

## **Orthodox-Protestant Relations in the Post-Soviet Era**

### **Mark R. Elliott**

*Dr. Mark R. Elliott is director of the Global Center, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, AL, and founding editor of the East-West Church & Ministry Report. Elliott has contributed numerous articles to REE. He is a member of the United Methodist Church. The following article was presented at a conference on Evangelicals in Mission within CIS, sponsored by International Baptist Theological Seminary (Prague), in February 2003.*

In taking the measure of Orthodox-Protestant relations in the post-Soviet era, conflict clearly has been more evident than cooperation.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, survey responses from 51 missionaries and indigenous Protestants received between November 2002 and January 2003 have generated more positive examples of Orthodox-Protestant collaboration than might have been expected, particularly in higher education, Christian publishing, and Bible distribution, and to a lesser extent, in compassionate ministries. At the same time, Orthodox, in collaboration with local authorities, increasingly are at odds with Protestants, such that mutual respect is a scarce commodity.

Five Protestant respondents noted specific institutions that utilize at least some Orthodox, as well as Protestant, faculty: the Tavriski Christian Institute (Kherson, Ukraine); the Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute (Sofia); the Moscow Evangelical Theological Seminary (OMS); the Russian-American Christian University (Moscow); and the Moscow Christian School of Psychology.<sup>2</sup> The latter program, launched by a Western Evangelical professor of psychology, has an Orthodox director and both Orthodox and Protestant faculty.<sup>3</sup>

Rather more rare were responses noting Orthodox utilization of Protestants in higher education: St. Andrews Theological Institute (Moscow), headed by Alexander Bodrov (course on C. S. Lewis); and St. John Orthodox University (Moscow), which has extended speaking invitations to Protestants.<sup>4</sup>

Academic conferences have provided some opportunities for Orthodox-Protestant interaction. The Society for the Study of Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism has pioneered

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1 For an extended discussion of the interface of Orthodox and Protestants, especially in the 1990s, see Mark Elliott and Sharyl Corrado, "The Protestant Missionary Presence in the Former Soviet Union," *Religion, State and Society* 25 (No. 4, 1997), 333-51; and Perry L. Glanzer, *The Quest for Russia's Soul: Evangelicals and Moral Education in Post-Communist Russia* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2002).

2 Clifford Dueck to author, 6 December 2002; Nik Nedelchev to author, 10 December 2002; John Creech to author, 15 December 2002; Janice Strength to author, 9 December 2002; Karmen Friesen to author, 12 December 2002.

3 Janice Strength to author, 9 December 2002.

4 *Ibid.*

such forums in the West.<sup>5</sup> In the East a 1994 Moscow conference on cults involved Orthodox-Protestant collaboration and a Romanian Orthodox conference included Protestant theologian and educator Emil Bartos sharing his doctoral research on Orthodox theologian Dumitru Staniloae.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1990s the Orthodox Open Christianity movement in St. Petersburg organized a number of conferences in collaboration with Dutch and U.S. Calvinist academics. Both Protestant and Orthodox professionals collaborated in a conference on “The Integration of Psychology and Christianity” sponsored by the Moscow Christian School of Psychology.<sup>7</sup> Also, in August 2002, the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague sponsored a conference on Baptist-Orthodox relations.<sup>8</sup>

Other examples of Orthodox-Protestant academic cooperation include informal Protestant contact with faculty at the Orthodox Theological Academy in St. Petersburg,<sup>9</sup> the Evangelical Christian-Baptist Seminary Library in Kyiv opening its doors to Orthodox seminary students;<sup>10</sup> the Odessa Theological Seminary of Evangelical Christians-Baptists hosting Orthodox guest lecturers (with reciprocity); and the same institution’s use of several Orthodox texts in its curricula.<sup>11</sup>

In publishing, perhaps the most ambitious collaborative effort involves the Russian Orthodox Department of Education and Gospel Light, a California-based evangelical ministry. The two parties are engaged in an ambitious project to provide graded Sunday school curricula appropriate for Orthodox churches across Russia.<sup>12</sup> An Anglican, as well, is said to be assisting Russian Orthodox in the development of Sunday schools.<sup>13</sup>

Interconfessional Bible societies probably account for the most extensive, best sustained, and most significant Orthodox-Protestant interface in the post-Soviet era.<sup>14</sup> Five respondents

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5 Bradley Nassif, “Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism: The Status of an Emerging Dialogue,” *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 1 (Spring 2000), 21-55.

6 Emil Bartos to author, 13 December 2002.

7 Adrian Helleman to author, 29 December 2002; Stephen Hoffmann to author, 9 December 2002; Janice Strength to author, 9 December 2002.

8 Peter Penner to author, 11 December 2002; Ian M. Randall, ed., *Baptists and the Orthodox Church, On the Way to Understanding, International Baptist Theological Seminary Occasional Paper*, No. 1, forthcoming.

9 Adrain Helleman to author, 29 December 2002; Peter Penner to author, 11 December 2002.

10 Anatoly Prokopchuk to author, 10 December 2002.

11 Greg Nichols to author, 9 December 2002.

12 Elliott and Corrado, “Protestant Missionary,” 345.

13 Janice Strength to author, 9 December 2002.

14 Elliott and Corrado, “Protestant Missionary,” 345.

noted Orthodox-Protestant cooperation in the Russian, Moldovan, Romanian, and Yugoslav Bible societies.<sup>15</sup> Other Bible societies in the region also make interconfessional common cause.

