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THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AT THE CROSSROADS

THE STRUGGLE WITH CONTENDING FORCES

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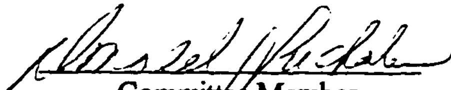

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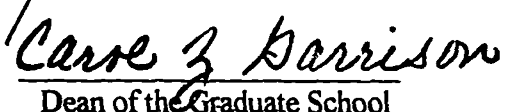

Dean of the Graduate School

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To Lois

Sharon, David John, Ruth and Barbara

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ABSTRACT

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AT THE CROSSROADS THE STRUGGLE WITH CONTENDING FORCES

No political analyst can afford to neglect the importance of religious affairs in analyzing nascent global conflict zones. Religion is a fault line within civilizations; "the clash of civilizations" marks a new phase of international politics. The Russian Orthodox Church is rising to become a significant player in post-Soviet Russia's politics. *Perestroika, glasnost,* and *demokratizatsiya* breed new opportunities for the Church. A recent public opinion poll ranks the Orthodox Church highest among the most trusted institutions of the State, surpassing the previous leader, the army. Questions centering upon the true meaning of this rating and on the capability of the Orthodox Church to maintain such a status are issues to be addressed by social scientists.

This study is designed to present the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church at the crossroads of capitalizing on unprecedented opportunities by focusing on the uniqueness of the Church in post-Soviet Russia, or resorting to a defensive posture toward forces interpreted as alien to Orthodoxy. Six chapters address internal and external forces. These include internal divisiveness; the new socio-economic environment; philosophy, the state and political culture; the growth of Protestantism; the spread of Roman Catholicism; and the influence of Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. The final chapter, titled "The Church in the Balance," addresses the Church as *sui generis* in society and posits the need for spiritual renewal to elevate the moral

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and spiritual levels of Russian people and to extend the Christian message beyond domestic borders.

As the Russian Orthodox Church confronts contemporary forces perceived to challenge its desired religious primacy, democratic trends of the new Russia elicit from the Church a Vatican II-type council to allow for reasonable ecclesiastical pluralism, to abandon the use of an incomprehensible liturgical language in deference to the vernacular, and to cultivate the highest of religious and moral precepts and practices that will promote the uniqueness of the Christian Church while offering people outside the Church genuine spiritual moorings.

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INTRODUCTION

No political analyst today can afford to neglect the importance of religious affairs in analyzing nascent global conflicts. Current events in Chechnya, the former Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland, Middle East states, and North and West Africa attest to the significant role of religion in national, regional and global affairs. Samuel P. Huntington argues that "the most important conflicts of the future will occur along cultural fault lines ... history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, *religion* (italics inserted)."[1] These fault lines differentiate major civilizations from one another, and "the clash of civilizations" marks a new phase of world politics.[2]

As one examines the New Russia emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, he is tempted to give primary attention to the struggle between the initiation of Western-designed social and economic reforms and contending conservative and neo-communist economic and social interests of fearful Slavophiles. As important as these are, one can argue that economic and political issues lose popular impetus as grievances and problems are addressed by new political regimes, but cultural cleavages evidence a durability that transcends social and economic conflicts.

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[1] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" in *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993, pp. 22-49), p. 25. This phase of "civilizations" succeeds three previous phases in modern history: conflicts among princes, emperors and monarchs (1648-1789), conflicts among nations (1789-1919), and ideological conflicts (1919-1991) respectively (pp. 22-23).
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

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Religion has played and will continue to play a meaningful role in the New Russia. Whereas non-Christian religions of Islam, Buddhism and Judaism have pockets of influence in the New Russia, as do Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church dominates the ecclesiastical scene; and, more importantly, some leaders within its ranks aspire to regain the political position enjoyed by the Church prior to the Bolshevik Revolution.

Religious Orthodoxy is at the root of Russian culture. The propinquity of Orthodoxy to the rising spirit of nationalism becomes apparent when men like Zhirinovsky, Lebed, and Zyuganov appeal to traditional values that must not be sacrificed as reforms are instituted across the Motherland. The greater the nationalistic fervor, the more allegiance political leaders evidence toward the Russian Orthodox Church. Does this translate into a distinctive prestige for the Church that militates against the ministry of exogenous ecclesiastical bodies? It might in the short run. Yet, Robert Daniels justly reminds us that "For three hundred years Russian thought has been impaled on the horns of a dilemma--tradition or modernity, faith or reason, the Russian way or the foreign way."[3]

Contemporary political rhetoric in favor of greater influence by the Russian Church in national affairs stems from the perceived humiliation of Russia through the collapse of the Union coupled with the belief that Russian tradition will restore the lost image. In reality, however, one must acknowledge a segment of Russian society historically that rejected tradition to embrace Western norms. Daniels traces this reaction to the late eighteen century when it "became embodied in the Russian intelligentsia, understood broadly as the consumers

[3] Robert Daniels, "In Search of a Reasonable Tradition," (p. 1), unpublished paper, The Transnational Institute Conference on "The Renewal of Russian Spiritual Life," Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH; July 8-11, 1992.

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as well as producers of books and ideas."[4] In the nineteenth century, the most advanced and radical ideas came from the West--rationalism, science, revolution, philosophical materialism, socialism, and Marxism.

Can the Orthodox Church in the New Russia realistically expect to have a nominal monopoly now over other denominations and religions owing to its historic cultural ties and apparent support from leading political parties and people? Not necessarily. Transitional political periods hardly afford sufficient grounds for predicting either coming events or state government policy.[5]

Regardless of whatever gains are made by the Orthodox Church during this transitional period, the question arises, What long-range benefits will the Church reap by political favoritism and support? This study addresses these issues.

Dawn of Freedom

Mikhail Gorbachev introduced the Russian populace to *glasnost, perestroika,* and *demokratizatsiya,* nuggets of domestic policy that facilitated a religious freedom seldom witnessed previously in all of Russia's turbulent history.[6] Yeltsin promised continued reforms, endorsing the concept of freedom of religion and conscience stipulated in Basket Three of the Helsinki Declaration on August 1, 1975. If a new Russian government chooses by law to grant the Orthodox Church a primacy in society to the detriment of other Christian denominations and non-Christian religions, the Church will experience short-term gains while risking long-range benefits. Peter H. Quimby justly argues, "while the Russian Orthodox Church may

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[5] Political instability following the adoption of a new system of government must be assessed as "transitional" in nature.
[6] The Gorbachev era was not without persecution against ecclesiastical bodies and priests. Alleged cruelty continued by the KGB trained to threaten, exile, or kill Christian devotees.

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appear to be positioned to play a leading role in the transition to democracy, its current course is directed by a perceived need to walk away from the ties to government that have plagued its past."[7] As political isolationism historically has not granted nation-states either economic prosperity or enhanced security, ecclesiastical exclusivity will hinder a national church from expanding its influence beyond its borders.

Collapse of the Soviet Union

The collapse of the Soviet Union is viewed by James H. Billington as probably "the most important event of the late twentieth century."[8] With that collapse came the end of the restrictive powers of the Soviet politburo, communist ideology, the KGB, and numerous local Soviet leaders. Such forces now do not hinder the Church from membership growth or geographical expansion. The re-emergence of the Russian Orthodox Church in society is strong and its potential regionally and globally is extensive.

In 1991 the Russian Orthodox Church, led by Patriarch Aleksi, comprised 86 dioceses in the USSR, and 10 dioceses abroad; its membership was estimated at 50 million. Since then, the so-called "resurrected parishes" of Moscow and elsewhere have continued to expand in number. Such expansion gives evidence to the popularity and strength of the Church. The construction of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow is most impressive. When completed, the cost is estimated to surpass $250 million, perhaps reaching close to $500 million. As secular architecture of the Stalin era once dotted the landscapes of Russia, gilded onion domes will now be most prominent.

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[7] Peter H. Quimby, "The Orthodox Church and Democratization in Russia" (p. 2),, unpublished paper; Dartmouth College Conference cited in footnote 3 above.

[8] James H. Billington. "Christianity and the Russian Transformation," in *Anglican and Episcopal History* (vol. LXIV, no. 1, March 1995).

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Purpose of Study

Historically, the cultural and political connection of the Orthodox Church to Russia is incontestable. In the words of Robert K. Massie, "Moscow was the 'Third Rome,' the Center of the Orthodox Faith. For millions of Russians, most of the drama and panoply of life on earth were found in the Orthodox Church."[9] Currently, the popularity of the Orthodox Church in Russia grants the Church a potential influence domestically and globally on religious and political affairs. Admittedly, there are serious forces confronting the Church that must be addressed. A composite of such facts establishes a foundational argument for examining in depth the strength and direction of the Church as it faces the twenty-first century.

Nowhere has the Orthodox Church dominated the cultural forces of a nation-state as much as in Russia. More importantly, no city conveys a stronger image of Orthodoxy than Moscow in the contemporary world, and no patriarchate of Orthodoxy currently enjoys a greater potential for international missionary activity and moral influence than the Russian Church. The Church is positioned at the crossroads of global influence, on the one hand, and conflictual forces and zealous defensiveness, on the other. At the fork of the Church's journey in this era of freedom and opportunity, one road leads to growth and influence, the other road leads to a national church fraught with concern over its own primacy and a determination to combat external competition.

The determinants for the direction of the Church rest largely on the manner in which it establishes and becomes energized by its doctrinal convictions and meaningful purpose and how it responds to contending forces. This study posits twin objectives for building up the

[9] Robert K. Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 5.

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Church: first, to focus energies on the uniqueness of church ministry in order to realize its divinely prescribed role in society; second, to acknowledge the virtue of a concessional stance toward other denominations and religions--the fact of reasonable pluralism--to avoid a dissipation of ecclesiastical energy.

In placing emphasis on the uniqueness of the Church, this study suggests a clearer understanding of the purpose and mission of the Church vis-à-vis the world. It does not allude either to an alteration of historic Church doctrines and liturgy or to a redefinition of purpose. Strength within denominations rests largely on their distinctive beliefs, forms of worship, and clearly defined historic mission. The Church must capitalize on its advocacy of these distinctives with a conviction that these constitute the core of its identification, the reason for its existence and a sufficient appeal for the human soul. No church needs to sacrifice its core convictions when accepting or yielding to the fact of reasonable pluralism. But a church or denomination can dissipate its energies by struggling against religious entities with different beliefs and practices so that it fails to have reserve strength to stand strongly against atheistic propaganda, insidious secularism and social evils.

The purpose of this study is to present the Russian Orthodox Church as positioned at the significant crossroads of capitalizing on unprecedented opportunities in the *glasnost* era of Russian history by heralding its beliefs and carrying out its purpose, or, resorting to a defensive--and perhaps antagonistic--posture toward non-Orthodox religious bodies and struggling against the fact of reasonable pluralism in the international political arena.

Orthodox clergy can be divided according to three groups: first, authoritarians who are disposed to engage in diatribes against other belief systems while building on the privileged

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position Orthodoxy enjoyed under the tsars and regained to a certain extent in the late Soviet period; second, reformers who evidence an uneasiness toward non-Orthodox religions but who are more concerned with internal Church dilemmas and contradictions which curtail the Orthodox commitment to spiritual revival and who seek a corporate act of repentance by the Orthodox Church; and third, ecumenists, who acknowledge the fact of reasonable pluralism, who promote dialogues with non-Orthodox Christian bodies--Baptists, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Adventists, Pentecostals--based on the principle of "oneness" in Christ," and who desire to struggle against the incursion and strength of contemporary atheism and sensualism.[10] The position of the latter group will be presented in this study as the most effective means for the domestic and global influence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Arguments to Support Ecumenism

Two arguments favor the ecumenist position. They are both based on one well-known text of the Bible, John 17:20-21. The setting for the text is the environs of Jerusalem., not far from the Garden of Gethsemane, on the night of the betrayal by Judas. Jesus' concern centered upon the disciples who were with him, for others in their respective Palestinian communities, and "for those who believe in Me through their word," verse 20. The latter phrase has a profound meaning for church leaders in that it prescribes a significant role of the mission of the Christian Church; i. e., Christ's disciples are to serve as transmission belts of the Christian message so that others may believe in Him. In other Scriptural texts, the message in question is simply called *ευαγγελιον*, which translated means the "good news" or "gospel."[11] The vicarious death and triumphant resurrection of Jesus signaled news worth sharing to the early

[10] James H. Billington describes the conflict experienced by the first two groups in a monograph acquired by this writer, Library of Congress (1992),titled "Notes on the Current State of the Russian Orthodox Church" (n.d.).
[11] See Mark 16:15, Acts 20:24,I Corinthians 1:17, II Corinthians 4:3-4, Hebrews 4:3-4.

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disciples and were intended to have the same effect upon all successive generations of Christians. But the motivation for ecumenism follows the reference to disciples sharing the good news.

Ecumenism as a movement and as a goal for the Christian Church is based upon two facts: first, Jesus prayed for unity; hence, His disciples ought to have the same aspiration; second, the petition for unity embraces the notion of a witness to the global community, "that the world may believe that You have sent me." In effect, there is an awareness here that the world is watching the Christian family. Schisms are scandalous, but unity emerging from common faith and distinctive life styles[12] has a magnetic quality. In a world divided by class distinctions, race, education, finances, languages, nationality and individual biases, the Founder of Christianity perceives and predicts favorable responsiveness by non-believers to the Christian message proclaimed by a united church.

This study will show from Russian Church history how ecclesiastical weakness and failure stems from a church's internal strife as well as from concerns over the growth of exogenous Christian churches and denominations. Conversely, when a church or denomination focuses on its purpose and mission which are unique from all other societal institutions, and all such endeavors are accompanied by ecclesial unity, other things being equal, numerical growth and popular influence are likely to follow. The study will disclose the dangers of the Russian Church becoming too aligned with state government and too determined to seek government legislation to oppose non-Orthodox religious bodies. It will likewise present the thesis that the

[12] Earlier in the same passage, verse 16, Jesus refers to His disciples as "not of this world," a phrase supporting the notion of the Church being composed of "called-out" (εκ-κλησια) followers of Christ.

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Russian Orthodox Church can become a pacesetter for all other self-governing Orthodox churches by adhering to the ecclesiastical uniqueness of cultivating the union of God and man.

Realizing the Church Potential

Though the Orthodox metropolitan of modern Istanbul may be viewed by some Orthodox devotees as the appropriate head of the Orthodox Church, his influence over Orthodox churches around the world lacks conciliar authority and ecclesiastical leverage. Orthodoxy has no Rome from which universal edicts are generated. Each regional church enjoys the commonality of being autocephalous. Therefore, regional and local leaders exercise greater official authority over parishes than does either Moscow or Istanbul. This fact is illustrated in Estonia where Orthodox clergy presently opt to become aligned with Istanbul rather than Moscow to the dismay of the latter. In fact, in January and February 1996, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church openly objected to the willingness of the Istanbul patriarchate to expand its authority to Estonia even though Estonian clerics submitted the request.

Seventy years of Muscovite domination of political and social affairs in perimeter states constitutes an obstacle for the Moscow patriarchate to overcome, but propitious actions by Russian churchmen at the close of the twentieth century can alter inherent weaknesses and suspicions associated with the City.

Religious bodies become weak as their doctrinal foundations crack or when their rich doctrines are either not accepted or are incomprehensible owing to the deficiency of the liturgical language or the lack of catechism instruction. As every developed state strives to elevate the educational level of its citizens, every Christian church should endeavor to promote

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the doctrinal comprehension of its parishioners. Such a feat demands appropriate training for the clergy and amicable relations between clergy and parishioners. Orthodox churches evidencing growth today understand the virtue and need of catechism classes and comprehensible liturgy.

There is a broad body of empirical evidence to support the thesis that churches are growing in Africa, Latin America and Asia which stress New Testament-type evangelism and particularly Pauline patterns of ecclesiology. The prime example today comes from the Central Church of Seoul, Korea--the largest church in the world--where Pastor Cho challenges parishioners with biblical texts to live, talk, act and witness as authentic Christian disciples. Though alerting the people to the appeal and power of secular forces, the pastor concentrates more on the virtues and power of prayer, Bible reading, charitable services, and the spread of Christianity to areas where Christian churches are nonexistent. But is this the sort of program needed by the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church? What, if any, parallels does one find between Korea and Russia? Are there differences between religious.responsiveness seen in Africa and Latin America, on the one hand, and in Russia, of the other? Do these differences weigh heavily against the growth and influence of the Russian Church? Which problems confront the Russian Church in order for it to reach its full potential? All such questions are relevant to this thesis.

In spite of certain frailties, the Russian Orthodox Church offers other churches a historical record of steadfastness and durability that merits attention. Of course there were compromises among some Orthodox priests; but archival evidence attests to the fidelity of a

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vast majority of them. The most cruel dictators and most deliberate government efforts against the Church over a period of seventy years failed to extinguish its light. What does this mean?

Uniqueness of this Study

No claim is made in this study of a lack of literature on dissenting voices inside the Russian Orthodox Church, or within the broader Eastern Orthodox Church, or on external forces overtly opposing the Church or competing with it. As evidenced below, this study is rooted in the breadth of literature on contending forces. By utilizing such literature, the crossroads confronting the Church come into clearer perspective. No effort is made here to suggest that Russian Orthodox leaders failed to published materials covering Church distinctives, purpose, vision, or meaning in society; but prior to the introduction of *glasnost*, such materials were scant owing to restrictions imposed by the Soviets.

The uniqueness of this study is rooted in three objectives: first, to establish the current status of the Russian Orthodox Church; second, to identify and weigh current forces perceived to limit Russian Church growth and expansion; and third, to assess some commonly held beliefs on what is required for the Russian Church to move ahead in the twenty-first century. No single work embraces such goals.

When researching doctoral dissertations written since 1946, less than 60 address the Russian Orthodox Church. Of these, the most prominent themes focus on church liturgy, icons, social status, ethnography, lay involvement, and the relation between church and state. None directly addresses contemporary forces vis-à-vis the Russian Orthodox Church. Only one examines the explicit purpose and global mission of the Church.[13]

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[13] Paul Edward Barkey, *The Russian Orthodox Church in Its Mission to the Aleuts* (D. Miss. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA., 1988).

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By identifying forces that contribute to Orthodox church growth, researching contending forces perceived to limit Orthodox Church growth, and assessing what is currently going on in Russian Orthodox Churches, an analyst is able to suggest a track for the Church to follow to achieve significant growth and popular influence as it prepares for the twenty-first century.

There is no doubt that efforts to initiate democratic principles in the New Russia promote reasonable pluralism. With the rise of reforms in Russia, analysts can envision a corresponding ascendance of tolerance toward diverse ecclesiastical systems of worship, a fact that elicits the highest degree of wisdom and leadership from the Church. The question of whether Russian Orthodox clergy will fortify the Church by means of confessional distinctives merits serious consideration. The question of reactions to opposing forces likewise deserves attention. By researching issues related to these and other questions, one should have sufficient criteria for interpreting the Church's strength and prospective growth.

The Russian Orthodox Church is a member of the World Council of Churches and exercises the greatest influence of all Orthodox Churches within that organization. The emergence of the ecumenical movement in the middle of the 19th century and continuing to the present time was not designed to create one global Church but rather to foster a congeniality among existing Christian denominations based on commonly accepted beliefs and practices. Whereas membership of the Russian Church in the World Council allows for denominational distinctives, it also breeds a spirit of ecumenism that fosters an acknowledgment of inter-faith oneness. It is appropriate at this time to ask to what extent the Russian Orthodox Church

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embraces ecumenicity within the borders of the Federation and what this means to the global Christian community?

Methodological Approaches

To achieve the purpose and goals of this study, four methods of analysis are employed. First, content analysis of books, church organs, journal and newspaper articles, and speeches relating to the central theme contributed to the historical analysis of the churches and their leaders in question as well as to a clearer understanding of the social, economic and political forces facing the Orthodox Church. Research was undertaken in the Thomas Cooper Library of the University of South Carolina (Columbia), the Virginia Episcopal Theological Seminary (Alexandria, VA), the Deering Library of Northwestern University (Evanston, IL) and the Library of Congress (Washington, DC).

Second, interviews were conducted with Orthodox scholars and priests, university professors and students, journalists, non-Orthodox church and religious leaders, and Russian citizens in parks, shopping areas, high-rise apartments and courtyards, or in institutions where they are employed. Most interviews were carried out on a one-on-one basis, mostly in person. A few were conducted by telephone in Moscow; others by e-mail messages to such places as Keston Institute (Oxford, UK), St. Vladimir's Seminary (Crestwood, NY), and the Institute for East-West Christian Studies (Wheaton, IL).

Third, a statistical sociological survey of the Bryansk oblast conducted by the Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow, afforded excellent material for comparing Orthodox and Protestant churches. The survey reflects a comparison of baptisms, membership, and attendance in churches of both branches of Christianity, affording criteria for

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assessing the degree to which parishioners in Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches interpret baptism, align themselves with churches as members, and attend services on a regular basis.

Finally, the writer attended liturgy or worship services in fifteen churches in Russia: eleven Orthodox, two Baptist, one Anglican, and one Pentecostal. In most cases, conversations were conducted with parishioners or clergymen either prior to or following the services on church property. Observations and inquiries centered around the nature of the services, the demographic representation of the parishioners, the size and condition of places of worship, and the history of each church. Where printed material regarding either the church itself or programs of the church were available, these were received

Major Resource Literature

Literature on the scope of this study can be divided into three categories: general literature on the broad spectrum of religious affairs in the Soviet Union and Russia, writings on the Russian Orthodox Church primarily as interpreted in contemporary settings, and treatises of dominant contending forces facing the Church.

Within the general religious literature category, nine books merit special attention. *Discretion and Valour* (1982), by Trevor Beeson, offers a splendid coverage of religion under the Soviet regime. Beeson characterizes one segment of clerics as subservient to Soviet regulations governing religious activities, endorsing all aspects of the Soviet system, and conducting themselves within the framework of secular prerogatives. Discretion marks such clergy. Another group of clerics is presented as no longer endeavoring to influence either religious or political authorities owing to the hopelessness of such effort; these clergy and their followers choose to emigrate from the Soviet Union. The latter group and many in between

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the two poles cited above are characterized by "valour"--resisting Soviet demands--while representing a myriad of religious persuasions. Like the previous volume, *Discretion and Valour* starts with a description of the Orthodox Church and then expands to other religious bodies inside the former Soviet Union. *World Christianity: Eastern Europe* (1988), edited by Philip Walters, is a comprehensive introduction to Christianity in Central and Eastern Europe which follows the pattern of Beeson's *Discretion and Valour.* Ninety pages are devoted to the major Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant branches of Christianity inside the Soviet Union with a special emphasis on the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Federation.

Candle in the Wind, edited by Eugene B. Shirley, Jr. and Michael Rowe (1989), leads the reader from the inception of Slavic Christianity into ancient Rus by Cyril and Methodius in 863 AD to Gorbachev's reforms concerning religion in the second half of the 1980s. No single volume covers such a broad spectrum of religion in Russia. The opening chapter presents a panorama of religion in Russia from the tenth century to the Bolshevik Revolution. Five of the eleven chapters deal directly with the Soviet period, treating such themes as state legislative and administrative control, anti-religious propaganda, responses by religious bodies, persecution and discrimination. These are followed by individual chapters on Buddhism, Islam and Judaism, the religious renaissance, and recent reforms. A four and a half page "Chronology" of significant political and religious events from 863 to 1989 charts the rocky course of Orthodox religion over the 1000-plus years in Russia.

Religion in the New Russia (1990), by James H. Forest, conveys an account of the religious environment in the Soviet Union during the period of *glasnost*, with special emphasis given to the Orthodox Church but also containing chapters on Catholicism, Protestantism,

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Judaism, Islam, and other religious bodies. The strength of the work rests on personal interviews conducted by the author with priests, bishops, pastors and people in all walks of life.

Christianity and Russian Culture in Soviet Society (1990), edited by Nicolai N. Petro, is a collection of thirteen essays by Sovietologists who specialize in religious affairs. Part One treats "Christianity and the Soviet State"; Part Two treats "Christianity and Soviet Political Culture." The essays are from a conference sponsored by the Center for Contemporary Russian Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, January 17-20, 1988. They focus on the anticipated influence of Christianity on the modern reshaping of Russian culture.

The Soviet Union on the Brink (1991), by Kent R. Hill, is a revised edition of *The Puzzle of the Soviet Church* (1989). Concerned with the treatment of Christians by Soviet authorities, Hill introduces his work with a disclosure of the official treatment of the "Siberian Seven" Pentecostals hold up in the American Embassy in Moscow for four years (June 1978-July 1982), and then proceeds with the role of Marxism in Soviet treatment of Christians. Hill analyzes church-state affairs during the entire period of Soviet domination and concludes with an array of denominational responses to the freedom introduced by *glasnost*. Four appendices cover means by which Western Christians can help Russian people, Soviet laws on religion from 1918-1990, the Law on Freedom of Conscience enacted in 1990, and international laws concerning freedom of religion. For purposes of the present study, the work offers considerable insight into the ministries of Orthodox and non-Orthodox denominations and parachurch groups; e.g., the World Council of Churches, the Billy Graham Association, Evangelicals, Lutherans, Catholics, and Seventh-Day Adventists. This work does not treat non-Christian religious entities in Russia.

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Religious Policy in the Soviet Union (1992), edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet, addresses both religious policy and policy makers in the Soviet Union as seen by analysts in late 1990 and early 1991. Since the attempted political coup of August 1991 occurred prior to the publication of the book, some chapters were subsequently updated to reflect the post-coup changes and the final collapse of the Soviet Union. The editor concludes the book with an "Epilogue" to present what the collapse of the Union meant in terms of religious opportunities.

Candles Behind the Wall (1993), by Barbara von der Heydt, presents the argument that persecuted and martyred Christians under Soviet regimes can be viewed as significant actors in the collapse of Soviet Communist. Her biographical narratives of Christians who suffered for their religious convictions reveal cause and effect relationships. Fr. Alexander Men, as an example, is interpreted as priming and encouraging priests such as Gleb Yakunin, Alexander Borisov and Georgi Kochetkov to be faithful to their calling regardless of unrelenting official persecution, virulent diatribes, and even martyrdom. She also cautions Russians against the dangers of the "smorgasbord" and "exotic fruits" offered by the cults.

Christianity After Communism (1994), edited by Niels C. Nielsen, Jr., addresses the social, political, and cultural struggles facing Christianity in the new Russia. The textual contents include papers presented at a conference on Religion in Eastern Europe After Communism, held in Houston, Texas, April 25-27, 1993. The papers reveal both tensions and opportunities confronting Christian denominations in post-Soviet Russia. Patriarch Aleksi II treats the unity existing between Jews and Christians; Metropolitan Ioann of St. Petersburg attacks Jews, liberalism, and the West for their adverse influence upon Russians; economist Alexander Zaichenko considers ethics and economic activity as they relate to Christian beliefs;

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Mennonite Walter Sawatsky stresses the need for leadership training; Fr. James A. Ihnatowicz treats the challenges facing the Roman Catholic Church; historian Wallace Daniel writes about the new religious press; historian Vladimir Ivanov conveys the interaction between the church and society; Philip Walters presents the response of the Russian Orthodox Church to contemporary developments; and Jerry G. Pankhurst suggests sociological models of religion in post-communist societies.

Before departing from general literature on religions in Russia and the Soviet Union, journals covering religion in the former Soviet Bloc states should be cited. *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas* (RCDA), was the first English periodical devoted to the study of religion under the Soviet political system. Founded in 1962 by the National Council of Churches (NCC), RCDA's original editors were Paul Anderson, a NCC expert on Christians in Russia, and Blahoslav Hruby, an immigrant from Czechoslovakia who related first-hand experiences of Christians behind the Iron Curtain. Since 1972, RCDA has been independent of NCC but continues the publication of articles offering content not seen elsewhere.

Keston Institute (Oxford, UK) publishes the most comprehensive contemporary reports on religion in Russia. Keston News Service sends out late breaking news on religious events, actions of local and federal legislatures on church matters, local church problems and achievements, and other relevant subjects from their offices in Oxford and Moscow via e-mail messages to subscribers. The Institute also publishes the Quarterly Journal *Religion, State and Society* (formerly *Religion in Communist Lands*), edited by Philip Walters. Michael Bourdeaux, General Director of Keston Institute and previous editor of the Quarterly is one of the most knowledgeable of contemporary scholars on current religious trends in Russia. Recent

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issues of the Quarterly reflect a broad spectrum of subjects relating to religion in former and current Communist states, including nationalism, anti-Semitism, Messianism, Catholicism, and so on. The value of the journal stems from the breadth of scholarship behind its articles. Writers represent the West as well as Eastern Europe, Gentiles and Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox.

Other journals that occasionally include articles on religion in Russia include *The Ecumenical Review, Religion in Eastern Europe, Ecumenism, Ecumenical Trends, Slavic Review, Journal of Ecumenical Studies,* and *International Review of Missions.* Periodicals containing shorter articles on the same theme are *Christian Century, Christianity Today,* the *New York Times*, and *Transition.*

A final source of general literature on religious affairs in Russia comes from the Transnational Institute Conference on "The Renewal of Russian Spiritual Life" which convened at Dartmouth College, July 8-11, 1992. The "Dartmouth Conference," as cited in this study, reprinted over fifty papers delivered to registered attendees and participants on subjects ranging from "The Russian Idea" to "Russian Reforms" and "The Orthodox Church and Democratization in Russia." One may be disturbed when perusing the papers that they include more philosophical than religious content; yet the richness of philosophical underpinnings to Russian religious culture ought not be neglected by contemporary scholars.

Literature on the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church is rooted largely in the data presented by Dimitri Pospielovsky in *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982,* two volumes (1984). This work is the most detailed and comprehensive study of the Russian Orthodox Church under Soviet regimes. The sources employed for the text are

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archives, *samizdat*, interviews with émigrés and dissidents, and published works in the Soviet Union and in the West. The book covers conflicts emerging between the Bolsheviks and the Church immediately following the Revolution, schisms emerging within the Church, trials of the Church in the 1920s and 1930s, the Church during the Second World War and the first postwar decade, Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign, and the catacomb churches. The final chapter is devoted to the Russian Orthodox Church from 1965-1982.

Literature on the Russian Orthodox Church has escalated since the introduction of *glasnost*, and more so since the collapse of the Soviet Union. *The Russian Orthodox Church* (1986), by Jane Ellis, is divided into two parts: the first comprises the organizational structure, parish life, theological education, publications, and Church-State relations of the Orthodox Church; the second addresses Orthodox dissent toward State mandates and responses from the State toward such dissent. Ellis' work offers a foundation for understanding dilemmas facing the Orthodox Church during the latter half of the twentieth century. It likewise offers a perspective of the Orthodox Church as the hierarchy prepared to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of Christianity in Rus in 1988. One thesis of the author is that Church dissent toward the State increased as its members evidenced a spiritual renaissance beginning in the 1950s and as *samizdat* publications correspondingly expanded.

Christianity and Government in Russia and the Soviet Union: Reflections on the Millennium (1989), by Sergei Pushkarev, Vladimir Rusak and Gleb Yakunin, covers much of the same material given in the first part of Ellis' work, but expands to consider the prospects for religious revival in Russia. At the time of writing, the Orthodox Church continued to

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confront official restrictions in regard to ownership of property, religious education in schools, public displays of religious symbols, and political rights of clergy.

A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy (1994), by Nathaniel Davis, offers an excellent review of Orthodoxy in Russia from the time of the Bolshevik Revolution to the early 1990s. It presents not only events and decisions of the registered Orthodox Church but also those of "underground" and other dissenting churches. Other inclusions reveal Khrushchev's attacks on the Church, the Millennium celebrations, the ranking of officials in Orthodoxy, theological education, and publications of the Church. Ten tables of Orthodox communities, membership, monks and nuns, and church income offer splendid analytical content for Orthodox studies.

Eastern Orthodox Christianity--A Western Perspective (1994), and *Eastern Orthodox Theology--A Contemporary Reader* (1994), by Daniel B. Clendenin, attempts to introduce major aspects of Orthodox history and theology to Protestant Christians who are not acquainted with other sources. The first volume begins with a general introduction to Orthodoxy and then expands to describe four theological themes of Orthodoxy: apophaticism, icons, Scripture and tradition. The author presents the thesis that Orthodoxy and Protestantism can be viewed as complementing each other rather than conflicting or contrasting each other. The volume concludes with "A Hermeneutic of Love." In *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, the author presents thirteen readings by eight modern Orthodox theologians on major motifs of Orthodoxy.

Finally, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow* (1996), by John Meyendorff, is a posthumous publication of lectures and articles by the outstanding scholar of St. Vladimir's Seminary who

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contributed much to the Western comprehension of Orthodoxy. The volume includes studies on various historical and theological issues which have been debated between the West and the East for centuries. It starts with the conflict between Rome and Constantinople, and presents a panorama of events occurring in Eastern Orthodoxy through the Middle Ages and up to the present. Stress is placed upon "New Life in Christ" as interpreted in Orthodox theology, the Christian Gospel, and social responsibility. It concludes with the author's perspective of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church and its theological moorings.

Analyses of specific issues facing Russian Orthodoxy and descriptions of Orthodox liturgical practices are found in *Eastbound Ecumenism: A Collection of Essays on the World Council of Church and Eastern Europe* (1986); *The Icon Handbook: A Guide to Understanding Icons and the Liturgy, Symbols and Practices of the Russian Orthodox Church* (1995); *The Orthodox Church* (1981), third edition, by John Meyendorff; *Russian Orthodoxy and Political Culture Transformation* (1993), by James W. Warhola; and *The Orthodox* Liturgy (1976), by Nicon D. Patrinacos.

Journals devoted largely to Orthodox Churches with articles on the Russian Church are *Orthodox Life*, *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, *Touchstone: A Journal of Ecumenical Orthodoxy*, and *Sourozh*.

Volumes on contending forces facing the Russian Orthodox Church come from the "general literature" cited above and from literature printed by competing religious groups working inside Russia.

An interpretation of evangelical activities in Russia can be found in the book *Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II* (1981), by Walter Sawatsky; in monthly *News Briefs* sent out

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by Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries of Wheaton, Illinois and its offices in Moscow; in *Soviet Charismatics: A Pentecostal Perspective* (1985), by William C. Fletcher; and in official denominational literary organs and mission agency reports.

Material on the Catholic Church are *Orthodoxy and Catholicity* (1966), by John Meyendorff; *Politicized Ecumenism: Rome, Moscow, and the Ukrainian Catholic Church* (1984), by Russell P. Moroziuk; *The Future of Roman Catholic Theology: Vatican II, Catalyst for Change* (1970), by George A. Lindbeck; and *Nothing Beyond the Necessary* (1995), by Jon Nilson.

Literature on Islamic beliefs and activities in Russia comes from *Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union* (1983), by Shirin Akiner; *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State* (1983), by Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup; *Islam in the North Caucasus: The Example of Chechnya* (1995), by Paul B. Hense; *Moscow's Muslim Challenge* (1982), by M. Rywkin; *Revolt Against Modernism* (1985), by Michael Youssef; "National and Religious Consciousness in Soviet Islam," in *Religion and the Soviet State* (1969), edited by Max Hayward and William C. Fletcher; selected articles of the *Moslem World;* and "Islam," by Marie Broxup, in *Candle in the Wind* (1989), edited by Eugene B. Shirley, Jr. and Michael Rowe.

Turning to Judaism in Russia, relevant works are *Soviet Jewry Since the Second World War* (1987), by Mordecai Altshuler; *Soviet Jewry* (1971), by Elizabeth Eppler; *Soviet Jewry in the Decisive Decade, 1971-1980* (1984), by Robert O. Freedman; *Essays on Orthodox Christian-Jewish Relations* (1990), by George C. Papademetriou; *Jewish-Christian Relations*

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in Today's World (1971), by James E. Wood; and "Judaism," by Jerry Goodman, in *Candle in the Wind*, cited above.

Volumes on Buddhism contributing to this work are *The Emptying of God* (1990), edited by John B. Cobb, Jr. and Christopher Ives; *Humanity at the Crossroads* (1988), by Karan Singh and Daiaku Ikeda; and "Buddhism," by Hans Braker, also in *Candle in the Wind*.

Delimitations of the Study

In addressing the Russian Orthodox Church, this study does not plumb the depths of contending forces confronting the Russian Orthodox Church prior to the accession of Mikhail Gorbachev to the chair of General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985. It does include historical data on the early history of non-Orthodox Christian churches and internal world religions, especially as these forces first became exposed to the Orthodox Church. The primary focus centers on the perceived posture and responsiveness of the Church toward opposing forces over the past decade, beginning with the introduction of *glasnost* into Soviet/Russian political culture and examining particularly church attitudes since the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

Prior to the disintegration of the Union, most Orthodox literature addressed issues emerging from the official atheistic dogma and treatment of Communist leaders toward the Churches. With the fall of the Soviet Union and a corresponding cessation of Soviet allegations, threats, persecutions and prohibitions directed toward the Church, the New Russia offers a distinct playing field for all religious bodies. Therefore, the conflict between the previous official atheism and ecclesiastical doctrines is addressed only as it complements the understanding of the Russian Church today.

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This study does not delve into all the historic cleavages that have faced the Russian Orthodox Church, such as the repeated conflicts with Constantinople, the German Stundists or Mennonite movements that caused no little concern to the Orthodox hierarchy under the tsars. As important as these forces may be historically, they hardly compare with contemporary forces because trends toward national and regional democracy present distinct ramifications to the Church. The crossroads confronting Russian Orthodoxy today transcend the obstacles facing the Church when tsars viewed Orthodoxy as tantamount with Russian culture.

Primary literature for this study does not include classical Russian writings concerning the Church from philosophical, sociological, poetic, or theological perspectives. The concern here is an appraisal of the current status of the Orthodox Church and what measures are now being taken by the Church hierarchy to build up the Church as the twenty-first century approaches. Therefore, recent literature weighs more than older, highly regarded writings on the Russian Orthodox Church. Relevant to the scope of the study, books and articles are sought that reflect official church sentiments, attitudes, responses, goals, purposes, legislation and pronouncements in the new era of the Church.

Literature that antedates the previous decade is cited in this study when it offers background information for changes made possible by *glasnost* and *perestroika;* or, when such literature referring to non-Russian religious phenomena contains material offering data for comparative analysis with the Russian Orthodox Church. Earlier literature is helpful for the purpose of analyzing weaknesses or strengths of specific strategies and practices of ecclesiastical bodies outside Russia.

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There is no pretense here of including every divisive or opposing force now confronting the Russian Church, such as the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Spiritism, Theosophy, Eastern religions; only major factions contending against the Church are addressed. Admittedly, this is a judgment call of the writer based on interviews with church representatives and diverse literature.

Development of the Study

Following the Introduction, the study is divided into seven chapters. Chapter I treats the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church: the break-through of freedom, the purpose of the church according to prescriptive analysis, the purpose of the church as perceived in four theoretical models, sources of church authority, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, principal doctrines and forms of liturgy, educating clergymen and regaining adherents, and a paradigm for church growth. This chapter ought to be viewed as the seedplot of the study for one finds here kernels from which the remainder of the study are based.

Chapter II examines the emerging Socio-Economic Environment since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The end of Sovietism marked the end of regime-imposed Marxism with its antagonism toward religion, its postulate of atheism, its rejection of capitalism, and its insistence on the "dictatorship of the proletariat." While recent elections point toward the rise of neo-communism in Russia, there are elements in the new socio-economic environment that will remain influential. Foremost among these elements is the role of the Church in Russian daily life. State government will not adopt a Marxist stance concerning religion. This means that for a sizable segment of society, religious values will hold significant meaning. But the Church will not control Russian society.

