crisis.

The Slavic Diaspora and Its Soviet Trauma

Mykhailo Cherenkov

The Slavic diaspora in the United States and around the world has a large, positive potential for spiritual, moral, and social influence. It is very unfortunate that the trauma of the Soviet era does not allow this potential to develop and generates inadequate reactions to global processes. I will speak a bit more to the darker side in a moment, as this issue tends to be avoided. I am sure that only by bidding farewell to the remnants of the Soviet period and its stereotypes will Christians from the former Soviet Union be able to be a blessing to the countries of their residence.

The Soviet Mindset of Dissidents

I think that the West, including the U.S., was too concerned with standing up to the U.S.S.R. and supporting religious and political dissidents. For those opposed to the Kremlin, all enemies of the U.S.S.R. were friends of the U.S. That was a convenient, but simplistic, paradigm. All people “born in the U.S.S.R.” (this is still a special social category), whether victims of religious persecution or fiery anti-Soviet activists, absorbed the spirit of the Soviet era and many stereotypes of Soviet thinking. They fought against Soviet ideology, but lived in a Soviet environment. I think the West underestimated the negative influence of the U.S.S.R. upon its religious groups and overestimated their anti-Soviet attitude. The West saw religious dissidents as heroes, conquerors, and the avant garde of democratic change. Even more, they saw in Baptists a strong conservative tradition.

Perhaps U.S. leaders making decisions at the time were influenced by memories of their own colonial antecedents, many of whom were dissidents from the Old World who brought with them to the New World an uncompromising spirit of evangelical Christianity. To open doors to the U.S. for yesterday’s persecuted Christians meant acknowledging their actions and their closeness in spirit to U.S. Christians.

Open doors for Soviet religious dissidents also had a pragmatic connection to demographic policy. I also would argue that the U.S. welcomed religious emigration from the U.S.S.R. in the hope that this conservative, biblical influence would strengthen and diversify American Christianity. Beginning in the 1960s, the U.S. actively began helping Protestants in the U.S.S.R. and counted on finding in them brothers close in thinking and in spirit. Of course, Syrian and Egyptian Christianity are more exotic and foreign. But, as I already noted, Soviet Christianity, though it seemed close, was actually deeply impacted by

the Soviet spirit, so the U.S. received, along with immigrants, deeply engrained Soviet thinking.

Difficulties in Assimilation

The unprecedented help provided immigrants from the U.S.S.R. was offered by the country which had won the Cold War. We must acknowledge that at first these immigrants truly needed that help, because after life in the U.S.S.R. it was very difficult to adapt to a free and competitive society. But after a time such generosity began to be taken advantage of and manipulated, and encouraged a consumer attitude. There is another possible reason for such generosity – a desire to control the situation in the migrant communities, to keep track of them, so that life, attitudes, and socio-political orientation could be controlled.

The high level of crime among immigrants from the Soviet Union can be explained by the “born in the U.S.S.R.” syndrome – where people see their country of residence as convenient but foreign, and therefore constantly look back to their Soviet experience and models of behavior for solving problems. Many Soviet immigrants do not feel a connection to American rules and laws, and even protest against them. Now they look back, not on the U.S.S.R., but on Russia and rejoice that it has “risen from its knees.” They are proud that they were “born in the U.S.S.R.” and are “Russian,” that they are heirs of an empire, and feel that they are entitled to more than law-abiding Americans.

Another problem is the separation created by the church upbringing of religious immigrants from the Soviet Union. In strict, conservative congregations (where almost everything is either forbidden or seen as “worldly” and “sinful”), many psychological problems hide within personalities and later find expression in deviant behavior. Many such immigrants also feel resentment for a poor childhood, for Soviet marginalization, and for their admittedly low social position in American society. But for evangelicals who left the U.S.S.R., I believe the strength of their bond with their fellow believers is the greatest source of their inability to adapt, hampered as they are by an ultra-conservative upbringing, a culture of taboos, a sharpened dichotomy between the church and the world, and a lack of holistic theological teaching on the self and society, faith, and culture. ♦

Mykhailo Cherenkov is vice-president of Mission Eurasia, Irpen, Ukraine.

I think the West underestimated the negative influence of the U.S.S.R. upon its religious groups and overestimated their anti-Soviet attitude.

Slavic Evangelicals in A Survival Mode: A Response to Mikhail Cherenkov’s “Slavic Diaspora”

Oleg Turlac

Unrealized Potential

In his succinct article, Dr. Mykhailo Cherenkov from Ukraine discusses issues related to the Slavic diaspora, the trauma experienced by many who lived under the Soviet regime, and the question of the adaptation of immigrants to the new reality of living abroad. Cherenkov points out that Slavic immigrants

have potential to offer much good to American society. However, he also mentions that “Soviet trauma,” which as I understand, is the experience of living under totalitarian Soviet rule, prevents Slavic evangelicals from realizing that potential. Cherenkov argues that Slavic evangelicals need to go through much transformation and adaptation to living in a free society before they are

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Slavic Evangelicals in A Survival Mode (continued from page 7)

able to become constructive citizens in the New World. And this they are not necessarily willing to do.

So far, Slavic immigrants in America have been facing considerable challenges in adapting to American life, culture, and legal requirements. It is hard for many to make choices and manage their own affairs. They tend to live in ghettos and rely on collective opinion concerning matters of life. Since the Slavic church remains the center of cultural and religious life for immigrants, Slavic preachers, rather than American mass media, shape their worldview.

In my opinion, Slavic immigrants should not be seen as an exclusive group that is expected to transform American society. They will exercise no greater influence than any other immigrant community. Their choice is between integration and marginalization.

Dissidents and Those Who Followed

I think Western support for the immigration of dissidents from the U.S.S.R. was the right thing to do. The problem is not with religious dissidents, such as Georgi Vins and Boris Perchatkin, but with those who followed in their footsteps who were not involved in dissident activities in the Soviet Union.

I think that the American government's selection process for potential immigrants is to blame, for it allowed quite a few Soviet citizens who were not necessarily persecuted evangelicals or Jews to come to America as refugees. This author knows of cases of devout believers who were denied the right to immigrate and of others who did not attend church at all who were permitted to come to America.