Perhaps the most wide-ranging Orthodox-Protestant collaboration of a scholarly nature in the post-Soviet era is the encyclopedia of religion being coedited by Orthodox Sergei Filatov and Anglican Canon Michael Bourdeaux. In addition to several articles in Keston's journal, *Religion, State and Society*, results have been published to date in S. B. Filatov, ed. *Religiya i obshchestvo: Ocherki religioznoi zhizni sovremennoi Rossii [Religion and Society: Essays on the Religious Life of Contemporary Russia]* (Moscow, St. Petersburg: Letni Sad, 2002).<sup>16</sup>

Quite a few respondents noted additional publishing projects involving some Orthodox-Protestant collaboration: St. Petersburg-based Bibles for All includes an Orthodox literature department in its bookshop; both Orthodox and Protestants participate in the St. Petersburg's Christian Book Fair; Evangelical scholar Sergei Sannikov's new church history text is the first Russian Protestant work to incorporate the Orthodox saga in its narrative; increasing numbers of master's theses in Russian Protestant seminaries are addressing issues of Orthodox theology and history; a Protestant publisher in Ukraine has published three titles by Orthodox priests; several Orthodox priests from Moscow have visited a Protestant publisher in Ukraine requesting Christian literature; and New Man Publishers in Bulgaria, headed by Protestant Roman Papratilov, has recruited Orthodox faculty as authors and editors and has secured an Orthodox "imprimatur" for various titles it has published.<sup>17</sup>

Since 1990 Western mainline churches, in partnership with the Moscow Patriarchate, have been involved in extensive programs of humanitarian aid in the former Soviet Union. UMCOR (the United Methodist Committee on Relief) and the U.S. Episcopal Church, for example, have distributed relief goods worth millions of dollars through the Russian Orthodox Church, although questions have been raised about the accountability of the distribution process.<sup>18</sup>

Prison Fellowship, founded by Chuck Colson, has enjoyed one of the most successful Evangelical-Orthodox collaborations in the field of social outreach in the former Soviet Union. Two respondents noted Prison Fellowship activities in Ukraine in particular, with Archbishop Augustin of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate serving as chair of the

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15 Brad Wood to author, 11 December 2002; Vera K. Izotova to author, 20 December 2002; Oleg Turlac to author, 12 December 2002; Emil Bartos to author, 13 December 2002; Milenko Andjelic to author, 10 December 2002.

16 See review by Nathaniel Davis, *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 11 (Winter 2003), 13.

17 Pavel Damian to author, 12 December 2002; Sergei Tupchik to author, 4 January 2003; Greg Nichols to author, 9 December 2002; Peter Penner to author, 11 December 2002; Tupchik (on Ukraine); Nik Nedelchev to author, 10 December 2002; Sharon Mumper to author, 27 November 2002.

18 Father Georgi Edelstein to author, June 2002.

ministry's Ukrainian board. The Archbishop, described as "an extraordinary man who is willing to work with other confessions," expressed his appreciation in October 2002 to Menlo Park Presbyterian Church for a container shipment that included computers for juvenile prisons in Ukraine.<sup>19</sup>

The charitable donations of Josh McDowell Ministries, which have included substantial contributions to Russian Orthodox parties, deserve special mention. Surprisingly, Josh McDowell maintained a friendship with the now deceased Metropolitan Ioann of St. Petersburg, known for his virulently anti-Western polemics. Commendably, Josh McDowell sincerely cherishes hospitable relations with the Orthodox, but it must be admitted that some detractors believe that such humanitarian aid, whether evangelical or mainline, involves Western donations to Orthodox who consider the faith of their benefactors to be heretical, with, at the same time, no effective accountability mechanisms in place.<sup>20</sup>

To this point Orthodox-Protestant relations have been noted primarily at the rarified levels of higher education, publishing, and projects negotiated between high church and parachurch leaders. In contrast, the greatest hope for sustainable, mutually respectful relations across confessional lines may lie at the microlevel and out of the spotlight. Three categories of such ties may be noted: 1. in connection with reform-minded Orthodox; 2. away from Moscow; and 3. at the local level.

As regards reform-minded Orthodox, Father Alexander Men, martyred in 1990, quickly comes to mind. This widely respected and broadly tolerant priest, who had a passion for apologetics and evangelism, was charitably inclined towards Protestants and Catholics. To this day he continues to be highly regarded by a significant number of Russian Evangelicals and knowledgeable Protestant missionaries. Evangelicals distribute his printed works and still underwrite rebroadcasts of his radio sermons.<sup>21</sup>

The parish of Sts. Cosmos and Damian in Moscow, led by Father Alexander Borisov, a disciple of the late Father Men, is a thriving center of reform-minded Orthodoxy. As a result, it has received encouragement from and has maintained friendly relations with a variety of Evangelicals, even as it has been the target of attacks by nationalistic, anti-Western Orthodox conservatives.<sup>22</sup>

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19 Max Rondoni to author, 25 October-1 November 2002; W. D. Wysong to author, 1 December 2002.

20 Father Georgi Edelstein to author, June 2002.

21 See *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 7 (Summer 1999), 1-5, 16; Greg Nichols to author, 9 December 2002.

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Chuck Sunberg to author, 12 December 2002; Adrian Helleman to author, 29 December 2002; Steve Godfrey to author, 18 December 2002; Nikolai Revtov to author, 1 January 2003.

Without question, the largest Orthodox expression of an evangelically inclined faith in Central and Eastern Europe is Romania's Lord's Army, dating from the 1920s which, as with the Men camp of Russian Orthodoxy, has attracted a great deal of interest from Protestants. Unfortunately, a close examination of this significant phenomenon is beyond the scope of this article.<sup>23</sup>

Another characteristic of a majority of examples of positive Russian Orthodox-Protestant ties is their distance from Moscow. The Baptist Logos Choir and Orchestra performed at the Moscow Patriarchate's Danilov Monastery in December 1999, but director Evgeny Goncharenko would be the first to point out the rarity of such opportunities in the Russian capital.<sup>24</sup> Not common, but more frequent than in Moscow, are examples of Orthodox-Protestant cordiality and cooperation farther afield: Athletes in Action working with Orthodox in Kostroma; Mission to Unreached Peoples working with Orthodox nuns on behalf of orphans in Vladimir; Methodist-Orthodox cooperation in assistance to orphans in the Kostroma Region; Archbishop Mikhail's affection for Lutherans and his invitations to address the congregation of St. Michael's Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg; Methodist-Orthodox cooperation in prison ministry in Ekaterinburg; Evangelism Explosion sharing personal evangelism strategies with Orthodox in southern Ukraine and with Armenian Apostolic Church teachers in Armenia; joint Orthodox-Evangelical television program productions in Kherson, Ukraine; an Orthodox priest preaching in a Baptist church in Kherson, Ukraine; and Orthodox-Protestant cooperation in Christmas and Easter programs in Western Ukraine.<sup>25</sup>

In the late 1990s Orthodox and Catholic churches joined the Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance and Agape Bulgaria in sponsoring 77 showings of Campus Crusade's Jesus film in ten days in Sofia. And every Easter, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant believers in Timisoara, Romania, conduct a Resurrection March which leads from the steps of the main Orthodox cathedral to a large outdoor amphitheater for an evangelistic service. Various religious leaders read Scripture and pray and an Evangelical usually delivers the main message to ten to fifteen thousand participants.<sup>26</sup>

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23 David P. Bohn to author, 27 November 2002; Tom Keppeler, "A Summary of Trifa's *What Is the Army of the Lord?*," *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 2 (Summer 1994), 8.