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A second element of the new environment is the lure of secularization. Regardless of the degree of political diatribes against the invasion of Western culture in Russia, popular affinity toward much that is secular will not disappear. Closely tied to the secularization of Russian culture is materialism. Both find immeasurable support from mass media, on the one hand, and modernization, on the other. Battle lines will certainly be formed between Orthodox tenets and popular, secular appeals to the Russian mind.

A third element of the new environment is democratic yearnings. Analysts cannot predict the degree of democracy that will be accepted or proposed by elected officials and the Russian congress during this transitional period, but global trends toward democratic government and recent efforts toward democracy in Russia are sure to provide some framework for democracy in spite of resonating political appeals for a "strong man" to pull the nation together, to fight ubiquitous crime, to provide for the needy, and to cultivate a renewed prestige for Russians.

Chapter III treats three themes: Russian philosophy, the state, and political culture. The philosophical aspect of the chapter focuses on the problem that arose most prominently in the sixteenth century concerning the relationship between the Orthodox patriarch and the Tsar. At the time, Patriarch Nikon declared his superiority owing to a priest's divine appointment. Peter I (the Great) turned the tables, refused to appoint a patriarch, choosing rather to usurp the position himself. But the history of Russia has been plagued with the contest between civil and religious authority.

Subjects addressed following the content on Russian philosophy are the separation of church and state, the aspiration of state support for Orthodoxy through legislation,

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rapprochement of state and church initiated through nationalist leaders, the struggle with international agreements concerning state-church affairs, shifts in political culture, the nationalist factor, and a legitimate role for the church in state responsibilities.

Chapter IV, addressing the struggle with Protestantism, reveals the roots of Protestantism in Russia, the historic Orthodox-Protestant divide, contemporary incursions of Western missions with particular emphasis upon strategies of Co-Mission, the argument behind funding for Western-based ecclesiastical entities, and the development of sister-church relationships between Western and Russian churches. There is a call here for the Russian Church to accept democratic pluralism while acknowledging serious flaws in the preparation, ministries and methods of Western missionaries. But one should distinguish between the work of Western missionaries and that of the Protestant national churches.

Chapter V examines conflicts between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. Starting with roots of Catholicism in Russia, the chapter branches out to consider the influence of Catholicism from the neighboring states of Lithuania, Belarus, the Ukraine and Poland, doctrinal differences between the churches, Catholic Uniate churches and the confiscation of their property by the Soviets in deference to the Orthodox Church, the growth of Catholicism in Russia, and ramifications of the East-West Schism of the eleventh century upon the two branches of Christianity today. Catholic leaders insist they are not endeavoring to win Orthodox people to their side but rather to identify Catholics in distinct regions and minister to them.

Chapter VI treats the challenges presented to Orthodoxy by Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. Topics addressed regarding Islam are the influence of external forces, historical

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backgrounds, early Orthodox-Islamic relations, Islamic regions inside Russia, the influence of Central Asia, wrestling with Islamic fundamentalism, and the present state and future of Islamic-Orthodox relations. Topics on Judaism cover the origins of the Jewish-Orthodox conflict, anti-Semitism and Orthodoxy, Pamyat and the All-Russian Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods, and the question of narrowing the gap between Jews and Orthodox. Topics on Buddhism are the origins of Buddhism, teachings of Buddhism, Buddhism in Russia, interaction between Buddhists and Orthodox, and prospects for Orthodoxy in Buddhist communities. The chapter concludes with literary references for rapprochement between Orthodoxy and the religious bodies mentioned in the chapter.

The final chapter presents an appeal for the Russian Orthodox Church to be focused on the uniqueness--a *sui generis* entity--of the Christian church as an institution in society with the title, "The Church in the Balance." First impressions of the contemporary Orthodox church can be exceptionally positive. Two observations, however, militate against that image: one, the fact that only a slim percentage of Russians attend church or take Holy Communion on a regular basis; two, unfavorable comments are uttered by people inside and outside the Russian Church. On the basis of these observations, a recommendation is submitted for the Church to have a clearer focus on ecclesial ministries so that there might be reality behind the assumed image of Orthodoxy.

A statistical survey conducted in the Bryansk oblast is used to compare Orthodox and Protestant churches and people. It reveals the difference between nominal or "cultural" Christianity and fervent, "protesting" Christianity. Some Orthodox priests, the Reformers, exhibit both success in their churches and relevance to the present generation of secularists,

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inquirers and devotees. Their lives and parishes warrant attention. Do their parishes offer a model for other Orthodox churches? Is there heuristic value in examining their methods and innovations?

The chapter concludes with a section on the perils of state churches and a call for prioritizing ecclesiastical goals to maximize church energy. No suggestion is presented for the Russian Church to dilute its own doctrinal creed or worship practices; in fact, the strength of the Church depends largely on the manner in which the Church stresses these distinctives. Yet, the Church will be well served by de-prioritizing its bid for religious primacy in Russia, recognizing the energy wasted in the process. Stress should rather be placed upon the primacy of unity and spiritual renewal within the Church and the fulfillment of the Church purpose to extend its message beyond Russian borders. The Russian Orthodox Church has the greatest opportunity of all time to affect the moral, sociological, and religious spheres of Russian life and culture. It is now free to choose its own course of action, to be a positive influence, whether by addressing the government or the general populace, and to persistently seek to elevate Russian consciousness to a greater awareness of the deepest meaning of true Orthodoxy.

The conclusion of the study reviews the rough historic pilgrimage of the Russian Orthodox Church. No denomination or branch of Christianity has marched through more rocky and treacherous sociological valleys than the Russian Orthodox Church in its history. From the time of the Old Believer Schism until the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Russian Church has confronted serious struggles. However, current forces interpreted by the Church as alien to Orthodoxy are based more on perceptions than reality, and do not merit the energy,

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time or treatment the Russian Church expends or levels against them: Grievous wrongs committed by western missionaries arriving on Russian soil in recent years must be acknowledged. Yet, the Orthodox Church would be well-served by focusing on its own mission and by allowing non-Orthodox Russian clergymen handle western offenses.

In addition, the Russian Church should focus on clarifying to its own constituents cardinal Christian truths while simultaneously endeavoring to set aside differences with other confessions, seeking reasonable pluralism that compliments Christianity, and recognizing the world as the legitimate Christian parish. Serious consideration should also be given to altering the liturgy from Old Slavonic to vernacular languages for the comprehension of its people. Effective ecclesiastical ministries demand more than rituals; they call for education, and education requires clear communication, and communication without comprehension is nigh to being worthless. The study ends with suggestions to implement changes that will place the Russian Church on a more productive ecclesiastical track as it approaches the twenty-first century.

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CHAPTER I

THE CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

For many Westerners the Russian Orthodox Church is encased in mystery. The more one endeavors to interpret and understand the mystery the greater is his appreciation for the beliefs and practices of the Church. As one enters into an Orthodox sanctuary, he becomes aware of a veritable sacredness in worship. The busyness of the secular world becomes eclipsed by reverence. Orthodox churches are more dimly lighted than Protestant churches, and one observes in them lighted candles, the fragrance of incense, walls decked with icons depicting images of Christ, biblical characters and canonized faithful. There are no pews, just wall benches for women and children. Fully bearded priests dress in albs and eucharistic vestments; some priests wear caps; bishops wear miters. Priests and people often kiss one or more icons. A small choir leads the congregation in worship. Three litanies are interwoven between three anthems of the season (antiphons) based on Psalms 102 and 145 and the Beatitudes. Worshippers cross themselves "in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" when names of the Deity are uttered, often bowing, while the choral group leads parishioners in hymns and the chanting of "Lord, have mercy!"

When the high priest reads the Scriptures, two attendants, one on either side, hold over his head brass liturgical fans representing symbolically Old Testament cherubim. The

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symbolism inside the sanctuary alludes to divine forgiveness of sin, purity experienced through sacraments, divine faithfulness and light, priestly intercession, and communication with God. In front of the sanctuary is the iconostasis, a wall filled with icons, with royal doors through which priests enter privately to commune with God on behalf of the people. A homily is given based on the Gospel reading with an exhortation to live actively with Christ and for Christ. The homily ends. The litany of fervent prayers for the departed is read by the celebrant and three deacons. This is followed by the litany of the catechumens. The most important part of the liturgy is the Eucharist. While the choir sings the cherubim hymn, the celebrant and deacon enter the nave with the bread and wine and carry them before the adherents, through the holy doors, and to the altar. No musical instruments are used in Russian Orthodox churches. In Orthodox worship, one is impressed with the stress placed upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ; this theme pervades much of the liturgy. More will be said of the liturgy below.

Whereas non-Orthodox believers seek through worship to cultivate greater doctrinal understanding, a blossoming of interpersonal relationships, opportunity to commune with God, and the joy of singing anthems, hymns, and songs, Orthodox believers center their attention on meeting and worshipping God.

Not all Western Christians react according to the above description, neither will a non-Orthodox believer find liturgical practices the same in all Orthodox churches, although cardinal Orthodox doctrines receive universal approbation in the Church. Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans and Episcopalians certainly practice similar forms of worship. Interestingly, these are the churches most inclined today to interact with

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Orthodox clergy on subjects of comity and cooperation, if not oneness and unity. Yet, differences of interpretation and practice even among these religious bodies strike scholars with considerable interest. A broader divergence of liturgy surfaces when one compares members of Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal and Adventist churches. Believers in these camps demonstrate a wider gap in both doctrinal tenets and worship practices between themselves and Orthodox members. All non-Orthodox religious bodies should seek to penetrate the mysterious curtain of Orthodoxy to perceive the commonality of Christian doctrine which constitutes the essence of faith and practice of the Church and to understand Orthodox liturgy. No Christian should forget the trials and martyrdom experienced by Russian believers under the Soviets; but all Russians face a new day with exceptional opportunities since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Break-through of Freedom

The contemporary Russian Orthodox Church must be interpreted primarily in the light of post-*perestroika* and present-day *glasnost* phenomena with tenets of *demokratizatsiya* resonating in domestic and international affairs. All three Gorbachev precepts granted the Orthodox Church increased opportunities to worship together, unite with common goals, indoctrinate parishioners, publish religious materials for youth and adults, with the intent to build up the Church not only spiritually but in its public image and influence. The same precepts allowed non-Orthodox churches inside Russia the same privileges and extended permission to non-Russian exogenous ecclesiastical denominations to enter the country and propagate their doctrines.

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Mikhail Gorbachev introduced concrete changes to the religious environment of Russia. According to *Moscow News,* between 1958 and 1988 almost 3,000 Christians were sent to labor camps or psychiatric institutions.[1] Gorbachev became General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985. In April, the Party directed members not to permit "the violation of believers' feelings."[2] Within approximately three years, the number of Christian prisoners dropped by more than 300 to 19, while the number of religious prisoners overall was reduced from 420 to 73.[3] Most of the prisoners were non-Orthodox believers, which suggests a special leverage for Orthodox clergy or the Church itself, if not direct collaboration between Church leaders and the CPSU, to mitigate differences on behalf of accused Orthodox parishioners before official tribunals. It also reflects the extent to which the Orthodox Church had become coopted by the regime so that it actively discouraged protest actions by its priests.

The new freedom set the social stage for greater overt Orthodox activity: Orthodox clergy began to appear on television and radio programs without concern over possible self-recrimination, censorship of sermons declined, published works on Christian education appeared in Russian book stores, films favoring the Church were permitted for viewing, periodical literature carried reports of expanded public interest in religious matters, and new church buildings were under construction. The effects of *glasnost* were so spontaneous and real in 1986 that Orthodox clergy entertained the possibility of open and Union-wide celebrations of 1,000 years of Russian Christianity two years later.

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[1] Kent Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1991), p. 251.
[2] George W. Cornell, "Analysts See Hopeful Stirrings of Improvements for Soviet Churches," *Los Angeles Times* (May 3, 1986), Part II, p. 5.
[3] Hill, p. 252.

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In December 1986 Gorbachev allowed dissident Andrei Sakharov to leave his exile in Gorki and return to Moscow. In January 1987 Gorbachev proclaimed the introduction of *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and *demokratizatsiya*, acknowledging that reforms required for improving domestic conditions were only possible through democracy and freedom of thought and expression. Though ubiquitous caution and incredulity characterized sentiments of Russian believers, church leaders continued to prepare for millennium programs and meetings through 1987 and into 1988, without official objections. In April 1988 Gorbachev met with Patriarch Pimen and five metropolitans of the Holy Synod, expressing his gratitude for Orthodox leaders who remained patriotic, who sought international peace, and who stood against nuclear destruction. He also promised government help in the Church's effort to celebrate the millennium of Christianity in Russia.

The meeting between Gorbachev and Pimen contributed to the registration of some sixty additional Orthodox churches within a couple of months.[4] Rumors circulated that the General Secretary sought rapprochement with Orthodox bishops, priests and lay believers because he needed their support for the success of his program. Millennium celebrations began in June 1988. Church leaders, dressed in colorful garb from all over the world, took part in special meetings in Moscow, Zagorsk, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, and other cities to commemorate the occasion. Public celebrations received not only an endorsement from government authorities but a strong collaboration from military forces sent out to accommodate crowds beyond the capacity of church edifices. These

[4] *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii* (June, 1988), p. 3

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celebrations granted unprecedented encouragement and stimulus to Orthodox and non-Orthodox believers alike.

The forces of change introduced by Gorbachev yielded positive ramifications beyond the realm of encouragement to Orthodox clergy. As the government moved forward to democratization, the people took strides to return to the Church. Russian adults, especially intellectuals, and youth began to look to the Church for moral and spiritual guidance. In 1989, Gleb Yakunin, a Russian Orthodox priest who adamantly supported the rights of believers during the Soviet era, observed, "Contemporary Russia is experiencing an awakening and growth in religious consciousness. Religion is attracting those who were atheists only yesterday. Most of those who are turning to God are members of the intelligentsia and young people."[5] But, Yakunin adds, "The overwhelming majority of believers are still elderly people."[6]

Yakunin is not alone is recognizing the responsiveness of youth to religious values and the Church. In 1992, James H. Billington wrote, "The thirst for purification is strong among new young converts to Christianity.... A recent poll and study of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago indicates that 30 percent of Russians under 25 have converted from atheism to a belief in God."[7]

As a result of government reforms, church-state relations under Gorbachev improved rapidly so that when the new political regime under Boris Yeltsin stepped to

[5] Gleb Yakunin, "The Present State of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Prospects for Religious Revival in Russia," in Pushkarev, Rusak and Yakunin, eds., *Christianity and Government in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Boulder: Westview, 1989), p. 107.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 125.
[7] James H. Billington, "Notes on the Current State of the Russian Orthodox Church" (monograph distributed by the Library of Congress, c.1992), pp. 4-5.

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power in Russia, political forces evidenced a friendly and supportive attitude toward the Orthodox patriarch and the Church. According to an appraisal of Billington, "[W]ith the collapse of the first officially atheist state, the historic religion of Russia emerged as a central cultural force in Russia's reawakened national self-consciousness and as the principal institutional beneficiary of a general religious revival."[8] The question arises, Is the Church now placing inordinate stress upon its being a "cultural force" in Russia and does "national self-consciousness" offset the Church's real purpose? When analyzing the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church, it is fitting that consideration be given to the purpose of the Church.

Purpose of the Church: Synodal Quest and New Testament Precepts

The contemporary Russian Orthodox Church faces unparalleled opportunities as the twenty-first century draws near. To capitalize on the opportunities, the hierarchy must have a plan of action. The most important part of any institutional plan is the formulation of a clear, comprehensive, motivating purpose or mission statement acknowledged and endorsed by constituents of the institution. This principle is as true for ecclesiastical bodies as it is for corporate and social agencies.

When the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church met in the Danilov Monastery of Moscow in 1994 (November 29-December 4), the main theme was the "mission of Orthodoxy in the contemporary world,"[9] an admirable subject for discussion. In reading through the synodal "minutes" of that convocation, one finds resolutions pertaining to the independence of Orthodox churches in the Baltics and Moldova, social

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[9] "Minutes" of the Synod were given to this writer by Russian studies researcher Richard Lyke of the Library of Congress, July 1995.

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and charity programs, the defrocking of Gleb Yakunin, the excommunication of monk Filaret (Denisenko), a condemnation of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, divisiveness within the Church, "the destructive activities of missionaries representing other religions," and a brief statement on the creation of "a new field of study on Missionology." Nowhere in the "minutes" does one find a clearly defined mission statement. The failure of the Church to establish a well-defined purpose attributes to considerable dissonance in every echelon of Church life and structure. Without identifying the purpose of an institution, its direction becomes exceptionally puzzling.

There is no doubt that protracted adverse discrimination against the Church by Soviet leaders, and poorly trained, censored leadership in the Church during the Communist-dominated era restricted Church preparation for the privileges and opportunities introduced by *glasnost* and expanded through the collapse of the Union. Acknowledging a variance among Orthodox clergy in defining the Church's purpose and direction, but stressing Church concordance that the Holy Scriptures disclose truths for the Church to follow, this study treats the purpose of the Church first from a New Testament exegetical perspective and then covers four contemporary teleological interpretations of the Church.

An analyst can assume logically that the Book which reveals the Architect and Builder of the Church should also include the purpose behind His design.[10] An analyst can also assume that when the mysterious clouds of political and social transition evaporate from the Russian horizon, Church leaders will focus on clear, divinely-ordained precepts

[10] The New Testament records the words of Jesus, "I will build My Church" (Matthew 16:16), and Luke relates that "The Lord" caused the Church to grow (Acts 2:47).

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for the Church that will alter and transcend whatever might be prescribed as the Church's immediate purpose and direction. The Church's purpose must be appraised as an essential doctrine for its leaders to formulate, and the New Testament offers definitive guidance for the establishment of that purpose. Therefore, it becomes expedient to examine Scriptural texts relating to the Christian Church and its purpose.

The English word "church" derives from the Greek "εκκλησια," a compound noun appearing no less than 80 times in the New Testament.[11] It stems from the preposition "εκ" and the verb "καλεω";[12] "εκ" denotes origin and means "out" or "from"; "καλεω" is a first person singular construct with the base meaning of "call." Placed together the two words are best interpreted to mean "called out from." So the etymology of "church" in the Scriptural text denotes "a group of people (not a building, nor a denomination) called out from" some societal entity to accomplish a divine purpose; and hermeneutically, the entity from which the "called out ones" originate is the secular, self-centered and carnal society. The central idea is grasped in the words of the Apostle Peter to Christ-followers of the first Christian century:

> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has *called you out of* [italics inserted] darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.[13]

[11] Septuagint translators employ εκκλησια to denote the "congregation" of Israel: Deuteronomy 31; I Kings 8.
[12] The identification of verbs in New Testament (koine) Greek is denoted according to the first person singular form rather than using the infinitive as is customary in other languages.
[13] I Peter 2:9-11.

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The conjunction "But" at the beginning of the passage draws a contrast between unbelievers and Christian people whether Jews or Gentiles. Employing a series of phrases from the Old Testament, Peter ascribes to Christians various privileges that had belonged to the children of Israel. This same passage explicitly alludes to the divine purpose behind the founding of the Church: its members are to proclaim, show forth and publish a message concerning the person of Jesus Christ.

This accords with other New Testament passages that shed additional light on the purpose of the Church. According to the synoptic gospels, Jesus told his followers, "Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them..." ;[14] "Go into all the world and preach the gospel";[15] and "You are witnesses" of the soteriological truths of My death and resurrection and of repentance and divine forgiveness of sins, truths that should be proclaimed "to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."[16] In the Gospel of John, Jesus places emphasis upon the mission of the Church to extend the Christian message beyond its present community when He commands, "As the Father sent Me, so send I you."[17] The same idea is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and conveyed forcefully to Jesus' followers at the time of the ascension when He said, "You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."[18]

An inescapable truth emerging from New Testament doctrine, therefore, is the responsibility of the Christian Church, local or corporate, to extend its influence and proclaim the Christian message, or κεριγμα, to its own community and beyond its

[14] Matthew 28:19.
[15] Mark 16:15.
[16] Luke 24:46-48.
[17] John 20:21.
[18] Acts 1:8.

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immediate boundaries to wider and more remote global areas until it has penetrated every tribe and nation. In response to the Scriptural injunction, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople sent two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, to Moravia in 863 AD and later to Bulgaria, thus laying the foundation for Slavic Christianity.

A clear understanding of the New Testament mandate enables international relations scholars to plumb the depths of the motivation behind modern day ecclesiastical efforts to spread the Christian message to distinct communities around the world. In like manner, such an understanding constitutes the framework from which the purpose of the Orthodox Church, or any Christian church, is derived. This point is crucial for the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church, but not all its leaders grasp this purpose.

Purpose of the Church: Four Theoretical Models

As cited above, contemporary Russian leaders reflect a disagreement in prescribing a clear-cut purpose or mission statement for the Church. In fact, often the purpose is more implicit than expressed. A diverse classification is derived from actions of the priests more than from expressed statements or creeds. Four theoretical concepts or models of the Church's basic purpose are represented in the Moscow patriarchate. The first two models present the Church ministry as limited largely to the Motherland; the third focuses on the sacraments and customary church administration; and the fourth centers on the proclamation of the Christian message domestically and globally.

Model one can be titled "national identity." It envisions the Church as providing a unifying national identity for rejuvenating the government. Stress is placed upon the historic close relationship between Russian society and the Orthodox Church, a

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relationship that is to be cultivated again in the new Russia. The Church is thus a means, and perhaps the best means, for elevating the government above contentions of political rhetoric and social despair to a plateau where Russian pride and prosperity can be restored. Vladimir Moss, a representative of this group, writes,

> The Russian Orthodox Church, by its numbers, its wealth, its historical associations, its popularity, and the enormous upsurge in Orthodox Christian activity throughout the country, should be in a strong position to play a major role, perhaps decisive part in the political life of the nation.[19]

Proponents of this position focus on the church lending a hand toward stabilizing political affairs. Inherent in the position is the notion of national well-being. After all, the Orthodox Church represents the soul of Russian people; it is inexorably tied to Russian culture; the Russian state is consolidated and shaped under the symbol of the Orthodox Church; and the warp and woof of Orthodoxy can be seen in the fabric of Russian life. In this regard, the words of Nicholas Berdayev are meaningful: "Profession of the true, the Orthodox faith, was the test of belonging to the Russian kingdom."[20] Partisans in the camp favoring national identity for the Church "tend to be older and higher in the episcopal ladder."[21]

The second concept, the "moral enhancement" model, views the Church as heralding a message on public morality and trust to build a progressive society independent of state structures and not focused on nationalistic ties.[22] Advocates of this position, according to James Billington, stress the responsibility of the Church to combat

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[19] Vladimir Moss, "Russian Orthodoxy and the Future of the Soviet Union," *Report on the USSR* (vol. 3, no. 24, June 14, 1991}, p. 5.
[20] Nicholas Berdyaev, *The Origin of Russian Communism* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1937), p. 10.
[21] James H. Billington, "Notes on the Current State of the Russian Orthodox Church," p. 5. Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Church Relations, represents the national identity model (See Keston News Service *News Brief*, dated September 30, 1996).
[22] *Ibid.*

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"Russia's real enemies: crime, corruption, and a growing sense of cynicism about everything."[23] One representative of this concept, Father Zinon, declares, "Russian Orthodoxy is at the crossroads and will either become once again a state church or leaven civil society with a new life of prayer, hard work, and Christian education that will renew local communities in which both human and property rights will be respected."[24] The design and outcome of Church activity stipulated by Zinon and others of like philosophy, is thus moral renewal in communities.

A third concept depicts a "sacrament-administration" model for the Church. Presented by traditional, liturgical devotees, this model is exhibited by priests who are satisfied to administer sacraments, to conduct rituals, to lead in the church liturgy, and thus serve as the priestly link between parishioners and God. Accordingly, the Church is to keep on doing what it did under Soviet regimes, what it does best, and what no other institution is recognized as competent to do.[25] Thus, the Church takes center stage on religious holidays, at times of births, baptisms, sickness, funerals, marriages, and so on. Pospielovsky finds participants of this model to be carry-overs from Soviet times and often representatives of a high echelon of church leadership. He writes, "The majority of the bishops ... prefer to see no changes at all.... Reduced more or less to decorative functions under communist rule, most of the bishops of the older generation have got used to that status."[26] In an address delivered at Bose, Italy on the theme "Fire and Hardness,"

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[24] Quoted by Billington in "Christianity and the Russian Transformation," *Anglican and Episcopal History* (vol. LXIV, no. 1, March 1995), p. 12.
[25] Of course the Church under the Soviets was viewed as suspect, as Zbigniew Brzezinski writes, "The Orthodox Church as an institution remained firmly under the party's control, with effective political and even secret police penetration of its clergy," *The Grand Failure* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), p. 81.
[26] Pospielovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church," p. 256.

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Fr. Georgi Kochetkov of Moscow's Church of the Dormition alluded to priests belonging to this church model when he referred to some who are marked by "inertia," whose teachings are "marred by inertia," and who have passed on "such inertia to the outward form of church life."[27] Such a characterization conveys a satisfaction with the status quo position and operations of the Church.

The fourth concept endorses a "redemptive mission" model for the Church, which affirms that its purpose is to share the κεριγμα of Christ to unbelievers at home and abroad.[28] In 1555, when Ivan IV wanted to commemorate his victories in the East, he ostensibly ordered the construction of the great Cathedral of St. Basil in Moscow. When completed, the Cathedral's many domes were of a different color and design, to symbolize the diverse peoples of Asia who awaited the light of the Gospel.[29] If the report is true, the Tsar understood the transnational intent of Christianity. Fr. Gleb Yakunin certainly postulates the redemptive model when he affirms, "The highest goal of the Christian church's rescue mission is to evangelize the world: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...'."[30] And according to *Christianity Today*, in 1995, when Patriarch Aleksi was asked, "What do you see as the paramount mission of the church today?," he responded, "The most urgent task of parishes, monastic communities, and of the entire church is a ministry of intensive evangelism aimed at filling the enormous spiritual vacuum in the people, the descendants of former Orthodox Christians, by the

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[27] A copy of Fr. Kochetkov's message was sent via e-mail to the writer, November 2, 1996.
[28] κεριγμα in Greek refers to the "message" preached or heralded. Part of that message is given by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15:3-4—the "Gospel"—but it connotes also other doctrines.
[29] "Early Russia," in *The Horizon History of Christianity*, Marshall B. Davidson, ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 258. Some scholars would argue that the Tsar's motivation centered more on political control rather than on personal salvation.
[30] Yakunin, p. 135.

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preaching of Christ our Savior."[31] As the Russian Church evangelizes its own people, regional and global evangelism will likely follow.

Owing to the importance of deciphering the purpose of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church, each of the above-mentioned models should be analyzed in the light of Scriptural texts and potential long range goals.

No one should deny the potential capacity of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church to be a unifying and stabilizing force in the new Russia. According to nationwide surveys conducted by OMRI's Audience and Opinion Research Department in 1995, the Orthodox Church enjoys the highest level of public confidence when compared to the principal institutions in Russia. The question read, "How much confidence do you have in [institution]: a great deal, some, not very much, or none at all?" The percentage of Russians declaring a great deal or some confidence in the Russian Orthodox Church is almost three-fourths of the adult population (72%), which compares to 27 percent for the presidency, 26 percent for the parliament, 38 percent for the judiciary, and 66 percent for the military.[32] However, whereas the need for governmental stability merits serious consideration as a role for the Russian Church, the attachment of the "national idea" to any church is foreign to the divine intent for the Church which Christ established; moreover, there are inherent dangers confronting a church that becomes engaged in promoting national allegiance.

In writing on the subject of the Lutheran Church under the Nazis becoming linked to German nationalism, the prominent Protestant theologian Karl Barth writes,

[31] "Russia's Pope," *Christianity Today* (June 19, 1995), p. 14.
[32] David G. Gibson, "High Public Confidence in the Church," in *Transition* (vol. 2, no. 7, April 5, 1996), p. 29.

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> In Germany there were many reasons to favour this new combination, especially for German Lutheranism.... It was able to become a powerful torrent in which the hitherto divided streams of German church history would be united.... It seemed that like a tidal wave it would refloat the ship of the Church that had run aground and finally carry it out onto the open sea of national life.[33]

But the marriage of the Church to the State, though it was perceived to be expedient in the early 1940s, opened the door to inexplicable cruelty by the state of Jews and non-Teutonic peoples while stripping the Church of its spiritual energy and divine mission. There is a virtual incompatibility and contradiction between the linkage of the Church to a national idea when Scriptural texts repeatedly tie the Christian message to the world. Therefore, to limit the ministry of the Church to national identification, stability or cohesion must be viewed as parsimonious. The nationalistic, political role of the Church reflects a limited geographical domain for ministry and witness with political affairs capturing the priority of the Church's energy.

Again, the Church can be and ought to be a positive influence toward promoting moral standards and developing mutual trust in Russian society as the "moral enhancement" model suggests. Empirical research confirms that behavioral legislation is a weak substitute for inherent morality.[34] Civic clubs indicate a measure of success in cultivating communal morality and trust, but their efforts are circumscribed by the sheer lack of members in their ranks. No one should doubt the efficacy of Church-related endeavors to improve social welfare. If the Church fails to address ubiquitous evils in a given society, which institution will perform that task?

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[33] Karl Barth, "National Idea and Christianity," *Religion, State and Society* (vol. 20, no. 2, 1992), p. 45.

[34] In "Prostitution, the Press, and Agenda-Building in the Soviet Policy Process," Andrea Stevenson Sanjian relates how the Soviets first viewed prostitution as "socially-deviant behavior"; later, with the onset of AIDS, the government imposed penalties for prostitution, but legislation cannot replace inherent morality (in Anthony Jones, *et. al.*, *Soviet Social Problems*. Boulder: Westview, 1991, pp. 270-295).

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Mikhail Gorbachev realized the moral influence of the Church when he met with Patriarch Pimen in 1986. Upon looking to institutions to support his cause, Gorbachev turned to the Church and willingly made concessions to enlist its favor. Nathaniel Davis, in explaining why the last General Secretary of the CPSU granted permission to the Church to celebrate the millennium of Christianity in Russia, declares,

> Early in his incumbency, Gorbachev was searching for allies to make perstroika work. He understood his country needed a moral reawakening if the corruption and cronyism that prevailed during the Brezhnev era were ever to be curbed. A population sodden with alcohol and devoid of a work ethic could not implement perestroika. Glasnost, in Gorbachev's original conception, was less freedom of speech than it was the license to speak up and to denounce the wrongdoer and the evil done. All these goals would require higher ethical standards, and the church could help.[35]

Yet, regardless of the magnitude and benefits of altruism and morality a political leader may exhibit, the ends of his agenda should not prescribe the primary or ultimate direction of the Church. Expediency motivating Gorbachev, Yeltsin, or any of their associates or successors, to grant the Church increased privileges should not distract the Church from discharging a spiritual ministry within it own national boundaries and transnationally. The moral enhancement model merits commendation and cooperation, but the Church's mission extends to broader horizons.

The concept of a sacramental-administration model for the Church's purpose touches a meaningful chord beyond the reach or intention of any other and all other social institutions. Worship, baptism, the Eucharist, anointing ceremonies, and other rituals conducted by clergymen make the Church unique in bridging the gap and witnessing the potential relationship between humankind and God. Sacraments and Christian rites fall

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[35] Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church* (Boulder: Westview Press 1995), p. 59.

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within the exclusive domain of the Church and constitute an integral part of the ministry. But, according to at least one Russian clergyman, the limitation of the Church to the administration of sacraments, however worthy, can jeopardize the spirit of the Church. In a pungent, critical vein, Yakunin writes,

> What is the Moscow patriarch today? For the Orthodox religious consciousness it is becoming a sect that merely performs rites. For most people, including non-believers who continue, out of tradition, to use such services of the church as baptisms and funerals, the church is becoming the religious branch of the consumer services network. For naive tourists from abroad the church is an exotic souvenir of Russia. [36]

Unfortunately, the meaning and efficacy of sacraments and religious rites can be forfeited and forgotten when not associated with the broader purpose of the Church. Sacraments can be viewed as carrying out orders of the hierarchy, or worse, meeting the demands of individuals who make no claim of Christian commitment. Therefore, as important and full of meaning sacraments ought to be, when they are not seen in the context of Christ's mission as that mission is intended to affect mankind, sacraments can be hollow.

The final concept of the Church serving as a rescue mission not only has Church endorsements but, more importantly, Scriptural support. The model comes from the Great Commission of Christ cited in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles as earlier stated. Thus, interpreted correctly, the Church is not intended to be nationalistic in scope but universal; it is not expected to strive only for moral and ethical enhancement in society, but to become a redemptive agent leading to human transformation; and the sacraments administered by the Church do not represent the total ministry of the Church

[36] Yakunin, pp. 135-6.

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but must be seen as "means of grace" (Orthodox view) for enriching the believer's communion with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Prior to the millennium celebrations of the Russian Orthodox Church, Fr. Yakunin made an assessment of the Russian Church and simultaneously presented questions to challenge Church leaders as the millennium approached. He wrote,

> Having survived the catastrophe of the 'great retreat,' a sobered. weakened, and spiritually drained Russia is now at the crossroads. Where will it be a decade from now? Will this great anniversary [millennium celebration] be marked only by regret about past history, or will it be accompanied by an auspicious new beginning for Christianity in Russia? ... Just as it did one thousand years ago, the future of Christianity in Russia depends on the church's leadership and missionaries. Will Russia recognize them and hear their good news about Christ?"[37]

If the divine intention behind the birth of the Christian Church signals a corporate witness starting "at home" and extending to remote global areas, and if earlier Orthodox leaders subscribed to the Scriptural mandate, why is there a void of global ministry in the vision and plans of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church?

The answer is rather obvious. For close to three quarters of a century the Russian Church had to fight for survival in the midst of a persecution era transcending all the horrors, cruelty and demands imposed upon Christians under Roman emperors from 64 to 313 AD. This struggle imposed on Orthodoxy was exacerbated by additional political factors. First, atheistic propaganda under the Soviets succeeded in warping the minds and behavioral patterns of Russian people. Second, isolation from the outside world characterized the official policy of the CPSU; moreover, the Church was forbidden from propagating its beliefs. Third, the Cold War cultivated a spirit of antipathy toward much of the outside world. Fourth, with Marxist leaders desirous of closing churches and the

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

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Russian ruble not used in international exchange, funding for global Church ministries was not feasible. Fifth, restrictions on public mobility precluded travel to all but the highest (and most compromising) bishops of the Church.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Church enjoys a new environment characterized by openness, freedom, potential growth, social influence, and spiritual ministry. At no previous time in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church has the realization of the purpose of the Church been so clearly within its reach. The achievement of that purpose now rests upon the choice of definitive actions that will unite the Church and propel it toward its divinely intended mission.

Sources of Church Authority

The Orthodox Church remains distinct from Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, albeit overlapping doctrines are found in each of these branches of Christianity, as will be observed in chapters IV and V. One of the significant differences between the churches is grounded in the issue of church authority. The cardinal question is, From what source or sources does the Church derive its authority? Traditional Catholicism recognizes the Holy Scriptures as authoritative but insists on adding decrees of Church councils, canon law, Vatican I and II, and papal utterances claiming infallibility. Protestant polemics against Rome became most notable under Martin Luther in 1518, when he proposed the position of *Sola Scriptura* for Church authority, thereby rejecting all outside or additional sources for the Church's faith and practice. Reformation forces never launched a theological beachhead in Russia as it did in Western Europe. Neither did the Counter-Reformation extend to Russia or to the Orthodox Church. Orthodox churches

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essentially follow the pattern of traditional Catholicism, teaching that the Holy Scriptures, edicts of Church synods and councils, and precepts of the Nicene Creed constitute the basis for all Church authority, with importance given also to pronouncements of the patriarch, without positing patriarchal infallibility.

The Orthodox Church often calls itself the Church of the Seven Councils. These convened between 325 and 787 in four places: Nicea (325), Constantinople (382), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), Constantinople (553), Constantinople (680-81), and Nicea (787). The councils condemned as heresy Arianism and monophysitism, defined the person of Jesus Christ, developed the doctrine of the Trinity, redacted Church creeds and addressed vital issues facing the Church. Yet, decisions made by the seven councils did not complete or terminate the development of Church doctrines. Later doctrinal affirmations by the Orthodox hierarchy are viewed as developments of the same original faith of the early Church and contribute guidance to priests for the interpretation of Holy Scriptures and direction for subsequent Church actions.

Ecclesiastical Hierarchy

The chief governing body of the Orthodox Church is the National Council *(Pomestny Sobor)* which is composed of the bishop, a priest and a layman from every diocese. The Council is responsible for important decisions of the Church and for the election of the patriarch. In between Council meetings, daily administrative business is discharged by the Holy Synod, consisting of the patriarch as chairman, five senior bishops who are permanent members, and three other diocesan bishops who serve six month terms. The head bishop may be called patriarch, metropolitan, or archbishop.

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The Orthodox Church recognizes three main ranks of clergy: bishops, priests, and deacons. The diocesan bishop is responsible for pastoral care in parishes under his charge and reports directly to the Patriarch. Suffragent or deputy bishops assist in the same ministries. Parishes are governed by priests who also care for the spiritual well-being of adherents. Large city churches are tended by several priests; small communities are often obliged to share a priest among two or more congregations and may not meet more than once or twice a month. Parish deacons are ordained seminary graduates who officiate in the matin and the Divine Liturgy along with priests and assist in the daily responsibilities pertaining to the local church. Deacons and priests may be married or unmarried, but only unmarried or widowed priests can become bishops.

The marital status of an Orthodox man at the time of his ordination has profound implications. Davis observes, "If he does not marry before ordination, he is expected but not obliged to take monastic vows. A parish priest may not marry after ordination, may not divorce and remarry, and may not remarry if a widower."[38]

Monks also have a role in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Orthodox Church. They have always played an immense role in Russian Orthodox practices. A man enters a monastery as a novice and has the opportunity to withdraw if he so chooses. Opting to remain, the monk takes vows, may adopt a saint's name, and becomes a monastic deacon. After several years in the monastery, he may then become a monastic priest, take on an angelic habit (*mega schema*), change his name again, and commit himself more to a life of prayer and meditation. Within monasteries are holy elders, the *startsa*, who are sought out by devout parishioners who approach them for learning and spiritual renewal. The father

[38] Davis, p. 143.

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superior of the monastery receives the title of Archimandrite, a title that has also become a rank. It is possible for an archimandrite to become a bishop, then be elevated to archbishop or metropolitan, and possibly be elected as patriarch.

As a complement to ecclesiastical ministries, the Orthodox Church sponsors nunneries that play a significant role in the Orthodox tradition. Nuns carry on the ministry of prayer, charity, mercy, and healing. In addition, they make sacramental vessels, produce candles, fashion birth crosses, embroider vestments, sew altar cloths, and bake bread for communion and for blessing and distribution.

Orthodox Doctrines and Liturgy

When one analyzes current distinctions between Christian churches and denominations, he should strive to separate incidentals from essentials in the respective belief systems and practices. Admittedly, there will be disagreements in the categorization. Church doctrines and liturgy constitute factors behind contending forces facing the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church. Generally speaking, incidentals are rooted in such things as forms of worship, the usage and meaning of candles and incense, the liturgical colors and nature of clerical attire, the relationship between church and state, roles of the laity, church architecture, and so on. Essentials encompass belief in the existence and power of God, the incarnation, death, bodily resurrection and ministry of Jesus Christ, the indwelling and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness of sin, the role of faith in the Christian life, the purpose of life, the spiritual condition of humankind, the relationship of human beings to God, and the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Each of

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these tenets falls within the rubric of "orthodoxy" (from the Greek word meaning "right believing").