Dissidents came to America in search of freedom and opportunity to express their faith. Many others who followed had purely economic motives. They simply followed the footsteps of their pastors and family members. I am inclined to agree with Cherenkov that instead of contributing to American society, quite a few Slavic immigrants began to exploit the system for their own advantage. They did not think of what they could offer to the country, but rather, what America could offer them.

However, unlike Cherenkov, I am not inclined to think that the American government had any high hopes that Soviet evangelicals would transform American society. It was rather a humanitarian effort to help those who went through much persecution and suffering for their faith.

Ghetto Mentality

The separation of Slavic evangelicals from American society, in my opinion, is due to ethnic churches being the center of their lives. Because believers from the same regions in the U.S.S.R. who immigrated to America tend to live in clusters (in Sacramento, Minneapolis, Spokane, Philadelphia, etc.), they form churches according to the image and likeness of congregations to which they belonged in the Soviet Union. It is true that for many believers church communities back in the days of the U.S.S.R. were a safe haven that shielded them and their children from the destructive influences of Communism and atheism. In America, on one hand, churches have prevented Slavic immigrants born in the 1930s to 1950s from experiencing total confusion in the face of a highly individualistic Western lifestyle. On the other hand, churches have also prevented immigrants from forming

their own independent opinions about reality, impeding their progress in learning English, and slowed even partial integration into American society. Younger Slavic immigrants, even those who retain a Slavic version of Christianity, tend to like all things American.

Whereas in the very beginning America seemed to immigrants to be the Promised Land with free perks, with time they developed a more balanced and realistic picture of the country. Slavic believers realized that not all Americans were followers of Christ, and even if they were, the way they expressed their faith was not exactly what Slavic believers considered "pure biblical Christianity." Slavic immigrants began to face legal consequences for breaking the law and came to realize that things that are available to them come at a cost.

In recent years, Slavic believers faced quite a few crises. Some of their children succumbed to the temptations of drugs and alcohol. Slavic families, unfortunately, were not immune to infidelity and divorce, which were widely considered "worldly vices." Violent murders of members of the Bukhantsov and Lazukin families shocked Slavic communities in Oregon and California.¹ A court decision to deprive Alexander and Lyudmila Kozlov of parental rights and to send them to prison filled the hearts of Slavic believers with resentment toward the American justice system.² In addition, recent events in Ukraine have caused disagreements between ethnic Russian and Ukrainian Christians.³ With the rise of nationalism and patriotism in Putin's Russia and widespread departure from a traditional view of the family in the West, quite a few Russian immigrants in recent times have tended to sound very pro-Russian and anti-American.

In my opinion, many Slavic immigrants feel betrayed and think that their new circumstance is as fraught with danger to their faith as was the case in the Soviet Union. Instead of thinking what they may contribute to American society, they are in a survival mode, trying to protect cherished values and to keep their children safe from what they consider to be the moral decay of American society. ♦

Notes:

¹ "California Man Faces Death Penalty after Being Charged in Brutal Stabbing of Mother and Her Two Toddlers," 27 October 2012, *Daily Mail*; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2223903/California-man-faces-death-penalty-charged-brutal-stabbing-mothers-toddlers.html>; Everton Balley, "Salem Man Kills Stranger, Wife, Kids, Self in Four-hour Span, DA Says," 10 September 2012, *The Oregonian*; http://www.oregonlive.com/pacific-northwest-news/index.ssf/2012/09/salem_man_kills_stranger_wife.html.

² Tim King, "Ukrainian Immigrant Couple Guilty of Child Abuse," 5 December 2009, *Salem News*; http://www.salem-news.com/articles/december052009/child_abuse_tk.php.

³ Suzanne Phan, "Local Russians and Ukrainians React to Crimea Crisis," 21 March 2014; ABC News 10; <http://www.news10.net/story/news/local/fair-oaks-carmichael/2014/03/21/local-slavic-americans-react-to-crimea-crisis/6683541/>.

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With the rise of nationalism and patriotism in Putin's Russia and widespread departure from a traditional view of the family in the West, quite a few Russian immigrants in recent times have tended to sound very pro-Russian and anti-American.

Eastern Orthodoxy, Eastern Europe, and Post-Soviet Politics

Lucian N. Leustean

The fall of the Iron Curtain undoubtedly changed the status quo of Eastern Christianity. With democratic transformations in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Orthodox churches became part of new social and political realities. The issue of religious freedom was one of the main factors across Eastern Europe in defining a break from the atheist, Communist past.

Macedonia, Romania, Poland, and Belarus

The fall of Communism represented a novel opportunity for church leaders to present an alternative to atheist regimes. They were encouraged to do so by both the increasing popular support for religion and by their own concern to promote spiritual awakening within a wider social and political context. For example, in the Republic of Macedonia, the leading Orthodox Metropolitan Mihail was put forward as a candidate for the country's presidency who, however, declined to run for the office. In Romania, a large number of Orthodox clergy joined newly established political parties and became entangled in electoral disputes. Some Orthodox clergy secured seats in the Romanian Parliament and, in 2000, an Orthodox priest was appointed minister of agriculture. In Poland, during the 1993 elections an Orthodox Electoral Committee supported candidates who were not tainted by Communist affiliation. Similarly, in Belarus, after the 1990 declaration of independence, the country's Metropolitan Philaret and three priests became members of the new Parliament.

Estonia and Ukraine

Domestic religious changes also increased as a result of international pressures. The legacy of the Cold War came alive when hierarchs in exile returned to their countries, denouncing existing religious leaders and claiming that they were the true preservers of the Orthodox faith. In particular, this situation deeply affected Estonia and Ukraine, which saw battles for recognition between old and new Orthodox churches, dividing the faithful. Prolonged disputes and unclear jurisdictional lines were still visible two decades after the fall of Communism, when Ukraine was in the rather unusually fragmented situation of having three Orthodox churches, each claiming to be the true preserver of Ukrainian religious identity.