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Evgeny and Kirill Goncharenko to author, 6 January 2003.

25 Karmen Friesen to author, 12 December 2002; Todd Kerns to author, 17 December 2002; William Lovelace to author, 16 January 2003; James Dimitroff to author, 9 December 2002; Nikolai Revtov to author, 17 January 2003; Clifford Dueck to author, 6 December 2002; Sergei Tupchik to author, 4 January 2003.

26 Nik Nedelchev to author, 10 December 2002; Preston Pearce to author, 14 January 2003.

Above all, numerous survey respondents stressed the importance of fostering close personal ties at the local level. Despite frequent Orthodox rebuffs of Protestant initiatives even at this level, it still can be asserted that cordial relationships are more plausible at local than at higher church levels. I will return to this theme when I address the best approaches to building bridges between Orthodox and Protestant churches. But first, let us address the stresses and strains of Orthodox-Protestant relations in the post-Soviet era.

The first point to make is that hostility is longstanding. Indigenous Slavic Protestants did not secure a clear legal existence in the Russian Empire until the 1905 Edict of Toleration, and even in the last 12 years of Nicholas II's reign, state tolerance for Protestants was the exception rather than the rule. From the emergence of Russian and Ukrainian Protestants in the 1860s up to the 1905 Russian Revolution, Slavic Evangelicals suffered imprisonment, banishment to Siberia, exile abroad, confiscation of property, state seizure of children from Evangelical families, and state and Orthodox harassment of "sectarians" and "sectarian" worship.

The historic Orthodox position has been that Russia is Orthodox canonical territory and consequently any non-Orthodox religious encroachment is a violation of Orthodoxy's exclusive spiritual hegemony over the Russian land and its Slavic inhabitants.<sup>27</sup> Recent Pew Foundation survey research indicates Russia is more heavily secularized than even Germany, Italy, or Canada. Nevertheless, Orthodox still regard Evangelical witness to even non-believing Russians to be proselytizing.<sup>28</sup>

Orthodox opposition to Protestantism is not only longstanding; it also is deep-seated. In the mid-1980s an unofficial poll of religious attitudes included an Orthodox respondent declaring, "When we say 'the Church' we always mean the Orthodox Church and no other. It has been established by Christ, and has had no deviations, neither left nor right. All the rest are false churches or sects that went astray."<sup>29</sup> The post-Soviet years have, if anything, engendered even more entrenched Orthodox hostility towards Protestants. Survey respondents illustrate the point:

1. Orthodox priests dismissing Methodism as "another of those religions made by men";
2. an Orthodox priest convincing a parishioner to divorce her Pentecostal husband because he was "demon possessed"; and

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27 Roy Stiff to author, 16 December 2002.

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"Religion Plays Important Role in Life of Only 14% of Russians," Portal-Credo.ru, 23 December 2002.

29 Eugene Grosman, "A Contribution to Protestant-Orthodox Dialogue in Russia," unpublished paper, Wheaton College Graduate School, Fall 1986.

3. a Baptist grandmother being accused of killing and eating her granddaughter. “The grandmother had to have the girl brought home prematurely [from camp] in order to prevent being placed in prison for the girl’s death.”<sup>30</sup>

Sad to say, Russian Evangelical attitudes typically are as negative toward Orthodox as vice versa. In the mid-1980s the same previously cited survey documented Protestant dismissal of Orthodoxy as “a dead church” with “drunkards” for priests. “They know how to cross themselves, and nothing else...Worshipping those icons, lighting the candles, praying for the dead, it’s all idolatry.”<sup>31</sup> And as with Orthodox, opinions of many indigenous Protestants seem to have hardened, rather than softened, since 1990. Many survey responses note nearly pervasive Evangelical hostility towards Orthodox, especially in rural areas.<sup>32</sup> One Ukrainian Baptist educator stated that the Orthodox Church “is not really a church, but a KGB-created organization;”<sup>33</sup> and a St. Petersburg pastor called Orthodox opposition the “devil’s fighting.”<sup>34</sup>

Missionaries can harbor equally antagonistic views of Orthodox. Fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and charismatic missionaries appear to be especially prone to negative views of Orthodox: the latter are said to be “one of the greatest barriers to the spread of the Gospel” and their church is “really paganism in Christian garb.” One Canadian documentary recorded a Western evangelist telling an Orthodox nun that she was going to hell. Likewise, Scandinavian charismatic Word of Life missionaries are reported to have told Bulgarians that “all Orthodox are going to hell.”<sup>35</sup>

A South African missionary to Russia wrote cogently that “we should not place the blame [for Christian infighting] only on the shoulders of Orthodox...or on the government that is biased towards the Orthodox Church. Much of what Protestants and especially Baptists and charismatics are doing justifies this natural antagonism....Teachings in the churches are not at all based upon love and concern for the lost in and outside the Orthodox Church.” Too often “pastors...propagate hate towards Orthodox believers” which “does not promote understanding, outreach, or acts of love....The biggest enemy is not out there....”<sup>36</sup>

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30 George Baskin to author, 29 November 2002; William Lovelace to author, 16 January 2003; Frank Dawson to author, 10 December 2002.

31 Grosman, “Contribution.”

32 G. E. to author, 10 December 2002; T. U. to author, 4 January 2003; L. T. to author, 11 December 2002; H. O. to author, 9 December 2002; O. S. to author, 17 January 2003. To avoid possible recriminations, survey respondents sharing sensitive information are designated in source notes by coded initials.

33 B. Q. to author, 10 December 2002; and a St. Petersburg pastor called Orthodox opposition the “devil’s fighting” (Q. E. to author, 12 December 2002).

34 Q. E. to author, 12 December 2002.

35 B. W. to author, 27 November 2002; C. W. to author, 12 December 2002; L. G. to author, 12 December 2002; O. O. to author, 10 December 2002. Also, Q. K. to author, 9 December 2002; K. T. to author, 9 December 2002; X. M. to author, 16 January 2003.