In 325 AD, Emperor Constantine convened a Council of Bishops in Nicea of Asia Minor for the express purpose of addressing Arianism, a heresy that denied the eternality of Jesus Christ as *Logos*, but the bishops went beyond the original intention of the gathering, proceeding to develop the foundation for one of the strongest documents on Christology that one can find anywhere. The document is called the Nicene Creed. It is this Creed to which Orthodox believers appeal for their principal beliefs. Main emphases of the Creed affirm five convictions: (1) the "sonship" of Christ is preferred to the *Logos* concept emerging from the Gospel of John 1:1,14; (2) the phrase is inserted that Christ is of the being *(ousia)* of the Father; (3) to the word "begotten" (John 1:14) is added "not made," to deny the Arian contention that the *Logos* was "made"; (4) the Son is "one substance" *(homo-ousios)* with the Father; and (5) to the phrase "became flesh" was added "and was made man." Anti-Arian anathemas were appended to the Creed.

Orthodox theologians include among essential doctrines four other tenets. One, the Church is the mystical Body of Christ held together, not by a centralized government or a single prelate, but by a bond of unity in the faith and communion in the sacraments. Accordingly, the patriarch of Istanbul (Constantinople), though known as the Ecumenical or Universal Patriarch and recognized as "first among equals" when compared with other patriarchs, does not have the right to interfere in the internal affairs of other churches. The explanation for such a policy, as indicated in the Introduction, rests on the agreement that each patriarchate is self-governing. Two, there is a legitimate use of icons in the

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Church. Icons are not to be taken lightly, but are to be viewed as symbols of biblical characters and church saints who merit veneration. Orthodox apologetes carefully distinguish between idols which are objects of worship and icons which are symbols of saints. By this means, they reject arguments of iconoclasts who accuse them of idolatry and acknowledge the prohibition of idolatry based on the Mosaic Commandment of Exodus 20:4. Icons, according to Orthodox interpretation, help parishioners understand the incarnation of Jesus: He "became flesh and dwelt among us."[39] Three, sacraments are channels or means by which the grace of God flows to the recipient, enabling him to enjoy rich communion with God and His Son. Like Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians acknowledge seven sacraments. The central sacrament is the Eucharist; the others are baptism, normally by immersion; confirmation; penance; holy orders; matrimony; and anointing of the sick. Additional sacraments are sometimes mentioned, such as blessing someone with water and the rite of burial. Fourth, Orthodoxy classifies as "essential" their rejection of the *filioque* clause, "and of the Son," being included in the doctrine of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent only by the Father; to say otherwise is "heresy" because then "the Trinity is turned upside down."

Some Church doctrines may not be placed either in the "incidentals" or "essentials" basket owing to a variance of priestly views. Orthodox believers venerate Mary as the Mother of God but reject the immaculate conception of Mary. Mary's intercession is invoked because she is perceived to be closer to Jesus than anyone else and is, therefore, the most prominent and holiest member of the Church. Orthodoxy posits the doctrine of apostolic succession of priests based on the organic continuation of the apostolic

[39] John 1:14.

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community, insisting that Orthodox tradition goes back, without a break, to the apostles. Such linkage unites local churches in a community of faith. Orthodox rules, as stated earlier, admit married men to the priesthood, but, bishops are elected from among celibate or widowed clergy. The Church does not practice or acknowledge the ordination of women. Orthodox believers pray for the dead whom they view as "having fallen asleep." And, like Catholics, priests hear confessions of parishioners.

Based on past and current ecclesiastical dialogues between the Orthodox Church and other Christian denominations, there is reason to believe that Orthodox leaders may seek to alter or redefine some Church doctrines and practices in the relatively near future just as the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) altered beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. An Interconfessional Conference was held in Minsk, October 1-3, 1994, in which Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk addressed the participants on the theme of "oneness" among Christians. His message emits a signal of doctrinal change in which the Russian Orthodox Church may temper its traditional alien attitude toward non-Orthodox Christians just as Vatican II began to look upon non-Catholics as "separated brethren" rather than "heretics."[40] And Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, the former Orthodox Exarch of Western Europe, acknowledges the impropriety of calling non-Orthodox believers "heretics" because they too believe earnestly in Jesus Christ and are not to be identified with "fourth century heretics who rejected the deity or human nature of Jesus Christ."[41]

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[40] This Interconfessional Conference is described at length in chapter VII of this study.
[41] Metropolitan Anthony of Surozh, "The Russian Church is Boiling Now," printed in *Metaphrasis, no. 58.* Distributed by Bishop Seraphim of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Japan (October 18, 1996).

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In the realm of practice, the Synod of Orthodox Bishops that met in 1994 at the Danilov Monastery, cited earlier, voted to "make every attempt to make the meaning of the church service and of religious texts accessible and comprehensible."[42] Though lacking specificity, this statement alludes to the Church reconsidering the language question in liturgy and the relevance in worship for Russian people which at this time may be marginal. Patriarch Aleksi, according to Pospielovsky, "agrees that a gradual russification of church services is inevitable."[43]

Liturgy in the Orthodox Church is a kaleidoscope of rich, meaningful symbolism fastened to every observed object. The Greek word for liturgy is λειτουργια which derives from λαος, people, and εργον, work. Originally, the term referred to public duty of any kind, the discharging of responsibility to neighbors and the general public, but later it was adopted specifically for religious services in which the Eucharist is celebrated. Orthodox clergy affirm that the supreme purpose of the Liturgy is to be interpreted in spiritual terms. Therefore, in *The Orthodox Liturgy*, by the Reverend Nicon D. Patrinacos, worshippers are reminded,

> The Liturgy should be regarded neither as a presentation nor a representation of a dramatic theme as this would be presented on the stage today. In spite of its dramatic character and the esthetics of presentation as regards both the visual and auditory arts, the Liturgy is not theater even in the most sublime meaning of the term.... The purpose and heart of the Orthodox liturgical experience transcends the visual and the auditory confrontation of the believer attending church.[44]

While some worshippers might allege that celebrants "perform" the Liturgy, in the strictest sense of the term, celebrants are expected to enter into worship with all participants under

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[42] "Minutes" of Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church (Nov. 29 - Dec. 4, 1994), cited above.
[43] Pospielovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church," p. 256.
[44] Nikon B. Patrinacos, *The Orthodox Liturgy* (Garwood, NJ: Graphic Arts Press, 1976).

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the guidance of the Spirit of God to witness the changing of sacraments into the communion of life everlasting.

The Eucharist derives from the Greek ευχαριστια, meaning thanksgiving. A more common term in other branches of Christianity is Holy Communion or simply the Communion Service. If worshippers seek an esthetic experience by participating in the Eucharist, they forfeit the intent of "sacrificial praise" offered in gratitude for the redemption of the Cross and the personal appropriation of that redemption by way of the communion of the sacramental blood of Christ.

Orthodox services begin with "matin," a preparation for true worship usually lasting 20 to 30 minutes, similar to Morning Prayer in the Anglican tradition. Matin is followed by the "divine liturgy," as explained earlier in the chapter. Hymnals are not used in Orthodox churches by parishioners; songs are sung from memory. Orthodox worshippers are inseparably participants of things said and done within the sanctuary, responding to utterances of the priest, even holding a kind of conversation with him, thus elevating them from the role of spectators to the role of an ancient Greek chorus. It is in this sense that worshippers, individually and collectively, make up the mystical Body of Christ.

Divisions within the Church

From the perspective of numerous Orthodox clergy, the present danger facing the Church is the encroachment of Western-supported religious representatives upon Russian culture and territory. While *glasnost* opened the door of freedom for Russian Orthodoxy, the Church hierarchy never contemplated the massive incursion of Western non-Orthodox

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clergy and volunteers that would descend upon Russian soil to set down distinct religious stakes apart from, and often in competition with, the Orthodox Church. The phenomenon of well-financed Western ecclesiastical representatives arriving in Russia during and following the Gorbachev era generated no little consternation among Orthodox clergy. As of December 1992, according to *Pravoslavnaya Rus*, more than 700 Western Christian agencies were operating in Russia.[45]

In response to this incursion, Orthodox clergy as early as 1990 initiated talks with friendly legislators in the Supreme Soviet, suggesting appropriate legislation to curtail the influence of Western clergy. By the summer of 1991 the Supreme Soviet agreed to allow preaching by Western clergymen who had been invited officially by recognized churches of the Council of Religious Affairs, but the decision lacked official significance as soon as the Soviet Union collapsed. Repeated attempts by the Church to have a similar measure passed by the Russian Federation Duma have been met with a veto by Boris Yeltsin.[46] Such efforts signaled a defensive posture for numerous Orthodox clergy, setting the tone for their activities in the midst of the new freedoms. Chapters IV and V of this study plumb greater depths of these contending forces.

From an analysis of Russian Orthodox problems, however, non-Orthodox forces and foreign church personnel ought to be considered less important than what one discovers within the Church itself. As the Church struggles with exogenous forces, it confronts a schism in its own backyard. As intimated earlier, Russian Orthodox clergy evidence a serious lack of unity. Not only are they divided over the purpose of the

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[45] *Pravoslavnaya Rus* (no. 24, December 15/28, 1992), p. 16.
[46] *Ibid.*

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Church, but an equally ominous situation emerges over the legitimacy of the present hierarchy, a generational divide stemming from a debate over the authoritarian leadership of the Church, and the proliferation of movements and organizations seeking to be separated from the Moscow patriarchate.

A considerable amount of modern dissension in the Church is rooted in the crises for control of the Church which emerged during the first decade following the Bolshevik Revolution; i. e., the incarceration or exile of ten of the eleven ruling prelates of the Church between 1925 and 1927, the loyalty oath to the Soviet Union made by Metropolitan Sergei (Stragorodski) of Nizhni-Novgorod in 1927, and increased restrictions placed upon local congregations.

The loyalty oath of Metropolitan Sergei described the Soviet Union "as our civil motherland, whose joys and successes are our joys and successes, and whose misfortunes are our misfortunes."[47] This oath immediately plagued the Church and has been repeated in spirit by subsequent prelates. Though allegations against the Orthodox hierarchy for bowing to and cooperating with the KGB constantly hurt the Church prior to Gorbachev's election as General Secretary of the CPSU, *perestroika* and *glasnost* unveiled a true and more complete story of such collaboration. In 1987, the journal *Glasnost* published police accounts of meetings between the KGB and Patriarchs Pimen and Aleksi who purportedly passed on confidential information about fellow clerics and Church administrators. In 1990, Major General Oleg Kalugin, former KGB leader, declared that top functionaries of the Russian Orthodox Church were on the payroll of the

[47] Nikita Struve, *Christians in Contemporary* Russia (New York: Scribners, 1967), p. 44; Matthew Spinka, *The Church in Soviet Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1967), p. 66.

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KGB.[48] Such accusations gave momentum to additional criticism and subsequently to demands for a thorough investigation.

Nathaniel Davis writes, "If storm clouds gathered against the Russian Orthodox Church in 1990 and 1991, gales of hurricane force struck it in 1992. In January, the long-brewing tempest over episcopal collaboration with the KGB broke over the heads of church leaders."[49] KGB files became accessible to parliamentary commissions and Orthodox researchers. Among the Orthodox representatives were Father Vyacheslav Polosin, chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet's Committee on Freedom of Conscience, Father Gleb Yakunin, deputy of the Russian Supreme Soviet, and Alexander Nezhny, a journalist. They unveiled the names of Orthodox metropolitans who, while in office, were agents of the KGB: Filaret of Kiev, code-named "Antonov"; Yuvenali of Krutitsa, code-named "Adamant"; Pitirim of Volokolamsk, code-named "Abbat," and Mefodi of Voronezh, code-named "Pavel."[50]

Archbishop Chrysostom of Vilnius openly admitted working with the KGB under the code-name "Restorer," but insists, "I was never a stool pigeon."[51] His word bares vindication on the basis that he was removed from Kursk, the next to the largest diocese of the Russian Federation, and placed in remote Irkutsk where his parish responsibilities were one-sixth of what they were previously.

Be that as it may, distrust toward the Orthodox hierarchy pervades much of the Church today. Accusations and counter-accusations continue among the clergy. Some of

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[48] *Orthodox Life* (no. 3, May-June 1992), p. 25.
[49] Davis, p. 94.
[50] *Ogonëk* (no. 18-19, 1992), p. 12.
[51] *Russkaya Mysl* (no. 3926, April 24, 1992), p. 8.

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the disaffection toward the Russian Orthodox Church stems from accusations of ecclesiastical imperialism, but more of the disaffection denotes hierarchical collusion with former Soviet authorities in the persecution of believers. Some clergy who battled godless authorities under the Soviets have made common cause with breakaway churches, insisting that until the hierarchy of the traditional Church evidences genuine repentance there will be massive division in the Church.

The magnitude and broad representation of such divisiveness alludes to a critical impasse for the Church as it endeavors to discharge its high and holy calling. Will clerical repentance quell the storm of distrust, as certain clergy suggest? Or, is it possible to identify and defrock former collaborators who brought disdain and stagnancy upon the Church, as other clergymen demand? Or, must the Church wait until the generation of former KGB-clergy operatives departs from active roles in the Church for a revived and rejuvenated hierarchy to set the direction for the Church? No competent analyst offers a definitive answer to these queries. Realistically, one can conjecture that each of these supposed remedies contributes to an implementation of a goal set on "collaborator-cleansing," but none is likely to be legislated specifically by the National Council *(Pomestny Sobor)* or adopted by the Holy Synod. By failing to address this issue more directly, however, the Church gives dissident Orthodox churches reasonable arguments for following their own agendas and for the promotion of increased popular questioning.

The conflict goes beyond the legitimacy of current Church leaders who compromised convictions in deference to Soviet demands; it entails a debate over the Church's authoritarian leadership that also initiates a schism. Older clergy tend to embrace

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the authoritarian model of leadership which seeks to recover "the privileged position that Russian Orthodoxy obtained in the late Soviet period to become again a fully established state-church with social discipline from the top down."[52] For the authoritarians, Russia can be victimized again by the materialism of Western cultures just as it became victimized by Marxism and is now victimized by market economies. Orthodoxy offers society freedom from the perversion of Western values, a rewarding alternative to the atheism of Soviet ideology, and the optimum foundation for daily spiritual life. All other religious routes constitute a mere mirage of hope for weary and depressed Russians.

"By contrast," writes Billington, "the rival, younger reformers in the church want internal, moral renewal of Orthodoxy and a total catharsis of the Soviet legacy. They see past hierarchical collaboration with Soviet authorities as an argument not so much for selective purges of the Church leadership as for some kind of corporate cleansing and formal repentance of the church as a whole."[53] They fear subordination of the Church to the state.[54] Billington adds,

> For many of the newly converted young Orthodox, both within and without the clergy, the need for a totally fresh start is so profound that they are increasingly willing to seek individual spiritual rebirth in conversion to Catholicism, or (more often) to evangelical Protestantism and Pentecostalism because of official Orthodoxy's perceived indifference to genuine institutional rebirth.[55]

Of course it would be incorrect to classify all older clergy as authoritarians or all younger clergy as reformers, but the generalization inherent in the observation just cited is supported by clergy and laity alike as one visits Russia's reforming churches.

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[52] James H. Billington, "Christianity and the Russian Transformation" (*Anglican Episcopal History*, vol. 64, no. 1, March 1995), p. 11.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[54] Billington, "Notes on the Current State of the Orthodox Church," p. 5.
[55] *Ibid.*

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Billington compares the zeal of these young reformers to that of Old Testament prophets who possessed "a passion for justice and a vision of building the church's revival on the faith of a righteous remnant from the Soviet era rather than on the imperial conquest of a righteous Russia. The reformers liken Orthodoxy's delivery from Communism to the delivery of the Jews from bondage under the Pharaohs."[56] Like the legitimacy issue, the problem posed by generational differences will hardly disappear until older clergy lose their authority.

The third contending force emanating from the ranks of the traditional Orthodox Church is a schism leading to the founding of competing Orthodox churches and to the transfer of some local churches from patriarchate rule to the newly established Orthodox assemblies. The possibility of such action rests on Orthodox policy that prescribes independence to local churches. Local church property does not belong to the patriarchate. Therefore, theoretically, the priest of any parish, if winsome and persuasive, has the potential to influence the relationship between a local church and central authorities. Moreover, when worshippers in any local church dislike policies and procedures enacted by the patriarchate, they can search for non-patriarchate Orthodox churches in which to worship or decide to attend non-Orthodox churches. The ramifications of such options certainly cause dismay to patriarchate leaders.

To analyze the gravity of the situation, one can examine the history of the Old Believers who emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century in reaction against the liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon (1652-1667). "Old Believers stubbornly defended their convictions and practices, and, when given the opportunity, proved remarkably adept

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

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at surviving, coping and prospering in as sinful world."[57] The schism introduced by Nikon continues to the present day. Kent Hill estimates their number to be "two million or more."[58] Some Old Believers select their own metropolitan, have their own churches, monastery, and cemetery, and minimize the importance of secular authority. Thus, descendants of seventeenth century Old Believers constitute a lingering force against the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church and also present a pattern for dissent within the Russian Church.

Other dissenting groups have abandoned the Mother Church since the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1921, Metropolitan Antoni (Khrapovitski) of Kiev met with Russian clergy in the Serbian town of Stremski Karlovci to protest the Bolshevik government. The meeting resulted in the founding of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA) and the proselytization not only of Russian émigrés but also to Russians inside the homeland and internationally. The ROCA was openly condemned by the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1994.[59] Inside the Federation, the ROCA is known as the Russian Orthodox Free Church (ROFC). In 1960, the ROCA opposed the proposal of Metropolitan Nikodim, head of the Office of Foreign Religious Affairs, to join the World Council of Churches.[60] The proposal was interpreted to be counter to Orthodox principles. Though the ROCA failed to alter Nicodim's decision, it gained adherents

[57] Robert O. Crummey, "Old Belief as Popular Religion: New Approaches," in *Slavic Review* (Winter, 1993), p.700.
[58] Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1991), p. 351.
[59] The "minutes" read: "condemn the non-canonical actions of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad on Russian soil (parallel structures) and propose a dialogue 'without any preconditions,'" p. 1.
[60] Davis, p. 39.

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through its stand. As Nikita Khrushchev sought to close numerous churches during the same period of time, the ministry of ROCA and ROFC became increasingly appealing.

When *glasnost* altered the ecclesiastical landscape of Russia, dissident clerics united with the ROFC taking their parish and parishioners with them. The movement spread across all of Russia, from the Baltics to the eastern region of Khabarovsk.[61] From January 1991 to the end of 1994, the ROFC constituent communities grew from about 40 to close to 100 and the Church purports a pattern of continued expansion.[62] This should not be interpreted to mean that the ROFC constitutes a strong competitive force for the Russian Orthodox Church at this time; however, the pattern of popular acceptance of and clerical transfers to the ROFC in the post-Soviet period can be described as a serious omen to a divided Church.

Another dissenting Church merits consideration as a contending force. As Russian émigré clergy started the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, other clergymen and laity within Russia gave birth to the True Orthodox Church as a reaction to the loyalty declaration made by Metropolitan Sergei in 1927. Founded as an underground body of believers, the True Orthodox Church established a hierarchical structure to govern Church affairs and arrange meetings. The Church continued to function until Stalin reinstituted his antireligious drive following World War II at which time the Church was effectively shut down. During the same period, the so-called True Orthodox Christians succeeded in worshipping together because they were not tied to a structure and not so easily detected. Davis affirms, "Some of the offshoot communities of the True Orthodox

[61] *Moskovski Tserkovnii vestnik* (nos. 18-19, 1992), p. 6.
[62] Davis, p. 77.

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Christians withdrew to live as hermits in the deep forest (the *skiyniki*); others took vows of silence not to betray their faith to the forces of the Antichrist (*molchalniki*); still others renounced life itself and committed suicide."[63]

With the dramatic political changes introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev and a corresponding freedom to worship granted to believers, underground and catacomb churches slowly surfaced to meet publicly for worship. In one Soviet governmental publication, *Religion in the USSR*,[64] an announcement is made that the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation officially registered the Inter-Regional Religious Administration of the True Orthodox Church in May 1991. Though varied accounts of the True Orthodox Church and True Orthodox Christians give an impression of several scattered communities, it is difficult to determine the full breadth of their presence or the size of their constituency. What is more meaningful, perhaps, is the witness of True Orthodox Christians to unrelenting fidelity to the Christian faith. It is that witness which may attract discontented Orthodox believers and non-Church inquirers to their churches.

Contending forces within Russian Orthodoxy have the potential of impeding the influence and the growth of the patriarchate Church more all other competing denominations or religions. Just as internal dissension and schisms have contributed to a steady decline of membership in mainline denominations of the West, so can they affect the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church. Opposition from outside an ecclesiastical camp may be severe, threatening and dangerous, but opposition from within the camp, if allowed to continue, will inevitably lead to ill-will and church stagnation.

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[63] *Ibid.* p. 133.
[64] *Religion in the USSR* (no. 5, May 1991), p. 26.

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Educating Clergymen and Regaining Adherents

Two daunting tasks confront the Russian Orthodox Church as it responds to contemporary opportunities: it must establish an aggressive educational program for the training of a new generation of priests, and it must seek to regain and indoctrinate Orthodox adherents.

There is a shortage of priests for the estimated 10,000 Orthodox churches in Russia today.[65] This shortage becomes understandable when the strategy of the Soviets toward religion is exposed. In their quest to terminate ecclesiastical activities, the Soviets annihilated or imprisoned the majority of priests and sought to shut down most of the religious training institutions. Soviet achievements against priests from 1917 to 1946 are well documented:

> There were more than 50,000 Orthodox priests before the Russian Revolution; by mid-1939 there were no more than 300-400.... As Stalin courted Church favor during World War II, the ranks of clergy increased. In early 1946, there were 8,500 Orthodox priests serving 10,500 registered church societies, but only 3.5 percent of priests and deacons had a university or theological academy degree; 39 percent more had graduated from a high school-level seminary, but more than half had not advanced beyond a basic primary school education. Eight percent of the clerics were under 41 years of age; 16 percent were 40 to 50; 31 percent were 51 to 60; 33 percent were 60 to 70, and 12 percent were over 70.[66]

Under Khrushchev there was a precipitous decline of clergymen, dropping to as low as 6,800 by 1964. This trend continued under Brezhnev until 1975 when the number of priests amounted to less than 6,000.[67]

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[65] Patrick Henry, "Church Backing, More Symbol Than Votes," in *Moscow Times* (May 25, 1996), p. 1. The Moscow patriarchate data suggests the existence of 15,000 churches within the Russian Orthodox Church which include churches outside Russia (*Tserkovnii vestnik*, 8/105, 1994).

[66] Davis, pp. 115-116.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

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With the dawn of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the USSR, the number of priests increased to about 7,000 in 1989 and to 8,000 in 1993.[68] But as priests increased in numbers, Orthodox churches expanded to over 11,000 in the Soviet Union, leaving a gap of about 3,000 between available Orthodox priests and existing churches.[69]

One of the most demanding tasks facing the Russian Church, therefore, is that of enlisting and adequately training the number of clergy required to capitalize on the influx of new members, to attract unchurched people to the Church, and to satisfy the psychological and intellectual needs of a highly educated population. Analytical curves comparing the educational level of Orthodox clergy to the average educational level of Russian citizens would reveal a marked decline for the clergy and a substantial increase for parishioners during the Soviet period of Russian history. Theological education failed to keep up with the elevation of secular education offered to Russians. The explanation for the variation is clear: the official Communist policy toward religion limited theological instruction and curtailed enlistments in seminaries and monasteries.[70]

Recognizing the consistency of atheistic propaganda that molded the minds and souls of Russians for three-quarters of a century with little or no competing theistic input, one acknowledges the difficulty of unwinding the patterns of doubt imposed upon the general public. Regardless of the moral and spiritual optimism generated by the collapse

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[68] Davis, chart on page 126.

[69] *Ibid.* One must keep in mind that apparent discrepancies between various authors on numbering Orthodox adherents and parishes are often due to data, on the one hand, that takes into consideration the entire Soviet Union, and, on the other hand, calculations limited to the Russian Federation. Moreover, the problem is sometimes compounded by the absence of reliable information.

[70] See Gleb Yakunin, "The Present State of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Prospects for Religious Revival in Russia," in Sergei Pushkarev, *et. al., Christianity and Government in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Boulder: Westview, 1989). Yakunin refers to academic restrictions placed upon seminaries and students by the state prior to 1989 in order to control both and thereby stifle religion (pp. 129-131).

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of official Communism, behavioral realists understand that people submerged in one ideology for decades do not readily abandon its tenets. Conversations with Russians today reveal a pattern of prevailing Marxist materialism and atheism. Can poorly trained clergy relate adequately to people whose educational level reflects a broad disparity with their own? Can untrained clergy engage in effective Christian apologetics with educated masses? At best, the result will be only marginal success. Thus, there is the need for a more educated clergy.

Two questions are paramount for Orthodox leaders to address: How can the Church effectively enlist and train the new generation of priests? and, How long will it take the Church to produce clergy who can hold their own on the same academic playing field as the average of Russian citizens? The challenge is great.

Walter Sawatsky refers to seven seminaries functioning in postcommunist Russia. They are located in St. Petersburg, Moscow (Zagorsk), Kursk, Saratov, Stavropol, Tobolsk and Tomsk. The average enrollment in each of these schools is estimated to be 200.[71] Dimitry Pospielovsky refers to eight Orthodox seminaries operating in Russia but does not identify all locations, albeit he mentions Smolensk, a city that can be added to the list given by Sawatsky.[72] Seminaries in Russia offer four years of what is called in the West "undergraduate" studies, but graduates of these training schools are considered to be ready for ordination and ministerial service. Theological academies in Russia offer post-graduate degrees and have far fewer students than the seminaries. As an example,

[71] Walter Sawatsky, Visions in Conflict: Starting Anew Through the Prism of Leadership Training," in Niels C. Nielsen, Jr., *Christianity After Communism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), p. 125.
[72] Pospielovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church," pp. 258, 253.

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Moscow Theological Academy accepted only 28 students for the first year class in 1993.[73] The only other theological academy in Russia is in St. Petersburg where student enrollment is less than 200. The St. Petersburg Academy could accommodate more students, "almost doubling its teaching and living space," but the patriarchate lacks the funds necessary for a larger enrollment.[74]

On the basis of statistics offered by Pospielovsky and Sawatsky, one calculates that the total number of students in seminaries and theological academies is between 1,500 and 1,800 with a high percentage attending the seminaries. Whereas at first sight, these numbers may appear impressive, one must remember they represent a wide period of academic training. Moreover, seminaries, like universities, suffer student attrition; besides, all students who complete either level of theological training cannot be counted on as filling parish vacancies. So the Church must turn to another source of Christian training to fill the depleted ranks of clergymen. Fortunately, there are eighteen interdiocesan spiritual schools functioning now in Russia that offer a two year program that was designed originally to train church leaders, Sunday school teachers, and choir directors. These schools now serve as a pool for ordinations as well.[75] Unfortunately, the schools are obliged to use church facilities rather than having separate buildings and often lack adequate space for classrooms. Two schools fitting within this category are sponsored by the Church of the Dormition and the Church of St. Cosmas and St. Damian in Moscow which are pastored by Frs. Kotchetkov and Borisov respectively. Pospielovsky comments,

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[73] *Ibid.*, p. 253.
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

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> The opening of new parishes in the postcommunist era has been so rapid and extensive, however, that even despite the fact that the number of seminaries has grown from three in the whole USSR in 1987 to eight in Russia alone by 1994 ... and that extra mural sections have been opened in almost all of them, they have not caught up with the need for more priests.[76]

The problem emerging from the shortage of priests is exacerbated by the present inability of the Orthodox Church to provide adequate and effective training to the students in the various institutions. Three serious issues inhibit the seminaries from offering quality ministerial and theological training. One, the financial crisis is responsible for limited space for classrooms and study halls, poor libraries, and inadequate technological equipment to capitalize on the availability of good theological materials. Two, there is a shortage of qualified theological professors. Scholars are available who hold doctorates in atheism gained during the Soviet period, "who would teach such subjects as Orthodox doctrine in an 'objective' manner-- that is, in the same way they had taught the same subjects formerly at institutes of 'scientific atheism'," but they are unqualified to address the spiritual vacuum that characterizes the new Russia.[77] Three, the nature of contemporary seminary instruction conveys an image of paranoia, of doom and of defeat rather than inculcating to the students a conviction of rich theology and a broad array of optimistic opportunities. Pospielovsky clearly describes this problem and its influence upon the students:

> Within two years of study most of their [the students'] religious enthusiasm, fired by love of Christ and their fellow men and open to the world, is replaced by a sense of being encircled by enemies, by the desire to isolate themselves from the sinful world around them and by the suspicion that they are surrounded by Judeo-Masonic plots against the Orthodox Church. Their monastic fathers tell them of doomsday forthcoming in the immediate future and of the futility of learning in such circumstances.... All too often a student entering the seminary full of

[76] *ibid.*
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 254.

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> enthusiasm looses all that enthusiasm after two or three years of study and becomes a total mediocrity as a priest on ordination.[78]

These three problems must be taken seriously by church leaders. In ecclesiastical circles one hears the maxim, "As the seminaries go, so go the churches." It is obvious that the future of any denomination or branch of Christianity depends largely on the human products of the training institutions. This maxim is applicable to the Russian Orthodox Church. Its leaders must now place seminary and academy instruction as high priorities if they aspire to attract non-believers to church and to instruct properly the people now attending the churches.

In the meanwhile, there is another way by which young priests can become inspired and receive additional training for the Christian ministry. Successful parish clergy can serve as role models to seminarians and seminary graduates by enlisting them in the ministries of the church, by tying them into the expanding church activities, and by counseling and encouraging them in the high and holy calling of the priesthood.

As the Church hierarchy strives to increase the number of priests through effective solicitation and an increased number of training institutions, it must also prepare the newly ordained priests for the indoctrination of current Church members and the evangelization of unchurched citizens. When the freshness of *glasnost* has worn off, contemporary clergy will be forced to acknowledge that church growth is not to be taken for granted.

There must be a plan for effective discipleship instituted by the church to motivate adherents to live as authentic Christians and give witness to their faith. In like manner, there must be a magnetism about the make-up of a local church, its liturgy, and its clergy

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[78] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

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to attract newcomers to church. Decades of church stagnation must be transformed into spiritual vitality if the Russian Orthodox Church is to expand.

A Paradigm for Church Growth

A splendid paradigm for the kind of character needed for church growth is available through analyzing the well-publicized ministry of Father Dmitry Dudko's in and around Moscow.[79] After spending six and a half years in labor camps, Dudko ministered in the Church of St. Nicholas in Moscow. Natalia Solzhenitsyn describes his magnetism as follows: "After every encounter with him you are left with the feeling: how deep and joyful is his faith! He is a man of surprising integrity and simplicity, and his preaching finds a direct and accurate path to the peoples' heart."[80] Dudko is best known for his informal Saturday evening sessions with parishioners during which time he allowed them to ask questions about doctrines, the church, prayer and faith. He was highly skilled as a Christian apologist. People liked the freshness of his reasoning, the warmth of his personality, and his fearless commitment to God and the Church. Youth particularly were drawn to him for forthrightness, spiritual counsel and guidance

In a sermon delivered on April 20, 1974 Dudko proclaimed "Atheists are taking advantage of our fear of suffering. They oppress our spirits, our free thoughts and feelings. They abuse us. We must overcome our fear and suffering and then we shall be truly free, vital, active, and invincible...."[81]. So successful was he that Soviet authorities

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[79] See Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1991), pp. 105-111; Eugene B. Shirley, Jr. and Michael Rowe, eds., *Candle in the Wind* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1989), pp. 130-136; Davis, pp. 50-51.

[80] Quoted by Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 310.

[81] Quoted in *Religion in Communist-Dominated Areas* (vol. 20, nos. 1-3, 1981), p. 10.

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decided to pressure Patriarch Pimen to transfer him to a parish in a Moscow suburb. Again he attracted such a large flock that official authorities, in an outrage, demanded that the Patriarch discharge him from the parish. Against the intervention of the World Council of Churches and protests from like-minded Orthodox clergy, Dudko continued to be harassed by Soviet authorities. On January 15, 1980 twelve KGB officers took Dudko into custody. He was placed in the dreaded Leforovo prison in Moscow.[82] In January 1981 Dudko, broken by his interrogators, recanted for his "anti-Soviet" activities. On June 20 his recantation was seen on national television by millions of Soviets who heard him declare his arrest was "not for believing in God but for crime." Released after his imprisonment, Dudko announced, "I cannot forgive myself for my weakness." Later in 1981, the criminal charges against Dudko were formally dropped due to his "repentance."[83]

To understand what characterizes the life of Father Dmitry Dudko, one can review the commendation offered by Natalia Solzhenitsyn: he is a man of "deep and joyous faith," of "surprising integrity and simplicity;" his "preaching" is "direct and accurate"; he reaches a "person's heart." Such marks of character attract nonbelievers to the church and can serve as a means for healing schismatic wounds in the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church. In the absence of this character in the priests, the Church will continue to convey Nathaniel Davis' sentiment of "A long walk to Church."

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[82] Political analysts chided President Ronald Reagan for his reference to the Soviet regime as the "evil empire" when speaking before the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando Florida, 1981. The story of Father Dudko and that of numerous other religious dissenters counters such criticism.

[83] This account of Father Dudko is based primarily on the text of Kent Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink*, pp. 105-11.

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CHAPTER II

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Study of the environment in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union affords analysts a broad spectrum of data for determining opportunities and hindrances confronting contemporary ecclesiastical endeavors. Aristotle affirms that people and their environment are inseparable. This goes well beyond ecological, climatic and geographical phenomena which attract considerable environmental attention. Just as Harold and Margaret Sprout suggest that international politics cannot be fully understood without reference to "environmental factors, human as well as non-human, intangible as well tangible,"[1] the same principle can be applied to churches when one seeks to understand local, national or international affairs.

When analyzing contending forces confronting the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church, one finds sufficient evidence to suggest that the social and economic environments are second only to internal Church dissension in impeding its influence and growth. When the Soviet Union collapsed, clergymen inside Russia and beyond its borders spoke euphorically about the emerging influence of the Church in the New Russia. Westerners, in particular, associated opportunities for the church as indicative of the introduction of democracy and *laissez-faire* marketing in Russia. After all, the Soviet collapse offered theorists a parallelism with a post-war phenomenon in global affairs.

[1] Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs with Special Reference to International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 27.

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Historically, an armistice following a high level war motivates human beings to return to spiritual roots, to ecclesiastical values, and to church pews. No one will deny that the Cold War for Russians ended with a sense of considerable loss in economic power and political prestige so that Russians came face to face with an awareness of an impractical official ideology, the loss of personal security as they knew it, and a bewildering future to be shaped by unknown political and sociological forces. Such factors often serve to promote religious beliefs, church attendance and involvement.

Whereas trends in Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union at first corroborated impressions of a sweeping spiritual revival in the land dominated by Marxism for seventy years, the social and economic environments now reveal symptoms of apathy and even alienation toward the Church. In recent years, Russia has been a disappointment for many people closely linked to the Russian Church. Anticipated popular responses toward Church programs, liturgy, and ministries frequently become mere dreams owing to a sociological environment marked by secular interests and residual Marxist dogma. Ironically, the secularism stressed by Marx under "scientific materialism" reflects shades of Westernization with Marxist and Western cultures converging to question Church doctrines and practices. Therefore, this chapter examines the ramifications of social and economic domestic factors upon the Russian Church.

The Death of Sovietism

The breakup of the Soviet Union ushered in sweeping social changes. Above everything else, it brought about the death of Sovietism, the Marxist ideology and structure intended to produce the "new Soviet man," "dictatorship of the proletariat," and

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the "withering away of the state." The colossal failure of Sovietism, however, is best witnessed in the survival of the Church in the midst of the most severe persecution and sanctions ever to come upon a national body of Christians.[2] In fact, following the collapse of the USSR in December 1991, the one social entity that had been anathematized by official Soviet actions and policy more than any other institution of the Motherland for over seven decades became the greatest benefactor of the Soviet demise. When Sovietism died the Russian Church breathed new life.

The breath of new life was manifested in two ways. First, moral and ethical values posited by the Church emerged to replace Soviet norms of behavior described succinctly as utilitarian, i.e., the end justifies the means. As early as mid-1988, William Van Den Bercken wrote of "The Rehabilitation of Christian Ethical Values in the Soviet Media."[3] He notes the recognition of "universal human values" that represent "a break with a past dominated by class morals and partisan ethics, to which even the individual conscience of the citizen is subordinated."[4] The intelligentsia as well as commoners rejected the Soviet emphasis upon class morality at the expense of individual responsibility and proper conduct. Gorbachev's tolerance toward religious teachings and practices was a mild admission of the state's inability to provide existential meaning. The consistency of Gorbachev in implementing *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and *demokratizatsiya*, even when resultant actions went counter to his own utopian Marxism, must be acknowledged as the launching pad for the regeneration of Orthodox morality among Russians. Additional

[2] Documentation on Soviet persecution against the Russian Church is recorded by several reputable authors, among whom are Spinka, Struve, Pospielovsky, Ellis and Hill.
[3] William Ven Den Bercken, *Religion in Communist Lands* (vol. 17, no. 1, Spring 1989), pp. 4-18. The journal (RCL) footnote states that the article "covers the period until mid-1988."
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 5

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energy for this morality came from individuals such as Dmitri Likhachev, chairman of the Soviet Cultural Fund, who called incessantly for moral renewal of Russian society based on Christian precepts.

As the Soviet Union was collapsing, the breath of new life in the Russian Church was also revealed by a marked increase in Russians who confessed belief in the existence of God. Tony Carnes writes, "Between April 1990 and April 1991, the number of people expressing certainty in the existence of God exploded. It was part of a general rise in spiritual interest and conviction."[5] According to a public opinion poll of respondents faced with the statement, "I am sure that God exists," only twelve percent of Russians responded positively in 1990 compared to thirty-four percent in 1991.[6] Coupled with an expanding support for theism was an increased interest in the Russian Church. Hedrick Smith refers to Russian nationalists who "are angry at the Soviet system for its destruction of their homeland," and adds, "the Orthodox Church is their ideological anchor."[7]

As the pillars of military hardware, superpower status, benefactor to exploited peoples, and technological acumen began to crack in the Soviet Union, citizens sought more reliable foundations. There was nowhere to turn but to the Church, prompting Van Den Bercken to affirm, "that the emotionally and spiritually attractive powers of the Russian Orthodox Church are undiminished in spite of the church's decline as a socially active institution."[8] Van Den Bercken reflects an awareness on the part of Russian commentators of residual spiritual energy even after unrelenting oppression.

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[5] Tony Carnes, "Modern Moscow: Its Religions and Moral Values," in *Urban Mission* (March 1996), p. 30.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[7] Hedrick Smith, "*The New Russians* (New York: Random House, 1990), p. 403.
[8] Van Den Bercken, p. 5.

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The Russian Orthodox Church in 1992 found itself on the stage of popularity, with permission to regain property lost to the Soviets under Stalin in the 1920s and 30s and under Khrushchev in the late 1950s and early 60s, to rebuild churches either destroyed or converted into museums, to offer religious instruction to inquirers, to worship freely, to publish books and periodicals, and to carry out ministries relating to all sorts of charity. Regardless of the weakened state of the Church caused by internal divisiveness, compromising officials, and official sanctions, the Russian Church emerged with sufficient popular appeal and spiritual light to constitute an oasis for a suffering, fledgling populace. With the fall of the USSR, and thus the end of official atheism, Russians of all ages started back to Church.