Bulgaria and Yugoslavia

The division of Orthodox churches also took a distinct political shape in the case of Bulgaria. In the early 1990s, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Alternative Synod emerged, whose leaders challenged the connection between the Orthodox hierarchs and the previous Communist authorities. Both the Bulgarian elite and the faithful became embittered in the division between the two churches, one claiming to be a revived religious body, and the other claiming continuity. The uncertain development of relations between the two Bulgarian churches represented one of the main challenges in the post-1989 Orthodox commonwealth. The break-up of a church could have easily become the norm across

the region as other Orthodox churches also had had close ties with Communist regimes. For example, a similar pattern was briefly visible in Romania, with Patriarch Teoctist resigning in December 1989; however, with the support of the new regime, he was asked to return to his position in April 1990. Similarly, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Serbia saw increasing demands of autocephaly from the Macedonian Orthodox Church and the establishment of a Montenegrin Orthodox Church.

The Balkans and Estonia

The changing nature of the main autocephalous Orthodox churches in Eastern Orthodoxy also led to convoluted religious structures. For example, the Ecumenical Patriarchate was not only a strong supporter of religious resurgence in Albania, where it established its own archdiocese, but also in Estonia, where it supported the return of the Estonian Church in exile to the country. Archbishop Johannes of Karelia and All Finland became the *locum tenens* of the Estonian Church until a suitable candidate could be appointed. The involvement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Finnish Orthodox Church was at odds with the interests of the local Estonian Church, which was placed under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate after the Second World War, and consequently Estonia still has two parallel churches, the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church and the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate's reissuing of the declaration of the autocephaly of the Czech and Slovak Church and the autonomy of the Polish Orthodox Church complicated matters, as the Moscow Patriarchate perceived these actions as a direct threat to its longstanding relations with Orthodox churches in Eastern Europe. At the same time, the recognition of autocephaly/autonomy of smaller Orthodox churches in the region was carried out with the active support of local political leaders. For example, in Moldova, while Orthodox communities became separated between the Metropolitanate of Chişinău under Moscow's jurisdiction and the Metropolitanate of Bessarabia under the Romanian Orthodox Church, President Petru Lucinschi proposed that the Ecumenical Patriarchate recognize an autonomous Moldovan Church to unite these churches. In 2002, in Macedonia, President Boris Trajkovski stated that the autocephaly of the local Orthodox Church was indissolubly tied to international state recognition. In Albania, the revival of the Orthodox Church was achieved in 1991 after prolonged negotiations between the Albanian and Greek prime ministers, the latter representing the position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Archbishop Anastasios Janullatos, a professor at the National University of Athens, was appointed as the hierarch of the Albanian Church but had to overcome the concerns of the local community, who claimed that its church could be ruled only by a native Albanian.

Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria

A distinctly separatist voice within the Orthodox

The legacy of the Cold War came alive when hierarchs in exile returned to their countries, denouncing existing religious leaders and claiming that they were the true preservers of the Orthodox faith.

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Eastern Orthodoxy, Eastern Europe, and Post-Soviet Politics *(continued from page 9)*

commonwealth has been the discourse of religious leaders in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, three former Soviet regions which aim to achieve statehood and are facing uncertain religious affiliation. The 1992-93 Abkhazian War led to the emergence of a small Abkhazian Orthodox Church which claims an autonomous status, situated between the authority of the Georgian and Russian Orthodox churches. Similarly, in 1992, the Orthodox communities in South Ossetia refused the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church and, after a brief period in which they were part of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, became integrated in the Holy Synod in Resistance, a Greek Old Calendarist church. At the same time, Orthodox communities in Transnistria have been torn between Moldovan churches and appealed to the Moscow Patriarchate, which in 1998 set up a canonical bishopric on its territory.

Close Church-State Ties

After the fall of the Iron Curtain a number of Orthodox churches proclaimed themselves “defender of the nation.” They enjoyed state financial support and acquired influence in the decision-making of their countries. In Russia, for example, Orthodox Church hierarchs have often been close to political leaders. The 1997 reconstruction of the Church of Christ the Savior in Moscow, which was demolished on Stalin’s orders in 1931, became the centerpiece of close relations between religious and political realms. In Romania post-1989 polls showed the Orthodox Church had “the most trusted institution” above the Army or Parliament. As a general trend, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, churches which initially attracted a large number of the faithful emerged stronger.

Clergy Collaboration with State Security

At the same time, the collaboration of clergy with state security services has remained controversial. After 1989 a number of clergy and top hierarchs publicly admitted working for security services, though most hierarchs opposed public enquiries into the matter. In a number of cases collaboration with the security services came at the expense of church unity. In Bulgaria, for example, it was confirmed in 2012 that during the Cold War period the majority of Orthodox hierarchs making up the Holy Synod were also working for state security services. As a general trend, Orthodox churches have been reluctant to deal with past collaboration with Communist authorities and have opposed the process of lustration (the removal of individuals with ties to former Communist regimes). When hierarchs and ordinary clergy were exposed as working for the state security apparatus, they made references to “patriotism” and “national interest” in support of their activities. Although collaboration with state security apparatus remains controversial, analysis on this topic has to take into account the ways in which Communist states worked. In some cases, membership of state security increased the possibility of becoming a hierarch, while in other cases clergy were coerced into compiling information.

The Re-emergence of Greek Catholicism

The legacy of the Cold War has perhaps become

more evident at the beginning of the 21st century with the re-emergence of Greek Catholic churches in Eastern Europe. After the Second World War, most Greek Catholic churches were integrated into the structures of Orthodox churches, their hierarchs were imprisoned, and they operated underground throughout the period. After 1989, their public recognition brought tension between Orthodox and Greek Catholic faithful, particularly around the issue of property restitution. From marginalized communities during the Cold War period, Greek Catholicism became a prime religious identity marker closely attached to the concept of the “nation,” such as the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (the largest in the world, counting around 5.5 million faithful) and the Romanian Greek Catholic Church.