36 I. G. to author, 19 December 2002.

Unfortunately, Protestant antagonism towards Orthodox involves not only arguments but also ill-considered actions. Too many Protestants are taught to isolate themselves from society, to consider all government representatives as evil, and some are advised to evade tax obligations—too often leading to a spirit of superiority.<sup>37</sup> Equally problematic is the dispensing of presents or candy by missionaries to draw children to Protestant church activities.<sup>38</sup>

Regrettably, Orthodox repay Protestant antagonism in kind. The most frequently reported active measure against Protestants involves local authorities blocking the purchase of property or the rental of auditoria for purposes of worship. Typically, officials give local Orthodox priests the option to veto not only Protestant building permits and rental contracts, but open air evangelism and ministry in schools, prisons, and hospitals.<sup>39</sup> Evangelicals, one missionary writes, fear standing for their rights to worship and freedom of speech because they often do not trust police and other authorities: “It is rare to hear about direct clashes between Orthodox and Protestant leaders. There is always a third party involved.”<sup>40</sup> Dr. David Barnes of Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, NY, has worked for years assisting Evangelical churches in Novgorod. He reports that two of 22 Evangelical Christian churches burned to the ground in 2002. “While there is no clear evidence that the Orthodox Church directed the burning of the churches, there is the perception among Protestants that the Orthodox Church makes inflammatory statements which promote abuse, fails to openly promote religious freedom, and pressures governmental agencies... to harass non-Orthodox religious expression” through “building codes, building permits, [and] health and safety [codes].” Dr. Barnes relates that one former missionary told him that the Orthodox Church is the enemy: “I have fought this attitude for years, but what does the data suggest?”<sup>41</sup>

As much as any Evangelical outreach, showings of Campus Crusade’s Jesus film seem to galvanize Orthodox opposition. While Orthodox church divisions and Catholic and Protestant strength in Ukraine have permitted widespread airing of the Jesus film there, Russia has witnessed much more concerted Orthodox hostility.<sup>42</sup> In Vladivostok, Russian Orthodox distributed leaflets denouncing the film.<sup>43</sup> In Tver, the Orthodox bishop declared on the front

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37 *Ibid.*

38 Anna Malpas, “Missionary Activity Questioned in Primorye,” *Vladivostok News* 3 October 2002; Q. Q. to author, 14 January 2003.

39 N. S. to author, November 2002; T. U. to author, 4 January 2003; N. N. to author, 6 December 2002; X. X. to author, December 2001; F. L. H. to author, 6 January 2003; I. G. to author 19 December 2002; L. G. to author, 15 January 2003.

40 I. G. to author, 19 December 2002.

41 David Barnes to author, 2 December 2002.

42 E. T. to author, 17 December 2002.

43 Zoya Bardina, “Success of Festivity with ‘Jesus’ Film,” *Good News 2002, News Agency of Evangelical Christians-Baptists*, 16 December 2001.

page of the local newspaper that anyone attending the Jesus film would be declared anathema.<sup>44</sup> In Omsk, an Orthodox wrote in a local newspaper that the Jesus film was satanic while the mayor was pressured into canceling signed rental contracts for its airing in theatres.<sup>45</sup> An Orthodox priest denounced an attempt by Evangelicals in the Moscow Region to show the Jesus film, telling them, “You are a little bit lower than cattle.” Nevertheless, “one house of culture director invited these Evangelicals to do an Easter program for her village. It was a great success, but it was the end of the relationship. ‘I love you guys, you do great programs, our community is very glad to have these programs to attend—but I need my job.’ In meeting with the mayor, the team was told, ‘I don’t care what you guys do, but I don’t want the priest bugging me, so it’s easier to just shut you down.’”<sup>46</sup> Orthodox object to cinematic depictions of Jesus because it is believed that showing the face of Jesus apart from the context of an icon can lead to idolatry. As one priest explained, “All these people who pray to receive Christ at the end of the film, to whom are they praying? They are praying to the actor in the film, not to Jesus.”<sup>47</sup>

Regrettably, hostility towards Evangelicals increasingly takes the form of more active measures, described by one missionary as just short of outright persecution: “But we do experience very strong, organized opposition from Orthodox priests.”<sup>48</sup> Examples include Orthodox clerics staging demonstrations against Protestant evangelization in the Volga Region;<sup>49</sup> an Evangelical meeting house in the Moscow Region firebombed and a pastor hospitalized following a beating;<sup>50</sup> police with dogs entering a charismatic service in Moscow, requiring a check of everyone’s passport;<sup>51</sup> Orthodox priests in Ukraine organizing physical resistance to an Evangelical tent meeting, which included destruction of the tent and theft of equipment;<sup>52</sup> an Orthodox priest in Moldova throwing stones and breaking windows in a van Protestants were using in an evangelistic service.<sup>53</sup> Patriarch Alexei has demanded, but has not received, a list of Russians who regularly attend St. Andrews Anglican Church in Moscow;<sup>54</sup> and an Evangelical who ministers in orphanages and prisons south of Moscow reports indirect opposition from an Orthodox priest. The prison director appreciates the material assistance and books provided by

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44 K. D. to author, 15 December 2002.

45 G. E. to author, 10 December 2002.

46 U. L. to author, 17 December 2002.

47 S. T. to author, 16 December 2002.

48 *Ibid.*

49 T. U. to author, 4 January 2003.

50 U. L. to author, 17 December 2002.

51 Q. H. to author, 16 March 2002.

52 T. U. to author, 4 January 2003.

53 P. U. to author, 12 December 2002.

54 B. I. to author, 29 December 2002.

the Evangelical, but finally “promised the priest that he will not allow the evangelist to come when the director is there—so the evangelist was told to come when the director is not present.”<sup>55</sup>

While I was teaching in Volgograd in 1997, a missionary shared with me his church’s outreach to a rural orphanage. The director, an atheist, appreciated the material and spiritual nurturing provided to her children. An Orthodox priest paid her a visit, urging her to cut all ties with this Evangelical group. She became angry and asked the priest why he had never come to assist her orphans, but only showed up to attack people trying to help.