However, the Russian Church soon confronted social barriers to popular acceptance of its teachings. Though the Soviet system of government expired, residual tenets of Soviet ideology remained to challenge the Russian Church.

Marxist Erosion of Religious Values

Seven decades of a dominant ideology, in spite of its weaknesses, is sufficient time to alter the values and beliefs of any population. Constantine Simon more pointedly affirms, "[T]he residue of seventy years of antireligious ideology taints the *Weltanschauung* of the *homo postsovieticus.*"[9] Marxist ideology pervaded school instruction, parental and familial instruction, media coverage, political policy, and all other phases of Russian life. Some Russians are capable of dispensing with Marxist tenets, cognizant of the despair it imposes on the population; others reflect positively on Marxist

[9] Constantine Simon, "How Russians See Us: Jesuit Russian Relations Then and Now," in *Religion, State & Society* (vol. 23, no. 4, December 1995), p. 352.

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teachings of "scientific" atheism, class struggle, and utopian dreams, all of which compete with the Russian Church.

On university campuses in Moscow and in St. Petersburg, this writer was told repeatedly by students that their lack of interest in church affairs stems from the fact that they were deprived of religious instruction all through the formative years of their life and exposed incessantly to atheism, scientific theories, and propaganda against the church.

Natasha, a graduate of the State Humanitarian University in Moscow and wife of an accountant, expressed an attitude toward the church which she claimed is very common when asked about her religious interests: "Do I go to church? No, all people my age look to the church as a museum because of its icons, architecture, colors, tradition and history. You see, ever since 1918 the government made sure we were indoctrinated with atheism; our parents could not teach us about God; only the Baptists had strong convictions and many of them suffered for believing. The rest of us trusted the authorities and now we don't know what to believe."[10] What impresses a listener in speaking to such a person is the sincerity, rationality, and matter-of-fact candor sensed in the reply. However, by prolonging the conversation, the inquirer learns that Natasha believes in the existence of God, or in a superpower (a frequently heard response), but she admits to doubts regarding the integrity of some Orthodox priests. Though expressing the belief that all people her age have the same feelings toward the church, Natasha's perception is indeed limited.

Just as Russian history reveals a paradox of loyalty and interest between Russophilism and Western culture, so contemporary Russians reveal a divided allegiance toward human values and morals. Relativism is a legacy of Marxism. Therefore, a large

[10] A courtyard conversation with the writer, Moscow, September 27, 1996.

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segment of Russians accommodate themselves to an ideology positing a taboo toward traditions, the justification of means to achieve ends, an acceptance of existentialism, and the questioning of Church teachings. But another segment favors traditional values, Orthodox teachings, moral absolutes, and a street that leads to a Church.

Statistics afford both encouragement and concern to bishops and priests who strive to build up the church in post-Soviet Russia. Encouragement comes from knowing the majority of Russians acknowledge the importance of believing in God. The concern is rooted in the knowledge that the increased interest in church and in God which accompanied the decline of the Soviet Empire shows signs of fading. Four public opinion surveys taken between April 1990 and June 1994 reveal a steady decline of Russian citizens who consider one's belief in God as "highly important": between April 1990 and April 1991, the percentage dropped from 42 to 39; from May 1992 to June 1994, the percentage dropped from 32 to 20. This is somewhat but not fully offset by the number of respondents who declined to acknowledge belief in God as "very important" but classified belief in God as "important": from April 1990 to May 1992, that category rose from 15 percent to 18 percent, and by June 1994 the figure was 32 percent.[11]

Whereas analysts can group together all who consider God either as "highly important" or "important" and conclude that the decline is only five percent over four years and two months, the trend is steady and very suggestive. Less than half the number viewing belief in God as highly important in 1990 holds to that conviction four years later. Tony Carnes is probably right when he suggests, "In 1990-91 large numbers of people came to God, perhaps hoping for a quick solution to their social and political problems.

[11] Carnes, p. 30.

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Since then, believers in God have lost their optimism that a belief in God offers a quick fix for contemporary problems."[12] Carnes' assessment, however, is only partially true. Human beings search for anchors, pillars, or foundations for perceived security and meaning in life. As Russians shifted to believing in God and attending church when Sovietism was crumbling, they now seek alternatives to what the church offers, especially Western values.

Skeptics of Church teachings now search for an accommodating sociological route toward improvement of life not based on an eradication of class struggle, as Marxists posited, but rather on individual ambitions and dreams. The bridge to this route is the Western idea: comfortable lifestyles, technological achievements, scientific discoveries, Hollywood films, everything-goes freedom, moral relativism and often a dual morality divided by public pretense and private living. Sovietism may be dead, but its cardinal philosophical and social precepts live on to impede the influence and message of the Orthodox Church.

Not everyone will agree with the analysis of Robert V. Daniels when he writes, "Russia finds itself--or has chosen to place itself--in a position where it has no tradition of its own and no faith in itself by which to be guided, but only the borrowed terms of a Western doctrine which has been highly debatable for many decades in the West and is to say the least anachronistic."[13] Though Daniels' thesis is a hyperbole, he identifies a verifiable problem for the Russian Church; i. e., a substantial percentage of Russians no

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[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

[13] Robert V. Daniels, "In Search of a Usable Tradition." Unpublished paper presented to the Transnational Institute Conference on "The Renewal of Russian Spiritual Life," Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH; July 8-11, 1992.

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longer supports traditional Russian values. This appraisal is supported by theologian and philosopher Andrei Kurayev, of the Russian Orthodox Open University, who declares, "Orthodoxy, as a factor of public life, does not exist in Russia today. Only a tiny minority of people can tell you that religious motivation is of some importance in their behavior.... I believe that instead of restoring traditions we will soon have the restoration of the crisis of traditions, of that pre-Revolutionary crisis which produced what it produced."[14] Both scholars allude to a sociological problem sufficiently ubiquitous as to alter Russian culture itself and with it the ministry, if not the effectiveness, of the Russian Orthodox Church.

One observes in Russia the results of a protracted Marxist ideological dominance that successfully eroded traditional foundations of numerous households and institutions. In turning away from official communism, Russians did not necessarily abandon skepticism toward the Church nor did they reject in mass Marxist doctrines infused into popular culture by official planning and decrees. Residual Soviet propaganda against the Church effectively shapes much of Russian thinking today. Marxist views continue to play a significant role in shaping the belief system and world view.

Every population, however, holds to some traditional roots. A very large segment of Russians--estimated to be as high as 40 percent--look to the Russian Orthodox Church for meaning. Dimitry Pospielovsky, a scholar who has written extensively on the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian values, clearly affirms that national traditions and culture of the Russian nation are organically intertwined with the Orthodox Church; furthermore, he perceives the Orthodox Church as being the only genuine mass movement in Russia

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[14] Alexander Zaichenko and Andrei Kurayev, dialogue on "Business and God," printed in *Literaturnaya gazetta* (N.16, 21. IV.93). Translated and distributed by the Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow.

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today.[15] In effect, then, and owing to the strong linkage in contemporary Russia between Slavophile culture and the Russian Orthodox Church, the controversy over the influence of traditions today on Russian culture hinges upon pro-Church or anti-Church values. Marxism, like its predecessor, "Voltairism," did much to turn Russians away from the Church and from cardinal Christian doctrines. Now the Church faces the daunting task of turning Russians away from the pressures of a Westernized and materialistic society and atheistic and agnostic philosophies.

The Vacuum of Morality and Ethics

Although morality is acknowledged to be an abstraction in that it means different things in varying cultures and is therefore difficult to define, in all societies there are norms, standards, and actions that are interpreted to be acceptable and others that are not. There is a common consciousness of propriety. Analysts agree in general that morality relates to proper actions and thoughts which, in a given society, are either right or wrong, altruistic or self-serving, good or bad. They also agree that there are universal rights and wrongs. Love for one's own family and for one's neighbors is good. Murder and prevarication are wrong.

Owing to tenets of Russian Orthodoxy, the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 6 are viewed as appropriate standards for all people in that they prescribe boundaries for human behavior. Human rights legislation as developed in various nations supports the notion of morality. With the introduction of Marxism, Russia became subjected to relativism and expediency as norms of life. The roots of Marxism continue to

[15] Dimitry Pospielovsky "Some Remarks on the Contemporary Russian Nationalism and Religious Revival," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* (vol. 11, no. 1, 1984), pp. 71-85.

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sprout bitter herbs, the fruit of which plagues much of contemporary Russian life. Marxism created a vacuum of moral absolutes that pervades Russia as much in post-Soviet times as when Communists ruled from the Kremlin. When Bolsheviks proclaimed war against the church, their intention was to destroy morality as we know it. "Solzhenitsyn claimed that the worst aspect of Communism was not its violence but its untruthfulness."[16] At the root of immorality, or the vacuum of morality, is the potential for a big lie. The Soviet system epitomized the principle and Russian people suffer today as a result. Knowing the cruelty, injustice, and scheming that transpired under the Soviets, one can understand the life of secrecy and isolation that characterized Russian society prior to Gorbachev's rule. The tragedy today is that the band plays on. Sovietism may have died but immorality prevails and pervades almost every area of Russian social life. The problem, of course, rests in the popular response. Relativism regarding morality, or outright immorality, has become normative behavior for many Russian citizens.

Mikhail Kazachkov, a dissident Jewish scholar who does not mince words in denouncing the government for its apathy toward immorality, insists, "It is absurd to expect a high-rise building to stand without a proper foundation."[17] In effect, he is saying, without morality, the health of a nation and its very existence are often in jeopardy. Reflecting upon this dictum, one is led to acknowledge that several nations which have initiated wars offer sobering lessons for all succeeding states; e.g., Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and so on.

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[16] Von der Heydt, p. 247.
[17] Related by von der Heydt, p. 248.

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As Kazachkov assesses the Russian Federation today, he is "convinced that it is crucial to convey the moral values which make the practice of democracy and a market economy possible." Alexander Zaichenko, former economic advisor to Gorbachev and current president of the Association of Christians in Business, concurs with Kazachkov when he says, "Without a moral foundation, democracy cannot flourish in a democratic society."[18]

The vacuum of morality is a significant element in the sociological make-up of the present generation of Russians. It constitutes the antithesis of what Orthodoxy stands for and therefore is a contending force to the Church itself. Sadly, a vast percentage of Orthodox priests do not address the devastating effects of immorality domestically, nationally or internationally. It isn't that big an issue. Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad confesses,

> Church tradition speaks little of contemporary public issues. The patristic heritage is more about the life of individuals, their spiritual condition, their struggle with sinful passions, their ascending to God up the ladder of prayer and virtue ... `out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slanders' (Matthew 15:19).[19]

On the basis of this declaration, then, Metropolitan Kirill admits to a deficiency of the Orthodox Church today and points to the very character of mankind as being at the root of immorality. He refers to church "tradition" as not directed toward public issues. One wonders if tradition in this case is not tied to the historic relationship between the Orthodox Church and the state, with the latter circumscribing the parameters of ecclesiastical pronouncements. The following chapter addresses this subject.

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[18] *Ibid.*, p. 249.
[19] Metropolitan Kirill, Keynote Address, Interconfessional Conference, Minsk, Belarus (October 1-3, 1996), p. 6.

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A failure by the Church to deal with the vacuum of morality in contemporary Russia means that the one institution which ought to teach and establish proper norms of human behavior is silent, so human vices, self-centered living, and moral relativism run rampant. The problem becomes even more serious when people outside the Church clamor for higher standards of behavior and do not sense support from the Church.

While sociologists turn to economic distress and political instability as explanations for the morass in which Russia currently is mired, Barbara von der Heydt reveals the keen perception of some Russians in assessing the downside of Russian life:

> While this earthquake [collapse of USSR] has toppled the edifice of Communism, a reliable new order has not yet emerged from the chaos.... Russians acknowledge with surprising candor the moral failure of their country and the present need to build a moral foundation. Many insist the crisis is not economic or political, but rather moral and spiritual.[20]

The crisis that emerges when morality becomes secondary in popular behavioral patterns is that ultimately everyone does what is right "in his own eyes."[21] And Metropolitan Kirill asks, "Is it not in the human personality that all the problems of today's world are rooted?"[22] Look at what is happening in Russia.

Corruption and Crime

When Boris Yeltsin won reelection in 1996, according to one report, he ostensibly "put the fight against high level corruption at front and center of his administration by appointing squeaky-clean rival and potential successor, Gen. Alexander Lebed, to oversee the new crackdown."[23] The same report adds, "By any yardstick, pervasive military

[20] Von der Heydt, p. 247.
[21] Judges 21:20.
[22] Kirill, p. 6.
[23] Robin Knight and Suzanne Possehl, "Calling Eliot Ness," *U. S. News and World Report* (Aug. 12, 1996), p. 39.

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corruption has become endemic."[24] Yeltsin himself admits that corruption "is eating away at the officer's corps like rust."[25] Analysts comment,

> No facet of Yeltsin's 'new Russia' is immune to corruption. But more than 1,000 officials responsible for the privatization of the economy have been arrested, and over 14,000 bribery cases involving bureaucrats have been registered since 1994--with central law enforcement agencies like the police, customs, and tax inspectors providing most of the offenders.[26]

The popularity of General Lebed is likely due to his "squeaky clean" character. In the June 1996 presidential elections he received over 13 percent of the popular vote. One might conclude that he did not receive approval from some Russians because he *is* viewed as a man of integrity. In some countries, corruption in the military is not surprising; but in Russia the army consistently has earned popular acclaim, as the following report affirms:

> For centuries, through czardom and communism, no institution ranked higher in prestige or played a more critical role in holding Russia together than its military. Today, says the defense minister, Gen. Igor Rodionov, 'our armed forces do not have a single regiment capable of launching a combat action or moving by rail or air at two or three hours' notice... Tens of thousands of officers have second jobs. Crime and corruption exceed even sky-high civilian levels. Officers abuse each other and their troops. Border troops trade drugs... Draft dodgers average 60,000 a year.[27]

The same report reveals, "Lev Rokhlin, a former general and parliamentarian, recently accused three serving generals of stealing some $30 million from Army coffers."[28] And Vadim Makarenko, ex-army officer and presently deputy editor-in-chief of *Novoye*

[24] *Ibid.*
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Robin Knight and Richard J. Newman, "Soldiers of Misfortune," *U. S. News and World Report* (Aug. 26, 1996, pp. 32-35), p. 34, 35.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

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Vremya, acknowledges, "We have lost our sense of shared destiny, of nationhood, our Russia."[29]

News channels are replete of horror stories on corruption and crime: ordinary businessmen employ their own body guards and chauffeurs to afford them some security. Scores of bank presidents have fallen prey to assassin's bullets over the past five years. Apartment dwellers are cautioned to use the peep hole in their entrance door before unlocking it when someone knocks or rings the bell; the consequences can be a severe beating and the loss of jewelry, the television set or whatever appears valuable.

.A business man in Moscow relates the *modus operandi* of two government employees seeking the payment of company taxes: their first words are, "Your records reveal you owe the government money. From every 10,000 rubles you receive, 17 percent must be given to the government. Of every 10,000 rubles your employees receive, 53 percent is owed the government. We expect you to review your records and pay up." Shaken, the businessman seeks a lawyer and is told, "There's only one way to avoid such payments. You must pay the men themselves. So you have two possible routes. You must choose. Those men can put you out of business fast." The businessman referred to the tax collectors as "government Mafia." [30]

No person of the society is immune from comparable experiences. The costs, the social cancer, the pain afflicts all Russians but in varying degrees. *U.S. News and World Report* declares, "corruption and gang-related crime in Russia constitute its most serious

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[29] *Ibid.*

[30] The businessman, who has 26 employees, related this experience to the writer in Moscow, September 24, 1996.

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problem."[31] It is estimated that 40 percent of Russia's gross domestic product now originates from the black market or underground economy, with much of the illegal profit being used to acquire government property or to buy controlling shares in legitimate businesses. Taxis charge $50 plus for rides from the center of Moscow to the international airport in old vintage vehicles, leading some Muscovites and tourists to suspect criminal collusion.

Though the very mention of "Russia" in parts of the West today resonates with notions of caution, if not fear, Russians can argue that gun fire is less common in the streets of their cites at night than in parts of New York, Chicago, Detroit and Los Angeles. The comparison is appropriate for heuristic purposes. Whether corruption and crime prevail in Eastern Europe or in the West, public interest in church life is minimal , morality is rationalized, and the distinction of human worth is blurred.. The curse of crime frightens Russians of every age; yet there is no end in sight of its pernicious activity.

Nascent Sects and Cults

In appraising the social and spiritual status of the new Russia, Alexander Zaichenko bemoans the lack of popular concern for what is happening in the Motherland. In his words, "When there is no spirituality in society, then there is no opposition to what has befallen us. Today Russia is spiritually open, and this is the biggest danger. The spiritual hole can be penetrated by anybody and anything and we are witnessing it."[32] Zaichenko is not talking about non-Orthodox Christians, though he is highly critical of some Western-style preachers. His primary concern regards the proliferation of cults and

[31] Knight and Possehl, p. 39
[32] Zaichenko and Kurayev, p. 7.

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sects. Andrei Kurayev supports the perception of Zaichenko, alleging, "Russia today is a country of an active, triumphant occultism. Occultism, I emphasize, not atheism. Many people facing tough choices seek advice not from the Gospel, but from an astrologist, a guru, an extrasensual expert, etc. Astrology has become so acceptable that TV stations consider it a scientific means of forecasting."[33]

Weighing the possibility of Russians returning to church while aware of appeals from non-Christian forces, von der Heydt comments,

> Unfortunately, there is a shadow falling across this bright development. Starving people will eat virtually anything set before them, and the result is that many have eaten at the spiritual smorgasbord now offered and have tasted the exotic fruits to be found there, only later do they find these fruits may make them sick.... Every manner of sect is on the streets seeking new members: the Moonies, Hare Krishna followers, sorcerers, occultists, Satan worshipers, New Age believers, scientologists, bizarre faith healers, hypnotists--everything imaginable of the spiritual spectrum. False spirituality is proving to be harder to combat than atheism was.[34]

Youth in Russia as in other parts of the world seek identity through belonging to some group. Prior to the collapse of Sovietism, almost all Russian youth belonged to the *Komsomol*, the Communist Youth League. With the emergence of *glasnost, perestroika* and *demokratizatsiya*, informal groups formed to take its place: the *fanaty* (fanatics), the *khippi* (hippies), the *serki* (metallists), and so on. In the past half-decade youth have turned away from localized "clubs" toward broader entities with "spiritual" overtones. Researcher George Law reports that in 1991 there were only about 500 Hare Krishna followers in Russia whereas today (1996) there are 50,000.[35] Commenting on the

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 3
[34] Von der Heydt, p. 248.
[35] Personal interview with this writer, Moscow, September 30, 1996.

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hodgepodge of sects and cults in the new Russia, Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (Anthony Borisovich Blum) argues,

> All who can do so have come to attack Russia now so as to convert her into something. I think it was the poet Tutchev who wrote, 'All blasphemous minds, all peoples revolting against God, have emerged from the Kingdom of Darkness in the name of Brotherhood and Freedom,' so it seems to me that this can be applied to the present attack directed against the Russian soul which is taking place now in all quarters. We must defend Orthodoxy.[36]

The Metropolitan acknowledges the problem facing the Russian Church. It is loosing youth to the myriad of sects and cults that have invaded Russia from the East and the West. In October 1996, Keston News Service reported that in the Tula Oblast, about 90 miles south of Moscow, Igor Shelpayev, the oblast's plenipotentiary, alerts youth to the dangers posed by the popular Unification Church (Moonies). He alleges, "they have gained access to state schools by recruiting future teachers at the pedagogical training institutes." As a result, the oblast administration has imposed laws against them.[37]

Such action might be expected at this time in the process of accepting democracy and the pluralism which comes with it; but as pluralism becomes more acceptable to Russians, political authorities and church dignitaries will find it increasingly difficult to circimscribe religious beliefs regardless of how questionable some may be. Obviously the antidote is a more appealing approach to the interests of youth from the Church itself.

The Struggle with Modernization and Materialism

The term "modernization" is used here to denote major societal changes regarding values and the structure of life from the preindustrial traditional society to an alteration of

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[36] Interview with Nataliya Rodomanov for the publication of *Metaphrasis* (no. 58). The text was sent to the writer via e-mail by Bishop Seraphim Sigrist, October 18, 1996.
[37] Lawrence Uzzell, "Tula Cracks Down on Religious Minorities" (KNS 496, September 24, 1996).

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values and an improvement of living standards made possible by the industrial age. Viotti and Kauppi define modernization "as the social, political, and economic prerequisites for, and consequences of, industrialization and technological development."[38] Inherent in modernization theory is an emphasis upon economic goals. The term "materialism" denotes an ideology which prompts human beings to desire an increasing amount of possessions in the proverbial cycle of building larger and larger barns to store more and more grain to feed more and more cattle to purchase increasing acreage to accommodate more cattle, and so on. This kind of ideology saps popular interest from non-material realities, the spiritual dimensions of life, concepts of altruistic living, and tenets of a transcendent God. The Russian Orthodox Church historically has criticized the West for its propensity to value possessions more than liturgy, human comforts above simplicity, and science governing human motivations. Now the "West" has entered Russia itself.

In reference to religious values and commitment to Church teachings and practices, there is a direct correlation between modernization and materialism. In a word, both phenomena can eclipse moral and spiritual energy and curtail societal allegiance to the Church. Russian Orthodox clergy, like other Christian clerics, are well aware of the teachings of Jesus on the conflict that stems from parishioners aspiring toward increased riches, which is at the very heart of the modernization and materialistic syndromes. Jesus affirmed, "You cannot serve God and mammon"[39] So Russian people today not only witness a tug-of-war between spiritual values and materialistic lures, but they have become

[38] Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, eds.*International Relations Theory* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 205.
[39] Matthew 6:24. The word "mammon" should have only one "m." It is an Aramaic word the precise meaning of which is lost, but the connotation is to "riches" or to whatever a person relies upon for life support.

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active participants in the contest. Both the economic plight of some Russians and the exceptional economic prosperity of other Russians since the Gorbachev era garner popular interest and allegiance toward materialistic assets while consciously or unconsciously relegating the Church and its teachings to secondary positions.

Major literature on modernization theory tends to focus on political and military conflicts emerging from disparities between nations in regard to the modernization process. It focuses on the divergence of societal haves and have-nots and how violence often erupts among people who perceive themselves as short-changed in the current economic system.[40] Emphasis is placed on economic contrasts between the North and South or between developed, developing, and underdeveloped nation-states. There is a paucity of scholarly work relating to the significance of modernization on major belief systems and dominant religions within nation-states, but the subject merits consideration. With an acknowledgment of the importance of religion in contemporary international conflicts, now is the time for scholars to extend their structural analyses to include the degree to which modernization and materialism affect human values, beliefs and mores.

No one can deny the impovertization of Russian people brought about by excessive military spending, poor centralized planning, the unconvertible ruble, inferior harvests, inadequate transport of raw materials and agricultural produce to markets, and the absence of effective incentives to provide for domestic consumer goods and promote export trade. While Kremlin leaders endeavored to retain superpower status, they

[40] For a better understanding of how scholars address modernization, see Edward l. Morse, *Modernization and the Transformation of International Relations* (New York: Free Press, 1976); John H. Kautsky, *The Political Consequences of Modernization*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1972), and C. E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

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prevented ordinary Russian people from enjoying conveniences of developed countries made possible by modernization and thus carelessly allowed living conditions to slip toward Third World standards. This resulted in a degree of resentment when Russians became exposed to living conditions in the West.

Before placing Russia categorically within the orbit of Third World states, however, one should observe at least three characteristics of the Federation that do not fit into that classification: military capability, educational opportunities, and the broad usage of television sets all across the Federation. These characteristics reflect first world status; however, in Russia they can be translated into liabilities.

Military buildup from the times of Stalin to the early years of the Gorbachev regime gave the Soviet Union a superpower status, but it thwarted modernization owing to its drain on the national economy. Excessive spending for military hardware, troop supplies and international commitments contributed to the deterioration of Russian living standards and a corresponding failure to enjoy the fruits of modernization seen in developed countries. Mikhail Gorbachev clearly perceived the dilemma when he introduced "new thinking" on economic and strategic priorities. According to one source,

> His arrival on the scene found the Soviet economy in deep trouble.... Gorbachev inherited an 'exhausted empire'--making necessary his coming to grips with its failures. Moscow and its buffer states in Eastern Europe faced economic decline with backward technologies--with the exception of weapons and outer space--while the world around them was exploding with advanced information processing and communications systems, genetic engineering and biotechnologies, global trade and international financial systems.... Newly industrialized countries (NICs) in the Far East were adopting new generations of microcomputers, integrated circuitry, and robotics--making the Soviet Union appear weak and feeble.[41]

[41] W. Raymond Duncan and Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl, *Moscow and the Third World under Gorbachev* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p.53.

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But an excessive military buildup goes beyond the realms of a decline in living standards and backward technologies, it inculcates false security to the citizenry. There is much more to life than stockpiles of weaponry to achieve superpower status. This false foundation was especially harmful to the church since Russians placed their trust in military power rather than in God--a substitution seen also outside the former USSR.

The second characteristic, broad educational opportunities, contributed only marginally to social and economic welfare because the economic system did not afford Russians sufficient opportunities to implement the skills and theories developed through advanced educational studies. While Soviet youth enjoyed splendid educational opportunities under the Soviets, competing favorably with most developed nation-states, graduates often perceived university or vocational training life to be preferred above post-graduation options, unless appropriate political contacts afforded personal opportunities for meaningful employment.

The third characteristic of Russia that sets it apart from Third World states is the broad proliferation of television sets, an input of modernization. This phenomenon served to counter official propaganda regarding the status of the populace. In the final year of the Soviet Union, a survey revealed that "93 percent of the Soviet population watch television; the audience of prime-time national-television programming runs between 150 and 200 million."[42] Five years later, it is fair to believe that Russian people have access to television in most communities and in a vast majority of homes. It is likewise fair to suggest that as Russians drifted more and more away from modern comforts, and as

[42] Ellen Mickiewicz, "Ethnic Differentiation and Political Communication," in Anthony Jones, Walter D. Connor, and David E. Powell, eds., *Soviet Social Problems* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p. 25.

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advanced educational opportunities became less rewarding, an increasing number of Russian people became energized by television programming to acknowledge their own comparative economic and social plight and aspired to enjoy the benefits of modernization similar to Western standards.

Thus, television functions as a major socializing agent and channel of information as much as it serves to entertain. For Russians, television reflects East-West differences in regard to consumer goods, living conditions, and economic opportunities. Specifically, television exposes Russians to modern machinery, well-furnished homes and apartments, high-tech appliances, automobiles, western dress and lifestyles, and other conveniences for contemporary living outside the Motherland, thus naturally breeding aspirations to acquire the same. It is more than rhetorical jargon to affirm "To see is to want" when modern fashions, attractive electrical appliances, and spacious landscaped homes appear on television.

This longing identifies a motivating factor resident in Slavs to abandon Communism and seek another political system of government; but the quest for modernization transcends the realms of political management, social transformation, and economic well-being. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, coupled with the rapid evaporation of false security offered under Marxism and the introduction of free-market opportunities, caused Russians to shift their energies in the direction of individual comparative advantage--just as Western entrepreneurs competed for economic advantage following World War II. Such maneuvering places modernization on center stage in the drama of social reforms while relegating religious values to a subordinate position.

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With the onset of *perestroika* and *glasnost* and the introduction of free-market exchange, Russians jockeyed for positions favorable to their own economic ends. Now, as the majority of Russians walk in step with the Western drumbeat of modernization and materialism, they simultaneously turn away from their own traditions and the traditionally-rooted Orthodox Church.

The very term "modernization" carries overtones of Western life-styles, values, comforts, and goals. At an international symposium on religion and modernization in the Soviet Union at Southwest Texas State University in March 1976, Dennis Dunn posited the notions that modernization "is the means by which societies have been and are being transformed under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution," and that it also comprises "a cultural transformation whereby native culture is modified (sometimes abandoned) to harmonize with the imported western ideas."[43] Cultural modifications in Russia that generate harmony with western ideas undoubtedly affect the Russian Orthodox Church. in Russia in the late 1990s more than they did two decades earlier.

The above analysis does not mean that in all societies modernization and religion are incompatible or that the advance of the one is synonymous with the denouement of the other. If such a thesis were true, developed nation-states would be expected to be the least religious, and underdeveloped states the most religious. This is simply not the case. But in Russia the contest between the Church and modernity must be acknowledged.

Daniels keenly observes, "Russian tradition and Russian faith have been continuously assaulted, from within as well as from without, by those who find it wanting

[43] Dennis J. Dunn, ed., *Religion and Modernization in the Soviet Union* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), pp. 4-5.

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in the face of the challenges and opportunities posed by modern life.... Pulled backwards and forwards at the same time, between nativists and the modernizers, Russia is a paradigm for that great part of the world that has found itself prodded into change by the alien models of the West."[44]

A sociological paradox surfaces in an analysis of contemporary trends in Russia regarding the lures of modernization. On the one hand, analysts perceive a high degree of nationalism emerging all across the Federation; on the other hand, they perceive an abandonment of long-held, cherished traditions. Russian nationalism is the one element of tradition that manifests strong popular support at this time; its correlates are the struggle to hold on to Russian hegemony against the clamor of autonomous republics seeking self-determination, and more importantly, an antipathy toward Western economic and military hegemony. The dichotomy is interesting. One is reminded of the building of St. Petersburg: Peter the Great employed French and Italian artisans to design and construct edifices after the fashion of the best of Western European architecture, yet he preferred to retain for the City an exclusive Russian identity. In like manner, contemporary Russians ambitiously seek Western comforts, conveniences and dress but cling to a Russian identity for recognition and prestige.

The phenomenon can be labeled "neo-Westernization" in that it is not a representative mirroring of Western thought and actions, but rather a quest for whatever enlivens and satisfies the Western population. It transmits the message "We want what you have but please don't encroach upon our independence or forget our greatness; we

[44] Daniels, "In Search of a Usable Tradition," p. 1.

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too have pride." It conjures up sort of a love-hate relationship between Russians and the West. The love aspect prompts Russians to enjoy Western lifestyles and living standards; the hate aspect stems from personal reservations toward the West fomented by official Marxist ideology, strong anti-capitalistic and anti-democratic sentiments, and the perceived role of the West in causing the collapse of the Great Russian Empire.

Neo-Western Russians are introducing a philosophy of life separate from the Russian Church. It is marked by the Enlightenment, rationalism, science, and human rights. Moreover, as Daniels suggests, Westernizers "selected the most advanced, radical, and anti-traditional elements in Western thought, and embraced them in a distinctly un-Western, and absolutist fashion. It developed an anti-religious stance much more extreme than Western anticlericalism, and an anti-commercial view of socialism much more uncompromising than most Western varieties."[45] These neo-Western traits constitute the grounds for interpreting "modern times" as a post-Christian era.

Russia remains in the midst of a social (as well as economic and political) transition which is unlikely to end prior to the commencement of the twenty-first century. No analyst can predict with certainty the extent to which modernization and materialism will challenge the leverage of the Church in Russian culture. If neo-Westernizers continue to expand their influence, the traditional role of the Russian Church to represent the "Russian soul" will become history. A more realistic prediction, however, envisions a continuous "tug-of-war" or struggle between what Fyodor Dostoevsky calls good and evil. If the Russian Church adheres to its Scripturally-prescribed purpose, if it accomplishes a measure of unity to re-enlist dissident Orthodox groups with common doctrinal

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

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foundations, and if it has the energy and wisdom to establish and implement worthy ecclesiastical goals, the assurance of the Architect and Builder of the Church will be realized in the Russian Church. Jesus said to His disciples at Caesarea Philippi, "I will build my Church and the gates of Hades will be incapable of destroying it."[46]

An alternate scenario for the Russian Church is also a possibility: it can wither away. The strongest Christian churches of the first century were located in ancient Asia Minor, e.g., Ephesus, Colosse, Philadelphia, Pergamos, Galatia. Constantine established the Holy See in Byzantium in 324 AD, signaling a stronger thrust by the Church throughout Asia Minor and beyond. Seventeen centuries later, only a handful of small Christian churches dot the landscape of the same region, reminding one of the musings of an archeologists who, upon ascending the acropolis of Athens to visit the Parthenon, succinctly remarked, "Glorious history; sobering thoughts!" Any church denomination, like any local church, should be a microcosm of the universal Christian Church. The difference is this; smaller entities can wither and die, but the principal Body lives on triumphantly.

The Clash with Economic Appeals

Closely linked to the lures of modernization and materialism is a contest facing the Russian Church from the reality of modern economics. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ushering in of Western-initiated reforms comes free-market economics, laissez-faire trade and financial liberalism. Overnight, metaphorically, every adult Russian is called upon to make moves in the competitive game of economic "Monopoly," a game with which he has little or no experience. The government distributed privatization

[46] Matthew 16:18.

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vouchers to members of collective enterprises designed to provide equal opportunity and fairness to all concerned. But free-marketing and private ownership produce both winners and losers. In the Russian arena, the former Party *apparatchiki* enjoy an advantage over others in that past political structures and associations continue to have meaning.

The majority of the losers are senior citizens whose financial security turned upside down with market changes. Next to the ramifications introduced by *perestroika*, *glasnost*, and *demokratizatsiya*, the most dramatic social changes emerged from the need of every Russian to identify the most expedient means to keep his own economic ship afloat. Monetary receipts and earnings became paramount in the livelihood of a vast majority of Russians. Nothing reflects the predicament facing the people more than a very common neighborhood market scene where senior citizens sit behind a small array of possessions--tools, paintings, kitchen utensils, clothes, and so on--seeking buyers. Liberal economics turned the tables of fortune for Russians as much as the fate of World War I altered German economic security.

Economic depressions are not in the same psychological ballpark as plagues, natural disasters and wars. The latter historically tend to drive human beings back to church while such a correlation becomes less likely under economic stress. The quest for ample food, clothing and lodging has a way of eclipsing moral and spiritual values which constitute the platform of ecclesiastical instruction and policy. Alexander Lebed argues, "Poverty pushes people into breaking the law, especially if the laws themselves are flagrantly flawed. The criminalization of the economy is destroying the honest Russian entrepreneur, breaking people and awakening in them the basest qualities and

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inclinations."[47] The veracity of this statement becomes alarmingly apparent today in the large cities of Russia. This implies that poverty and adverse economic conditions tend to drive some people into criminal activity and others into whatever survival mode they might find, but in many cases away from Church standards and worship.

Hebrew history affords two rather well-known examples of this principle. When famine struck the land of Canaan, Abraham moved southward seeking the prosperity of Egypt. While in Egypt, he set aside two of his customary practices: he ceased erecting an altar to God, a sign of his devotion; and he ceased pitching his tent, a sign of being a pilgrim on earth.[48] Abraham's subsequent life in Egypt was anything but righteous. Again, when the nation of Israel wandered from Egypt toward the land of Canaan, the people sought divine intervention when fighting against alien tribes and when poisonous vipers attacked them at Mount Hor, but when they had no water to drink, they grumbled and wanted to return to Egypt.[49] Today, in Russia, there is undoubtedly a spiritual revival among some of the people, but far more people can be found on a Sunday morning in parks and on river or lake beaches in the summer time than in the churches. So, a veritable competition emerges between human beings wanting to enjoy leisure time, modern comforts and financial fortunes and the Church seeking loyal converts.

Wrestling with Democratic Structures

The disintegration of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 introduced a momentary euphoria of democratic dreams. Democracy implies a rule of government in which supreme power is retained by the people and exercised either directly through secret ballot

[47] "Lebed, Zyuganov Address a Russia in Pain," in *The Current Digest* (November 8, 1995), p. 1.
[48] See Genesis 12:8-20.
[49] See Exodus 17:1-16; Numbers 21:1-9.

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voting procedures or indirectly through a system of representation. In truly liberal democracies, even minority groups have access to government and enjoy rights not experienced under other political systems. These supposed "rights" constitute a problem for Russian Orthodox leaders who view non-Orthodox groups as alien to Russian culture. Though Russian political leaders present the Motherland as multiconfessional, traditionally the Russian Orthodox Church occupies a privileged place. The Church is the keeper and legitimate successor to the spiritual heritage of Russia. Practically all political forces and movements appeal to the Church for endorsements and support.

Tatiana Panchenko, a participant in the Dartmouth Conference on "Renewal of Russian Spiritual Life" in 1992, argues that "the democracy obligatory (sic) presupposes the desacralization of the idea of power," [50] and that the idea of power lies at the very heart of Russian culture.[51] Panchenko builds her paper on the theme of popularly-recognized official power in Russian culture and ties the Orthodox Church together with the notion of inherent power. When writing on "The Symphony of the Church and the State," Panchenko recognizes a valid authority or power inherent in both institutions to which Russians should submit themselves and affirms on this basis that "the ideas of democracy remain alien to the orthodox consciousness."[52] Democracy promotes self-sufficiency while denigrating the sacredness of the State and the Church.[53] In other words, for traditional Russians, according to Panchenko, power is sacred and should not be subordinated to human justice or democratic tenets. And since justice lies at the root

[50] Tatiana Panchenko, "Once Again About the Symphony of the Church and the State", a paper presented at the Conference on "The Renewal of Russian Spiritual Life," Dartmouth College, July 8-10,1992, p. 1.
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[53] *Ibid.*

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of democracy, a veritable clash occurs when Orthodoxy and democracy converge. If and when democracy triumphs over civil and religious power, people will be granted freedom of choice and action resulting in a corresponding loss of power to traditional institutions.

As strong and logical as Panchenko argument sounds, social and political trends in contemporary Russia point toward the adoption of democratic principles, but the new democracy by no means closes the door to Orthodox influence. Vladimir Moss describes the new order in the following way, "[T]he Russian Orthodox Church, by its numbers, its wealth, its historical associations, its popularity, and the enormous upsurge in Orthodox Christian activity throughout the country, should be in a strong position to play a major, perhaps decisive part in the political life of the nation."[54] Though Moss wrote prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, his message is as true today as then, but the political system has changed. Throughout this study mention is made repeatedly of the manner in which political candidates appeal to the Russian Church for its support, a sign of true ecclesiastical influence.

Since the currency of democracy has reached Russian peoples, albeit with numerous and loud protests, it is best for the Russian Orthodox Church to lighten its oppositions to non-Orthodox religious groups and to muster cooperation from the same groups to combat the more devastating forces militating against basic Orthodox convictions.

Admittedly, it is still too early to assume the immediate triumph of democracy over other forms of government. In fact, the democratic idea can be twisted and distorted. The

[54] Vladimir Moss, "Russian Orthodoxy and the Future of the Soviet Union.," in *Report on the USSR* (vol. 3, no. 24, June 14, 1991), p. 5.

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powerful continue to rule in sections of Russia either by criminal leverage or by official status. In reference to the power of crime and politics to control the population, one citizen who prefers to remain anonymous said, "Sometimes we just refer to the government Mafia because we really don't know where the difference lies. Is this democracy? Democracy is contingent upon the free flow of information but when information is controlled by one party, democracy is not in effect." He added, "the whole system is intertwined with the way things were done in the past, with corruption. Here in Russia there are no absolutes."

The Orthodox Response

When analysts examine the social and economic conditions in the new Russia, they acknowledge the need for drastic improvements in morality, values, law enforcement, private and political integrity, goal setting, motivation and incentives. Under the Soviets, and thus far under the democratically-elected regimes of the Russian Federation, the governments have been incapable of elevating the capacity of their people to become better citizens.