Symphonia in Russia, Serbia, and Romania

Church-state relations in Eastern Christianity have been based on the concept of *symphonia*, which goes back to the Byzantine Empire and argues for close cooperation between the religious and political spheres. While references to the concept of *symphonia* have continued in the discourse of churches since 1989, particularly in that of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, most Orthodox churches claim that the concept does not fully represent their approach to contemporary social and political realities. *Symphonia* remains a controversial concept mainly because it does not impose a clear distinction between religious and political rulers, while the boundaries between the spiritual and profane remain unclear.

Tensions between Moscow and Constantinople on jurisdictional matters in Eastern Europe and the diaspora, exaggerated claims of the actual number of Russian Orthodox believers worldwide, and President Putin’s 2012 suggestion of involving the Russian Orthodox Church in the proposed Eurasian Union of countries of the former Soviet Union denote the increasing political influence of the Moscow Patriarchate at home and abroad. Other Orthodox churches have their own view of the concept of *symphonia*. Close relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the state after the fall of Slobodan Milošević’s regime in 2000 and the loss of church influence in Kosovo have been criticized by intellectuals. In Romania, where the Orthodox Church retains a prime position of religious influence and is building a mega-Cathedral of National Salvation in Bucharest, *symphonia* seems to have shifted towards a German model of cooperation between church and state.

Religious Education in Schools

In an increasingly secularized world, what role does religious education play for both church and the state? How do churches view the latest technological advances in mass media, the internet, and television? A significant number of churches have launched their own television and radio channels and have a strong internet presence which may mobilize the faithful on social and political issues.

As a general trend, after the fall of Communism, Orthodox churches supported the introduction of Orthodox teachings as part of the national curriculum

After 1989 a number of clergy and top hierarchs publicly admitted working for security services, though most hierarchs opposed public enquiries into the matter.

at both primary and secondary levels of education. The demand, although successful in a number of countries, such as Bulgaria (where it is elective) and Romania (where it is mandatory), was criticized by intellectuals and the impact of religious education remains uneven in Eastern Europe; in Bulgaria less than two percent of pupils have opted for religious classes.

Orthodox Churches and the European Union

How do Orthodox churches engage with the process of European integration and the political system of the European Union? How have Orthodox churches perceived the process of European integration? After the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, the European Commission encouraged dialogue with a number of “churches, religions, and communities of conviction.” As a result, many churches have opened offices in Brussels and Strasburg engaging in direct contact with European institutions. In 1989, as part of the dialogue with church leaders, President Jacques Delors of the European Commission met two metropolitans of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In 1994, the Ecumenical Patriarchate opened the Liaison Office of the Orthodox Church to the European Union, a title which suggests that it represents the whole Orthodox commonwealth in relation to European institutions. However, in the following years other churches opened their own representations, namely the Orthodox Church of Greece in 1998, the Russian Orthodox Church in 2002, and the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of Cyprus in 2007. In addition, the Serbian Orthodox Church has a representative working for the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches. In 2010, Orthodox leaders from these offices decided to set up a Committee of Representative of Orthodox Churches to the European Union in an effort to coordinate a trans-Orthodox response to the political evolution of the European Union. It remains unclear if this Committee will have a long-term impact on relations with European institutions and among national churches or merely represents a church-based

organization raising awareness of Orthodox values among civil servants in Brussels and Strasburg. That Orthodox churches regard the Brussels offices as key bodies in dialogue with the European Union was underscored by the appointment of Bishop Hilarion Alfayev, formerly head of the Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church in Strasburg from 2002 to 2007, as chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The Impact of Nationalism

The new Orthodox churches that have been established after the fall of Communism have taken into account the national character of their communities. Their names reflect this emphasis on ethnicity with, for example, *Macedonian* in the Macedonian Orthodox Church, and *Ukrainian* in all three major churches (the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate, and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate).

At the beginning of the 21st century, the process of globalization raises a question of the diversity of Eastern Christianity. Will Eastern Christian churches continue to divide or will they unite? Will other churches be accepted in the communion of the 15 recognized churches? These are open questions. However, the history of Eastern Christianity and, in particular, religious and political developments after the fall of Communism, suggest that Eastern Christianity will continue to be a “family of churches” which is prone to division and new configurations. ♦

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Religious and political developments after the fall of Communism suggest that Eastern Christianity will continue to be a “family of churches” which is prone to division and new configurations.

Beyond the Moscow Patriarchate: Popular Piety and Protest in the Russian Orthodox Church

Anastasia Mitrofanova and Zoe Knox

Popular Religion

The resurgence of Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical life following the demise of the Soviet Union led to expectations that the church-state arrangement of the Imperial period might be restored. However, enormous politically significant changes have taken place in mass religious consciousness, conditioned by the influences of the subculture of the Soviet religious underground (the Catacombs) on the Orthodox milieu in general. Church historian Alexei Beglov stresses two of its important characteristics. The first is the degradation of traditional ecclesiastic culture. As a result of the extermination of clergy, liturgical life nearly ceased to exist and was replaced by various popular services, often conducted by laymen and even women.¹ Reciting *acafisti* (hymns to God, His Mother, or saints) became particularly popular. In the absence of churches, practices of veneration of water springs and trees moved from the periphery to the

center of religious life. Second, Beglov points to the erosion of the church hierarchy and of the hierarchal principle. Instead, believers follow charismatic personalities, including those holding no position in the hierarchy, as primary bearers of grace.² These changes have profoundly shaped popular religious expression.

Popular religio-political concepts are partly shaped by the fact that the majority of Orthodox believers in modern Russia are relatively recent converts. Their past makes them doctrinally flexible and unwilling to trust the Moscow Patriarchate unequivocally. These intertwining factors have contributed to a decline of the pre-revolutionary church system and the emergence of an “alternative hierarchy” of charismatic “elders” (*startzy*) who form non-territorial parishes uniting people across considerable distances. Such developments are criticized by the official church hierarchy, labeling

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alternative leaders young elders (*mladostartzy*).³

The collapse of the Soviet Union engendered a wave of eschatological expectations, similar in many ways to those caused by the revolutionary turmoil of the early twentieth century. Initially everything associated with the Soviet state (passports, census, elections, trade unions) was seen as a sign of the coming of the Antichrist. Simultaneously, eschatologically oriented groups developed a negative view of the “official Church.” The rejection of the bureaucratic apparatus of the new Russia, most notably the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), new passports, and census-taking, is accompanied by a distrust of the Moscow Patriarchate as apostate for cooperating with “godless authorities.”

