

## EDITORIAL

How necessary is Holy Scripture to Christian faith? One answer was that Communist governments made a concerted effort to restrict access to the Bible and hoped thereby to wean believers away from their faith. With the great transformations, the first new agenda for rebuilding Christianity was to print or to import Bibles, and to devise reliable methods of distribution. So Bible societies re-emerged. Beyond that, there was a major effort to establish theological training centers, which were to foster scholarly study of Scripture, among other things.

This is the context for reading Peeter Roosimaa's careful reconstruction of the story of a new Bible in the Estonian language and his detailed illustrations of the problems that needed to be addressed. The general reader will appreciate the way in which a matter of great urgency nevertheless turned out to be highly complex, yet was sustained by widespread goodwill. The attempt to produce a publication that would be owned ecumenically was successful to a considerable degree. Scholars will welcome the careful attention to detail that Roosimaa provides.

The concern to be inclusive of other Christian churches underwent considerable testing over the past decade. The findings from two sociological studies in Croatia provide some unique angles of vision. Croatia, now said to consist of a population that is 76/5% Catholic, 11.1% Orthodox, plus minority groups of Protestants and Jews, was at war in some of the worst violence of the decade. Duvnjak and Relja note how much the Roman Catholic Church, through its leadership from the Vatican, were urging further ecumenical initiatives globally in keeping with Vatican 2, were urging that church leaders in the former Yugoslavia stress the eirenic side of the faith, so they set about testing popular sentiment about the other churches. Their findings, though substantial, are not comprehensive. At the most fundamental, attitudes of appreciation of the other churches were difficult to develop because of the limited information, the infrequency of contacts. Even *Glac Koncila's* coverage, as mouth piece of the Croatian Catholic Church, managed only minimal attention to the life of other churches.

In our previous issue we promised that more reports and papers from the Skopje Dialogues are forthcoming. Our third article is such a report. Paul Mojzes includes numerous personal comments. Given his record as highly respected expert on religion in the Balkans, one should take seriously his comment that this time he returned home with a feeling of hope, in contrast to feeling dispirited. To begin to talk with each other, to send symbolic signals such as the Orthodox and Muslim

theological schools listening to the other's dean, may not seem that substantive. Mojzes detected a break through, however, when the two deans shook hands publicly. Perhaps one is reminded of other handshakes, like those of Middle East leaders on the White House lawn, and what came after, but the point is that building the peace consists of many little steps by persistent people. Plans are underway for further talking in November.

Walter Sawatsky