Acknowledging government failure, the Orthodox Church now has the opportunity to strive toward the enlistment of all religious institutions and agencies to cooperate in an energetic and mass effort to establish an alternative agenda for Russian people, one which fosters theistic, moral, ethical, and altruistic standards to offset the appeals of sensualism, corruption, crime, modernization, materialism, sects and cults, alcoholism, and so on.

Few analysts will deny the readiness of Russians to abandon Marxism and experiment with democracy. Only die-hard Communists who prospered and advanced

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socially under Marxism would deny the advantage of democracy over the track record of communism in Russia. Whether democracy will characterize Russia at the beginning of the twenty-first century remains open to debate. Beyond debate is the acknowledgment that turbulence and rough seas lie ahead for masses of Russian people. But rough seas, like battle field fox holes, have a way of drawing human beings back to church and to God. Russians may be ill prepared for democracy and may at this time be less prepared to return to church, but in the final analysis when social and physical props fail, the church faces its finest hour.

The Church, which according to its Founder, is "the salt of the earth"[55] and "the light of the world,"[56] is the primary institution capable of combating forces that work contrary to human rights and personal well-being. But if the Church fails to afford "good packaging" for what it is marketing, or falls short of meeting the needs of Russian people, substitutes will certainly be sought and found. John Meyendorf, former dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary, alludes to this truth:

> Orthodoxy will always maintain that the starting point, the source, and the criterion for solving social issues are found in the uninterrupted, mysterious, and in a sense transcendent communion of the eucharistic gathering. Historically, Orthodox Christians frequently looked for substitutes for this initial and basic criterion. The Byzantine Empire provided one; nationalism later presented another. But these historical and spiritual mistakes were ultimately recognized as such. They should not, in any case, justify similar substitutions today.[57]

Meyendorf's conclusion, albeit correct from an ecclesial perspective, does not take into consideration grave weaknesses within the Church itself. Andrei Kurayev, dean of the

[55] Matthew 5:13, Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34.
[56] Matthew 5:14
[57] John Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), p. 182.

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theology department at the Russian Orthodox Open University, identifies a common observation in saying,

> Those who are really familiar with the life of Orthodox parishes clearly understand that there takes place there an absolute indifference to man: he came to church, was baptized and was forgotten, forgotten by the community, forgotten by the church ... but a person who is a member of a Protestant community today is much more influenced by it than an Orthodox person who is baptized these days. [58]

It is fitting, therefore, for church leaders to ask several relevant questions: What does the Church offer inquirers? Is its program competitively attractive and meaningful when placed by the side of substitutes? Why do youth in large numbers endorse and join sects and cults? In sum, what is wrong with the Church?

As secular corporations include "assessment" in their planning circle for performance evaluation, so must the Russian Church be subject to self-examination. Questionnaires for church constituents and opinion surveys covering people outside the Church would enable church leaders to identify weaknesses that need mending.

Owing to the identification of the Orthodox Church with Russian culture and the fact that the majority of Russians claim to be Orthodox in their belief, the Church owes Russian people more than what it is now offering. It should not relegate its spiritual and moral responsibilities to the government or to non-Orthodox religions or ideologies. Popular identification with Orthodoxy requires a corresponding response from the Orthodox Church. Table 1 below reveals a comparison in populations of the eight religious and ideological categories considered in this study. This table and Figure 1 which follows it are important for a principal argument of this study.

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[58] Zaichenko and Kurayev, p. 4.

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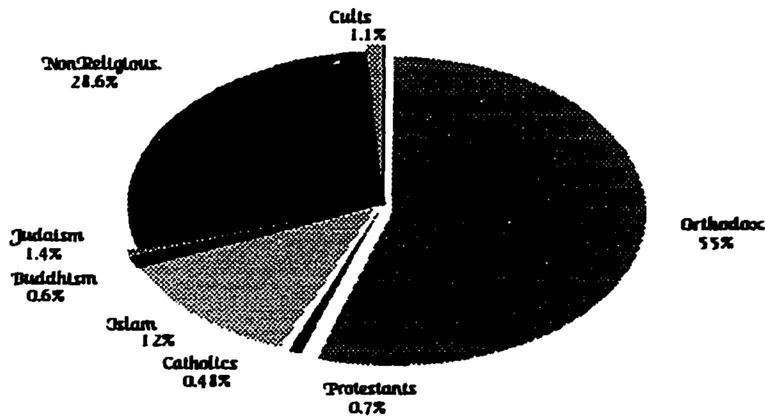
Table 1. Percentages and Populations of Religious and Ideological Divisions

Orthodox	55%	81,235,000	Judaism	1.40%	2,067,800
Protestants	0.70%	1,033,900	Buddhism	0.60%	886,200
Catholics	0.48%	708,960	Non-religious	28.6%	42,271,740
Islam	12%	17,724,000	Cults	1.10%	1,624,700

Source: The percentages cited here represent an extrapolation of this writer based on data from a variety of sources: *Operation World* (1993), edited by Patrick Johnstone; *A Long Walk to Church* (1995), by Nathaniel Davis; *World Mark Encyclopedia of the Nations* (1995); *The Muslim Almanac* (1996), edited by Azim Nanji; and from periodicals of each group. Since many Muslims and Jews, in particular, declare themselves to be "non-religious," analysts tend to group them as members of these "religions." [59]

Figure 1 reflects graphically the high percentage of Russians who claim to be Orthodox as against the very small percentage who classify themselves either as Catholics or Protestants. The ratio is nearly 50 (46.6) to one.

Figure 1. Orthodox and non-Orthodox Population Comparisons



Source: These ratios are based on the sources cited under Table 1.

[59]The total population of the Russian Federation is taken to be 147,700,000 in 1996.

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Considering the ratios presented in Figure 1, the question arises, Is the time and energy currently spent by the Russian Church on opposing these bodies worth the effort? One logically concludes that the Russian Orthodox Church, and all religious bodies, would be well served by reshaping their programs and focusing on the 28.6 percent of Russians identifying themselves as "non-religious" rather than combating each other. And, instead of waiting for such people to enter the church, churches must go to where the people live and work and play so as to convert them and thus free them from elements of bondage.

To reach youth, a fine model is established by the Church of St. Cosmas and St. Damian in Moscow, led by Fr. Alexander Borisov, which offers summer camping to youth inside and outside the church and sends busses of young people on mission trips and assemblies to Siberia, France, Poland, and elsewhere. For reaching adults, the Church of St. Cosmas and St. Damian is involved in a project sponsored by various churches through which a building has been acquired to house and feed homeless people. The idea of stepping outside the church for effective social and spiritual ministries is best illustrated by Alexander Zaichenko as he refers to the Church serving as an "excavator." The following narrative sets a pattern for clergyman:

> There are certain groups with strong religious fervour ... which work among drug addicts, criminals, unemployed, homeless; they go to the very bottom of society.... They visit dens and speak from the Bible. They tell a fallen man about love, they bring him to the community, support him and gradually bring him back to his family, to his work, to himself, and, of course, to religious life. Such a man does not continue to drink or smoke or misbehave. The community gradually begins to grow, to raise its economic and moral status, and in the end of a generation it becomes almost a prestigious church. Children follow their parents, get an education and go to a Methodist, Presbyterian or some other prestigious churches. They become new spiritual leaders in the community. Such leaders are people with strong spiritual potential.... They act like an excavator which uncovers the people who used to be trampled down.[60]

[60] Zaichenko and Kurayev, p. 5.

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Zaichenko expresses a concept of what could happen in the Russian Church as it confronts seemingly alien social forces. Such a concept combined with actions of a church like that of St. Cosmas and St. Damian will turn lights on in dark places.

On sharing his "Impressions of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church," Dimitry Pospielovsky paints a rather gloomy picture of its current status; but he concludes with a conviction resident in the minds of some Orthodox clergy and parishioners alike who envision new life for Russia and for the Church. He writes,

> The country is not a total wasteland, and neither is its Church, which here and there sprouts healthy buds. These, however frail, are buds of life; the alternatives on offer hold out no hope for life or growth, only for stagnation. The buds of living, healthy, open Christianity are therefore bound to prevail.[61]

[61] Dimitry Pospielovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church: Its Problems and Its Theological Education," in *Religion, State and Society* (vol. 23, no. 3, 1995, pp. 249-262), p. 260.

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CHAPTER III

RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY, THE STATE AND POLITICAL CULTURE

Radical political changes in Russia over the past decade have ushered in positive state attitudes toward the Russian Church. Mikhail Gorbachev must be credited for these changes. When Gorbachev first became General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985, the political environment remained antagonistic toward religious entitites and religion itself was perceived "as a kind of opium, a foreign substance that caused great harm in the society."[1] When sentiments of greater tolerance toward religious practices began to be echoed, suspicions of a political ploy countered public optimism. Though Gorbachev did not overtly alter official practices of repressing religious endeavors and imprisoning religious dissenters during the first eighteen months of his regime, he is responsible for allowing churches to celebrate the millennium of Christianity in Russia in 1988. Reflecting on the celebration, one author writes,

> When Gorbachev first came to power, many dismissed his criticism of previous leaders and his calls for change as typical of a new Soviet leader. Three and a half years later it is clear that he means business. In his own words, *perestroika* (restructuring) is entering a new phase, one that will put words into practice and set Soviet society on the road to a fairly fundamental renewal. During Gorbachev's first two years in power, religious communities experienced little change. As the millennium celebrations approached, however, signs of a shifting official policy emerged.[2]

In analyzing state-church rapprochement under Gorbachev, one must view the permission he granted Christian churches to celebrate the millennium of Christianity in "Rus" as

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[1] Kent Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1991), p. 123.
[2] John Anderson, "Legislaive Control," in *Candle in the Wind* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Publc Policy Center, 1989), p. 87.

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the principal and clearest step taken by an official head of state of the former USSR to acknowledge the right of churches and their respective parishioners to worship without state restrictions. This overture was followed by the release of religious prisoners from the labor camps, mental hospitals, and prisons. Under Gorbachev's administration, a new day dawned not only for the Russian Orthodox Church but also for other religious bodies. It was Gorbachev who personally visited Pope John Paul II in the Vatican in December 1989 to express regrets for previous Soviet actions toward the Church while voicing his own appreciation toward the Roman Catholic Church for its moral and spiritual leadership. Robert L. Phillips captures the importance of that visit when he writes,

> The visit of Gorbachev to the Vatican in December was of world historical importance. To witness the heir of Lenin in effect seeking the Pope's blessing a scant 45 years after Stalin's contemptuous question: `How many divisions does the Pope have?' could only mark a historic milestone. The symbolism is inescapable: after twenty centuries, the successor of St. Peter is still on the throne while yet another secular empire crumbles.[3]

Gorbachev also opened doors of freedom to other Christian denominations to worship without political intervention or sanctions. And, above all else, it was Gorbachev who turned the CPSU away from fearing the growth of religion and from the corresponding determination to combat it by subversive, legislative, and official means. Such changes in official religious affairs received support from Boris Yeltsin in Russia when the Soviet Union collapsed. Thus, in a period of six years (1985-1991), one of the most influential factors behind changes in Russian political culture must be seen as the seeding, cultivation, and fruit of "glasnost" introduced by Gorbachev, and particularly his own openness toward the validity of the church in social affairs.

Thus, the highest political leader altered the political playing field by extending greater

[3] Robert L. Phillips, "Communitarianism, the Vatican, and the New Global Order," in *Ethics & International Affairs* (vol. 5, 1991), p. 137.

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freedom to religious bodies inside the Motherland. Kent Hill records ample evidence to support the suggestion of new religious freedom. It includes permission to Pentecostals to hold their own elections for superintendent and local officials (1989); to Adventists to construct a large headquarters building in Zaoksky that contains administrative suites, a library, a cafeteria, a meeting hall, and a seminary (1989); to Ukrainian Catholics to register their congregations with the state (1989); to Jehovah Witnesses to have their activities legalized (1989); to German Lutherans to elect their own bishop (1988), to Catholics to broadcast programs throughout the Baltics and into Byelorussia and parts of Russia (1990); and to Baptists to replace the Soviet-imposed designation, the "All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists" (AUCECB) with the "Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists" (UECB).[4] In October, 1990, the first congress of the Lausanne Evangelization Movement in the Soviet Union was conducted in the Izmailovsky Park Convention Center in Moscow. The congress was attended by over 1000 clergymen from all parts of the Soviet Union, a feat that transcended human imagination prior to *glasnost* and *perestroika*. As Gorbachev was unaware of the political ramifications of his reformed ideology, he likewise failed to perceive the philosophical, religious and cultural consequences of his program.

This chapter examines three significant political forces with which Russian Orthodox leaders must contend as they face the challenge of the twenty-first century: Russian philosophy, the state government, and the new political culture emerging from the ashes of the Soviet system. Associated with these forces are the themes of legislative action concerning the church,

[4] Kent Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1991), pp. 341-383.

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international agreements regarding religious affairs, and the role of nationalism in church structure and planning.

Russian Philosophy and Church Responses

Philosophy plays a role in the way people live, believe, interact and worship. Nowhere does philosophy play a greater role in church-state affairs than in Russia. As one analyzes the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, he becomes aware of a philosophical dualism that emerged in three stages.

The Blossoming of Patriarchal Philosophy

The early stage can be labeled "Patriarch above the Throne." In 1653, Patriarch Nikon declared himself to have superior authority over Tsar Alexis and the state in that he was divinely appointed to lead the people. Considerable numbers of Russians endorsed the premise. John Meyendorff affirms that Nikon became "the most powerful man in Russia."[5] Heads of monasteries began to address him as "Great Sovereign," as did the Tsar himself. When Alexis went off to war in mid-1654, Nikon was left in charge of the government and issued decrees. He demanded that the Tsar's war efforts be supported by money and supplies of the Church. His authority was almost limitless in ecclesiastical and governmental affairs.[6]

Intent on implementing changes, Nikon adopted Greek liturgical practices, inserted them in newly-drafted liturgical books which were then printed by the government printing office. With the introduction of each reform measure in the Church and the converging of the Church with government affairs, opposition mounted increasingly against Nikon and his followers.

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[5] John Meyendorff, *Russia, Ritual and Reform* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir 's Seminary, 1991), p. 89.
[6] *Ibid.*

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Interestingly, while Nikon posited the claim for such authority in Russia, the Enlightenment was emerging in the West through the writings of Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Rene Descartes (1596-1650), and John Locke (1632-1704), best known for their rationalistic philosophy and insistence on empirical science. While the secular tenets of the Enlightenment may not have affected Nikon directly, Western germs of new and creative thinking served to motivate him toward Western ecclesiastical practices. As Western patterns of worship and practice were adopted by the Patriarch, and as the Church identified itself increasingly with civic authority, Orthodox clergy and parishioners opposing Nikon merged to declare "the Russian state was of antichrist."[7] A virtual split within the Church followed.

The polarization arose largely from a group later called Old Believers (*Raskol'niki*), identified with Archbishop Avvakum, who were united in their opposition to the state and "in their rejection of the western culture and manners of officialdom."[8] While a large segment of the Church supported Nikon, Old Believers viewed him as heretical and effectively destroying the Church. The split that occurred in the middle of the seventeenth century sowed seeds of discord within the Russian Orthodox Church which continue to the present. The fact that in the closing years of the Soviet Union hierarchical leaders sided with and even collaborated with the Kremlin in sinister activities toward certain Orthodox clergy exacerbates the cleavage within the Church even today.

The Intrusion of Tsarist Philosophy

At the outset of the eighteenth century, the second stage of philosophical development made its debut in Russia, with Peter the Great (1672--1725) as the protagonist of the drama.

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[7] Robert O. Crummey, "Old Belief as Popular Religion," in *Slavic Review* (Winter 1993), p. 14.
[8] Crummey, *Old Believers and the World of Antichrist* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970) , p. xii..

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This stage can be called "Shaking Religious Foundations." Three decisive actions of the Tsar relate to the Russian Church. First, in 1698, Peter rebuked Patriarch Adrian who sought mercy for rebellious *streltsy*-- the permanent militia--who had supported an insurrection movement within the Kremlin. Peter curtly declared that bishops have no right to speak on matters of military discipline; thus, the Tsar drew a line of demarcation between secular and religious authority. Second, when Adrian died in 1700, Peter postponed the election of a new patriarch and nominated Stefan Iavorski, Metropolitan of Riazan, to be guardian of the Russian Church. The weakness of the Church wrought by the Old Believer schism played to the Tsar's favor. Finally, in 1721, a new constitution for the Church was published under the title "The Ecclesiastical Regulation." According to this document, the patriarchate was abolished and a "Holy Synod" was chosen by the Emperor to govern the Church. Peter appointed a secular official, called the Procurator of the Synod, to supervise all its proceedings. The concept of a synod for church government was copied from German ecclesiastical synods. Close supervision of the Church by the Tsar continued for two centuries, until 1917, when Nicholas II abdicated the throne. But even then ecclesiastical independence and self-government were short-lived through the rise of the Bolsheviks and their insistence on atheistic absolutes.

While Peter showed signs of deep spirituality, he was addicted to the lowest of vices, to rages, personal dissipation and immorality. His dual personality was a microcosm of Russian philosophy: on the one hand, it reflected a sense of pride and gratitude for the spiritual and national heritage granted him from the Motherland; on the other hand, it signaled an appreciation for and an identification with Western values and habits. The latter are quite distinct from Russian culture.

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Commenting on the dualistic philosophy of Russians, Vyacheslav Styopin writes, "One may say that Russian philosophy proper, its aspect and its fate, were the result of a meeting and a clash, upon the Russian soil, of two streams of world culture, the West and the East."[9] Earlier, Nicholas Berdyaev attributed much of Russian cultural energy to contacts with the West, affirming, "The unusual explosive dynamism of the Russian people revealed itself in its cultural layer only upon coming into contact with the West after the reforms of Peter (the Great)."[10] But not all Russians then or now interpret Western thought in a positive vein.

Numerous Russians resented Peter's reforms which included making people wear European clothes, cutting beards, freeing women from Asiatic seclusion, sending Russians abroad, and the crowning of his consort, Catherine I, who was only a peasant and a servant. So devoted was Peter to Western culture that in building St. Petersburg, he hired the best architects and craftsmen from the West to erect edifices according to the best of Italian and French blueprints.

The chasm between Orthodox customs and royal actions widened under Catherine the Great (1729-1796). Born a German princess, Catherine married Grand Duke Peter of Russia whom she simultaneously despised and allegedly conspired with others to arrange for his mysterious death in 1762 so that she could accede to the throne. Like Peter the Great, Catherine cultivated close ties with the West, especially with Western diplomats. But the French philosopher and skeptic Voltaire (Francois Marie Arouet) probably influenced the thinking of the queen as much as anybody. The two carried on voluminous correspondence.

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[9] Vyacheslav S. Styopin, "Russian Reforms and the Russian Philosophical Tradition," unpublished paper presented to the Transnational Institute Conference on "The Revival of Russian Spiritual Life," Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH; July 8-11, 1992.

[10] Nicolai Berdyaev. "The Russian Idea," *On Russia and Russian Philosophical Thought* (Moscow, 1991), p. 46.

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Voltaire accepted an invitation from Catherine to visit her in St. Petersburg. One can assume that the content of his pamphlets assailing the bigotry and intolerance of the Church formed part of their communication. Surely, Voltaire's philosophy accorded Catherine an acceptable rationale for her own scandalous life style. Catherine's fondness of the West led her to the adoption of Western culture and ideas. The royal acceptance of Western culture in the eighteenth century, according to Robert Daniels, meant "the total rejection of tradition and the embrace of Western norms."[11] Daniels adds, "From the late eighteenth century on this reaction became embodied in the Russian intelligentsia ... [who] ...broadened its compass in the course of the nineteenth century to include ... the `people from all ranks.'"[12] Though Tsars of the nineteenth century struggled against Western governments, the pattern of official behavior favored Western culture and intellectuals favored Western "philosophical materialism, revolution, and socialism, culminating in Marxism."[13]

Seventy Years of Marxism

The third phase of Russian philosophical development is that of "Bolshevik socialism." Indeed, it is based on the Marxist ideology of atheism, anti-capitalism, economic determinism, and basically a positive view of human nature. Stressing the validity and reliability of science and the capability of human nature to solve societal dilemmas, Marxists do not so much attempt to destroy religion but to control and co-opt church endeavors while shunning ecclesiastical tenets and values. The Stalin model of behavior should not be taken as normative in Marxist circles. Bolshevik socialism offers a more subtle approach to religious influences and church authority. It is rooted in the Enlightenment and the man-centered philosophy that

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[11] Robert Daniels, "In Search of a Usable Tradition," p. 1. Dartmouth Conference. See footnote 9 above.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[13] *Ibid.*

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led to an outright rejection of Orthodox tenets, such as belief in God, the immortality of the soul, and original sin. Skepticism toward clergy and the Church mounted through the writings of Enlightenment thinkers who represented the educated class of Europe.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was a product of the Enlightenment. Born in the West, a German and a proponent of a major stream of Western thought, Marx enhanced the concept of the power of reason and the perfectibility of human beings. Marx pointed to human institutions and the prevailing economic system as root causes for human strife. For him, capitalism breeds class struggles and class struggles will only be resolved by social revolution. Seeking to bring about the organization of all laborers for their common good, he sowed the seeds that led to the modern socialist movement. The biography of Karl Marx reveals that he was an ardent secular humanist. He lacked any thought of a transcendent God with a claim of sovereignty over human beings.

Bolshevik socialism clearly developed along the lines of Marxist philosophy. While no one should overlook the altruism that motivated Marx to seek justice when he wrote *Communist Manifesto* (1848), and no one can argue against the view that grave inequities characterize civilizations, especially in the West, sufficient evidence supports the view that Marxist doctrine did not further the cause of the Orthodox Church nor did it contribute moral stimulus to Russian people. In fact, as Marxism expanded across Russia, biblical truths became discredited and the seeds of atheism were planted, cultivating in Russian society the option of two prominent philosophical theses: whether human life is to be interpreted as man-centered or God-centered. Bolshevik socialism is governed by man-centered convictions; Orthodox Christianity is governed by a firm belief in a sovereign God who created the universe, who

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looks upon human beings as separated from Him through their own willfulness, who views that separation as the principal cause of human struggles, and who provides the means by which human beings can be reconciled to Him and to one another.

One of the key components of Bolshevik thinking is atheism. This fact is presented in detail by Sergius Bulgakov in *Karl Marx as a Religious Type,* first printed in 1906. Bulgakov had been an early follower of Marx but later converted to Christianity. His principal thesis posits convincingly that Marx derived his creed primarily from "militant atheism."[14] In addition, Bulgakov insists that there is "an inner bond between atheism and socialism in Marx" which often is "either misunderstood or unnoticed."[15] The obvious corollary of Marxist anti-God conviction is a critical view of religion which he characterized as "the sigh of the overwhelmed creature, the soul of a world without soul, the mind of a world without mind. It is the opium of the people."[16] Thus, the real world was perceived and interpreted by Marx in materialistic terms, leading him to believe that if human beings had their material needs met, religion would simply disappear.

Though Bolsheviks aspired for over seventy years to create a monolithic philosophical system based on Marxist thought, there were signals of its failure prior to and during the Soviet era and even greater evidence following the collapse of the Soviet Union. All along there were countercurrent feelings toward Bolshevik doctrine. Early in the twentieth century there arose among a limited group of young intellectuals a trend of thought comprising a hybrid of Western modernism and traditionalism that was more ecumenical than native. The group is best

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[14] Sergius Bulgakov, *Karl Marx as a Religious Type* (Belmont, MA: Westminster Press., 1979), p. 110.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[16] Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Philosophy of the Right by Hegel,* quoted in *Communism and Christianity in Theory and Practice: Doctrines/Facts/Conclusion* (United Kingdom: Aid to the Church in Need, 1978), p. 5.

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identified with the philosophy of "*Vekhi*" ("signposts") and represented by one-time Marxists among whom were Nicholas Berdyaev, Nikita Struve, and Sergius Bulgakov. The *Vekhi* group had second thoughts about Marxist tenets and questioned the elevated status of science in the West. While the movement hardly had time to become a new tradition, its leaders and convictions became a popular source of inspiration to many Russians who chose to reject Communism and looked with suspicion upon Western rationalism; the exception being with Russian peasants and workers.

When Bolshevik socialism is examined objectively, one finds a strong and enduring official effort to put an end to all religious teachings while stressing rationalism, science, the rights of man, class struggle, the evils of capitalism, and revolution. Did the Bolshevik blueprint for society work? The Revolution of '89 in Central Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself in December 1991 offer an indisputable "no" to the question. Do these events signal a total failure of Bolshevik propaganda during the Soviet era? Indeed not! Bolshevik socialism prevailed sufficiently to alter Russian thinking among intellectuals and the general public alike. Russian sociologist and author Boris Kagarlitski represents the younger generation who perceive significant virtues in Bolshevism.[17] Even Mikhail Gorbachev held to the strengths of socialism for the welfare of Soviet people. And recent elections in Russia attest to a sizable portion of the Soviet population who favor socialism above other systems of government. This is especially true of the older generation. Though the majority of Russians at this time voice a disapproval toward Bolshevik socialism, objective analysis of contemporary

[17] Kagarlitski wrote *The Thinking Reed* (New York: Verbo, 1990) to endorse a conviction of numerous Russians that Bolshevik socialism offered considerable promise to Russians but Soviet leaders had tainted it.

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Russian thinking indicates that its notions of materialism, secularism, atheism, a man-centered universe, and the superiority of science over church doctrine survive in Russian culture.

Post-Soviet Philosophical Options

When analysts examine contemporary Russian culture, they find that its Westernizers did not import a comprehensive corps of Western habits, values, life styles and personal goals, but rather selected the "most advanced, radical and anti-traditional elements" and "embraced them in a distinctly un-Western, absolutist fashion."[18] One of the elements was "an anti-religious stance much more extreme than Western anticlericalism."[19] This adaptation became so rooted in the minds of Slavophiles that it constitutes a major force in dividing the Russian people themselves and in constructing a chasm between Orthodox beliefs and secular values.

Though philosophical dualism in Russia dates back at least to the middle of the seventeenth century, and every phase of that dualism has affected the Russian Church adversely, it must be said that Bolshevik socialism widened the already existing chasm. The so-called post-Communist spiritual revival noted by some scholars focuses on the reality of current life and enthusiasm in both Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches throughout Russia, a fact that underlines the ultimate Bolshevik failure in achieving its Marxist goals. But along with the perception of spiritual revival is the realization that masses of Russians do not darken church portals except for weddings and funerals, that the understanding of science outweighs the pursuit of sacred truths; that material prosperity takes precedence over ethical and moral life-styles, that moral relativism constitutes sufficient bases for human actions; and that there is insufficient empirical evidence for one to take the notion of a transcendent God seriously.

[18] Daniels, p. 2.
[19] *Ibid.*

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Bolshevik socialism effectively sowed doubt in Russian minds regarding Christian doctrines and practices. Now the Russian Orthodox Church must employ the best of its energy and talent to convince the doubters of the veracity of Christianity and the weaknesses of rationalism, relativism, materialism, science, and atheism. Up to a point in the *glasnost* era, the church was doing quite well. A 1993 study of the International Social Survey Program led analysts to declare, "a religious revival of historic proportions may be underway in Russia. One-third of all Russians who once called themselves atheists now believe in God."[20]

The prognostic potential of Russian philosophy cannot be dismissed. James P. Scanlon justly notes that "Russian philosophy has a direct and specific bearing on reform."[21] Philosophical openness generates an atmosphere conducive for change. Who will deny that freedom of speech and open public dialogue can influence intellectuals, publics figures, and citizens at large? When alternative systems of thought are freely expounded, alert leaders pay attention, modifying their own precepts to blend more satisfactorily to those of the general public. In the ecclesiastical arena, Russian philosophy exposes a struggle between faith and unbelief that moves inexorably through much of Russian history. In contemporary times, this struggle assumes the form of spiritual conflict generating tense discussions and disputes about the reality of a transcendent God and correspondingly the destiny of civilizations and humankind. This is certainly true in post-Soviet Russia where encrustations of Marxism prevail.

The crucial question facing Marxist indoctrinated peoples, observes Otto Dibelius, "is whether the character of coming generations shall receive the stamp of atheistic materialism, or

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[20] Larry B. Stammer, "Study points to religious revival in Russia," quoted in *Los Angeles Times* (December 29, 1993); Section B, p. 5, column 1.
[21] James P. Scanlon, "The Relevance of Russian Philosophy to the Reform of Russian Society Today." Dartmouth Conference. See footnote 9 above.

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whether those values which came into the world with the Christian faith shall be the foundation of human society."[22] The passion, demeanor, and general appeal of the Russian Orthodox Church will serve as determinants as Russians face the crossroads of Russian philosophical thought. The task of the Russian Church is clear. It must hold tenaciously to pure Christian doctrines, determine to propagate those doctrines with passion, seek domestic and global intersections where meaningful dialogue is possible with non-believers, and present the advantages and opportunities that Christianity affords its adherents for a more meaningful and rewarding life--"on earth as it is in heaven." Russian philosophy indeed poses a roadblock to the Russian Orthodox Church as it grapples with its mission at the end of the twentieth century, but an equally sinister villain hides in its bushes.

State and Church: How Close Can They Be?

In June 1996, the *U.S. News and World Report* published an article titled "A Mixed Blessing for the New Russia--the Orthodox Church Shows its Political Clout."[23] The author, Paul Glastris, reveals several illuminating facts relating to the relationship between the contemporary Russian Church and national politics. One, Russian politicians seek to curry favor with the Church in pre-election times. Prior to the June 1996 elections, Yeltsin "seldom missed a chance to visit local churches, light candles before TV cameras or appear in public with Patriarch Aleksi II, leader of the 50 million-member church."[24] And Gannadi Zyuganov sought church support by "visiting monasteries, dropping atheism from his party's platform and proclaiming at campaign rallies that 'Jesus was the first communist'."[25] Two, Patriarch Aleksi

[22] Cited in "Forward" of *God and Caesar in East Germany* by Richard Solberg (New York: Macmillan, 1961). Debelius was well aware of the pervasiveness of Marxist philosophy in the German Democratic Republic.
[23] Paul Glastris, "A Mixed Blesing in Russia," *U. S. News and World Report (June 24 1996), p. 47.*
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] *Ibid.*

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overtly endorsed Yeltsin over Zyuganov by calling upon voters to "make the right choice," hinting that "a Zyuganov victory would mean a return to Soviet-style repression and state control of the church."[26] But above everything else, Glastris cites results of the most recent opinion polls indicating "Russians rate the Orthodox Church as the institution they most respect." Not everyone will agree with the conclusion to which Gastris arrives when he reflects upon the popularity of the Russian Church and the political leanings of its bishops; but his theory merits serious consideration by transnational scholars and clergymen. He suggests,

> Given its growing clout, the church will almost certainly secure strong state support regardless of the election's outcome. But that isn't necessarily something for the West to cheer: the resurgent Russian Orthodox Church is increasingly dominated by a reactionary wing of anti-Western, anti-democratic priests and bishops.[27]

In a similar vein, the state confronts problems in catering to the Orthodox Church at the expense of other religious bodies. In their official capacity, federal officials should be both globalists and nationalists, a dual concern demanding the utmost of diplomacy. Internationally, freedom of worship is prescribed by international agreements, a subject treated more extensively later in the chapter. Pluralism in religious practices today is as much an expectation internationally as it is in regard to multiethnic and multiracial human rights. Domestically, political leaders and the church hierarchy acknowledge the constitutional principal of church and state separation, but causes emerge to prompt church officials toward political involvement. Nationalism is on the rise in Russia today as in other parts of the world. In Russia the Orthodox Church is perceived as part and parcel of nationalism. Recognizing this, men like Vladimir Zhirinovsky, Gennadi Zyuganov and even Boris Yeltsin make generous

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[26] *Ibid.* Such an endorsement is surprising owing to a decision by the Russian Orthodox Church bishops in March 1996 prohibiting clergy from campaigning in the nation's presidential election ("Church leans towards Yeltsin in Russian vote," in *The New York Times* [May 30, 1996; sec. A, p. 1, col. 5]).
[27] *Ibid.*

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promises to church leaders and adherents during election times to obtain their support. A growing segment of contemporary Orthodox clergy now seeks a primacy status for Orthodoxy over other denominations from the government. What this means in terms of the state and church relating to outside organizations is not yet clear.

The state faces a dilemma when seeking to satisfy international expectations and domestic desires. The question arises, Which aspiration will afford the highest dividends for the general welfare of the people now and in the long-term toward political transnational relationships? Discounting the importance of either front carries with it serious political and economic consequences. In the contemporary world, state isolation from the broader global community no longer constitutes an option for a developed or developing nation-state. Political leaders admit to the interdependent nature of international affairs. The Soviet government paid a heavy price for endeavoring to restrict its commerce to Soviet bloc and satellite states, insisting on the use and false value of the ruble and effectively isolating itself from major markets and cultures of the world. Its isolationist posturing adversely affected relationships with Central European states and contributed partially to the decline in living standards of Russian people themselves.

Vladimir Zhirinovsky trumpeted an isolationist tune for the elections of December, 1993 that catapulted him to achieve a broad measure of popular support at the time, but such support was short-lived. The adverse ramifications of his *Dash to the South* became understood by the deputies of his own party early in their legislative term, and by the time Russians went to the polls in June 1996, Zhirinovsky supporters scarcely accounted for five percent of the voters. Zhirinovski himself was all but forgotten in the July elections when

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Yeltsin defeated Zyuganov, another politician who appealed to nationalism for Russian unity. Yeltsin's victory approached fifteen percentage points above the number supporting Zyuganov.

At this transitional period in the development of the New Russia, it is safe to suggest that a majority of Russian political leaders will continue to commend the contribution of Orthodoxy to Russian culture and are disposed to grant the church special privileges. Prior to the June 1996 elections, presidential candidates Gennadi Zyuganov, Alexander Lebed and Vladimir Zhirinovsky promised, if elected, to stop the inflow of Western missionaries into Russia. In so doing, they expressed their dismay over the insurgence of Western church representatives on Russian soil, interpreting their presence as a threat to Orthodox beliefs and jeopardizing the richness of Russian culture. To this troika of politicians, the perceived western missionary threat looms so high on the horizon of domestic concerns that they unite to condemn the incursions.

The three men represent distinct political camps siding with the Orthodox Church. Zyuganov is a reformed Communist who, aware of the impressive influence of Orthodoxy, no longer openly adheres to the Marxist metaphorical view of religion as opium because without support from the Church his chances of winning elections becomes negligible. Lebed sides with authoritarianism, holding to a strong, independent nation backed by military might and the Orthodox Church. His appointment by Yeltsin following the June 1996 elections to the post of national security advisor caused no little concern to advocates of Western-type democracy. Since he lost favor with Yeltsin and was relieved of his security post in October 1996, western democracy advocates might have greater worries. In the face of the pervasive crime and corruption cited in the previous chapter, Russians will probably aspire to have a Lebed-type

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leader to succeed the current president. Zhirinovsky is an ultranationalist, reflecting xenophobic traits, and viewing the West, particularly the United States, as selfishly exploiting Russia in the post-Soviet period. If the will and promises of these three men and others like them become accepted in the Motherland as the twenty-first century approaches, Russian Church nationalists may experience the realization of their dreams. In that case, however, the likelihood of liberal democracy triumphing over authoritarianism, fascism, or a reshaped socialism is not assured.

Democracy and Pluralism--Social Reform

As the Orthodox Church deals with social and political reforms, its leaders face the daunting task of choosing to what extent the Church will separate itself from state government. Regardless of what elected government officials announce concerning their appreciation of and support for Church doctrines and assumed prerogatives, democratic moves in the new Russia present new challenges for church-state relations. First, church officials must face the true meaning of democracy in Russia. Democracy means more than universal suffrage, open and free elections of government officials, and a representative legislature. In a true democracy, every citizen enjoys a measure of influence to ensure his own human rights. In ecclesiastical terms, this means that neither the Church nor the foremost of political aspirants or office holders can justifiably claim exclusive prerogatives for Orthodoxy or curtail the worship or public pronouncements of non-Russian denominations or religions. But since Russia is in the early stages of democracy and since Russians themselves are assessing the deepest implications of democratic tenets, it is very likely the Church will experience short-range official goodwill and favors, albeit in time such overtures will wane. The current Duma already records a non-

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Western and pro-Orthodox stance, and Yeltsin already has provided suites of offices in the Kremlin for the Patriarch, a perk not enjoyed by the Church since the fall of the Tsars.

Yet, the probability of Orthodoxy achieving primacy over its religious rivals remains in question for the next few years owing to conflicts with international agreements. If primacy or special privileges are granted, will the image and effectiveness of the Orthodox Church be improved? Doubts run high. Orthodox clerics will be well served by examining the downside of state-church linkage.

The weakness of such favor rests on the Orthodox Church approaching "national" status similar to becoming the official state church. This perceived achievement is a risky venture for the Orthodox Church for four reasons. First, some Orthodox leaders are aware of the heavy costs incurred upon the Church by the propinquity between Orthodox clergy and Soviet officials prior to December 1991. History emits warning signals when priests and politicians seek close ties between the state and the church. In the mid-1970s, the British sociologist Christel Lane observed that patterns of piety among the Orthodox in Russia were quite similar to those in established church societies like Sweden and England.[28] The parallelism is important. In Sweden, where the Lutheran Church is the official ecclesiastical body, only five percent of the people go to church on Sundays; this figure includes parishioners from other denominations. In England, where the Anglican Church reveals a close affinity to the state, only ten percent of the people attend church services on Sunday.[29] In these cases, citizens express some sort of an affiliation with the principal church but it seems to mean very little in their everyday lives.

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[28] Christel Lane, "Religious Piety among Contemporary Russian Orthodox," *Journal for the Scientific Discovery of Religion* (vol. 14, 1975, pp. 139-158).
[29] Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (Grand Rapids: Multnomah Press, 1993), pp. 561, 518.

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Something more precarious than an attrition in church attendance can occur when the church becomes too close to the state. The violence period in Colombia, South America (1948-1958), during which 200,000 to 400,000 died, was prompted by a collusion between the state and the Roman Catholic Church which caused the Church to lose face among the people. Conversely, the story of the Catholic Church in Poland under the Marxist regime revealed its greatest strength not by uniting with the state, but rather by affirming Christian convictions. The explanation is clear. As the public makes adjustments for errors, faulty decisions, and unfulfilled promises by the state government, so the public reacts to the folly of politically-laden church leaders by simply dropping out of Church life or switching to another church, denomination, or religion. The public is scarcely more tolerant toward Church mistakes than toward political pot-holes, dead ends, and cul-du-sacs. The historic roller-coaster route of politics in any nation-state constitutes a pitiful and painstaking route for any church.

A second reason for suggesting weakness when strong ties exist between the state and the church is that the church's political ties thwart its spiritual mission. In the opening chapter of this work the church was defined as a corporate body of people "called out from" the world to discharge a divine mission. When the Apostle Peter assesses the relationship between Christians and their socio-political environment, he designates Christians as "holy" (separated), "people of God," "aliens," and "strangers," with the intended purpose "that you might proclaim the excellencies of Him who has *called you out* of darkness into His marvelous light (italics inserted)."[30] Peter does not suggest asceticism in this verse as some might believe; he rather specifies the role of the Church in both a domestic and global context.

[30] I Peter 2:9.

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When a church or denomination seeks a symbiotic relationship with the state, it cherishes integration rather than separation, likeness over distinctiveness, and political accommodation more than divine approbation. Again, when the church identifies itself increasingly with nationalistic causes and enters the political fray of choosing between democracy or some other form of government as well as becoming involved in the East versus West controversy, it also runs a high risks of losing its spiritual focus and compromising with secular forces. Uniqueness should mark the nature and ministry of the Orthodox Church and every other church. This uniqueness lies in its message and ministry. No other institution but the Church inherently exists to establish human values, reconcile human beings, and instill hope, love, and purposeful living as does the Christian Church.