Tax I.D. Numbers, Passports, and the Antichrist

The most important grassroots Orthodox political movement in recent years was directed against the Taxpayer Identification Number, made obligatory for all citizens of Russia in 2000. A number of radical Orthodox believers supported by certain priests have claimed that TINs were the seal of the Antichrist which, according to the Book of Revelation, would be necessary to sell and buy anything. Protest against TINs included demonstrations and protest letters sent to the Patriarch and other Church hierarchs. On 19-20 February 2001 the seventh extended plenary session of the Synodal Theological Commission was held to discuss the TIN issue. After a lengthy discussion, the commission came to the conclusion that the TIN issue was of no religious significance and that the acceptance or rejection of a TIN should be regarded as the private choice of each individual believer.⁴ Like many other controversial issues in church life, the TIN continued to be debated on internet chat rooms, discussion boards, and blogs.

An increase of eschatological (and anti-governmental) sentiments occurred in 2002 as a result of the exchanging of old Soviet passports for Russian ones and conducting the national census. Radical traditionalists saw both as signifying the coming of the Antichrist. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) leadership firmly opposed this interpretation. Aleksii II obtained a new passport himself, commenting: “Is the sickled and hammered one dearer for you than the new one with the two-headed eagle and St. George?”⁵ Paradoxically, traditionalists still consider the Soviet passport less dangerous than the new one: Some have been fined for refusing to exchange passports.⁶

Unofficial Canonizations and Venerations

Popular, unofficial canonizations based on political grounds represent another important aspect of lived Orthodoxy. Venerators of unofficial saints have developed complete ritualistic systems, including icons, prayers and *acafisti*.⁷ *Acafasti* are popular because they provide an opportunity for a service without an ordained priest. Political canonizations mostly reflect the popular veneration of people who have done something significant for Russia, or who suffered for Russia, or were killed on a battlefield for Russia. Evgenii Rodionov (1977-96), an eighteen-year-old conscript killed in Chechnya, supposedly for refusing to convert to Islam, is one

of the most widely venerated, though not officially recognized, martyrs. Unsanctioned examples of popular “canonizations” are historic figures such as Ivan the Terrible, Grigorii Rasputin, and even Joseph Stalin. Deacon Maxim Pliakin, secretary of the Saratov Diocesan Commission on Canonization, stressed that in such cases their political activity (which is debatable itself), rather than their Christian virtues, are the criterion of sainthood.”⁸

There are examples of non-canonical icons and other forms of veneration of officially recognized saints having political connotations. The “excessive veneration” of Nikolai II and the imperial family has been labeled as “tsar-theism” (*tzarebozhnichestvo*). Venerators are accused of believing that Nikolai is “the second Christ” who has “redeemed” the sins of the Russian people. Some tsar-theists produce icons of Saint Tsar Nikolai with a cruciform nimbus (*Zhertva userdnaya*, or “Zealous Sacrifice”), but such a nimbus can be used only for Christ himself; or they paint all tsars and emperors of Russia with nimbuses, including such controversial rulers as Pavel I, or Catherine II.

There is a political belief that after the elimination of the monarchy in 1917 the Virgin Mary became the mystical custodian of the Russian throne. The popular veneration of the Virgin sometimes becomes (at least from the viewpoint of the ROC) excessive. For example, in some icons she is dressed in an episcopal robe holding a chalice like an “archpriestess.” The ROC opposes such unauthorized venerations and canonizations, while some clergy hope for a gradual change of the official position in response to pressure from below.

Bishop Diomid

Among priests openly expressing their political positions one may find both liberals such as Hegumen Petr Meshcherinov, Fr. Alexandr Borisov, Fr. Georgii Mitrofanov, and Fr. Georgii Kochetkov, and traditionalists such as Fr. Alexandr Shargunov, Archimandrite Petr Kucher, and Fr. Oleg Steniaev. Bishops normally do not express clear adherence to this or that camp. The only exception in recent decades has been Bishop Diomid (Dziuban, born 1961), who became the head of the new diocese of Anadyr and Chukotka in 2000. His first “Appeal,” signed by several other clergy from his diocese, was published on 22 February 2007. The document criticized church leaders for their ecumenical and inter-religious contacts; submission to mundane (“anti-people”) authorities; unwillingness to protest against the TIN and other initiatives, which, taken together, formed a general accusation of apostasy against the Moscow Patriarchate.

This “Appeal” caused wide public discussion, and the traditionalist camp of the ROC for a while was enthusiastic about Diomid’s leadership. But the bishop soon switched from general criticism of the Church to personal accusations directed at Patriarch Aleksii. Bishop Diomid’s second “Appeal,” issued 6 November 2007, signed by Diomid alone, accused the Patriarch of apostasy for participation in the veneration of the Holy Crown of Thorns in

As a result of the extermination of clergy, liturgical life nearly ceased to exist and was replaced by various popular services, often conducted by laymen and even women. In the absence of churches, practices of veneration of water springs and trees moved from the periphery to the center of religious life.

Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris, together with Roman Catholics. Diomid demanded he repent. The two appeals actually promoted ecclesiastical democracy by advocating handing power over from the Bishops' Council to the Local Council. As a result, the 2008 Bishops' Council, held from 24 to 29 June, not only condemned Diomid's activities but committed to defrock him unless he repented. On 17 July 2008 Diomid published his third "Appeal," signed only by him. He accused the leadership of the ROC and Patriarch Aleksii of heresy and apostasy and declared the Church "the great whore." Diomid excommunicated the Patriarch and all the hierarchs of the ROC and declared anathema on them unless they repent. By doing this, he proclaimed himself the head of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Until that time he had enjoyed relative support from various respectable traditionalist organizations and communities. But excommunicating the Patriarch changed everything. On 6 October 2008, the Holy Synod defrocked Diomid himself. This did not cause a schism or any protest from the traditionalists. Only a small number of them joined Diomid's "jurisdiction." The majority accused him of being a provocateur aiming to force traditionalists out of the Church. Diomid's fall demonstrates that traditionalists, even when highly critical of the hierarchy, do not want a schism. Eschatological expectations with anti-governmental and anti-church connotations are widespread but in most cases not transferred into practical action.