And if an Orthodox priest becomes too friendly with Evangelicals, there can be consequences. An American Methodist minister assisted an Orthodox priest in the Urals Region with several humanitarian aid projects and with repairs to an Orthodox Church. “One time there was a celebration of worship together, though in an informal setting, not in an Orthodox Church. Shortly thereafter, the priest was sent away to the Russian Far East.”<sup>56</sup>

Other active measures against Protestants include the posting of signs outside Evangelical meetings warning people, “Don’t let Baptists buy your soul with humanitarian aid” or “Orthodoxy is the only true path to God.”<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Orthodox regularly employ local press, radio, and television to denigrate non-Orthodox faiths. Press articles often “say outlandish things about Catholics and Protestants and their ministries. Local Russian Christian leaders feel that it is best to remain silent, lest they draw more attention which would limit future possibilities for Protestants in general.”<sup>58</sup> One director of a Protestant seminary has characterized denunciations of Evangelicals in the print and broadcast media as “endemic.”<sup>59</sup>

On 20 December 2002, in connection with Russia’s observance of International Human Rights Day, President Vladimir Putin told a Kremlin meeting of his human rights commission that “There is a big gap between the constitutional guarantees and peoples’ real-life opportunities to use them.” And the culprit he blamed was “an environment of bureaucratic lawlessness.”<sup>60</sup> Well put. But what is Putin doing to combat such lawlessness on the part of officials whose responsibility it is to uphold the rule of law? It would appear precious little. Not only do federal authorities tolerate wholesale discrimination against non-Orthodox believers, in direct violation of the Russian Constitution, Russian legislation, and international accords signed by Russia, but the state itself is to blame for an increasing number of denials of visas of foreign religious workers. Keston News Service deserves commendation for tracking this troubling development. From the mid-1990s, Keston reports that an increasing number of foreign religious workers have

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55 I. G. to author, 19 December 2002.

56 X. M. to author, 16 January 2003.

57 H. O. to author, 9 December 2002; D. T. to author, 12 December 2002.

58 G. E. to author, 10 December 2002.

59 U. L. to author, 17 December 2002.

been denied visa renewals. Initially many chose not to protest publicly for fear of jeopardizing the visas of coworkers. By November 1997, about half of all foreign Catholic priests in Siberia were experiencing difficulties with their visas.

In late December 2002 U. S. Representative Chris Smith and U.S. Senator Gordon Smith published an article in the *Washington Times* noting the undeniable hardship visa denials were causing the Catholic Church in Russia, 85 percent of whose priests are foreign born.<sup>61</sup> The rash of expulsions of foreign religious workers, they contended, “smacks of a vendetta aimed primarily at Catholic clergy.” While press attention seems to have focused on the Catholic expulsions, including Bishop Jerzy Mazur from Irkutsk, in fact, many more Protestants, and possibly more Muslims, have suffered from visas denied or revoked than have Catholics. In late October 2002 Keston published a nearly comprehensive list of foreign religious workers who had had visas denied or revoked.<sup>62</sup> This report, other printed sources, and more recent e-mail communications indicate a current total of 84 known expulsions of foreign religious workers (1997-2003), including 54 Protestants, 15 Muslims, 7 Catholics, 3 Buddhists, 3 Mormons, and 2 Jehovah’s Witnesses. Keep in mind that these totals almost certainly are incomplete because of the desire of many to avoid publicity.

A new Russian law that went into effect 1 November 2002 sets quotas for the number of foreign workers in Russia’s various regions. How this will affect missionaries is not yet clear, but the potential for mischief is considerable, given the prospect of more bureaucratic hassles, if nothing else. Attorney Vladimir Ryakhovsky of the Slavic Center for Law and Justice notes that “It is not normal for internal affairs administrations to establish quotas for how many priests they need to invite. Under Russia’s international commitments, religious organizations should arrange their activity in line with their own canonical statutes.”<sup>63</sup>

Note the following two cases. 1) Beginning in 1999, American Protestant missionaries Jeff and Susan Wollman, worked with children at risk in the Kostroma Region: obtaining eye glasses, providing orphans with computer instruction, and teaching life skill classes, among other expressions of concern. They were denied visas in July 2002, as they were told, “in the interest of ensuring national security.”<sup>64</sup> 2) Since 1992 a French Catholic monk, Brother Bruno Maziolek, served in Yaroslavl extending humanitarian assistance to needy children, former drug addicts, and the mentally ill, a ministry strongly criticized by the Orthodox archbishop in

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61 “Kremlin Christmas,” 27 December 2002.

62 Geraldine Fagan, “Russia: Escalation in Missionary Expulsions,” Keston News Service (KNS), 25 October 2002.

63 Tatyana Titova, “Russia: How Will Foreigners’ Law Affect Religious Workers?” KNS, 9 December 2002; Nabi Abdullaev, “439,000 Foreign Residents Allowed,” *Moscow Times*, 13 November 2002, p. 1.

64 Geraldine Fagan, “Russia: Five More U.S. Protestants Denied Entry,” KNS, 4 October 2002.

Yaroslavl. Brother Bruno's visa was revoked in December 2001 on grounds that he posed "a danger to the Russian Federation."<sup>65</sup>

Authorities frequently do not offer explanations for the denial of visas, but when they do, national security and the alleged threat of missionary espionage on behalf of foreign powers are the reasons most frequently cited.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, even with an appreciation for the depth of Russia's wounded national pride and its growing xenophobia, the accusation that missionaries pose a threat to Russia's national security appears ludicrous.

As early as January 2000, President Putin approved a national security document that clearly drew the connection between foreign espionage and foreign religions: he specifically warned of "the negative influence of foreign religious organizations and missionaries" and "the cultural-religious expansion of neighboring states into Russian territory."<sup>67</sup> The latter reference undoubtedly refers to Siberia and the Russian Far East (Primorye), about which Putin evidences extraordinary sensitivity. The now infamous leaked government "Draft Report on Counter-Extremist Measures," published by *Gazeta* in early December 2002, is enough to disturb any champion of religious freedom and civil liberties. Catholics are deemed public enemy number one, while Protestants, especially those congregated east of the Urals, are said to pose special dangers to Russia's national integrity: "Under the guise of providing humanitarian aid, many new Protestant organizations have established within various groups of the population a position of self-alienation with respect to the Russian state and national traditions, way of life, and culture that have grown up over the course of centuries. It is especially disturbing that these tendencies have been especially manifested in border regions. The most active expansion of Protestant organizations has been noted in the Far East Federal District, where the total number of religious organizations has reached 800 societies.... More than half of them have not undergone state registration. More than 60 percent of the religious structures active in the region are financed from South Korea and USA."<sup>68</sup>

A newspaper in the west Siberian city of Omsk asserts that spies traverse the region "on invitations issued by religious organizations." A seminar held for religious organizations in the

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65 Geraldine Fagan, "Divide and Rule in Moscow," *The Tablet*, 15 November 2002, KNS Summary, 11-15 November 2002. Concerning missionary expulsions see also Geraldine Fagan, "Russia: Are Catholics and Protestants a Threat to National Security," KNS, 11 December 2002; Malpas, "Missionary Activity;" C. U. to author, 26 December 2002; Q. H. to author, 16 March 2002.