Dimity Pospielovsky cautions Church leaders against becoming so political that legitimate complaints are leveled against the Church and its personnel. He refers to the Soviet period, "when priests were allowed to sit in the USSR Supreme Soviet, and appeared on television wearing cassocks and pectoral crosses and vigorously attacking their adversaries, [so] there was widespread dismay among ordinary clergy and laypeople."[31] Can the current popular indifference toward the Russian Church and divisiveness within the Church find their roots in that history? Pospielovsky alerts the Church to an even greater danger possibly confronting the Church by warning, "After seven decades of conditioning by Marxist-Leninist hate propaganda, the nation is dangerously split along ideological, political, ethnic, class and economic lines. If the Church were to get involved in the polemics and take sides, the split would penetrate the Church and cause another schism."[32]

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[31] Pospielovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church," p. 251.
[32] *Ibid., p. 256.*

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The third reason for the weakness of state-church linkage stems from the conclusion that whenever a symbiotic relationship of this sort occurs the church becomes subordinate to the state. In the words of Pospielovsky, "If the government were to issue protective legislation, there would always be the danger that sooner or later the government would want its pound of flesh from the Church in return. Russian history provides plenty of precedents."[33] In the words of Chuck Colson, "Whenever the state balances political interests against religious interests, the scales tip toward political interests."[34] Church flirtations with political environments are always risky because fluctuations in popular concepts of political decisions are as varied as human temperaments. Political rhetoric often sways human wills and shapes individual choices. Unfortunately, both the rhetoric and personal choices repeatedly reveal carelessness and disastrous results, leading the public to alter its course and seek new leadership and even new party affiliation.

Finally, contemporary international sentiments do not commend religious exclusivity as an acceptable model for any nation-state. Analyses of recent events in the former Yugoslavia attest to regional and international trauma caused by a government partial to one religious body over another. Middle Eastern states currently engender serious international concern by openly deferring to one religion over others when enacting legislation and formulating domestic and international policy. Moreover, as a government openly favors one church over other denominations and religions, it sets itself apart from states supporting integration, cooperation, and tolerance. Russian leaders understand the high costs of global isolation that characterized to Soviet period. Their people and nation at-large suffered politically, socially and economically

[33] Pospielovsky, p. 256.
[34] Charles Colson, *Against the Night* (Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1989), p. 101.

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from Kremlin determination to have the Soviet Union function largely in a separate orbit where communism prevailed.

Perhaps the most serious reaction to a state endorsement of Orthodoxy over other religions will emerge from the forces of Islam, although the two religious bodies at present show considerable respect toward each other. In addressing the influence of religion, particularly Islam, on the current fighters in Chechnya, Michael Specter observes that Moscow is slowly coming to realize that a confrontation with the Muslim world could become as painful and lengthy as the cold war. He cites an outrage against Moscow evidenced in neighboring Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.[35] While moderates in these regions endeavor to fend off the insurgence of Islamic fundamentalism, moves by Orthodox clergy that limit Islamic practices will be interpreted by fundamentalists as kindling wood for larger and more pervasive Islamic flames.

The Church and Legislative Action

Shortly after Gorbachev introduced his programs of *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and *demokratizatsiya*, Western denominations and mission agencies began enlisting and sending volunteers for service in the Soviet Union. When the Union collapsed in December 1991, the open-door policy initiated by Gorbachev continued in most of the constituent republics, especially in Russia. Right-wing Orthodox clergy and nationalists objected to this trend, and in the new Russia, the sheer number of adherents of the Russian Church contributes leverage to its solicitations of government officials. Church clerics now carry considerable weight for preferential treatment. As examples, on July 14, 1993 the Russian parliament, under pressure

[35] Michael Specter, "Faith Reinforces Hate in the Caucasus," in *The New York Times* (Jan. 15, 1995; sec. 4, p. 5, col. 1).

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from the Russian Orthodox Church, passed a bill that would restrict the activities of foreign religious groups in Russia;[36] and on August 27 the Supreme Soviet, while backing off from efforts to restrict activities of foreign missionaries, approved amendments that offer preferential treatment to the Russian Orthodox Church."[37] Though President Yeltsin vetoed the 1993 bill and inserted in the 1993 Constitution (which was ratified in a public referendum in December of 1993) guarantees of freedom of speech, of assembly, of religion, and of travel,[38] pressures continue to mount in both legislative branches of government for laws favoring the wishes of the Orthodox Church. In July 1996, the Russian Duma approved new legislation regulating religious organizations in its first reading, with 376 in favor and only three objecting.[39] The law was drafted by an Advisory Committee that includes representatives of most denominations and an array of legal experts, including Anatoly Pschelenstev, Vladeslav Polosin, and others who have worked since 1993 on changes to the 1990 law. The new law has the backing of all Duma factions and most religious organizations, although the Russian Orthodox Church has recently withdrawn from the Committee, seeking a stronger role and amendments not agreeable to other denominations. This may mean an end to compromise and a more confrontational demeanor based on the enormous political clout of the Orthodox Church; however, knowledgeable scholars suggest Yeltsin will veto any bill targeted against non-Orthodox religious groups.

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[36] Serge Schmemann, "Russia may curb foreign religions," in *The New York Times*, July 16, 1993; sec. A, p. 9, col. 3.
[37] "Moscow declines to restrict foreign religious activity," *The New York Times*, Aug. 28, 1993; sec. A, p. 5, col. 6. Two months after this action, Yeltsin ordered tanks to attack the parliament building and the disbanding of the parliament for its own opposition to him.
[38] See Celestine Bohlen "Yeltsin promotes a charter that is very much his," in *The New York Times*, Nov. 10, 1993, Sec. 18, p. 4, Col. 4.
[39] This information and that which immediately follows is a news brief sent out via e-mail by Keston News Service in July, 1996.

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While opposing official preferential treatment toward Orthodoxy, Yeltsin allows regional and local governments to enact such laws and local politicians and legislatures already are in the redacting process. In the Tula oblast, south of Moscow, the government is already cracking down on religious minorities.[40] Authorities of the oblast say the measures are to restrict the Hare Krishna movement, the Unification Church and other cults and sects from expanding, but the representation of these two groups in Tula is low, whereas Adventists have a substantial group of adherents in Tula. In the Sverdlovsk oblast, 900 miles east of Moscow, legislation of another sort is under consideration. Here, the provincial government is on the verge of narrowing religious freedom for all religious bodies. The preamble of a proposed legislative bill states that regulations are necessary "for the defense of the interests of the populace and the preservation of social tranquillity (*spokoistvie*)." The underlying assumption, opponents charge, is that religion as such is a threat to the public interest.[41] Oblast legislators tend to agree. The bill, if enacted as it now stands, will establish restrictions on all religious bodies, even the Orthodox Church. There is potentially a positive side to the interpretation of this event; namely, it fosters a spirit of cooperation among all religious bodies and hopefully precludes the need to pass legislation that might cause a clash between them. The downside of the legislation is the inherent notion that churches, or the message proclaimed by churches, cannot alleviate social or psychological sores of Russian society. Is this an indictment upon all religious endeavors in Russia, or should one attribute the action to Soviet cadre maneuvering in democratic waters?

[40] Lawrence Uzzell, "Tula Cracks Down on Religious Minorities," Keston News Service, September 24, 1996.
[41] Lawrence Uzzell, "Sverdlovsk to Crack Down on All Religions?" Keston News Service , October 8, 1996.

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The influence of right-wing, anti-Western clergy is increasing. The Russian Church will probably secure strong state support for numerous programs. A question surfacing from such a linkage, however, hinges on whether close state-church ties will serve the church as well as certain clerics suggest? In other words, will a primacy status or any privileged role granted by the state to Orthodoxy over Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and so on, make the Russian Church stronger, larger, or in any way more effective in carrying out its prescribed mission?

The enactment of specific legislation against foreign missionaries assumes the Orthodox Church, which is promoting such legislation, has an adequate reservoir of personnel to represent it in regions not presently represented by the Church and to attract the 42,200,000 "non-religious" people of the Federation to Orthodoxy. The vastness of such an enterprise precludes reasonable expectations. Even former Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrinin, realized the virtue of some missionary work when he granted Cameron Townsend, founder of the Summer Institute of Linguistics of Norman, Oklahoma, a visa in 1968 to visit certain tribal groups in Russia, to work toward the reduction of their languages to writing, and subsequently place in their hands a portion of "the greatest book every written," the Bible.[42] The same Institute now has personnel working in "24 language projects: 18 teams of exegetical advisors serve in 16 languages, and a consultant couple has some ongoing contribution in 8 lanaguges."[43] Besides, through interconfessional endeavors, some foreign missionaries can work well with Orthodox clergy to lead non-religious Russians into a better

[42] Cameron Townsend related this account to the writer in his home in Waxhaw, NC, November, 1983.
[43] This information was sent to the writer from Elaine Townsend, wife of Cameron Townsend, on October 29, 1996.

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understanding of Christian truths. Not all foreign missionaries work against the Orthodox grain.

There are logical arguments in favor of Orthodox actions to restrict exogenous ecclesiastical efforts inside Russia. First, as noted earlier, Orthodoxy constitutes a significant part of the rich Russian culture. Religious organizations failing to acknowledge such a linkage risk popular suspicion if not rejection from the outset of their endeavors. Second, analysts of ecclesiastical activity inside Russia estimate more than 700 Western Christian organizations functioning in Russia alone in 1996.[44] Third, the vast diversity of Christian groups conveys considerable confusion among Russians among whom the Soviets deprived religious liberty, trained clergy, and biblical instruction and knowledge. Rather than signaling a united front at the very time the Christian Church confronts the most significant opportunities of any time in Russian history, the diversity of representation introduced by Western groups conveys images of division, strife, chaos and a Tower of Babel environment. Fourth, exogenous religious groups are supported by a reservoir of financial reserves that transcends immeasurably Orthodox resources to accomplish church-growth goals. Western financial contributions provide ample resources for the subsidization of pastoral salaries, new training institutions, church-school literature, office equipment, seminar convocations, radio broadcasts and telecasts to promote Western formats of worship, evangelism and doctrine. The Russian

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[44] This estimate is based on the work of Sharon Linzey (ed.), *East-West Christian Organizations Directory* (Evanston, IL: Berry Publishers, 1993), in which she documents 700 Western church/parachurch organizations working in the former Soviet Union in 1992., and a fax message sent to this writer, dated November 13, 1996, in which Linzey writes, "I would imagine that over a thousand Western Christian organizations are presently working in the Russian Republic. More come all the time." In addition to being awarded a Fullbright Lectureship in 1993, Linzey has taught at Moscow State University and was able to pursue extensive research in Russia through financial grants from several organizations that are mentioned in a subsequent work she edited, *Directory of Indigenous Christian Organizations of the Former Soviet Union and East Central Europe* (Evanston, IL: Berry Publishers, 1996).

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Orthodox Church becomes eclipsed in its mission by the opulence of Western endeavors and its own financial limitations. Fifth, Western church representatives admit to an inadequate knowledge of Orthodox doctrines and practices which engenders a clumsiness in addressing questions relating to Orthodoxy and sometimes a veritable denigration of the Orthodox Church.

Acknowledging the insurgence of exogenous religious endeavors inside Russia and struggles caused thereby to the Orthodox Church, one should not be surprised at the reaction of its bishops and priests to seek legislation to rectify perceived Western short-sightedness and weaknesses. Analysts with a crystal ball coupled with the above data may accurately predict the passing of some legislation in the near future designed to satisfy a measure of Orthodox concerns.

International Agreements Affecting State-Church Affairs

Admittedly, religious intolerance can be traced back to antiquity when the ancient Hebrews battled the Canaanites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and other nationalist peoples. Religious differences fostered suffering, persecution and death to Christians from the first to the third centuries in the Roman Empire as Christians charged others of idolatrous and self-indulgent life-styles and refused to bow to images of the emperor. Again, in Medieval times, the Crusades of the West and warring hordes of the East kept religious fires burning between Christians and Muslims. The schism erupting between Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox believers, culminating in 1054, reveals differences but not the kind producing wars. Later, religious intolerance became prominent within Christianity itself as the Reformation took hold in Western Europe. Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists and other groups drafted their

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respective Church creeds condemning clergy and parishioners of contrary beliefs. Religious polarization continues in modern times as witnessed in Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, Chechnya, India, Pakistan, North Africa, and geographical pockets of the Americas.

On the basis of these realities, international agreements concerning freedom of religion are necessary. Regardless of how far Russian nationalists and right-wing Orthodox clergy aspire to go toward placing Orthodoxy above other Christian denominations and world religions, they must face international agreements signed first by the Soviet regime and later by the Russian government. In 1945, the Soviet government became a signatory to the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter calls for freedom of religion. Indeed, the very purpose of the United Nations, according to Article 1 of the Charter, is "to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinctions as to race, sex, language, or *religion* (italics inserted)."

Framers of the Charter undoubtedly acknowledged the gravity of religious conflicts. They wisely perceived potential struggles, the lack of global cooperation and the forfeiture of human rights arising from governmental restrictions of religious freedom and conversely what tolerance regarding distinct religious persuasions could mean toward fostering regional and even transregional amicable relations.

Again, under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948, three articles promote the freedom of religion: 2, 18, and 26. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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approved by the General Assembly on December 16, 1966, freedom of religion again was decreed in Articles 2. Article 18 requires the curtailment of religious freedom by legislative action only when based on issues of public welfare, personal health, and morality. Satanic cults requiring members to participate in infanticide, pet animal sacrifices, and so on illustrate the intent of the negative parameters of religious freedom. But the curtailment of religious worship centering around generally accepted religious practices outside a given nation-state is proscribed by the Covenant.

On August 1, 1975 all states of Europe and the United States and Canada approved what is often referred to as the Helsinki Accords but more accurately titled the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Article VII repeats what the United Nations approved under previous international agreements: "The participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, *religion* or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion." Later in the same document, participating States are required to "act in conformity with the purpose and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." It is quite well known that the United States proposed the insertion of the freedom of religion principle while Leonid Brezhnev, then General Secretary of the CPSU of the Soviet Union, resisted approval of the Final Act because it required state-sponsored religious freedom. In this case, international pressure served as a necessary force to lead Brezhnev to cast his vote for approval. Again in 1981, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved another document prescribing "freedom of thought, conscience and religion." In 1986, the Commission on Human Rights adopted the Resolution on Religious

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Intolerance convinced "of the need to deal urgently with questions of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief."

As a follow-up to the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975, CSCE representatives convened in Vienna between 1986 and 1989 during which time religious freedom appeared again on the agenda. The Concluding Document issued by the CSCE calls upon states to "foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect between believers in different communities as well as between believers and non-believers." Finally, principle 32 of the Document calls upon CSCE states to "allow believers, religious faiths and their representatives, in groups or on an individual basis, to establish and maintain direct personal contacts and communication with each other, in their own or other countries, *inter alia*, through travel, pilgrimages and participation in assemblies and other religious events."

If international laws regarding freedom of religion are respected, neither political rhetoric nor hierarchical dreams and solicitations will alter the expanding consensus that freedom of religion promotes global peace, welfare, cooperation and human rights. Repeated references to religious freedom by the United Nations and by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe attest to the seriousness of infringements against such freedom. Repeated efforts by these supranational bodies to implement religious toleration reveal the ubiquitous nature of the endeavor and the international pressure to have nations comply with the United Nations Charter.

International aspirations favor religious pluralism for the welfare of states, regions and the world. Without allowing for religious freedom, a state is apt to confront serious social conflicts domestically and internationally. Therefore, if the contemporary Russian Orthodox

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Church strives toward national exclusivity at this time, it will thereby set itself aloof from international expectations which in turn will limit its global vision and opportunities. Moreover, the greater the Church's concern for political ties within Russia itself the less the Church will be concerned about the spiritual, moral and ethical conditions of non-Orthodox and exogenous groups. In addition, as non-Orthodox groups outside Russia perceive a disparity between official treatment toward Orthodoxy at the expense of other religions, the greater the probability of a domino effect of *quid pro quo* reactions to Orthodoxy outside Russia.

Shifts in Political Culture

The third major theme of the chapter addresses the weight of political culture on the progress of the Orthodox Church. Robert Tucker defines political culture in one volume as "everything in a culture that pertains to government and politics."[45] In another source, Tucker expands the definition to encompass "a society's complex of real and ideal culture patterns, the former comprising the accepted ways of political acting ... the latter comprising the accepted ways of political belief."[46] William Zimmerman defines political culture as "a group or nation's basic orientations to politics."[47] Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba interpret political culture as "the political system ... internalized in the cognitions, feelings and evaluations of its population."[48] Taken together, these definitions convey a meaning of political culture that embraces every echelon of dominant national sentiments, perspectives, expectations, responses, and participation in politically-related affairs.

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[45] Robert Tucker, *Political Culture and Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), p. vii.
[46] In the Forward to *Post-Communist Studies and Political Science* by Frederic J. Fleron, Jr. and Erik P. Hoffmann, eds. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), p. xi.
[47] William Zimmerman, "Synoptic Thinking and Political Culture in Post-Soviet Russia," in *Slavic Review* (Fall 1995), p. 630.
[48] Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *Civic Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), chapter. 1.

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Political culture is treated in this study as both a conduit for political action--thus an overt actor in the social and political processes of a nation-state--as well as a political entity in democratic societies that is shaped by popular opinion. This dual interpretation of the term is viewed by Almond and Verba under the rubric of "participant political culture."[49] They describe it as emphasizing both output to and input from citizens. The term, therefore, comprises a dual sided process with which analysts must wrestle when interpreting socio-political dynamics. Adhering to this meaning, political culture plays a role toward shaping political outcomes and is also a medium of a society which communicates a message of support for or dissatisfaction with a political system, regime or ideology.

The relevance of political culture to the struggles facing the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church rests on the inherent question of whether popular sentiments among Russians lean toward the Church becoming an integral part of Russian politics or if preference is given rather to a greater degree of separation between church and state? Closely linked to the same question is whether new democratic trends within the Federation are supported by the Church or whether clerics reflect apprehension toward democratic reforms? Answers to these questions grow in importance as one looks to the prospects of the church at the end of the twentieth century.

William Zimmerman cites two basic and conflicting views concerning the malleability of Russian political culture.[50] By one account, "culture is a relatively stable, ethnically or spatially specific predictor variable that shapes a nation's political institutions."[51] Accordingly, Russians are perceived as comprising a rather unique culture dominated by authoritarian

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[49] *Ibid.*
[50] Zimmerman, pp. 630-632.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 630.

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leadership and the state so that significant changes in political culture are unlikely even after the collapse of Sovietism. A consistent conviction of this position leads inevitably to the conclusion that Russia is congenitally incapable of democracy. By another account, Russian political culture is malleable due to educational alterations, social and technological changes, and work experiences. Scholars in the second camp consider political culture as "an outcome variable shaped by institutions and incentive structures."[52] In other words, when social institutions change, political culture likewise changes. Then political culture engenders additional changes within a culture.

Zimmerman, admittedly, addresses political culture from an economic perspective. His essay is mentioned here because his analysis is readily applicable to ecclesiastical affairs. Regretfully, political scientists and international relations scholars seldom tie their theories and findings together with religious belief systems or institutions in spite of the ascendance of global and regional religious conflicts. If Russian political culture is expected to remain relatively constant as Model 1 suggests, the Orthodox Church will continue to enjoy a high degree of favor from the political hierarchy. Considering the Soviet era then as an anomaly in Russian history, analysts must cling to Russia's aristocratic past and the tsarist era for their interpretations. The Orthodox Church, albeit dominated by Tsars prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, was viewed in pre-Bolshevik times as a root of Russian authentic culture that fed into the moral, spiritual, and political fiber of society. So important was Orthodoxy in Russian culture, according to normative reasoning, that the existence of Russia without the Church was interpreted as inconceivable. Related to this discussion is the belief that Russians are dominated

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 631.

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by only one philosophy, and as such, Russia must be placed in the category of being *sui generis* when analyzed from a global perspective.

Since there is a paucity of scholarly material on whether the supposed uniqueness of Russian culture precludes exogenous religions from emerging successfully within Russia, ecclesiastical interpreters and strategists must develop their own assessments and theories. Interestingly enough, such a task has the potential of contributing to the broader study of the future landscape of Russian political culture. When one acknowledges the close tie between the Orthodox Church and political culture, he can pursue the probability of the Church retaining its role in the New Russia. However, if research on contemporary history reveals a lessening role for the Church in which non-Orthodox denominations and religions surface to challenge the primacy of Orthodoxy, the end result may attest to the malleability of the whole gamut of political culture and thus an argument against single philosophy adherents.

Whether the Soviet era was an anomaly in the history of Russia or not, analysts are now obliged to acknowledge the significant role played by the collapse of Sovietism in altering the way people live and the nature of their belief system. Russian political culture has been transformed over the past decade from being a reservoir controlled by Marxist ideologists into being a bastion of popular expression. Elections of June and July 1996 attest to a wave of democracy and free market reforms sweeping across Russia. For the first time in Russian history, an independent Russian people--not bankers, oligarchs, or organized crime--chose a president in a rather fair and free election. Popular multiparty elections now characterize the Federation. The president and legislative representatives are chosen by democratic processes. Major cities in like manner offer multiparty election slates. From Vladivostok to the Baltics,

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Russians go to the polls to cast their votes where the names of competing aspirants to political posts are listed in rural areas, villages, towns and cities. Moreover, the central government no longer controls human actions as it did under the Soviets. Individual and corporate freedoms have become realities. While a single election does not denote an assurance of Western-style democracy for Russia, it does signal a move forward with a solid popular mandate. Whether Russians will pursue a steady democratic course is another question. In all likelihood, there will be a two-steps-forward and one-step-backward performance toward democratic rule.

In the economic arena, free market principles have witnessed exceptional acceptance since 1991. Collective farms, factories, government-owned businesses have become privatized. Corner commercial kiosks saturate transportation junctions. Open produce markets dot the landscapes of numerous communities. Hotels, restaurants, taxi companies, and all other sorts of businesses are in private hands. The volume of social and economic changes introduced since 1991 provides a sufficient sample of evidence to argue in favor of a malleable culture affecting both politics and religion. Now the Church hierarchy must assess the results of these changes for the future of Church life and action.

Acknowledging current and imminent changes relating to political culture, four important challenges confront Church leaders at this time. One, they must identify the socio-economic forces that militate against the best interests of the Church; two, they must resolve to combat these forces in the most effective way without losing ground to other contending forces; three, they must assess the strengths and weaknesses within the Church itself to improve its image; fourth, they must take strides and make creative moves to stimulate the loyalty of its current members and to attract the multitudes which only enter church portals for

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weddings, funerals, and other celebrations. The major challenge to Church leaders is to recognize the unique influence of the Christian message and then to take creative steps to have the Church recognized as a crucial hub in any community.

The closinlosing scene of the mid-1980s Soviet film titled *Repentance*, directed by Tenghis Abuladze, presents an elderly woman asking the question, "Does this road lead to a church?" Receiving a negative answer, the woman responded, "What's the use of a road if it doesn't lead to a church?" The film was received all across the Soviet Union with great acclaim for it alerted viewers to the evils of Stalinism and the need for spiritual values. The question today is not so much whether a road will lead to a church, but whether Russians will take the road that leads to a church and what sort of a church will it be? Church leaders must take every step necessary to develop the Church so that its primary objective is the spiritual welfare of Russian peoples and of global people groups. The challenge is daunting; but the possibility of altering Russian political culture by ecclesiastical media is both logical and rewarding. As William Zimmerman concedes that national institutions can change political culture, Church leaders must believe that the institution called the Orthodox Church possesses a latent power that can be quickened to transcend the accomplishments of any other institution. They must believe, as did the New Testament writer St. Luke, that Christians "turned the world upside down."[53]

The Nationalism Factor

The emergence of nationalism in post-Communist Russia is the single most significant phenomenon of its socio-political environment, transcending in importance the dual experiments of democracy and free market economy. Hans Kohn defines nationalism as "a

[53] Reported by Luke in *Acts of the Apostles* 17: 3.

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state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt due to the nation-state."[54] According to this definition, nationalism affects the intellectual processes, personal allegiances, and emotional make-up of people in a given society, and these responses originate in and are stimulated by one's identity with the nation-state. Going beneath superficial layers of nationalism, one finds a pervasive sense of distinction based on historic events, national heroes and ascribed culture. Therefore, nationalism serves as a device to lift the spirits of a nation that is either threatened by outside forces or has been defeated. In Russia, the rise of nationalism is the antidote for the humiliation wrought by the death of the Soviet Union and the eclipse of its military might.

The history of Russia lends weight to the designation "Great Russians," a concept emphasized by modern nationalism. The characterization is apt in that Russia in her greatness turned back Napoleon, produced writers like Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Pushkin, Gogol, and Turgenev, and gave the world composers such as Rubenstein, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Borodin. The architecture of Russian palaces, cathedrals, concert halls, and government buildings compares favorably with the finest of Western Europe. All this leads to a "pooled self-esteem," generating an extreme loyalty to the Motherland.

Contemporary nationalism manifests sufficient energy to cause the foundations of democracy to crumble and the pillars of *laissez-faire* marketing to collapse. Increasingly, it has become an integral part of Russian political culture which explains why every presidential candidate in 1996 trumpeted the tune. Russian nationalism is related symbiotically to the Russian Orthodox Church, mutually seeking to cultivate traditional Slavic values while evincing

[54] Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History* (New York: Nostrand, 1965), p. 9.

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signs of suspicion toward Western culture and governments. One intellectual affirms, "It is impossible to separate Russian nationalism from [Russian] religiosity; this would be contrary to the nature of the Russian people and its history."[55] To illustrate the seriousness of the current nationalistic influence, in mid-September 1995 the Russian Duma, known for its nationalistic fervor, discussed the possible beginning of World War III as it expressed dissatisfaction concerning NATO bombings over Bosnia. Duma members claim that a new war would pit the Christian West and Muslim civilizations against the Christian Orthodox East.[56] Such an allusion describes the sentiments of Russians who continue to feel pain from the political and social events of the Soviet Union occurring between the summer of 1989 to the end of 1991. Reactions of this nature led John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene to comment, "Cultural nationalism runs deep. When it is challenged, or when there is a new opportunity for its expression, it will rise to the surface."[57]

Nationalists look to the Church as an agent for social discipline and the periodic purging of corrupt foreign influences. For both nationalists and many Church leaders, Russia itself is a martyred nation victimized by materialistic Western ideas: liberalism in the late tsarist period, Marxism under the Soviets, and market economics in post-Soviet times. But the Church constitutes a counterforce to such destructive movements, and the emergence of nationalism in the new Russia offers Orthodox leaders a tempting ploy for political power.

A weakness of the linkage between nationalism and the Church is the similarity to what was noted earlier when a church vies for close ties with a state government. In one case,

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[55] Quoted by Dimity Pospielovsky, "Russian Nationalism and the Orthodox Revival," in *Religion in Communist Lands* (Vol. 15, no 3, Winter 1987), p.304.
[56] Marshall Ingerson, "Peeved Russians talk the talk but stay on sidelines in Bosnia," in *Christian Science Monitor* (Sept 11, 1995), p. 6, col. 1.
[57] John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, *Megatrends 2000* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1990), p. 152.

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prerogatives and programs of the state take precedence over church agendas; in the other case, nationalistic values and goals dominate the Church's vision and planning. When one realizes that approximately 85 percent of all Orthodox believers in the world live in Russia and post-Soviet bloc states, he can deduce at this time that Orthodoxy leans more toward being nationalistic in scope than global, with its vision prescribed by one culture, one region, and one language rather than conceiving the world as its parish. Nationalism, like "the State-Church" status, can become a greater hindrance than a help to the Russian Orthodox Church.

A Role for the Church in the State

This chapter has dealt largely with adverse outcomes from a politically motivated church hierarchy, but any treatment of the interaction between a church and the state in which it is operating merits a positive and more balanced approach. While the Russian Orthodox Church by its Founder has a soteriological mission to the world, it enjoys the luxury of starting that mission in its own backyard where the tenets of scientific atheism ultimately failed to elevate the human spirit and where restless Russians now seek a redemptive message. Gleb Yakunin, though a dissident Russian Orthodox priest, made a memorable comment at a reception hosted by American Ambassador Warren Zimmerman in Moscow on May 30, 1988 in saying, "Religion is like salt which protects humanity from decomposition and disintegration. Any attempt to banish it from social life invariably leads to a degradation of society."[58] The principal of separation of church and state does not and should not be interpreted to mean the Church has no role in state affairs. Acknowledging a myriad of weaknesses wrought by the union of the Church with the State, church bishops and priests must likewise consider the

[58] Ambassador Warren Zimmerman , as chairman of the United States delegation to the Vienna Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe. quoted Yakunin in his June 10, 1988 speech on religious freedom to the plenary session of the CSCE.

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extent to which the Church can work in a symbiotic manner with the state to accomplish goals of mutual importance. Such goals can include improved conditions for families and communities, the establishment and recognition of moral and ethical standards, the clear pronouncement of a theological philosophy to offset the dominance of secularism and advanced technology, the promotion of altruistic endeavors toward Russia's poor and disadvantaged peoples, and, above all else, the provision of a community oasis where Russian people are challenged intellectually and spiritually to reckon with the reality of a transcendent, yet loving God.

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CHAPTER IV

THE STRUGGLE WITH PROTESTANTISM

In order to grasp the actual disparity between Orthodoxy and Protestantism, one should understand the beginnings of the Protestant movement, particularly the doctrines which led to its separation from Rome. As the year 1054 AD marks the culmination of an escalating schism between Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians, 1529 identifies the culmination of a growing chasm between clergy within the Catholic Church of Western Europe that gave birth to Protestantism.

The Protest of Martin Luther

Martin Luther started a fire within Catholicism when he nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg on October 31, 1517. The Theses were intended merely as a criticism of the nefarious system of indulgences carried out by Tetzel, an agent of Archbishop Albert, whom Luther viewed as exploiting the people by claiming repentance was not necessary for the buyer of an indulgence since the indulgence afforded complete forgiveness of all sin. At the time, Luther sought reform but not division. Over the succeeding twelve years, Luther challenged both the authority and certain doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. He insisted on the superiority of the Bible over decrees of the pope, dogmas of the Church and tradition. He posited justification by faith alone without human works, the certitude of salvation to all believers,

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the reality of only two sacraments--the Lord's supper and baptism, the priesthood of all believers, and since all believers are priests there is no spiritual difference between pastors and people and thus no claim of apostolic succession.

At the Diet (assembly) of Speier (in Germany) in 1529, the question of the prerogative of princes to choose the religion of their subjects arose. It was in response to a similar gathering three years earlier in which princes were conceded such authority; but in 1529, the Diet reversed the previous decision, alleging Roman Catholicism as the only legal faith. In response, princely followers of Luther read a *Protestation* before the Diet, thus giving birth to the movement called Protestantism which spread rapidly across northern Europe and to North America.

The Latin verb *protestari*, from which the adjective "Protestant" is derived, means more than "to protest" in the sense of objecting to a statement or action. The deeper and more correct meaning is to avow, witness, or confess. Early Protestants were making a statement in 1529, believing they were confessing the primitive faith of the early Christian Church which had become obscured by medieval Catholic innovations. More specifically, they regarded their beliefs as a recovery of basic theology presented in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. What started out as an endeavor for reformation thus culminated in separation. The so-called Reformation that started in Germany reached Russia not as the force of a continental movement but as the distant and scattered spray of a mighty storm. Waves of the storm now beat against the Orthodox Church.

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Orthodoxy--Forgotten in the West

Historically, Western scholars of ecclesiology have stressed the cleavage between Roman Catholics and Protestants that gave rise to the Reformation and anti-Reformation, with scarce references to Orthodoxy. Daniel B. Clendenin appropriately labels Orthodox believers "the forgotten family."[1] Karl-Heinz Schroeder concurs:

> All too often accounts of the history of civilization pay relatively little attention to the Russian people, presenting their story in relation to that of presumably more important Western peoples.... Students of the history of Christianity are likely to be even less aware of the Russian people's religious history. This ethnocentric approach has deprived Western students of the insights they need to understand the Russian and Slavic political, cultural, and religious traditions.[2]

The absence of more in-depth attention to Orthodoxy by Protestants can be explained in several ways: one, Orthodoxy has never posed a serious challenge to Protestantism; two, the primary seat of Orthodoxy, Istanbul (Constantinople), lacks global prominence and the patriarch himself leads a relatively small constituency while having no official authority over other patriarchies since each is self-governing; three, with repressive measures by the Soviets against all forms of religion over the past 70 years, there was little communication and only superficial relations between Russian Orthodox prelates and Western clerics; fourth, outside the former Soviet Union where Orthodoxy has its highest classified patriarchies--Istanbul (Constantinople), Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem--the geographical and sociological environments have been exceptionally hostile to the Orthodox Church, stifling its ministries while impeding its growth; and finally, with an

[1] Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity--A Western Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), p. 29.
[2] Karl-Heinz Schroeder, "Religion in Russia: To 1917," in Eugene B. Shirley, Jr. and Michael Rowe, eds., *Candle in the Wind* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1989), p.1.

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estimated 65 percent of Orthodox believers identified with Russia, Orthodoxy approaches the status of a national and cultural religion rather than being universal.

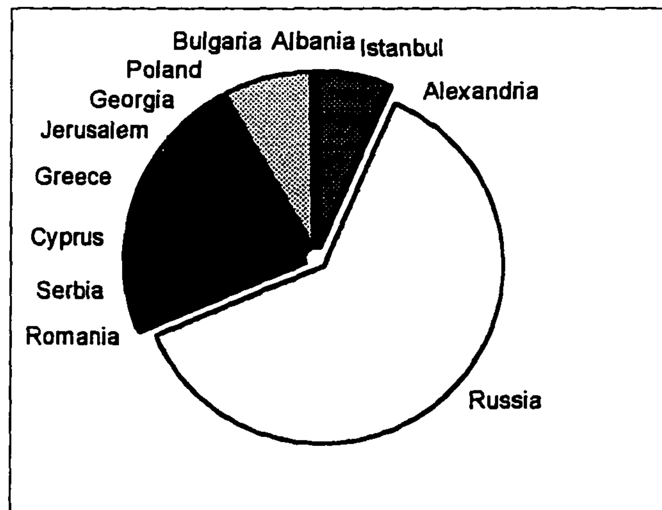
To understand Orthodoxy in a global context, one should be aware of the locations of the autocephalous patriarchies and of their reported size. Table 2 reveals adherent populations; Figure 2 reflects the proportionate size of the patriarchies.

Table 2. Population of Autonomous Orthodox Patriarchies[3]

Patriarchate	Adherents	Patriarchate	Adherents
Alexandria	350,000	Cyprus	450,000
Russia	62,500,000	Greece	9,000,000
Romania	17,000	Jerusalem	60,000
Constantinople	6,000,000	Georgia	5,000,000
Albania	210,000	Poland	750,000
Serbia	8,000,000	Bulgaria	8,000,000

Source: Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity–A Western Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), p. 32.

Figure 2. Size Ratios of Autonomous Orthodox Patriarchies



Source: The ratios are based on the data of Table 2.

[3] The rounded numbers in Table 2 result from questionable record keeping, inflated statistics, and/or a question of cultural versus belief identification.

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Owing to the large number of adherents claimed by the Russian Orthodox Church, in comparison with its sister communities, this study presents the argument that the Russian Church should become more involved in global affairs and not limit itself to territory of the Federation and the "near abroad" as is now its custom.

The explanation for the intense Western interest today toward the Russian Orthodox Church, above everything else, is the radical political transformation that has taken place in Russia and in the perimeter states of the former Soviet Union since the introduction of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. As Western people, academic institutions and corporations evidence a vital interest in the freedoms and opportunities afforded them in the new Russia, so do Western denominations and mission agencies aspire to capitalize on the same freedom and on moral and spiritual opportunities. One would like to affirm that the Christian spirit of *koinonia* (human bonding, togetherness) links Western believers with Russians, but this is not the case. The influx of Protestant volunteers to Russian cities, towns and villages is not in response to appeals from Orthodox hierarchy or an expression of transnational *koinonia*, but rather an overture emerging from denominational connections between Russia and the West and in some cases from Western churches which choose to send representatives to a land previously dominated by official atheism.

In Russian culture, the Orthodox Church is perceived as the harbinger, if not the epitome, of moral standards and authentic Christianity. For a Westerner to perform religious services in Russia in the post-Communist era, he should know and wrestle with Orthodox doctrines and practices. Some Western denominations are keenly aware of

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potential clashes with Orthodox clergy and people arising from doctrinal and liturgical ignorance. Of these, many now seek to identify with Orthodox priests and people in a show of support, knowing of the plight through which the Church has come under Marxism. Others perceive the Orthodox Church to be so lacking in authentic Christian character, so distant from them in doctrine, and so short on missionary spirit that they opt to be independent from Orthodoxy. Of course, such perceptions can be terribly misleading. The latter views serve to polarize the Orthodox Church from Protestantism and, regretfully, the Orthodox Church from Western people and influences.

This chapter presents background material for understanding the relationship between the Orthodox Church and Protestantism and proceeds with an overview of Protestant activities in contemporary Russia which reveal significant growth patterns, problems caused by the incursion of western missionaries, an explanation for Western missionary ministries, and suggestions for a rapprochement between the two branches of Christianity.

Early Stages of Russian Protestantism

Whereas Eastern Orthodoxy is considered an integral part of Russian culture, historical annals point to a Christian witness in Russia prior to AD 324 when Constantine established his office as head of the Church in Byzantium (Constantinople, Istanbul). Orthodox priests themselves acknowledge the legendary report of the Apostle Thomas setting foot on Russian soil in the first Christian century. Again, in the third century, Western missionaries arrived in "Rus" to evangelize and indoctrinate non-believers. Non-Orthodox Christian endeavors did not surface significantly in Russia until the Reformation

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had ignited and inflamed the passions of Martin Luther's followers in the early part of the sixteenth century. Indeed, western Protestant sentiments were leveled toward the Catholic Church and the reforms demanded by Luther did not affect the Russian Empire directly.

There are reports of Lutheran German immigrant churches in Russia at the time of Ivan the Great.[4] Philip Walters reports that Lutherans arrived in Russia as farmers by invitation of the Russian government in the sixteenth to eighteen centuries.[5] German Lutherans settled principally in the Baltic region and in the southern Volga region of Russia where they established scattered congregations. But the congregations had no central organization until 1832 when they were united under the Imperial General Consistatory. Although Lutheran churches could be found in many large towns in Russia prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, their constituents were largely German. The exile and flight of Germans from their residences during World War II dealt a heavy blow to Lutheranism in Russia proper. Lutherans constitute the dominant religious body in Estonia and Latvia; but in Russia the number of Lutherans is minimal.

One might conjecture that reforms initiated by Patriarch Nikon in the middle of the seventeenth century were stimulated by Western Protestant changes. Indeed, Archbishop Avvakum and his followers interpreted Nikon's reforms as alien to Russian traditions, but they did not tie Western Protestantism to the changes. Aside from a penchant and personality for ecclesiastical innovations, Nikon was exposed to Greek clerics who introduced him to Greek Orthodox practices and books interpreted by the break-away segment of the Russian Church as counter to proper Orthodox liturgy.

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[4] Kent Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1991), p. 81.
[5] Philip Walters, *World Christianity: Eastern Europe* (Oxford, UK: Keston College, 1988), p. 84.