Patriarch Kirill

Patriarch Kirill was enthroned as Aleksii II's successor in February 2009. Since then he has initiated a number of interconnected reforms. By 2012, five of these appeared to be particularly significant. First, new Synodal departments were established, namely the Department of Inter-relationships between Church and Society, the Department of Penitentiary Diaconia, and the Information Department. The Church also opened a doctoral and postdoctoral school. Second, since 2010 the positions of staff social worker, catechist, and youth organizer have been made obligatory for every parish, although there are still not enough specialists to occupy all vacancies. Third, the Patriarch has promoted members of the laity and married priests. For example, on 22 August 2010 at Solovetskii Monastery he sharply criticized "monastic careerism" (when young men use monastic vows for social mobility),⁹ the widowed Archimandrite Panteleimon (Shatov) was consecrated bishop, and in 2009 Vladimir Legoida became the first layman to head the Synodal Information Department. Fourth, several large dioceses of the ROC have been divided into smaller ones and new bishops consecrated. Finally, at the end of 2011, the Patriarchate put forward a project to make catechization compulsory for the sacraments of marriage and baptism (in the case of infants, this was for the parents). These five reforms, although they may seem disparate, have in common a desire to draw Church and society closer together. In parallel, Kirill seemingly intends to narrow the gap between clergy and laity and between monks and married priests. He also aims to raise the religious consciousness of nominal Orthodox and persuade

them to live in accordance with Christian ethics. If these ambitious aims are achieved, the Church may become an independent political actor able to implement its ideological position in the national political agenda.

A Punk Rock Protest

As Diomid posed a threat to the ROC from the right, so the Pussy Riot punk rocker protest against close ties between Putin and the Church illustrates a threat to the ROC from the left. On 21 February 2012, five members of this feminist punk group, wearing brightly colored outfits complete with balaclavas, danced in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, jumping up and down and kicking and punching the air. The women later explained that they were protesting against the Russian Orthodox Church's support of Putin in the Duma elections the previous December. Footage of the protest was made into a video and uploaded to YouTube. The lyrics included sacrilegious profanity.

Pussy Riot's central objection – the close links between church and state – reflected debates about the appropriate relationship between the Orthodox Church and the Russian state which are as old as the introduction of Byzantine Christianity to the *Rus'* lands. The protracted detention, trial, and conviction of the punk demonstrators for hooliganism motivated by religious hatred, coupled with Western media's intense interest in the Putin regime, meant that the fate of the protestors became a *cause célèbre* for human rights campaigners and for those critical of the Moscow Patriarchate's links with state authority.

The wide range of views within Russia on the incident demonstrates the diversity of opinions on the issues of freedom of conscience, church-state relations, and the status of sacred space in a secular state. Though many political figures opposing Putin became vocal supporters of the punk rockers, there was generally less sympathy for the group in Russia than internationally. The guerrilla performance was condemned by some as obscene and blasphemous, and there remains limited support for their broader political agenda. ♦

Notes:

¹ Alexei Beglov, *V poiskakh 'bezgreshnykh katakomb'*. *Tserkovnoe podpolie v SSR [In Search of the 'Sinless Catacombs']. The Church Underground in the USSR* (Moscow: Arefa, 2008), 205.

² *Ibid.*, 210.

³ On the tradition of spiritual elders, see Irina Paert, *Spiritual Elders, Charisma, and Tradition in Russian Orthodoxy* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

⁴ "Itogovii document zasedania rasshirennogo plenuma Sinodalnoi Bogoslovskoi komisii [The Final Document of the Expanded Plenary Session of the Synodal Theological Commission]," *Moskovskii Zhurnal* No.4 (2001), 31.

⁵ "Alexei II prizyvaet ne iskat priznakov kontza sveta [Aleksii II Calls Not to Look for the Signs of the Apocalypse]," *Mir religii*; <http://www.religio.ru/news/4049.html>.

⁶ "Zhiteli Tylskoi oblasti otkazyvaiutsya ot poluchenia rossiiskogo pasporta [People from the Tula Oblast Refuse to Receive Russian Passports],"

Eschatological expectations with anti-governmental and anti-church connotations are widespread but in most cases not transferred into practical action.

(continued on page 14)

Beyond the Moscow Patriarchate (continued from page 13)

Religia i SMI; http://www.religare.ru/2_86627.html.

⁷ Various non-canonical icons can be found at: A.V. Slesarev, "Sovremennye psevdopravoslavnye ikony" [Modern Pseudo-Orthodox Icons], *Anti-Raskol*; <http://www.anti-raskol.ru/pages/1251>.

⁸ Quoted in Julia Zaitseva, "Akafisty Ivanu Groznomu, Iosifu Stalinu i Igoriu Talkovu kak forma okolotserkovnogo folklora [Acafisti to Ivan the Terrible, Joseph Stalin, and Igor Talkov as a Form of Para-ecclesiastical Folklore]," *Kievskaya Rus'*; <http://www.kiev-orthodox.org/site/worship/2136/>.

⁹ "Sviateishii Patriarkh Kirill: samoe otrvatitelnoe v Tserkvi eto monasheskii karierizm [His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: Monastic Careerism is the Most Disgusting Thing in the Church]," *Official Website of*

the Moscow Patriarchate; <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1256252.html>.

Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from Zoe Knox and Anastasia Mitrofanova, "The Russian Orthodox Church" in Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century, edited by Lucian N. Leustean (London; Routledge, 2014), Editors note: This chapter, although originally published in 2014, was written in 2011 - 12.