66 C. U. to author, 26 December 2002; E. T. to author 17 December 2002; Malpas, "Missionary Activity;" Smith and Smith, "Kremlin Christmas;" Fagan, "Russia: Escalation;" Fagan, "Russia: Five More Missionaries;" Fagan, "Russia: Are Catholics and Protestants a Threat?;" Kevorkova, "Ideology;" Fagan, "Russia: Ex-KGB Renews Interest in Religion," KNS, 18 November 2002; Fagan, "Divide and Rule."

67 Fagan, "Russia: Escalation."

68 Quoted in Larry Uzzell to author 2 January 2003. See also Kevorkova, "Ideology."

Omsk Region included a regional department of justice official preparing those present for closer state scrutiny of religious activities: “You should resign yourself to this and get in touch with us more often.” Also in Omsk, an FSB (ex-KGB) security officer now regularly interrogates an Eastern Catholic Rite priest who concludes this is the “gradual restoration of Soviet institutions” and a “slipping back into the old routine.”<sup>69</sup>

A 26 September 2002 meeting in Vladivostok of a regional Commission on Questions of Religious Associations voiced alarm at “the enormous number of foreign religious missionaries” in the Russian Far East, reportedly 406, including 265 South Koreans and 114 Americans.<sup>70</sup> In particular, Presbyterian, Methodist, and other South Korean Protestant churches and Mormons drew fire at the Vladivostok meeting as “harmful to Russian national interests.”<sup>71</sup> As Bishop Veniamin of Primorye and Vladivostok put it, “The main danger of all these religious groups coming from abroad is that they all are unpatriotic. Really, can Americans, Koreans, and others teach people to love our fatherland, native soil, Russia, and to be concerned for it in the way the Orthodox Church teaches, which from time immemorial has united our nation?”<sup>72</sup>

Even Russians who have studied religion abroad are suspect. Russia’s new chauvinists see a “threat to... national security” in what they contend is “A tendency to drive out loyal and law-abiding clergy and replace them with younger and more educated graduates of foreign study centers.”<sup>73</sup> Yet Russia’s fiercest enemy of Wahhabism (radical Islam), Mufti Talgat Tadzhuiddin, himself studied at Egypt’s Al Azhar University.<sup>74</sup> On 9 December 2002 Orthodox apologist Alexander Dvorkin, one of Russia’s most aggressive opponents of “foreign cults,” spoke in Ekaterinburg at a conference on “Totalitarian Sects: The Threat of Religious Extremism,” in the former auditorium of the regional Communist Party school. He asked rhetorically, “You know what they call us? Raw meat. A sect is a meatgrinder that needs new pieces of meat all the time in order to chew them up and spit them out.”<sup>75</sup> Ironically, given Orthodox nationalists’ fixation on suspect, foreign influences, it must be noted that Dvorkin holds U.S. citizenship.

Former Keston Institute Director Larry Uzzell asked this author in early January 2003 if I had detected Russian authorities paying any particular attention to Protestants east of the Urals. Allow me to elaborate from my response to his e-mail:

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69 Fagan, “Ex-KGB.”

70 Marina Ivleva, “Mission Unfulfilled,” *Vladivostok News*, 3 October 2002; Malpas, “Missionary Activity.”

71 Malpas, “Missionary Activity.”

72 Ivleva, “Mission Unfulfilled.”

73 Kevorkova, “Ideology.”

74 *Ibid.*

75 Maria Cherkasova, “Church and State Join Forces Against Sectarianism in Urals,” *Kommersant-Daily*, 10 December 2002, Steeves translation.

1. The article that my assistant, Sharyl Corrado, and I published in 1999, “The 1997 Russian Law on Religion: the Impact on Protestants,”<sup>76</sup> noted that a disproportionate number of incidents of discrimination against Protestants had occurred in the Russian Far East (4.8 percent of the population but 13 percent of reported incidents—9 of 69). In addition, all three missionaries expelled by that point had resided in the Far East: a Korean in Khabarovsk, an American near Khabarovsk, and a New Zealander in Vladivostok. And two of the three missionaries murdered as of 1999, a Korean-American couple, had resided in Khabarovsk.<sup>77</sup>
2. Orthodox specialists Jane Ellis and Nathaniel Davis have noted the longstanding relative weakness of Orthodoxy in Siberia which could lead one to perceive greater non-Orthodox religious strength.<sup>78</sup> Both tsarist and Soviet deportations of suspect minorities no doubt reinforced non-Orthodox strength east of the Urals.
3. Since, due to climatic considerations, the vast majority of Siberians reside close to the Mongolian and Chinese borders, most believers of all persuasions also live close to the frontier.
4. Finally, Americans and Koreans should not be seen as the real threat to Siberia and the Russian Far East, but rather Chinese, due to their large-scale illegal immigration into Russia, estimated at 200,000 to five million.<sup>79</sup>

Moscow’s sensitivity over real or imagined threats to its territorial integrity, accentuated by the war in Chechnya, is manifest in the geographic distribution of revoked missionary visas to date: those serving in the Russian Far East and Siberia (approximately 41 percent) and those serving in ethnic minority regions such as Tatarstan and Udmurtia (approximately 25 percent).

Even where Evangelicals desire to foster cordial relationships with Orthodox it is difficult, and much more so now than in the early 1990s. In 1997 the *East-West Church & Ministry Report* published a description of an especially positive interaction between a Western Protestant denominational mission and a local Russian Orthodox bishop that included working relationships on many levels, mutual respect, and mutual assistance and encouragement.<sup>80</sup> Still, the author preferred to remain anonymous and to omit the location for fear that the Moscow Patriarchate might look askance at such interconfessional good will. In December 2002 a survey response sadly revealed a dramatic deterioration in relations in that location: “When [we] arrived, we opened dialogue with the local Orthodox bishop. For some time there was a monthly meeting.