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The lasting roots of Western-style Protestantism were planted in Russia by Peter the Great (1682-1725) who opened the country to Western influences to advance Russian culture while leaning heavily toward the Christianity of the West. The indomitable Emperor became interested in the teachings, leadership and ministry of August Hermann Franke, the pietist in Halle, Germany. German pietism was a reaction to scholastic Lutheranism. Tsar Peter allowed Franke's students to come to Russia as educators, teachers and pastors. The first Russian secondary school was started by pietists, and the first president of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences was a friend of Franke. Writings of Franke largely influenced people around St. Petersburg so that as late by 1900 an estimated 100,000 Protestants, ten percent of the population, were living there.

Following Peter the Great, Catherine II (1762-96) allowed Moravian Brethren from Herrnhut, Germany to establish a settlement at the bend of the Volga River close to modern-day Volgograd. The leader of Herrnhut, Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf, traveled to Russia in 1765 to negotiate and sign the agreement. Under Tsar Alexander I (1801-25), the St. Petersburg Bible Society was established and a Russian New Testament was produced. Protestants from Germany continued to move into southern and eastern areas of Russia from the end of the eighteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries. According to Kent Hill, "The rulers tolerated the immigrant's theology in order to gain access to their technical expertise."[6] Regardless of the motivation behind the immigration permits, Germans accumulated large material assets through their hard work and technical skills.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

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Among the nineteenth century Protestants appearing in Russia were the *Stundists*, Baptists and Evangelical Christians. *Stundists* were German farmers who settled in the southern part of the Russian Empire, present-day Ukraine, in the 1850s and 1860s.[7] Products of Western European Protestantism, *Stundists* sponsored Bible studies with Russian laborers. Study sessions were labeled *Bibelstunden*, "Bible Hours," by participants. The *Stundist* movement eventually reached circles of Russian workers and peasants, spreading from the Ukraine to other areas of Western and Central Russia. Its leaders stressed an understanding of the Holy Scriptures, living according to Scriptural standards, and the obligation of believers to share the Christian message with others.

The Russian Baptist Movement found its inception through the missionary work of German Baptists who went to Russia for the express purpose of working in German settlements. Amicable contacts were made with *Stundists* in the settlements owing to the similarity of doctrines and practices between the two groups. As Baptists extended themselves beyond German settlements, they contacted a group known as Molokans in Tbilisi, Georgia. Molokans rejected the ritualism of the Orthodoxy Church, developing doctrines according to their own understanding of the Bible. At first Molokans were reluctant to identify with Baptists for they regarded baptism merely as another ritual. But they later allowed for baptism. The Baptist movement grew steadily so that a Baptist Union was formed in 1884 with many of its top leaders from the Molokan background.

Evangelical Christians in Russia emerged from another setting. While in Paris, a Russian princess heard English nobleman Lord Radstock speak. Radstock had fought against the Russians in the Crimean War (1854-56). So impressed was the princess by

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

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Radstock's message that she invited him to St. Petersburg, then the capital of the Russian Empire. In 1874, Radstock returned to St. Petersburg to minister not only to the princess and to other members of Russian aristocracy, but also to prisoners. An early convert, Vasily Pashkov, carried on the work initiated by Radstock while simultaneously ministering to Russian prisoners. Followers of Radstock and Pashkov founded the group known as Evangelical Christians. Their ministry in Russia coincided with the expansion of the *Stundist* and Baptist movements, but the format of their meetings was shaped not according to Baptist customs but rather by the less structured Brethren practices.

As these non-Orthodox movements extended their ministry and their beliefs to other regions of Russia, Orthodox forces initiated campaigns of harassment, discrimination and persecution against them. Kent Hill writes,

> The hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church did not look kindly on religious competition. The ruling council of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Holy Synod, decreed in 1891 that anyone who left the Orthodox church to join another denomination should suffer 'the loss of all civil and personal rights.' To distribute 'heretical' (i.e. non-Orthodox) propaganda was punishable by exile to Siberia.[8]

Such action by the Russian Church resulted in a greater affinity between the Protestants, leading *Stundists*, Baptists and Evangelical Christians to become increasingly alienated from the Orthodox Church.

An imperial Edict of Toleration was passed in 1905 under Tsar Nicholas II, affording non-Orthodox believers freedom of conscience. The same year, the Evangelical Christian Union was formed. Some *Stundists* merged with the Baptists Union; others with the Evangelical Christian Union. In 1906, both Unions joined the newly formed Baptist World Alliance and sent representatives to its first congress in London. The principal

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

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difference between the two Unions was their traditional roots: Baptists followed strict Baptists practices which stress pastoral preaching and evangelistic endeavors as high priorities; Evangelical Christians follow Brethren practices which stress Bible study and teaching more than preaching and evangelism.

In addition to *Stundists*, Baptists and Evangelical Christians in Russia, other non-Orthodox Christian groups appeared. Seventh-day Adventists, founded in the United States in 1861, had converts among German communities along the Volga River in the 1880s. In 1886, the first German Adventist church--composed of immigrants--in the Russian Empire was founded in Berdebulat.[9] German Adventists successfully sought converts from among the Russians so that in 1889 the first Russian Adventist congregation was founded in Stavropol, the city in which Mikhail Gobachev first occupied a Communist Party post. By 1914, Adventists had 240 churches and 5,880 members, three publishing houses and a monthly journal. During the first World War many Adventists were incarcerated for their refusal to bear arms.

Protestantism Under the Soviets

Shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution, when Communist authorities decided to curtail the ministries of the Russian Orthodox Church, Protestant groups were given considerably more liberty to worship and propagate their beliefs. The privilege was based on an official conviction that such preferential treatment would offset the influence of Orthodox leaders.[10] With the conclusion of the Civil War in 1921, Lenin instituted the New Economic Policy which benefited small farmers who made up a sizable portion of

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[10] Eugene B. Shirley, Jr. and Michael Rowe, eds., *Candle in the Wind* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1988), pp. 28-29.

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Protestant groups. Lenin died in 1924. Protestant groups expanded rapidly during the early years of Bolshevism.

One of the fastest growing denominations in Russia today was just in its infancy in Russia at the time. Pentecostalism received its start in Russia, according to Philip Walters, in 1911-13 when "two young Russian Evangelical Christians, Ivanov and Smorodin, took up the Pentecostal message and traveled widely in Russia ... and founding small Pentecostal groups wherever they went."[11] Pentecostalism expanded after the Bolshevik Revolution and even more so following the Russian Civil War. In 1921, Ivan Voronayev arrived in Odessa from New York. Voronayev had left Russia a decade earlier as a Baptist and returned as a Pentecostal.[12] A strong, effective preacher with good administrative skills, Voronayev is credited to having started 350 congregations throughout the Ukraine within a six year period in addition to founding the Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith in 1926. He later went to Moscow where he ministered to a temperance congregation of 500 with a large number becoming his disciples.[13] By 1928, the Pentecostal Church claimed a total church constituency of 80,000 and 600 congregations.

The Baptists and Brethren churches likewise witnessed remarkable growth prior to the Revolution and in the early years of Bolshevism, expanding "from 107,000 baptized members in 1905 to 350,000 by 1921 and to 500,000 by 1929.[14] In 1929, Stalin decided to follow the path initiated in 1923 by the Twelfth Party Congress which voiced concern

[11] Walters, p. 74.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] Kent Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink*, p. 82.

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over the growth of Protestantism. He curtailed religious activities by enacting the Law on Religious Associations which demanded the registration of all religious groups of twenty or more persons, thus prohibiting unregistered groups from meeting, and effectively serving notice to all believers that freedom of worship had ceased. Stalin did away with the New Economic Policy and instituted a program of "revolution from above" designed to promote industrialization and collectivization. Thereafter, Stalin crushed opposition by starving millions of farmers in 1932-33, by sending additional millions of citizens to labor camps, by purging governmental and military ranks of seasoned and respectable officers through death squads in 1937-38, and by an all-out attack on all forms of religion. By acting in this way, Stalin gave to the world a stage performance of a new form of government called "totalitarianism."

Baptists, Evangelical Christians, and Pentecostals suffered severely by the collectivization of agriculture. Many were the offspring and disciples of Germans who developed the best farms according to the expertise and discipline passed on to them from a rich German heritage. They also suffered from the Stalin-induced famine which obliged farmers to supply unreasonable quotas of produce for others before taking anything for themselves, thereby breeding efforts among the farmers to survive by consuming the most minimal amount of their own crops. Failing to meet the quotas, the farmers either became victims of starvation or were dealt with harshly by hopeless exile to Siberia or sudden death.[15] And many of the Baptists and Evangelical Christians were *kulaks*, middle class farmers, who simply did not fit in with Bolshevik ideology and planning.

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[15] A perceptive understanding of the 1932-33 famine is presented by Robert Conquest in *Harvest of Sorrow*: Soviet *Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

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When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, all anti-religious propaganda ceased. In response or perhaps to defend Orthodoxy in the Motherland, Russian Orthodox metropolitans--Sergei, Aleksi, and Nikolai--called for a "holy war" against Hitler and solicited from their parishes contributions toward a war fund. Taking notice of church demeanor, Stalin invited the three metropolitans to meet with him on September 4, 1943. Four days later, nineteen bishops of the Orthodox Church met with Stalin in a Sobor, the first since the death of Patriarch Tikhon in 1925. In October, the government established the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (CAROC) designed to elicit state and church harmony. Shirley and Rowe affirm that

> the arrangement arrived at in 1943 became a model for church-state relations in the Soviet Union, and to some extent in other Marxist states: the hierarchy or other leadership of a church is granted privileges in return for loyal service to the state, which usually includes propaganda service; meanwhile, the state attempts--with varying degrees of determination--gradual reduction of the body of believers through atheistic propaganda, administrative pressure, and outright persecution.[16]

Nine months after the Orthodox Church made peace with Stalin, in July 1944, the government established the State Council for the Affairs of non-Orthodox "cults" to parallel the Council working with Orthodox churches. In October, the Council for non-Orthodox affairs pressured Baptist and Evangelical Christian leaders to form the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptist (AUCECB), an action resented by several non-Orthodox clergy and believers.

But owing to a declaration by AUCECB leaders to be loyal to the Communist regime, Protestants functioned with considerable freedom in the period immediately following the "Great Patriotic War". Many Baptists returned from labor camps in 1953-

[16] Shirley and Rowe, pp. 51-2.

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54. But, irritated by the pledge of loyalty to the atheistic regime by AUCECB leaders, a segment of pastors and parishioners, called "Pure Baptists," pulled out of the All-Union Council. A more serious AUCECB split occurred in 1960 after Nikita Khrushchev instituted his anti-religious campaign and Council leaders again made objectionable concessions to official demands.

Actions and reactions of Orthodox and non-Orthodox leaders toward official Marxist demands under Stalin, and again under Khrushchev, were somewhat parallel in that both groups realized that resistance to government orders would result in additional persecution, pain, the closure of churches, and lack of freedom. When adverse evaluations are made today of church leadership decisions during stressful times of church survival, one should remember that concessions to the state originated in both religious camps and that decision makers sensed a responsibility toward parishioners and their extended families. Analysts acknowledge a rift even today among believers in Russia and the perimeter states rooted in the church-to-state concession controversy of the post-war period.[17]

Historic Orthodox-Protestant Cleavage

Differences between Protestant and Orthodox churches have not been as pronounced or painful as historic conflicts between Catholics and Orthodox churches. The explanations for more congenial and tolerant relations are rather obvious First, Protestants and Orthodox worked largely in distinct geographical areas: the one in the West; the other in Eurasia. Second, both churches could claim support of the majority of

[17] The writer of this study witnessed severe cleavages among Evangelical believers in Moldova while visiting numerous churches there in 1993. A large group of both leaders and parishioners then evidenced a strong resistance toward accepting "compromisers" back into the church fellowship.

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the population where each was working: the one in northern Europe; the other in the vast Russia Empire. Third, whereas both churches had representative congregations in the geographical area of the other, neither perceived the presence of such congregations a serious threat to its own regional ecclesiastical domination. Fourth, generally speaking, efforts by the two churches in the geographical area of the other were not directed either toward stealing sheep from the other's flock or in denigrating the image, doctrines, or practices of the other church.

There were more Moravians, Lutherans, Baptists and Adventists from the West in Russia than Orthodox believers in Western Europe, a fact attributable to the broader opportunities open to farmers especially but also to craftsmen from the West, to periodic migrations to Russia prompted by religious intolerance in the homeland, and to the fact that the Russian Orthodox did not stress evangelism. But, as the number of Europeans moving to Russia increased, as churches were organized and buildings constructed to accommodate the cultural and liturgical preferences of the immigrants, and as the newly-formed churches overtly sought to establish Russian national churches according to their own beliefs and practices, Russian Orthodox clergy gradually signaled their concern and sought measures to curtail the perceived competition. As competition accelerated, distinctions between Protestant and Orthodox churches became increasingly abrasive.

Russian Protestant Ecumenical Links

At a time when the notion of ecumenism is gaining acceptance in the study of the Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic churches, the early thrusts toward mutual understanding and dialogue between the churches warrant consideration. The National

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Council of Churches (USA) revealed an early interest in the Russian Christian community by responding to perceived threats posed by Marxism upon believers and to common justice. In 1951, the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches issued a policy statement declaring, "[The] communistic social system, grounded on avowed atheism, is an unprecedented threat, especially since it claims to serve ethical purposes such a justice."[18] The Russian Orthodox Church joined the World Council of Churches in 1961, just one year after Khrushchev had initiated his anti-religious campaign.

In 1962, the National Council of Churches published a scathing indictment against Communistic practices, affirming, "Communism comes preaching brotherhood but practicing a new type of imperialism growing out of the dream of world revolution, an imperialism that not only resorts to military conquest but is not satisfied until it imposes its absolute control over the minds and hearts of men. It is in effect a Soviet colonialism."[19] In 1963, the Protestant AUCECB was allowed to join the World Council of Churches with the caveat that representatives to WCC meetings evidence unreserved favor and loyalty toward all aspects of the Soviet system. For a while thereafter, the NCC looked more favorably on the Soviet Communism; sometimes defending it against attacks from the United States.[20] But in 1968, aware of two hundred Baptist dissidents imprisoned during the previous two years, the NCC passed a "Resolution on Religious Intolerance in the USSR" affirming it was "compelled to raise its voice against the persecution of

[18] Quoted in K. L. Billingsley, *From Mainline to Sideline: The Social Witness of the National Council of Churches* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1990), pp. 19-20.
[19] *The Christian Handbook on Communism*, published by the National Council of Churches' Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature, 1962, p. 45.
[20] See Alan Geyer, *Together on the Way* (New York: US-USSR Church Relations Committee, National Council of Churches, 1984), pp. 5, 14.

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dissenting Baptists in the USSR." Again in 1979, the NCC viewed the imprisonment of Father Gleb Yakunin "a distressing encroachment on the discussion and exercise of human rights."[21]

One of the most significant contributions of the NCC is the publication of *Religion in Communist Dominated Lands* (RCDA). Founded in 1962, the RCDA was the first English periodical dedicated to convey religious affairs under Communism with non-Marxist peoples. Unfortunately, the NCC withdrew its support for the journal a decade after its founding.

The World Council of Churches, the global counterpart to the NCC, evidenced interest in Eastern bloc states at the same time as the NCC. Formed in 1948 and claiming now a membership of more than 300 ecclesiastical bodies, it is the largest Christian organization in the world. In 1959, the WCC published *Current Developments in the Eastern European Church,* objectively relating difficulties facing believers in the Soviet Union, and noting disturbing signs of religious repression by the government. At that very time Nikita Khrushchev was being revealed as viciously crusading against churches and their leaders by closing churches and harassing pastors. Like the NCC, the World Council in the 1960s turned away from its criticism of the social system and the government, persuaded that previous evaluations may have been biased by Western thought.

Kent Hill assesses the membership status as a "mixed blessing" in that it opened the door for dialogue between Eurasian and Western churches, but, in the final analysis, it allowed representatives to WCC meetings to voice unswerving support to the Soviet

[21] Kent Hill, *The Puzzle of the Soviet Church* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1989), p. 180.

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government, thereby concealing Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign.[22] In 1968, the WCC did condemn the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. It protested the deportation of Alexander Solzhenitsyn in 1974 and during the same year defended the unregistered Baptist leader Georgi Vins whom the Soviets had imprisoned for the second time. In retrospect, WCC leaders acknowledge a deficiency of knowledge concerning the actual state of believers behind the iron curtain during the final decades of the Soviet Empire owing to their dependence upon hearsay rather than empirical data. Today WCC representatives have as close an association with the Russian Orthodox Church as any organization with the exception of the Anglican Church. It is certainly the most auspicious supranational ecclesiastical body to extend a Western welcome to Orthodoxy.

Growing National Churches in the Decade of Freedom

With the introduction of government reforms by Mikhail Gorbachev beginning in 1986, Soviet totalitarianism ended. All churches of Russia gradually sensed the fresh air of freedom but no church was prepared for the opportunities offered through the new political system. The breakup of the Soviet Union signaled the reality of the reforms--at least in Russia. Since this study addresses "contending forces" confronting the Russian Orthodox Church, and since much already has been written on attitudes that separate Protestantism from Orthodoxy, a brief examination of Protestant achievements of the past decade is warranted. Attention is given first to growing national churches within Protestantism in the recent reform era.

Earlier in the chapter a reference was made to the growth of Adventism in Russia toward the end of the nineteenth century and continuing into the twentieth. Though Stalin

[22] Kent Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink*, p. 136.

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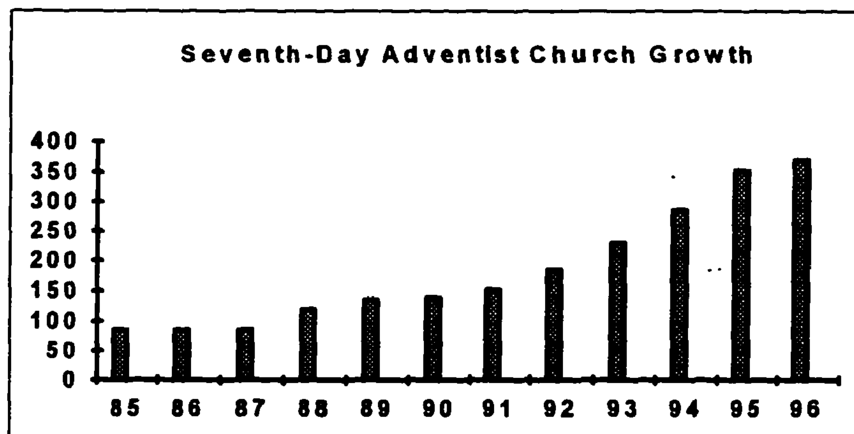
endeavored to terminate Adventism as much as that of other denominations, whenever freedom was granted for the propagation of the Gospel, the Adventist Church garnered its forces. Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign reduced the number of Adventist adherents by fifty percent, so that in 1964 they numbered 21,500.[23] When Gorbachev became General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985, Adventists evidenced only marginal growth until the Soviet Union collapsed, but immediately thereafter an exceptional growth pattern surfaces of both Adventist adherents and congregations. Between 1985 and 1996, the number of Adventist congregations increased from 86 to 286, and the number of adherents swelled from 6,239 to 39,200 (see Figures 3 and 4 below).[24] Russian Adventist churches receive financial help from Western sources. Their headquarters and seminary building in Zaoksky, south of Moscow, is both beautiful and spacious. The seminary opened in 1988 and trains students from peripheral republics and Russians.

Figure 3



Source: E-mail report from the Secretariat of the Seventh Day Adventist, Moscow, sent to this writer on September 9, 1996.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 81.
[24] The growth of Adventists in the Tula Oblast is suspected of motivating local authorities to crack down on "religious minorities," according to a Keston News Service report dated September 24, 1996.

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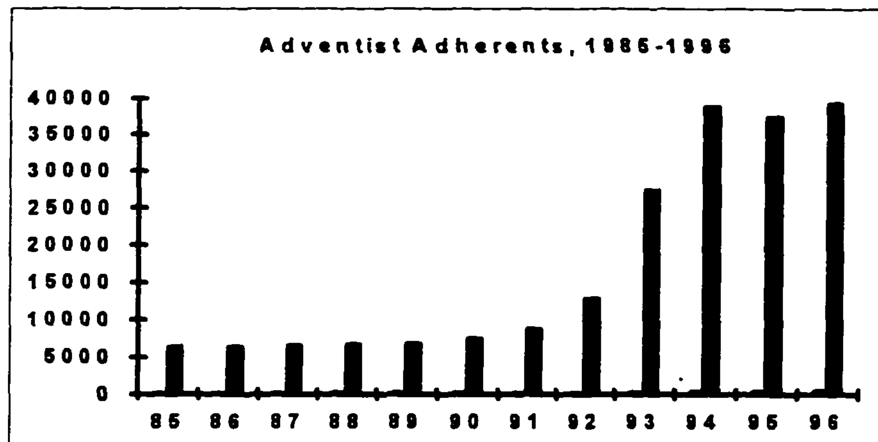
Figure 4



Source: Seventh Day Adventist Secretariat report from Moscow, September 9, 1996

The Russian Adventists constitute an indigenous organization even though the churches preach and teach doctrines formulated in America, just as the Russian Orthodox Church holds to doctrines imported from Constantinople. Laws seemingly directed against Adventists, mentioned in Chapter III, seem irrelevant from a strictly legal standpoint. The Adventist radio studio in Tula city reaches listeners all across the Russian Federation.

The growth of the Pentecostal movement in Russia probably causes as much consternation to the Orthodox Church as any of the so-called evangelical churches owing to its growth in membership and in the starting of new churches. Between 1991 to 1995, Pentecostal churches started over 600 new congregations, according to George Law.[25] Russian Pentecostal churches are divided into two groups. One is identified with the Union of Pentecostal Christians of the Evangelical Faith (UPCEF). Russian Pentecostals do not publish statistical data on the movement but will convey information verbally.

[25] George Law , Director of the Association for Spiritual Renewal in Moscow,September 24, 1996.

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The UPCEF was founded in 1991 and comprises three Pentecostal groups: registered Pentecostal churches, charismatic Baptist churches, and unregistered Pentecostal churches which were "underground" until Gorbachev introduced political and social reforms. From an initial constituency of 60 congregations in 1991 the UPCEF has grown to over 400 in 1996 with the total membership reaching close to 40,000.[26] Two hundred fifty pastors serve these church groups on either a full-time or part-time basis. According to conversations conducted by this writer with the president of the UPCEF, Rev. Vladimir Murza, and his assistant, the average Sunday attendance in each of the Pentecostal churches is about 100. The UPCEF has its own Bible Institute for aspirants to the Christian ministry. Rev. Murza is currently active in discussions with members of the Duma who are considering amendments proposed by the Orthodox Church to the legislative bill on religious groups mentioned in Chapter III.

The second group of Pentecostals comprises independent churches which have no affiliation with a church Union. The number of these congregations is estimated to be between 200 and 400, with a total membership approaching 25,000.[27] Emphases in most Pentecostal churches centers upon lively music, biblical preaching, speaking in tongues, evangelism, and physical healing.

One Pentecostal church merits exposure. The Immanuel (Pentecostal) Church of Moscow celebrated its fifth anniversary on September 22, 1996. Meeting in a large public theater after the original congregation grew too large for other rented halls, the church averages about 1000 in its services each Sunday. Though pastored by a young Russian,

[26] These figures were given to the writer by the Rev. Vladimir Murza on September 30, 1996 in Moscow.
[27] These estimates were provided to the writer by administrators in the UPCEF headquarters in Moscow on the same occasion as the interview with the Rev. Vladimir Murza.

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the format of worship follows the "contemporary" style of some western churches--instrumental music, praise songs, drama, personal testimonies, and preaching--plus the other elements of Pentecostalism. An impressive characteristic of the church is the high percentage of young people and couples with children who make up the congregation.

When the President of the UPCEF was asked for his appraisal of the Russian Orthodox Church, he diplomatically responded, "Look, I am the leader of Pentecostal churches; I only know about them."[28] However, Pentecostal churches in Russia now face a difficult crisis. Fifty percent of the their congregations meet in government-owned theaters because they cannot obtain permits either to purchase property or to build their own churches. Authorities now are discussing a proposal, suspected to have originated in Orthodox quarters, that public facilities should not be used for religious purposes even if rented just once a week.

The largest group of Protestants in Russia is comprised of Baptists. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Soviet-imposed All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists (AUCECB), cited earlier, disbanded. A large percentage of churches of that Union then founded the Baptist Union. Some abstained from joining.

The best known Protestant church in Russia is the Moscow Central Baptist Church. It is the only Protestant church in Moscow that remained open during the Soviet period.[29] It has no vestiges of western ways, but holds to traditional forms of worship and follows traditional structures of ecclesiology. The Tashino Baptist Church, also in

[28] Personal conversation with the writer outside the Pentecostal headquarters building, Moscow, September 30, 1996.
[29] By allowing the Central Baptist Church to remain open, the Soviets were able to convince some Western clergymen of freedom of religion in the USSR. See Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink*, p. 171.

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Moscow, uses more contemporary forms of worship and is constitutionally autonomous of the Baptist Union. Owing to their personal commitment to Christian doctrines, Baptist church members are extremely loyal to the church and active participants of its programs.

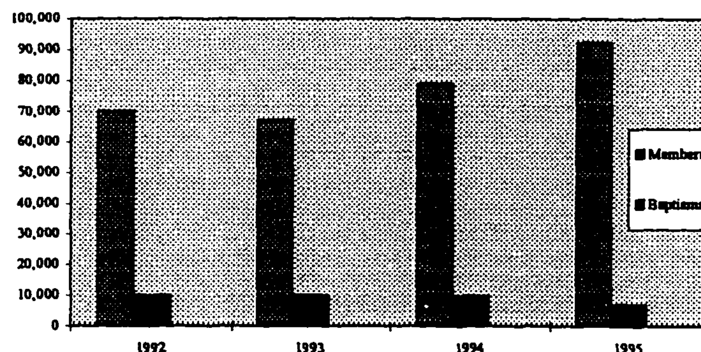
Like the Adventist Church and Pentecostals, Baptist Union churches and independent Baptist churches have started new churches and increased in membership in recent years. The Baptist Union itself has not grown as rapidly as the other two denominations. According to an official report, between 1992 and 1995, the number of Baptist Union churches increased from 1,135 to 1,180 while membership in the churches increased from 70,000 to 92,279. Table 3 and Figure 5 present the reported data.

Table 3. Churches, Baptisms and Membership of the Baptist Union

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995
Baptist Churches	1,135	1,294	1,050	1,180
Baptisms	10,000	10,000	9,759	6,693
Membership	70,000	67,234	78,848	92,279

Source: Report from John Gilbert, research director, Foreign Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, Richmond, VA., October 10, 1996.

Figure 5. Baptist Union Ratio of Baptisms to Membership



Source: John Gilbert report cited under Table 3.

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The Adventists, Pentecostals and Baptists in Russia evidence considerable growth over the past decade. The next decade will find each of these churches, or denominations, struggling to obtain permits to purchase property and build their own churches. The test of true democracy in the new Russia will be weighed on the scale of whether these churches will be accorded the same rights as the Russian Orthodox Church. Property belonging to the new Cathedral of Christ the Savior surpasses that of all Protestant churches combined in Moscow. The equivalent of three city blocks contiguous to St. Michael's Cathedral on Venadskovo Prospect are empty as are several adjacent areas in the same community. If religion is considered an instrument through which morals and ethics are communicated to a society, as indeed it should be, and if theism is to be granted rights clearly stipulated in the United Nations charter and other international agreements, the Russian Duma and the Orthodox Church should not serve as barriers to the progress of Protestant churches. As Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox clergy worked together under past political regimes, so it is incumbent upon them to do so now. Interconfessional conferences are designed to foster better understanding between all religious groups.

Protestant Churches in Dialogue

Not all western Protestant churches cause alarm among Orthodox clergy. Some churches opt to approach freedom of religion in Russia is a way distinct from evangelical mission agencies. Above all others in this grouping are the Anglicans in England and their counterpart, the Episcopal Church of America, and Lutheran churches in western Europe and in America. They strive for dialogues of understanding and avenues for cooperative ventures. The Anglican Church enjoys a special relationship with the Orthodox Church

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that antedates the modern ecumenical movement by almost half a century, starting with 1862 when the Anglican Church "established a 'Russo-Greek Committee' for the purpose of seeking fresh contacts with and information about the Orthodox."[30] Clergymen of both confessions participate regularly in cross-cultural liturgies in Russia and in the West. As the Soviet Union initiated an open door policy to Western churches to become involved in rectifying social and psychological traumas which plagued Soviet peoples, Anglicans assessed their opportunities and responsibilities to the Russians and chose to become a partner with Orthodoxy in the new Russia. Rather than sending their own personnel to Russia to assist Russian churches in discipleship and church planting (starting new churches) as evangelical churches chose to do, Anglicans decided to support the Orthodox Church financially and to work with them to improve seminary instruction for priests. Accordingly, as an initial contribution, Anglicans sent $100,000 to the Orthodox Church.[31] In addition, Anglican faculty members in the West have gone to Russia to teach in Orthodox seminaries. The attitude characterizing representatives of the two confessions in the last decade of the twentieth century is rooted in the historical pattern of respect. Prior to his death in 1944 Sergius Bulgakov wrote,

> The Episcopal Church is, of all the Protestant world, the nearest to Orthodoxy.... We may hope that the reunion of Orthodoxy and of the Episcopal Churches of England and America will be an accomplishment in the not too distant future, and that this movement will be a decisive phase in the re-establishment of the unity lost to the Church, and of peace between East and West.[32]

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[30] J. Robert Wright, "Anglicans and Orthodox Then and Now: A Context for the Visit of Patriarch Aleksy," in *The Anglican* (Ecumenical Issue, vol. 21, no 2, 1192), p. 7.
[31] Reported by Bill Lewellis in *The Anglican*, Ecumenical Issue, vol. 21, no. 2, 1992. The same article refers to a gift of $1,000,000 granted by the Methodist Church for educational purposes (p. 6).
[32] James Pain and Nicholas Zernov, eds., *Sergius Bulgakov: A Bulgakov Anthology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 138.

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The "nearness to Orthodox" cited by Bulgakov is based on common perspectives and practices of ecclesiology such as liturgy, historical roots, the Episcopal office, the administrative systems, mutual attitudes toward the Vatican, cultural patterns, and domestic linkage to the government. Rev. Jonathan Frais concurs with Bulgakov but adds that Orthodox and Anglican churches do not agree on all points of doctrine.[33] Differences are apparent. The Orthodox wrestle with the Anglican decision to ordain women, the inclusion of *filioque* ("and the son") in the Nicene Creed, and a Western propensity to alter liturgies and compromise on theological precepts. Anglicans wrestle with the *theosis* doctrine of the Orthodox Church which affirms that human beings by conversion grow in spirituality to become as God. The word in English is generally interpreted "deification." In spite of these differences, however, the two churches seek common understanding and fellowship to the end that "they might be one,"[34] and by any empirical measurement, one must conclude that Orthodox and Anglican churchmen present a workable model for church rapprochement.

There are two Anglican Churches in Russia at this time: one in St. Petersburg, the other in Moscow. Their mission is distinct from that of most other exogenous religious bodies; they seek to minister to English speaking people, mostly ex-patriots and diplomats, who seek to worship in their own language.

St. Andrews Anglican Church, located within half a mile from Red Square was founded in the 1880s, appropriated by the Soviets in 1920 and converted into a radio studio. Services commenced again in the same edifice in 1991 with about 20 in

[33] Personal interview with the writer, Moscow, September 30, 1996. Rev. Jonathan Frais serves as the Assistant Chaplain in St. Andrew's (Anglican) Church in Moscow.
[34] John 17: 21. Jesus, in His High Priestly Prayer contained in the chapter, prayed for this unity.

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attendance. Through a visit in 1994 of Queen Elizabeth to Moscow, negotiations are now underway to return the property to the Anglican Church. The average attendance at present in the 10 a.m. Sunday service is between 150-200. Jonathan Frais, cited above, reports,

> Prior to 1993 it seemed that every Russian wanted to know about Jesus Christ, but that day has passed. The Anglican Church has excellent relations with the Russian Orthodox Church because the two are together in opposing the overblown doctrines of the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Pope and certain concepts regarding Mary. In effect, what one finds now in Russia is a renewed culture. The renewal of spirituality is distracted by the reconstruction of buildings, on the one hand, and the priority of the Church over Christ, on the other hand.[35]

Like the Anglican Church, Lutherans also enter into dialogue with Orthodox clergy to pursue common understanding, but Lutherans started over a hundred years after Anglicans. By examining Lutheran-Orthodox dialogues, an analysts comes to grips with doctrinal diversity when denominations strive to achieve the ecumenical ideal of unity. There is a complexity to the Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue. When discussing fine or debatable points of theology, the nature of Lutheran ecclesiastical structure allows regional churches to vary from each other. Therefore, in addressing differences, one must identify theological interpretations according to a region or state; moreover, if the Lutheran World Federation releases a theological statement, any region has the right to disagree.

In addition to the complexity of Lutheran dialogues, there is often an overriding theme addressed when seeking common ground with Orthodox clergy. It is the *theosis* doctrine mentioned above under Anglican conversations. For Lutheran theologians, the notion of human deification through conversion is a veritable hurdle to mutual

[35] Personal interview with the writer in Moscow, September 30, 1996.

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understanding. To Orthodox, it is a New Testament principle clearly presented in II Peter 1:3-4::

> "Christ's divine power has granted to us [believers] everything that pertains to life and *godliness* through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the *divine nature*" (italics inserted).

In the 1970s, the Finnish Lutheran Church opened conversations with Orthodox clergy covering deification. As a result, participants redacted and published a statement titled "Salvation as Justification and Deification," affirming in the preamble, "In the conversations ... it has become evident that both these important aspects of salvation discussed in the conversations have a strong New Testament basis and there is great unanimity with regard to them both."[36] So, on the basis of the Finnish-Orthodox dialogue, Lutheran doctrine may be interpreted to imply that justification, baptism, repentance and so on belong to a process by which the human person participates in divine life; "a process of growing in holiness or coming closer and closer to God."[37] An interpretation of this nature obviously lowers the hurdle separating the churches. The American Lutheran-Orthodox "Common Statement" refers frequently to the Finnish-Russian dialogue and is careful to state that "the Orthodox theology of deification ... has no such importance in Lutheran thinking or spirituality."[38]

The Evangelical [Lutheran] Church of Germany has also held dialogues with the Moscow patriarch touching upon salvation and deification. One resultant draft states,

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[36] Risto Saarinen, "Salvation in the Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue--A Comparative Perspective," in *Pro Ecclesia* (vol. V, no. 2, Spring 1996), p. 203.
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 210.

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"Through the intimate communion with the risen Christ the Christian receives the gifts of grace which strengthen his faith and encourage him to respond to the love of God which heals his will, contributes to his moral perfection and prepares him for eternal life."[39] Although the statement received common approval at the time of the dialogue, German Lutheran theologians later objected to the wording because it confused the doctrines of "justification" and "sanctification"; the former covering God's declaration of righteousness and the whole process of salvation, the latter the gradual process of growth in the Christian life which leads ultimately to human "glorification"--the experience that comes closest to the notion of Orthodox deification. Later, a report was published indicating that the two churches had not been able to produce any common theses.

In 1981, the Lutheran World Federation and the Orthodox Church appointed a Joint Commission to assess differences pertaining to Scripture and traditions. Later the Joint Commission examined doctrines filtered through the Seven Ecumenical Councils because "doctrines of these Councils are authoritative for both confessions."[40] In 1995, the global Lutheran body met with Orthodox bishops in Limassol, Cyprus to address the doctrines of salvation, justification, and glorification. A concluding statement affirms,

> Justification is a real participation in Christ, true God and true human being. In the Church, the believer by faith participates in Christ and all his gifts, and so has a share in the divine life. The presence of Christ in faith genuinely effects the righteousness of Christ in us and leads believers to the sanctification of their lives.[41]

Compared to efforts on regional levels to seek Lutheran-Orthodox rapprochement, the Joint Commission was satisfied with a more general document. One can observe in these

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 207.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 211.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

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dialogues an intensive struggle toward a convergence of the two belief systems for the purpose of ecumenical fellowship. While theologians will debate the propriety of employing terminology that appears to render similarity of doctrines when in effect there remains a gap between ecclesial positions, one must admit that the Lutheran and Orthodox churches yield strong evidence of traveling together down a friendly road--albeit with occasional confusing signs--striving toward unity "that the world may believe."[42]

The strongest social argument for churches working together rests solidly on the realization of contending mighty forces outside ecclesiastical boundaries that appeal to the base nature of humanity with promises that turn out as empty cisterns.

The Dawn of Western Missions in the New Russia

The study of religion in the new Russia inevitably leads to the incursion of western missionaries. As scholars aspire to foster greater understanding today among all religious bodies, it is proper to elicit the same from major actors in the controversial subject of western missionaries on Russian soil. But understanding demands the presentation of facts and motivating factors that contributed to the present dilemma.

The Orthodox Church emerged from under Marxism battered, discredited, and short on priests to capitalize on the new ecclesiastical environment. No one can deny that some of its highest leaders served as virulent moles of previous atheistic regimes. Compromises made by them divided the Church and limited its credibility in the eyes of numerous Russians and thus also its ministry to Russians. With the introduction of *perestroika* and *glasnost* and later with the collapse of Sovietism, the Church awakened

[42] In John 17:1 Jesus prayed for the unity of believers "that the world may believe that You (God the Father) have sent me."

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to a new sociological and ecclesiastical horizon glittering with unimaginable prospects and opportunities for which it was ill-prepared professionally, spiritually, or economically.

Faced with the radical political changes in Russia and a perceived passionate desire of Russians to test the waters of Christian truths, western Christians mobilized to send missionaries to Russia. The euphoria of rapprochement between Russia and the West following the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union created a corresponding western disposition to provide support in personnel and finances for almost any and all evangelistic endeavors initiated by leaders of western churches, denominations, institutions and agencies. Most of the personnel went to Russia on assignments ranging from two weeks to a year. For the Co-Mission project alone, cited below, approximately 1,500 "CoMissioners" went to Russia between the Spring of 1991 and the middle of 1996 with less than 150 remaining for over one year.[43] One source estimates the total number of missionaries in Russia in 1990 to be 505.[44]

On the basis of the estimated number of western agencies now working in Russia, one can conjecture that between 1,500 and 2,000 long-term Protestant volunteers have been sent to Russia over the past decade. In addition to involvement in evangelistic pursuits, missionary agencies provide personnel and funding for at least 50 newly established Bible institutes and seminaries in Russia.[45] Major Protestant denominations (e. g., Baptists, Pentecostals, Mennonites) have sent large shipments of medical supplies,

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[43] Beverly Byers, Assistant to the Director of Co-Mission, Curt Mackey, conveyed this information to the writer via e-mail from San Clemente, CA on November 15, 1996. Additional data on the Co-Mission project, including estimated costs, are cited below..

[44] Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World*, p. 646. Johnstone only counts the missionaries who go to Russia on a one year assignment or more.

[45] Ala Tikhanova, of the research department of the Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow, has edited a booklet in which 53 theological training institutions are identified as functioning in Russia: "The Directory of Theological Institutions in the CIS and Baltic States," (Moscow, 1996).

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clothing, and food to Russian churches affiliated with their respective denomination, and World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals (Wheaton, IL) serves as a auxiliary benevolent agency for churches and small denominations which do not have their own offices and structures.[46] Without question, most missionary endeavors, intentions and motivations are honorable.