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Book Review

David Doellinger. *Turning Prayers into Protests; Religious-Based Activism and Its Challenge to State Power in Socialist Slovakia and East Germany*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013. Reviewed by Robert Goeckel.

In examining the social context for the revolutions in 1989, many observers highlight the role of the churches and religion as explanatory factors. Certainly Poland is the obvious example, but often the German Democratic Republic (GDR) is also cited as one case in which the Evangelical Lutheran Church played a key role. But in the case of Czechoslovakia, the Catholic Church is seldom cited as instrumental to the Velvet Revolution. In this solidly researched volume, however, David Doellinger breaks with this accepted wisdom. First, by disassembling the Czechoslovak system, he looks at the separate case of strongly Catholic Slovakia. And second, he chooses not to focus on the state-church leadership relationship, but rather "two distinct grassroots movements whose sustained challenges to state power successfully expanded spaces for action independent of state control" (p. 1).

The author's main interest is how churches provide a free space in an otherwise authoritarian social system, permitting the possibility of organizing an embryonic civil society. In the Slovak case, Doellinger finds after 1948 a "secret church which created a community of believers that by taking precautions and acknowledging limits could worship freely and grow spiritually" (p. 47). In the less repressive GDR case, by contrast, groups focused on peace, environmentalism, and reconciliation could enjoy the legal protection of the church, based on "the give and take relationship which the state never had with the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia" (p. 30). Despite these differences in the churches' standing, Doellinger discerns similar patterns: Both provided a fertile basis for independent communication networks which broke the state's monopoly; and in both cases, triggers such as pilgrimages and commemorations (Slovakia) or European security tensions and declining ecological quality (GDR) led to a widening of the social space of the grassroots groups.

But Doellinger's analysis also underscores differences between the two cases. The goals of the GDR groups focused on social issues, to be sure subsumed under the religious motive of peace; religious freedom or human rights was not their primary agenda. By contrast, the Slovaks called primarily for religious freedom, using petitions and protests. In addition, he

finds primarily personal networks ("a self-imposed atomized sphere of independent activity," p. 192) in Slovakia, with very limited linkages with non-religious Czech dissent. In the GDR, by contrast, a robust group culture and eventual "archipelago of activists" provoked growing tensions with church officials as they sought more autonomy from the church in the late 1980s.

One of the key strengths of the book is its detailed treatment of activism in "the provinces." Doellinger focuses not on Berlin, but on the varying strategies and dilemmas of activists in Leipzig, in the context of the celebrated Monday peace services. By the same token, the distinct character of the opposition movement in Slovakia from that in Prague is easily overlooked. Doellinger also nicely captures the ambivalence in the relationship of the church leaderships to the groups, more acute for the GDR churches with their investment in "church within socialism." In my view, the crucial question in explaining the role of religion in the revolutions is whether the religious dissent was able to join forces with non-religious dissent. And in this respect, in this reviewer's opinion, neither Slovakia, nor even the GDR, compares with the Polish case, in which such "solidarity" was developed and practiced openly by the mid-1970s.

This is a well-researched volume, relying on numerous interviews with key actors in the grassroots movement in both cases and well-grounded in the secondary literature. It is fluidly written, analytically sound, and cogently argued.

Ultimately in both cases, the churches did not make the revolutions, but they did prepare them by developing leadership skills and nascent civil society. In both cases the tempo of the revolutions brought greater autonomy to the churches, but less social significance. On this last dimension, even the "Polish exception" has now become regrettably quite comparable with the GDR and Slovakia. ♦

Robert Goeckel, professor of political science, State University of New York at Geneseo

The churches did not make the revolutions, but they did prepare them by developing leadership skills and nascent civil society.

Christian Psychology in Russia (continued from page 16)

“Northern Capital,” witnessed the development of its own school of Orthodox Christian psychology. Among its well-known representatives are Y.M. Zenko, L.F. Shehovtseva, and Father Vladimir Tsvetkov. The Society of Orthodox Psychologists in St. Petersburg was founded in 2008.

“Abigail”

In 2000 in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, psychologists interested in combining professional approaches with their Christian beliefs founded the Psychological Counseling Center, popularly known as “Abigail,” headed by psychologist and psychotherapist Elena Strigo. In their professional views the members of “Abigail” were inspired by the therapeutic and psychological approaches of Russian psychiatrists and psychologists, including Mark Burno and Fedor Vasylyuk. As a structure they were greatly inspired by IGNIS Academy for Christian Psychology, Germany. Since 2007 the center has been represented in the European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology, and Psychotherapy (EMCAPP). The influence of this movement has resulted in a Christian approach to trauma therapy which is now being developed by “Abigail” Center psychologists.

Professional Training

Christian psychologists and anthropologists have also seen the need for professional training. In 2002, the Russian Orthodox Institute of St. John the Divine established a psychology faculty, the first in the Orthodox educational system. It was created by the efforts of Orthodox priest and psychologist Andrey Lorgus, the founding dean of the faculty. In 2009, Father Lorgus established the Institute of Christian Psychology in Moscow as a training, educational, and research center. The educational program of the Institute is a unique combination of the spiritual tradition of Orthodoxy, Christian anthropology, and modern scientific psychology. Rector Andrey Lorgus, a member of the EMCAPP Board, hosted the 10th EMCAPP Symposium at the Institute of Christian Psychology in Moscow in May 2010.

In other developments, the Christian counseling psychologist Olga Krasnikova founded the Institute of the Psychological Counseling and Educational Center “Sobesednik” (Conversationalist). In 2011 the Russian Orthodox University in Moscow re-opened. Its rector is Abbot Peter (Eremeev), its dean is Father

Peter Kolomyitsev, and its scientific supervisor is Professor Boris S. Bratus. Thus, educational and training opportunities in the sphere of Christian psychology are gradually expanding.