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<sup>76</sup> *Religion, State and Society* 27 (no. 1, 1999), 112.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 112 and 123.

<sup>78</sup> Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church, A Contemporary History* (London: Routledge, 1986), 17; Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church, A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 44.

<sup>79</sup> Sarah Karush, “Hardworking Chinese Harvest the Steppe,” *Moscow Times*, 15 August 2002, p. 1; Dmitri Trenin, *Russia’s China Problem*, (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).

<sup>80</sup> “A Success Story in Orthodox-Evangelical Relations; Report from a Western Ministry in Russia,” *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 5 (Spring 1997), 9.

Then it was his secretary, then a local priest. Finally we were told that they were not allowed to meet us. We had ordered a very nice flannel Bible story set for this priest, but he said he was not allowed to accept it....We now have no contact with the Orthodox Church, but that is not our desire.”<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, while a representative of Archbishop Lev attended a Protestant church groundbreaking in Novgorod in 1995, no one from his office accepted an invitation to attend the dedication of this same Christian Evangelical Church in July 2000. Times have changed.<sup>82</sup> One Protestant missionary educator describes the interface of Orthodox and Evangelicals in Russia as “haves/have-nots. We were all have-nots ten years ago, but now the Orthodox Church is part of the establishment. Russian culture presupposes an autocracy, and Orthodoxy is once again a part of the establishment’s autocracy. All other religions are a threat to its monopoly position. Questions of commonality of doctrine, faith, or mission are irrelevant.”<sup>83</sup>

Despite escalating tensions and conflicts between Orthodox and Protestants, it still behooves believers of good will to strive for peace among Christians, even if the prospect appears to be slim in human terms. Ideally, followers of Christ are to be faithful and loving regardless, not calculating the likelihood of reciprocity. To that end, in drawing up a list of recommendations for Evangelical missionaries in relation to Russian Orthodox<sup>84</sup> I would suggest:

1. At the outset of a new ministry in a given area, make every effort to arrange a visit with local Orthodox priests or hierarchs. Whether this proves successful or not, it is right to make such attempts at common courtesy. At the very least, it can clarify that nothing clandestine or secretive is part of a missionary’s agenda. As one missionary put it, “Our philosophy has been that what we are actually doing would be reassuring to the Orthodox, compared to what they fear we might do if they had no direct knowledge of our activities.”<sup>85</sup>

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81 L. C. to author, 16 December 2002.

82 David Barnes to author, 2 December 2002.

83 U. L. to author, 17 December 2002.

84 Other guidelines to review include Lawrence A. Uzzell, “Guidelines for American Missionaries in Russia,” and Anita Deyneka, “Guidelines for Foreign Missionaries in the Former Soviet Union” in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia; The New War for Souls*, ed. by John Witte, Jr., and Michael Bourdeaux (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 323-30 and 331-40; Edward E. Roslof, “Guidelines for Western Assistance to Russian Orthodox: A Mainline Protestant Perspective,” *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 4 (Winter 1996), 6-7; and Connie Robbins and Rodney Hammer, “Giving Guidelines for Russian Short-Term Missions,” *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 11 (Spring 2003), 16.

85 “Success Story,” *Report*, 9; also, G. E. to author, 10 December 2002. Sadly, missionary survey responses frequently reported a lack of success in making direct contacts with Orthodox: K. U. to author, 13 December 2002; S. I. to author, 7 December 2002.

2. Several missionary respondents recommended reading as much as possible of the church fathers and about Orthodoxy out of respect and out of recognition that Russia's historic faith is a critical key to understanding Russian culture. "Obviously, we are all busy with our ministries, but we are not too busy to walk into an Orthodox Church and read a book about Orthodoxy from time to time. Protestants who do not do at least this should not be here in the first place in my opinion. God help me to do better also."<sup>86</sup> In the ten years I have edited the *East-West Church & Ministry Report* I have sought to champion respect for other cultures on a regular basis.

3. Various missionaries have also emphasized that criticism of Orthodox teaching and practice should be avoided.<sup>87</sup> Do not engage in public debates or private arguments.<sup>88</sup> "Discourage sermons that might target specific doctrinal/traditional practices with which we disagree with Orthodox."<sup>89</sup> Another missionary writes, "Those who preach Christ should preach Christ without trying to attack those whom they feel don't preach Christ."<sup>90</sup> To conclude this point, let me draw from the reflections of a missionary of ten-plus years in Russia: "In my opinion, an inappropriate or insensitive Protestant reaction to our Orthodox brothers and sisters is to try to prove to them that they are wrong and we are right. None of us was called here to 'straighten out' the Orthodox Church. We must be willing to recognize that the Orthodox Church has a huge responsibility in this part of the world and we should not complicate it more than we already do by speaking out against them.... My heart was grieved when I heard a Protestant church leader from the United States say in public some years ago that Orthodox believers were not real Christians. In my view, followers of God do not have time for this kind of judgment. Totally inappropriate!"<sup>91</sup>

4. An effective, winsome witness will also steer clear of any defense of a missionary's favored political or economic system. One who preaches Christ and him crucified should not dilute the message by championing or defending the culture, material blessings, or foreign policy of one's homeland. A recent survey respondent shared that one American missionary, in a discussion with two Russians, alienated those he was trying to reach when "he started defending his country and stopped talking about Christ and God's kingdom."<sup>92</sup>

5. Missionaries, as well, should "avoid proselytizing Russian Orthodox Christians, directing...ministries instead toward the vast majority of practical atheists."<sup>93</sup> This will, in fact, require the polite but firm rejection of the Orthodox claim that every person of Slavic descent, if

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86 D. T. to author, 1 December 2002; also, B. I. to author, 29 December 2002.

87 X. X. to author, 1 December 2002.

88 U. L. to author, 17 December 2002; K. E. to author, 9 December 2002.

89 X. M. to author, 16 January 2003.

90 D. E. to author, 6 December 2002.

91 D. T. to author, 1 December 2002.

92 D. E. to author, 6 December 2002. See also Lawrence Uzzell's review of *Ekspansiya [Expansionism]* by Nikolai Trofimchuk and M. P. Shishchev in the *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 11 (Winter 2003), 12.