Secular and Orthodox Criticism

In its development, from the very beginning Christian psychology in Russia has faced confrontations, criticisms, misunderstandings, and opposition from unsympathetic members of the psychological community. Christian psychologists are accused of breaking the principle of secularism in education, undermining psychological science, and mysticism. In addition, some priests of the Russian Orthodox Church have expressed negative attitudes toward Christian-oriented psychology. Although such opposition is becoming less intense, and many parishes have established their own psychological counseling services, misunderstanding remains. For their part, secular psychologists continue to contend that science and religion are incompatible spheres. Professor Boris S. Bratus has taken as his task to respond to the criticism of Christian psychology’s major opponents, consistently defending spiritually oriented psychology in the best tradition of scientific debate with his characteristic humor and broad humanitarian erudition.

In Conclusion

In conclusion, the hope of Christian psychologists in Russia is that, in coming to know the work of their colleagues abroad, Christian psychology will proceed along the path of mutual understanding, taking advantage of shared experience. Keeping in mind that “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain,” Christian psychologists in Russia dedicate their efforts to the Lord, asking Him to bless their counseling, their teaching, and their research. ♦

Edited excerpts reprinted with permission from Tatiana Kim, “The Way of Christian Psychology in Russia: Introduction to the Articles,” The EMCAPP Journal, Christian Psychology around the World, No. 3 (2013): 12-15; http://emcapp.ignis.de/pdf/journal_3_2s.pdf.

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Letter to the Editor

As always I look forward to receiving the *East-West Church and Ministry Reports*. They are a wonderful resource for researchers and those doing missions in Eastern Europe. For the spring 2015 issue, I have a strong concern. While I firmly believe that alternative points-of-view should be provided when possible (and it’s part of our scholarly responsibility to do so), the facts regarding Russia’s occupation [of Ukrainian territory] are well established. Having someone hide behind a pseudonym [“Sergey Osokin,” “A Russian Christian Perspective on the Ukrainian Crisis,” 1-5], while continuing to state propaganda that has been widely

debunked, does not meet the scholarly standard I have come to expect from this publication. The column that was published lacks appropriate sourcing, facts, and data. I’m disappointed. I understand the desire to present both sides of view on the Russian occupation of Ukraine, but I think it does not serve anyone well to have an anonymous person post the “Russian” view. There is no concern for religious persecution here for a person who is backing what Putin is doing in Ukraine. ♦

Stephen Benham, PhD., President, Music in World Cultures, Laurence, PA

Christian Psychology in Russia

Tatiana Kim

words “sin” and “mercy” to be deleted from scientific psychological papers, as reminiscent of religion.

Perestroika

Only in the 1990s during *perestroika*, when the country entered a new, post-Soviet era and ideological pressure was eased, did some psychologists seize the opportunity to openly refer to Christian themes. In April 1990 an important event that gave impetus to the development of Christian psychology took place within the walls of Moscow State University. At that time the university’s psychology faculty conducted its first seminar on “Psychology and Religion” directed by Professor Boris S. Bratus and future Orthodox priests Boris Nichiporov and Ioann Vavilov. The seminar aroused so much interest that it was decided to make it permanent.

Thus the first seminar on Christian psychology and anthropology in the history of Moscow State University was born. In addition to famous psychologists Fedor Vasilyuk, Viktor Slobodchikov, and Vitaly Rubtsov, its participants included historians, literary critics, art historians, and philosophers. According to the recollections of participants, interest was huge, and the seminars lasted for three hours without a break, followed by discussions with tea, talks in corridors, and disputes. It was around these seminars that a community of Christian-oriented scientists and students was gradually formed. In the early 1990s, through the efforts of Professor Bratus and his collaborators, specialization in the psychology of religion and, in fact, in Christian psychology, was introduced into the psychology department of Moscow State University. That was the first step in the field of Christian psychological education.

Further formation and development of Christian-oriented psychology is associated with the creation of the Christian Psychology Laboratory at the Psychology Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, headed by Professor Boris S. Bratus; a number of scientific conferences and seminars, including international ones, in Moscow and St. Petersburg on the problems of Christian psychology and anthropology; and the editing of the first manuals on Christian psychology (B.V. Nichiporov, *Vvdenenie v Khristianskuiu psikhologiiu [The Basics of Christian Psychology]*. Moscow: Shkola-Press, 1994; B. S. Bratus, *Nachala khristianskoi psikhologii. Uchebnoe posobie dlia vuzov [Introduction to Christian Psychology]*. Moscow: Nauka, 1995).

Among the significant events were special issues on Christian psychology in the *Moscow Psychotherapeutic Journal* beginning in 1997. Its founder and editor-in-chief was the well-known psychologist and psychotherapist Professor Fedor Vasilyuk. At the same time, St. Petersburg, our

Psychological science in Russia developed in the harsh conditions of subordination to Marxist ideology and aggressive atheist propaganda, barring any positive mention of religion in psychological literature.

Only in the 1990s during a new, post-Soviet era did some psychologists seize the opportunity to openly refer to Christian themes.

Pre-1917

“Psychology has a long past, but a short history” – the famous saying by Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850-1909) is true for Christian psychology in Russia, which has a history of several decades, but with roots lying in the distant past. A close relationship between psychology and Christianity can be traced through Russian history before the Revolution of 1917. The first book on psychology was published in Moscow in 1796. Its author, Ivan M. Kandorsky, was a deacon and later priest in the Russian Orthodox Church. From the 17th to the early 20th century, psychology was taught in theological academies and seminaries.

Prior to 1917, the religious philosophy-oriented trend in Russian psychology predominated, with psychology developing on the basis of Orthodox anthropology. While in the 19th century materialism and positivism predominated in the scientific world, Christian psychology in Russia continued to exist with potential for further development. However, the October Revolution in 1917 and the subsequent years of the atheist Soviet regime made it impossible even to mention Christian psychology.

The Soviet Era

The Soviet totalitarian system was aimed at the suppression of individuality, the destruction of the “human being in the human being,” and the discrediting of spiritual values. Psychological science in Russia (no doubt successful in certain areas) developed in the harsh conditions of subordination to Marxist ideology and aggressive atheist propaganda, barring any positive mention of religion in psychological literature. Professor Boris S. Bratus recalls how in the 1980s an editor required the

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