93 "Success Story," *Report*, 9.

not every person in the Russian Federation, is off limits to non-Orthodox witness. Evangelical missionaries should encourage reform within the Orthodox Church so that it can be a more effective witness in highly secularized Russia. But at the same time, even a reenergized and renewed Russian Orthodox Church would be incapable of reaching every Russian.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, in God's economy of salvation, it can be argued that the witness of other Christian confessions have their place in Russia.<sup>95</sup>

6. "Every Christian ministry should make full legal registration a matter of high priority."<sup>96</sup> Conversely, secretiveness can only raise unnecessary suspicions among ordinary citizens as well as local authorities. Perhaps in a climate of intensifying discrimination, a low profile is justifiable. But arguing otherwise, a veteran Western missionary to Russia writes convincingly that Protestant churches and missionary agencies working in Russia need to "come out of the closet and sidelines by becoming transparent in their ministry and financial operations. Financial accountability is a huge challenge and the need to train leaders on their legal and financial rights and responsibilities is barely touched in this country. No wonder Evangelicals are seen as sects. If they become transparent and the light on the hill that the church should be, the church will see the value of its role in society and the power of its witness."<sup>97</sup>

7. One Protestant missionary, whose experience has led him to conclude that "high level talks" with Orthodox leaders are "practically useless," nevertheless urges contacts at lower levels that hold promise for "far more fruitful... interactions... where local pastors and priests cooperate with each other in ministry."<sup>98</sup> Again, while pages could be filled with Orthodox rebuffs of Evangelicals at the local level, recent survey respondents have brought to light a heartening number of reports of grassroots mutual respect and sometimes practical collaboration. One missionary, unsuccessful with Orthodox on a leadership level, nevertheless recounts "very good relationships with ordinary Orthodox believers. Our daughter's piano teacher and her husband are very faithful Orthodox believers, yet they accept us as believers too."<sup>99</sup>

In northwest Russia a local priest initiated contact with Protestants active in evangelism: "they are planning some outreaches together in the new year [2003]."<sup>100</sup> In a suburb of Moscow an Orthodox priest is cooperating with a Pentecostal church in Bible distribution and gave a public blessing at the dedication of an Evangelical rehabilitation program. "Admittedly the priest is taking some risk."<sup>101</sup> Outside Odessa Orthodox believers complained to their priest about a

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94 Elliott and Corrado, "Protestant Missionary Presence," 342-43.

95 See Kent Hill and Mark Elliott, "Are Evangelical Interlopers," *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 1 (Summer 1993), 3-4.

96 "Success Story," *Report*, 9.

97 I. G. to author, 19 December 2002.

98 X. M. to author, 16 January 2003

99 D. T. to author, 12 December 2002

100 I. G. to author, 19 December 2002.

101 C. W. to author, 1 December 2002.

Protestant evangelistic outreach. He told his parishioners not to bother them and complimented their charitable activities. “When one woman verbally attacked the Evangelicals, the priest told the woman to...apologize,” which she did.<sup>102</sup>

8. In addition to favoring grassroots approaches, it is “best to start...with what people have in common.”<sup>103</sup> This applies to theological common ground, but it also applies to common ethical, social, and community concerns.

One missionary related the story of “a Russian Baptist deacon who works with Gypsies. His neighbor is an Orthodox priest. I’m not sure who sought who first, but they have a good relationship. The deacon asked the priest questions, in earnest. For example, ‘Why do Orthodox believers cross themselves?’ Answer: It is a reminder to whom you are praying or actually an address to God. The brother now asks Gypsies why they cross themselves (most don’t know) and then he explains the reason. (Up--Father in heaven, Down--Son who came down to earth, and from right to left across the chest—the indwelling of the Holy Spirit). This deacon is eager to learn from the priest about Orthodox beliefs and they visit in each other’s homes to have tea and conversation. That sense of respect for Orthodox theology has enabled a good relationship with an Orthodox neighbor and with the Gypsy people.”<sup>104</sup>

In the Rivne Region of Ukraine a Protestant ministry, Hope to People, has assisted the historic Ostrog Academy National University in the development of curricula on Christian ethics, carefully involving Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical teachers and students in the process. Orthodox and Protestant students studying Christian ethics together were “cautious around each other” at first. But “barriers began to break down when, for example, members of various groups had to work together to form a choir to teach worship songs and to perform at a final student gathering. In general, living together in unheated dormitories, doing homework together, praying together, and getting to know each other as people have contributed to a more relaxed atmosphere.”<sup>105</sup>

The missionary relating this story concluded with a heartening account of Orthodox-Protestant reconciliation. “A bright, young woman teacher addressed the student body and asserted that Christianity is not the only true religion, merely one of many true world religions. She assigned the students to write about Christianity in relation to other religions and was shocked when she read their papers to find that they almost unanimously asserted the truth of Christianity.... She actually stood at the podium and sobbed, ‘How can you be so narrow?’ It turned out to be something of a surprise, too, for Orthodox and Protestants to find themselves on the same side of the fence for once—defending the primacy of Christianity. One Orthodox woman was moved to rise and say, ‘Dear Protestants, I never accepted you before, but you are

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102 I. G. to author, 19 December 2002.

103 N. S. to author, 17 December 2002.

104 G. E. to author, 10 December 2002.

105 N. S. to author, 17 December 2002.

our brothers and sisters. Please forgive us! We love you!’ In response, a Protestant woman said, ‘Please forgive us, too. It is Christ who has united us.’”<sup>106</sup>

Note two final examples of interconfessional cooperation, one Soviet and one post-Soviet. Alexander Men’s writings have had influence among Catholics and Protestants as well as Orthodox. Given his spirit of charity across confessional lines, it is worth noting that a Belgian Catholic publisher, Zhizn s Bogom [Life with God], published a number of his works and at least one of his manuscripts was secreted out of the Soviet Union to the publisher by David Benson, head of a Western Protestant mission, Russia for Christ.<sup>107</sup> More recently in the 1990s, Father Georgi Edelstein managed to renovate his Church of the Resurrection near Kostroma with help from Norwegian Lutherans, Canadian Baptists, and an Irish Catholic priest. Father Georgi, in turn, has given ongoing advice and counsel to an American Methodist congregation sponsoring an orphanage near his parish. I will close with his advice for helping orphans, which should hold true for Christian outreach in general, whatever the confession: “The material help we give the children will be in vain if we do not also share with them Christ.”<sup>108</sup>

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106

*Ibid.*

107

David Benson to author, 12 August 2003.

108 Father Georgi Edelstein to author, June 2002.