Unfortunately, their methodology sometimes betrays well-accepted missiological principles and anthropological common sense. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, missionaries rushed into Russia, flushed with financial support, embarrassingly deficient in knowing the national language and the culture, ignorant of Orthodox doctrines, suspicious of all Orthodox clergy, classifying Russia as a Third World nation-state, and, above all, seeking "conversions" in large numbers to meet expectations of Western churches and individual donors. Such an evaluation in no way characterizes all missionaries to Russia; but it is a perception conveyed to and by Orthodox and non-Orthodox Russian pastors and parishioners.

There are some facts, however, that serve as caveats for future missionary engagements. Never before in the history of Christian missions have so many missionaries gone into a country so ill-prepared as the volunteers that invaded Russia since December 1991. Never in the history of Christian missions has so much money been raised in such a short period of time for the evangelization of a nation as has been provided for Russia. And never before has the provision of exogenous funding for Christian endeavors been

[46] *The Soviet Union on the Brink* by Kent Hill includes 40 pages of useful information concerning means by which western Christians can help and agencies performing a diversity of services to Russians. See "What Western Christians Can Do to Help," pp. 421-61.

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interpreted so adversely by a branch of Christianity closely tied to the national government than it has in Russia by the Orthodox Church.

From a missiological perspective,[47] the incursion of western missionaries merits both acclaim and suspicion. When ecclesiastical freedom became a reality first under Gorbachev and more so after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Orthodox Church was unprepared for the social and political transformation. The drastic shortage of skilled administrators, well-trained priests, ecclesiastical facilities, and adequate funding precluded the Russian Church from instituting a "rapid response team" for the occasion. A vast majority of the 150 million Russians had scant understanding of Christian doctrines. And national Protestant churches were faced with even greater shortages.

As Russian government authorities sought exogenous assistance at the time of the political, social and economic crisis of 1991 and 1992, so did some national churches. These churches invited western missionaries to Russia, but never imagined the magnitude nor the nature of the response. Since this study cannot review all efforts extended by western religious denominations and mission agencies to meet the perceived spiritual needs of Russian people in the early 1990s (such a feat would require volumes), only two projects are presented. One is commendable from a Protestant missiological perspective; the other raises serious questions culturally and missiologically.

[47] The term "missiology" is derived from the Latin word "mitto" meaning "to send." According to John 20:21, Jesus said to His disciples, "As the Father sent Me, so send I you." The word "apostle" is derived from the Greek, "αποστελλω", meaning "I send." Evangelical missionaries consider themselves as "sent ones" by Christ to unbelievers to seek their conversion to Christianity. Missiology, therefore, is the study of successes, failures, methodology, motivations, and so on of the Christian endeavor to share the Christian message with unbelievers. Orthodox clergy use the term "missionology" to denote this effort.

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In the fall of 1991, an agency highly respected in Evangelical quarters, called Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries (PDRM), of Wheaton, Illinois launched "Project 250" designed to train within one year 250 national pastors and church workers interested in "planting" (founding) new churches in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Funding is provided by western sources. Staffed mainly by Russian-speaking workers of Slavic descent, and highly esteemed by Baptist Union Churches, PDRM enlisted capable Russian pastors to conduct the 6-11-day seminars in the three republics. Within the first year of launching the seminar project, 385 students received the training in three seminars. By 1995 twelve such seminars were offered in cities such as Moscow, Minsk, Voronezh, Omsk, Krasnodar, Rovno and Kiev with a national student enrollment of 1433. Doctrines presented in the seminars accord with Baptist teachings. The success of the program is measured not only by the achievement of the original goal but also by the accomplishments of seminar alumni. Within a five year period, seminar alumni in cooperation of their "home" churches have started 850 new congregations. As a result of the seminar success, PDRM has adopted a "long-term goal to plant one church for every 5000 people in the CIS by AD 2020."[48]

Another type of project was launched by western agencies simultaneously with Project 250 of PDRM. Without question, the largest Evangelical endeavor associated with Russia in the 1990s is Co-Mission. In 1991, representatives of three American organizations, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Association of Christian Schools International, and Walk Though the Bible gave birth to the Co-Mission Project. Receiving

[48] George Law, "Changes: Historic Opportunity for a Church Planting Movement in Russia," Master of Arts thesis, Moody Bible Institute (Chicago, 1995), Abstract, and p. 95. The material on Project 250 comes from the thesis and from conversations with Andrew Semenchuk, vice-president, PDRM.

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official sanction from the Ministry of Education, the three organizations proceeded to enlist western institutions--mission agencies, seminaries, denominations--for the Project. Eventually eighty-five signed up with the specific objective to train Russian public-school educators in a course titled "Christian Ethics and Morality: A Foundation for Society." Co-Mission leaders called for masses of theologically-trained persons, educators, and devout lay people to volunteer for short-term service in Russia and the perimeter states "while the door is open," fearing a possible reversal of the official state policy regarding foreign missionaries.

The strategic plan for the Project was simple: over a five year period, establish many ten-day "Convocations" to promote Christian values; invite Russian educators and provide their costs; send Christian educators from the West to address the educators on the virtues of Christian ethics and morals; give guidance for Christian curricula development; encourage Westerners to attend the convocations who would pay their own way and provide for expenses of the Russians who can lead (by translation) Bible study sessions, and then send the Russians back to promote programs on morality. Theoretically, a program of this nature would offset Soviet atheistic teachings and hopefully contribute to the rebuilding of a great nation and simultaneously build up the Kingdom of God.

Since its founding, Co-Mission has set up 133 Convocations in 118 cities with 40,000 national teachers attending.[49] Seventy-three Convocations were conducted in Russia. Average attendance at Convocations has been 300 with an average of North American personnel of 50. Co-Mission I, the educational phase, concluded in December

[49] This information is from the Co-Mission Director's office, San Clemente, CA. It was sent via e-mail to the writer on October 28, 1996 by Beverly Byers, Assistant to the Director.

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1996. Presently plans are being formulated for Co-Mission II which will reflect much greater "flexibility ..., and also an even stronger focus on empowering nationals to assume leadership and responsibility."[50]

Whereas Western individuals who attend the Convocations are expected to pay about $3,000 each for the two-to-three week trip, long-term Co-Mission individual workers are requested to raise $20,500 as annual support and married couples $35,400.[51] One source closely related to Co-Mission reports that the total expenditures for all aspects of the Co-Mission endeavor from the Spring of 1991 through June 1996 were approximately $60 million.[52]

Though deliberately abstaining from identifying with national churches, Co-Mission organizers engendered suspicion among Russian Orthodox clergy who sensed subterfuge. The latter pieced together a notion that the Project was intended to promote evangelicalism rather than only Christian values and morality. Indeed, Co-Mission plans included "teaching biblical principles in neighborhood Christian education classes, training nationals to lead home Bible studies, and providing humanitarian aid."[53] But the original intention earnestly sought to plant moral teachings in public school classrooms through teachers who accepted Christian precepts.

In February 1995, the Co-Mission executive committee was advised by the Russian Ministry of Education that it had canceled its official approval of Co-Mission convocations, but local school districts retained the right to accept the western-based

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[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.*, e-mail message, November 18, 1996.
[52] This figure was given to the writer; but the source prefers to remain anonymous.
[53] "Co-Mission Agreement Canceled," in *Christianity Today* (April 24, 1995), p. 52.

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ministries. Why did government authorities terminate their official sanctioning of the convocations? Two explanations are given: one, the government revealed anti-religious bias; two, the Russian Orthodox Church opposed the venture. Whereas both merit consideration, the most likely answer is that Orthodox clergy interpreted Co-Mission as an evangelical endeavor favoring Protestant churches and therefore placed pressure upon government personnel to cancel the protocol previously granted architects of the Project. One observer writes, "Although the project had the approval of Russian education officials, from the onset many Russian Orthodox church leaders opposed the plan, fearing it was a covert method by Protestants to proselytize Russian children through public schools."[54] An important heuristic principle can emerge from the Co-Mission Project. Since the Russian Orthodox Church adheres to Christian standards and since it is an integral part of Russian culture, creative and energetic church strategists who envision an endeavor like the Co-Mission Project would be well advised to consult with both Orthodox and national Protestant leaders and seek their cooperation. Such a route would grant the endeavor longer life while fostering a symbiotic relationship between public school educators and Christian churches. With nationalism on the rise in the new Russia, Western-based innovations, even when grounded on the highest of intentions, carry awfully heavy cultural baggage for the Russian public to appreciate.

Do western cultural flaws and faulty judgments justify reactionary forces within the Russian Church that now seek legislative measures to curtail the work of foreign missionaries? From a human perspective, there is ample explanation for such responses. In fact, some western agencies owe a sincere apology to the Orthodox Church and to the

[54] *Ibid.*

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people of Russia for the cultural ignorance and offensive insensitivity evidenced by its people and programs. An observation by Robert Hosken, an American missionary outside of Moscow, merits consideration. Hosken says, "After the USSR collapsed, it would have been better missiologically if America had sent one-tenth of the number of missionaries it sent to Russia but the people who came should have been ten times better prepared."[55] Another perspective of missionary presence and work comes from Andrei Kurayev of the Russian Orthodox Open University of Moscow who says, "On the whole, it is possible that Protestants, having triumphally entered atheistic Russia, will awaken Orthodox feelings in their parishioners and theologians. And then Russian Protestants will make efforts to eliminate the gap between our religions."[56]

From a Christian and religious perspective, adverse Orthodox reactions are questionable. Already the incursion of western missionaries has subsided. Western Christian organizations slowly acknowledge poor returns from unprepared and insensitive volunteers, faulty strategies, and evangelistic endeavors gone awry. Though the Orthodox Church has reason to criticize Western missionaries, what will the Church accomplish in the process? The commencement of criticism leads to an extension of criticism--a cancerous malady--and ultimately to unwarranted polarization.

A Better Path for Ecclesial Relations

A better path is available; namely, a cooperative venture among all Christian churches and agencies. The motivation for such cooperation is obvious. Both the East

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[55] Quoted by Lawrence Uzzell of Keston News Service to this writer, Moscow, September 21, 1996.
[56] Andrei Kurayev, "The Gap is Not So Deep" (a monograph given to the writer by the Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow, September 24,1996), p. 1.

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and the West are confronted with the same need. No society can live harmoniously in responsible freedom without acknowledging and renewing moral roots. The former Soviet Union reveals what happens to a nation and its people when moral absolutes are denied.

If evangelicals were to look deeply into the belief system of the Orthodox Church they would discover a meaningful tie between external paraphernalia and Orthodox doctrines, and something more. Orthodox believers promote the resurrection of Jesus Christ as much as any denomination, and hold strongly to other doctrines included in the Nicene Creed.[57] Since the Orthodox Church reflects much of Russian culture and since it is the institution acclaimed to be most trustworthy of any and all institutions found in Russia, it would be very fitting for evangelical missionaries to study Orthodox doctrines, to meet with Orthodox clergy, and to take other measures to strive toward lowering the wall dividing the two groups. According to Patriarch Aleksi, Russian Protestant and Orthodox churches already maintain the same fraternal relationship as when both churches suffered under government atheism, and "Each time problems arise that disturb our country and society, we together try to find ways to resolve them in accordance with our convictions."[58] Hopefully, other Orthodox and Protestant clergy will exhibit what the Patriarch affirms; hopefully also, western church representatives who now live in Russia or who will arrive in Russia will be willing to remain in the shadows of ecclesiastical affairs and employ their energies to build toward a spiritual united front in the new Russia.

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[57] In this study, doctrines characterize Protestantism, especially the tenets of *sola scriptura* and the unique deity of Jesus Christ. Mormons place themselves outside of historic Christianity by including other sources (e.g., the *Book of Mormon*) as authoritative. Jehovah Witnesses view Jesus as the highest created being, thus approaching Arianism. Neither group is therefore truly Protestant; and, owing to low membership estimates in Russia of the two groups (Mormons, 5,000; Jehovah Witnesses, 20,000), neither religion is treated as a significant "contending force" in this study to warrant their inclusion.
[58] "Russia's 'Pope'," *Christianity Today* (June 19, 1995), p. 14.

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CHAPTER V

ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND EASTERN ORTHODOXY

Christianity was born in what for Jews is the Holy Land and for non-Jews is Palestine. In obedience to the commission of Jesus Christ to take the Gospel to the "uttermost parts of the earth,"[1] His apostles and their followers spread the Christian message as far as Rome in the first Christian century, adopting the language and employing the roads and navigational routes of the Greco-Roman world. By the year AD 100, an estimated 500,000 persons accepted the Jesus Way. Official recognition of the Christian church became a reality in 313 when Constantine issued the Edict of Milan granting new freedom to Christianity. In 324, Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire to the Greek city, Byzantium, later named Constantinople. This move had ecclesiastical ramifications for both cities, introducing strained relations between the two regions. A study of what follows between Roman Catholicism and Byzantium constitutes the focal points of the present chapter.

Among Protestants, there is a common misconception that Catholicism and Orthodoxy can be lumped together because their beliefs and practices are perceived to be similar. This interpretation is based more on external images than on the core character of the two churches. Protestant theologian Ernst Benz admits to a "natural tendency to confound the ideas and customs of the Orthodox Church with familiar parallels in Roman

[1] *Acts of the Apostles* 1:8.

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Catholicism."[2] In commenting on an alleged ecclesial propinquity of Orthodoxy to Catholicism, Daniel Clendenin argues, "[I]t is a gross error, for the religious and political history, theology, worship, and entire frame of reference are all very different from Catholicism. Indeed, from the Orthodox perspective, Protestantism and Catholicism are simply opposite sides of the same coin, and much more similar to each other than either is to Orthodoxy."[3] In a similar vein, Timothy Ware suggests that Orthodoxy "is not just a kind of Roman Catholicism without the Pope, but something quite distinct from any religious system in the West."[4] All this is written to affirm that anyone who studies the relationship between Catholicism and Orthodoxy must be emancipated from the conceptual mold of broad parallelism.

This chapter begins with an explanation of why Catholicism is included under the general theme of "contending forces" confronting the Russian Orthodox Church. It proceeds to examine Catholic-Orthodox cleavages, doctrinal differences, the first and third Romes, Vatican councils, Marxism and biases vis-à-vis Catholicism, the influence of neighboring republics, Catholic-Orthodox dialogues, and the present state of relations between the two churches.

Catholicism--A Contending Force to Russian Orthodoxy?

Catholicism is included in this study not because it reveals marked contemporary influence or strength in the Russian Federation, but for reasons associated with global images, human rights, religious loyalties of perimeter states, and the current ecumenical

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[2] Ernst Benz, *The Eastern Orthodox Church: Its Thought and Life* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1963), p. 1.
[3] Daniel B. Clendenin, "*Eastern Orthodox Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), p. 15.
[4] Timothy Ware, *Orthodox Church* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1963), pp. 9-10.

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movement. Catholic churches represent less than half a percentage point of the total population of the Russian Federation,[5] affording analysts a strong argument for discounting Catholicism as a major factor in the status and operations of the Russian Orthodox Church. In making such an assessment, however, such analysts betray a parsimonious impression of the potential dynamic of Catholicism upon Russia and for global ecclesiology.[6]

Most of the apparent similarities perceived by outsiders between Catholicism and Orthodoxy turn out to be nothing more than mirages when one penetrates the deepest meanings of ecclesiastical structures, forms, doctrines and practices. What non-Orthodox and non-Catholic analysts interpret as being parallel ecclesiastical systems, bishops and priests living within the polarized arenas consider poles apart. Significant differences separate the two churches as seen when the Orthodox Church looks to Roman Catholic beliefs and practices. Indeed, Roman Catholicism should be viewed as a contending force.

Consider the following arguments. First, when examining Christianity from a global perspective, researchers classify the Catholic Church as the largest single Christian church, comprising 18.8 percent of the world population. Catholicism flexes a strong muscle in much of Western Europe and even greater strength in Latin America. As the Russian government takes strides to emerge from global economic and political isolation, the Russian Orthodoxy Church--viewed as "the guardian of Russian national culture"[7]--

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[5] According to Patrick J. Johnstone, available demographic statistics in 1993 revealed the total Catholic population in Russia to represent 0.48% of the Federation, in *Operation World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), p. 467.

[6] *Ibid.* Johnstone estimates the average annual growth of the Catholic Church in Russia from 1985 to 1990 to be 10.3%, p. 467.

[7] Eugene B. Shirley, Jr. and Michael Rowe, *Candle in the* Wind (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1989),p. 108.

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becomes increasingly exposed to Catholicism. Such an exposure elicits dialogue to avoid future conflict. Second, Catholicism and Orthodoxy have already clashed in the former Yugoslavia and continue to polarize Croat and Serb nationalists who are linked respectively to Rome and Moscow. In theory, one might suggest that if Catholic and Russian Orthodox representatives meet to mend church fences, their influence might have an irenic effect upon potential or real Catholic-Orthodox conflicts. Third, the religious factor behind the contemporary "clash of civilizations" should not be overlooked when analyzing relationships between Russia, where Orthodoxy is dominant, and Lithuania and the Ukraine, where Catholicism is demographically strong.[8] At this time, Catholic-Orthodox contentions surface most in the Ukraine, but conflicts outside the former Soviet Union can affect behavioral patterns wherever and whenever religious loyalties are mobilized for a meaningful cause. This reality partially explains why Mikhail Gorbachev decided to visit Pope John Paul II on December 1, 1989. Finally, as a member of the World Council of Churches, the Russian Orthodox Church is committed to striving toward ecclesiastical unity among all Christian churches; and, resolutions coming out of the Second Vatican Council in 1963, plus the "observer" status of the Catholic Church vis-à-vis the World Council of Churches, lend support to the belief that both churches will seek closer ties as the twenty-first century approaches.

Developing Catholic-Orthodox Cleavages

As Constantinople grew in wealth and power Rome declined, transforming the new imperial capital into the premier center of Greek culture and of the Christian Church.

[8] See Johnstone. The population of Catholics in Lithuania, Belarus, and the Ukraine is 80%, 22%, and 15% respectively, pp. 357, 143, and 551.

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In the fifth century, Roman Bishop Leo I asserted primacy for Rome over other bishops. At first the claim was not seriously contested, but by the seventh century sufficient opposition arose to diminish the power of Rome. Opponents argued against the notion of a "pyramidal" structure in ecclesiology, suggesting local church administrative independence and self-governance while adhering to conciliar doctrinal pronouncements and unity wrought by a bond of faith and communion in the sacraments. However, a contest over authority surfaced between Rome and the Eastern Church in the ninth century stemming from the first missionary endeavor of Constantinople.

The patriarch of Constantinople (Byzantium) launched a missionary expedition into Slavic territory in response to a request by Prince Ratislava of Moravia in 863. Two brothers of Thessalonica in Greece, Constantine (later named Cyril) and Methodius, were sent to the Slavs who were in the process of forming their own state. The brothers had already performed some church work among the Khazars north of the Caucuses.[9] Constantine (Cyril) provided the Slavs with the Cyrillic alphabet which came into usage not only for civic purposes but also for Slavic liturgical services, thus parting from the Roman usage of Latin. Interestingly, Pope Hadrian II of Rome approved the missionary activities of the brothers and even made Methodius archbishop of Pannonia with jurisdiction over Pannonia, Moravia, and Slovakia. However, a clash between the Greek brothers and the Roman Church developed when Germanic Franks in the Slavic territory objected to the use of the Slavonic language in worship. They also took issue with the Slavic omission of the *filioque* ("and from the Son") clause in the church creed, a subject to be discussed at greater length below. Prince Ratislava was overthrown by his nephew

[9] Shirley and Rowe, p. 2.

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Sviatopolk in 870 who favored Roman Catholic ties. Frankish clergy began persecuting Orthodox adherents, arranged for the imprisonment of Archbishop Methodius, and proclaimed the beginning of a new ecclesiastical order more in line with the Roman Church.

Although the foundations of Russian Christianity are frequently traced to Cyril and Methodius, a more direct link is made to Princess Olga of Kievan Rus, the earliest Russian state. Kievan Rus flourished from the tenth to the thirteenth century. Olga was regent in Kiev from 945 to 962. Though baptized by the Byzantine patriarch upon visiting Constantinople in 955, the princess asked German Emperor Otto I to send a bishop and priests to work among her people. She knew that Rome was already engaged in missionary work in Scandinavia, Poland, and the Baltic region. Though the Emperor responded favorably to the petition and arranged for missionaries to go to Kiev, by the time the priests arrived, Olga had stepped down and her son Sviatoslav became regent. Lacking appreciation toward missionary work, the son sent the Latin priests back home. One can only hypothesize from this narrative that if Princess Olga had retained authority at that crucial moment in history, Russia may have turned westward for its heritage rather than to Constantinople.

The most notable Russian leader of the tenth century was Prince Vladimir, grandson of Princess Olga and possibly also her spiritual heir. Vladimir converted to Christianity in 988. He immediately proceeded to oblige Kievan Rus people to accept the teachings of Eastern Orthodoxy. Mass baptisms followed. Vladimir launched a development program for Eastern Orthodoxy that included the construction of cathedrals

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and monasteries, the destruction of pagan idols, and the enlistment of foreign priests. In 1017, the Church of St. Sophia in Kiev was underway. In 1037, Kiev became a metropolitanate under the patriarch of Constantinople. What began as a religious reform movement under Princess Olga and Prince Vladimir became a social and religious force for the transformation of Russian culture.

The sequence of adverse attitudes between Rome and Constantinople that began with Leo I in the fifth century culminated with the Great Schism of 1054. Ominous events prior to the Great Schism should have signaled the dangers confronting Orthodox-Catholic relations. In 1009, Orthodox Patriarch Sergius refused to include the name of Pope Sergius IV on the official list of bishops classified as Orthodox, an action that essentially ended communion between Rome and the Eastern church.

Until the Great Schism of 1054, the Patriarch of Constantinople was considered second in the Catholic Church hierarchy. His excommunication pronounced by Pope Leo IX placed an ominous cloud above most of Christendom, ultimately ending with Pope Leo IX excommunicating Patriarch Michael Cerularius of Constantinople. Meyendorff reminds students of the Schism of a process behind the ultimate event of separation by affirming,

> All modern historians agree on one negative point: the Schism between Rome and Byzantium, two centers of Christendom in the High Middle Ages, cannot be associated with one particular event, or even with a precise date. It was, rather, a progressive divorce--'an estrangement,' according to Yves Congar--which began with theological tensions during the period of the ecumenical councils and the development of a different understanding of the role of authority in the church. The two halves of Christendom broke communion with each other on several occasions, but were eventually reconciled, until the relatively minor incident of 1054 became *de facto* a final break between Rome and Constantinople.[10]

[10] John Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), p. 46.

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Church leaders of all succeeding ages should derive a lesson from AD 1054. The tragedy of divisiveness, however, is not limited to the immediate and respective confessions; it has a virulent effect upon succeeding generation and the world.

Following the Great Schism, Catholics and Orthodox alike were obliged to sift through a whole range of doctrinal and practical differences separating each one from the other. The emergence of the Reformation in the West added new components to the discussion. The Orthodox Church was motivated largely by the writings of Peter Moghila, the metropolitan of Kiev, and by Dositheus of Jerusalem, French ambassador to Constantinople, who took a strong position against Protestantism, expressing support for the original Byzantine position regarding purgatory and for the words used in the Eucharist. So, in spite of the long Orthodox tradition of anti-Romanism which antedated Luther and Calvin, the Reformation stimulated both the Orthodox and Catholics to curry each other's favor. John Meyendorff affirms, "Catholics acknowledged that Orthodox bishops were the successors of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil ... even going so far as to maintain a *communio in sacris* with them."[11] But the amelioration of differences was not complete. Orthodox clergy retained pre-conditions for mutual ecclesial ties, one of which was the appropriate form of baptism. Meeting in Constantinople in 1755, a synod attended by patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem, as well as the ecumenical patriarch Cyril V of Constantinople, decreed that persons coming into Orthodoxy from Catholicism had to be rebaptized according to the rite of triple immersion in order to be admitted to the Church.[12] But, at the same time, the Russian Church, which until then had followed

[11] John Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), p. 97-98.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

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the practice of rebaptizing Catholics, decided to lower its admission policy. It dropped rebaptism as a prerequisite for Orthodox membership and required only that new members profess the Orthodox faith and render penance.[13]

If analysts in the middle of the eighteenth century perceived a steady road to Catholic-Orthodox rapprochement, analysts less than a half century later were obliged to consider another road. Meyendorff relates that Catholic missionaries had been sent to Russia from the West to convert Muslims, but when they discovered how difficult it was to have success among Islamic peoples, "they turned their attention to the Orthodox Christians living in those parts, Greeks and Arabs, and thought nothing of depriving them of the sole remaining treasure which had been preserved to them: their Orthodox heritage!"[14] This prompted adverse reactions among the Orthodox. In January 1848, shortly after ascending to the papal throne, Pius IX sent an appeal to Orthodox patriarchs calling for reunion with Rome. Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem responded later the same year with an encyclical, signed also by twenty-nine metropolitans, to all the Orthodox. Meyendorff suggests the text "seems to have been approved in advance by Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow."[15] The encyclical of 1848

> defined 'papism' as a heresy and then expressed the hope that Pius IX would himself be 'converted' to the true Orthodox faith and return to the true Catholic Apostolic and Orthodox Church, for, as they declared, 'no patriarch or council has ever been able to introduce any novelty among us, since the Body of the Church, that is, the people themselves, is the guardian of religion.'"[16]

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 99.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Ibid.*

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The announcement was given wide publicity at the time it was written and continues as an authoritative statement of Orthodoxy in the last half of the twentieth century. The ever widening gap between Catholics and Orthodox was based, as one can see, on doctrinal differences more than on pragmatic or methodological distinctives.

The Roman Papacy--A Wall That Will Not Tumble

The clash between Slavs and Rome is essentially grounded on the debate over the Catholic claim of primacy for the pope. Of course, when two entities begin to clash, each finds additional objections to magnify perceived errors of the other party, and ecclesiastical forces are not immune to common behavioral practices.

Orthodoxy has no central office where church doctrines are sifted, debated and authoritatively decreed. The Orthodox Church rests upon decisions of church councils and synods. The primacy debate centers upon three themes: the pope as the final source for doctrinal interpretation, the pope as the head of the Universal (Catholic) Church, and apostolic authoritative linkage between the Apostle Peter, the first Roman bishop (pope), and all succeeding bishops of Rome. The Catholic-Orthodox disagreement over the alleged primacy of the pope constitutes the "chief obstacle to full ecclesial communion" between the two churches.[17] Though the primatial role of the bishop of Rome is viewed by Catholics as essentially related to doctrine, "guarding the deposit of faith" entrusted to the Apostles,"[18] as head of the Roman Catholic Church, he has final authority in all matters. In regard to the apostolic succession that purports a continuity of authority passed on

[17] Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Headship and Communion: American Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue on Synodality and Primacy in the Church," in *Pro Ecclesia* (vol. V, no. 1, Winter, 1996), p. 60.
[18] II Timothy 1:14.

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from Peter to succeeding Roman bishops, Pope Leo I activated this doctrine as he asserted authority over other bishops.[19]

The claims relating to papal primacy are based upon two assumptions. One, Jesus conferred upon the Apostle Peter the honor of primacy when He looked at him while meeting with His disciples at Caesarea Philippi and said, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church."[20] These words were followed by the promise to give Peter "the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."[21] Catholics interpret these statements to mean that Peter is the "rock" upon which the Christian Church was born and that he was granted authority by Jesus Christ to be over other bishops and churches since "the keys" were given to him. Two, the right and privilege of primacy bestowed upon Peter is passed on by the will and plan of God to Peter's successors in Rome. The doctrine of "apostolic succession" is illustrated by this interpretation.

When one asks, "Why Rome and not Jerusalem?," the answer is grounded (rightly or wrongly) on Scriptures which are interpreted to relate the manner in which Peter died as well as the city in which he died. Shortly before His ascension, Jesus told Peter, "[W]hen you are old, you will stretch out your hands and others will direct you and take you where you do not want to go,"[22] The narrator adds, "Jesus said this to let him know what kind of death he would die to glorify God."[23] Interpreters take the statements to infer death by crucifixion. Catholics believe Peter arrived in Rome about AD 61 and died in AD 64 at the hands of Nero. They observe that Peter closes his First Epistle with the

[19] Daley, p. 66.
[20] Matthew 16:18.
[21] *Ibid.*, v. 19.
[22] John 21:18.
[23] *Ibid.*, vv. 18-19.

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words, "The church here in Babylon ... sends you her greetings."[24] The reference to "Babylon" is considered a metaphor for Rome and the text is interpreted to mean Peter was in Rome at the time of writing the Epistle. On the bases of these texts, therefore, the Roman Catholic Church finds grounds for the Roman bishop holding a position of both honor and authority in the economy of global Christianity.

Orthodox theologians disagree with Catholic interpretations. While consenting to a real (temporal) primacy for the Roman bishop and to a practical or expedient primacy born out of collegiality, the Orthodox Church is unwilling to concede to any bishop a primacy either pertaining to doctrinal interpretations or to authority that is binding upon all churches. When Catholics affirm that the system of government in both the state and the church at Byzantium conceded supreme authority to one man, John Meyendorff defends Orthodoxy by citing historical dynamics behind the two confessions:

> The West experienced the fall of Rome in the fifth century; and after the ephemeral attempts of Carolingians and Ottonians to assume the old Roman imperial power, and after the epic struggles by popes to ensure the Church's independence, the *Roman pontiff* was finally recognized as a legitimate successor of the Caesars, acknowledged both as the religious and the political leader of Christendom. By contrast, in the East the original empire lasted until 1453. But if this is so, are historians right in assuming that the system of government accepted by the Byzantine state and church was a form of 'caesaropapism?' This is a serious contention. If it were true, it would imply that in the medieval period the Orthodox Church did in fact capitulate to the 'secular'.... In that case Orthodox theology today would be inconsistent with its own past in criticizing 'secularism'.[25]

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[24] I Peter 5:13.

[25] John Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), pp. 173-174.

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Meyendorff goes on to say, "Byzantine Christianity never accepted the belief that the emperor had absolute authority in matters of faith or ethics.... Byzantine society avoided caesaropapism ... referring all authority directly to God."[26]

In opposition to Catholicism, Orthodoxy views all bishops as enjoying equal status based on the virtue of ordination. Interestingly, Orthodox theologians agree with Catholicism on an "unbroken continuity" going back to the Apostolic Age, but the professed continuity of Orthodoxy does not center on a person or position in the Christian Church but rather upon "the Apostolic faith of the New Testament."[27]

Ecclesiastical Authority--The Synoptic Problem

Addressing doctrinal authority, both churches subscribe to the notion that Biblical truths are most important and to the binding nature of pronouncements issued by early church councils. Beyond these sources of authority, however, Catholics look to the Roman bishop (pope) for ultimate rulings while Orthodox defer to the bishops of autocephalous churches, to church councils and synods because such a structure offers expedient "checks and balances."

Orthodox theologians cite Peter's confession to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," for their interpretation of the "rock" upon which Christ's Church would be built. Accordingly, the Christian Church was not to be built upon Peter ("*Petros*" which simply means "a little stone") but rather upon the foundation of Petrine-like faith exhibited by the affirmation that Jesus is truly "the Christ, the Son of the iiving

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[26] *Ibid.*, p. 174.
[27] See Daniel Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), p. 30.

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God."[28] Some exegetes take the reference to "rock" as pointing directly to Christ, for Peter himself later referred to Jesus as "the chief corner stone" and "the stone which the builders rejected" in his first letter.[29] The Russian Orthodox-Catholic debate concerning the papacy is so alive that it serves as the principal deterrent for a meeting between the Pope and the Moscow Patriarch. Roman Catholic Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz says, "There has never been a meeting between the Moscow patriarch and the Pope. Efforts recently were made to bring the two together in Budapest when the Pope would be in Hungary, but the Russian patriarch could not make that proposed meeting."[30] The implication is a lack of willingness by the patriarch.

The *filioque* Clause and *theosis*

In addition to Orthodox disagreements with Catholic doctrines associated with the papacy and church authority, the Orthodox Church also objects to the *filioque* clause ("and of the Son") being added to the Nicene Creed of 325 by the Council of Toledo in 589. The addition was made in response to the heresy of Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople (341-360), who taught that the Holy Spirit was a minister and servant on a level equal with the angels, and thus a creature subordinate to the Father and Son. The ecumenical Council of Constantinople condemned the views of Macedonius in 381. Convictions among early church theologians affirming that the Holy Spirit is co-equal, co-eternal and co-substantial with the Father and the Son were sufficiently persuasive in 589 to add the phrase "and the Son" to the official Nicene Creed. In the ninth century, the

[28] In Greek, Peter is πετρος, meaning a stone; but the word "rock" here is πετρα, referring specifically to a large stone or boulder. Some non-Catholics argue that if the Christian Church were built upon the character and life of the Apostle Peter, its foundation would be exceptionally weak.
[29] I Peter 2:6.
[30] Personal interview with the writer in the rectory of the archdiocese, Moscow, September 21, 1996.

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Frankish church in concert with Rome insisted on interpreting the decent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost as resulting from the will and action of both the Father and the Son. The Byzantine church continued to support the initial version of the Nicene Creed which refers only to the Holy Spirit proceeding "from the Father." For the Eastern Church the deletion of the filioque clause is pivotal in fostering communion between the churches. Later in this chapter a moderation of bi-polarity emerging from the *filioque* clause is presented as the patriarch of Constantinople met with the pope in Rome to celebrate a mass together.

Whereas literature on the divergent views between Protestants and Orthodox includes debates over the *theosis* (deification) doctrine of human beings, this subject is hardly covered in Catholic-Orthodox dialogues. An explanation for the omission is probably the overarching monopoly of conversations centering on Roman papacy and the *filioque* clause. The debate centering on *theosis* becomes more acute with Anglicans and Lutherans as is indicated in Chapter IV. In addition to varying interpretations of the doctrines cited above, history reveals earlier Roman opposition to the use of the Slavic language, as opposed to Latin, by Orthodox clergy, but the Second Vatican Council approved of this change. In fact, issues addressed by the Vatican Councils have a direct relationship with the Orthodox Church, as will be observed in a later section.

The First and Third Hierarchical Sees

In the annals of Christian history, the Roman bishop became prominent as early as the middle of the second century with each successive bishop for three hundred years accruing increased power and influence for Rome. It is true that Constantinople

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challenged Western ecclesiastical hegemony in the fourth century when Constantine moved the capital of the empire to Byzantium. It is likewise true that from the fifth to the eleventh centuries differences escalated between Catholic and Eastern Christian churches, ultimately ending with Pope Leo IX excommunicating Patriarch Michael Cerularius of Constantinople. In 1204, Western forces stormed Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, ransacking the Church of the Holy Wisdom. Though efforts were made for reconciliation between Rome and Constantinople at Lyon in 1274 and again in Florence in 1438-39, tangible rapprochement did not materialize.

Metropolitan Peter is responsible for moving Slavic church headquarters from Kiev to Moscow in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. As Orthodoxy drifted further away from Catholicism following the Great Schism, the Slavic metropolitanate in Kiev and later in Moscow took on increased prominence. Even when the Mongols invaded Russia in the latter part of the fourteenth century and reasserted their rule over Russia in 1408, the Orthodox Church of Moscow retained considerable civic and religious influence. And contemporary Russians make no apology for the prominence of Orthodoxy in Moscow.

Constantinople could have been called the Second Rome at the time of the Great Schism in that it then became acknowledged as the center of a church separated from Rome. (The designations "second" and "third" should be interpreted as denoting time and not subordination or secondary status.) However, Constantinople acquired the epithet "second Rome" long after the fall of the capital city to the Turks in 1453. At that time, Moscow became heir to the title of protector of Christianity. But it wasn't until 1510 that

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a monk, Philotheus of the Eleazor Monastery of Pskov, wrote a letter to Tsar Basil III, saying,

> The church of ancient Rome fell because of the Appolinarian heresy; as to the second Rome--the church of Constantinople--it has been hewn by the axes of the Hagarenes.... Two Romes have fallen, a third [Moscow] stands, a fourth there shall not be.[31]

So Constantinople and Moscow were designated "second" and "third" respectively by Philotheus the monk, and Moscow today has the opportunity to become far more influential than Istanbul (Constantinople) in the compass of global Christendom.

The alleged reason for the fall of the first Rome is noteworthy: the church is accused of heresy like that promoted by Apollinarius, a fourth century priest, who acknowledged the full deity of Christ but denied His full humanity. Apollinarianism was condemned by the Second Council of Constantinople in 381. While Philotheus's allegation concerning Rome may apply to specific periods of its theological development, it is largely false when examining the broad theological pilgrimage of the Church. But the accusation reveals a heightening of antipathy by Orthodox clergy towards the Roman Church.

The Vatican Councils

The stormy days of the Reformation caused the Catholic hierarchy to defend its practices and refine its theology. Subsequent efforts to regain ground through the Counter-Reformation movement led to ecclesiastical rigidity and an emphasis on structure and organization. Two notable Catholic councils convened to address church dilemmas on matters regarding the headship and nature of the Church.

[31] James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe* (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 61, 69.

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Reckoned by Roman Catholics to be the twentieth ecumenical council, the First Vatican Council convened on December 8, 1869 and concluded on July 18, 1870. Of primary concern to the pope, Pius IX, was the questioning of papal absolutism. The pope had promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. Ten years later he issued the *Syllabus Errorum* which blasted liberal and progressive thinking. Responding to these papal decrees, one group of Catholic scholars rejected unilateral papal decrees, holding that such issues be presented to a general council rather than be decided by one bishop[32] Another group argued in favor of a strong papal position. Vatican I supported papal authority above conciliar decisions. It also promoted its reinforcement of the doctrine of papal primacy and the formulation of papal infallibility.

A quarter of a century following the First Vatican Council (1894), Leo XIII sent his encyclical *Praeclara gratulationes* to ecumenical Patriarch Anthimos seeking reunion. The patriarch replied with another encyclical stigmatizing "the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility as 'Roman novelties' and declared that reunion could be contemplated only on the basis of the undivided faith of the first centuries."[33] Thus, as Catholics and Orthodox entered the twentieth century, they were no closer to one another than where they had been one hundred years earlier.

In the history of Christendom, the Second Vatican Council is interpreted as having introduced several dramatic changes. This perception is not completely true, because for

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[32] The rationale for the supreme authority of a general council was presented at the Council of Constance (1414-1418) at which time three men claimed the office of pope. With the aid of the Emperor and representatives of the church, the Council met and decided to depose all three popes and prescribe limits to papal prerogatives. The same Council dealt with the case of John Hus, granting him safe conduct to defend himself, but later rescinded the promise, ultimately leading Hus to be burnt for heresy.

[33] Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow,* p. 100.

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much of what transpired during the Council was a reiteration and reinforcement of what previous councils and popes had decreed. The Council convened on October 11, 1962 and ended on December 8, 1965, a period that was divided into four sessions. Having been in office only ninety days, Pope John XXIII declared his intention to hold the twenty-first ecumenical council (Second Vatican Council)[34] As leader of the first session of the Council, Pope John XXIII dramatically altered the Catholic perspective of parishioners belonging to non-Catholic churches. Prior to the commencement of the Council, outsiders were labeled "heretics"; following the Council sessions they were called "separated brethren." So with one stroke of congeniality and brotherly love the pope lowered ecclesiological walls which had been building up for centuries. The Russian Orthodox Church was especially affected by this decree. Of special note is the inclusion of Orthodox bishops as observers in the Council. Pope John XXIII died as preparations for the second session of the Council proceeded.

Pope Paul VI guided representatives through the final sessions of the Second Vatican Council. When it concluded several important decrees were issued. One, the *Lumen Gentilum* ("the Light of the nations") declared the Church to be the continuing incarnation of Christ, signifying that as Jesus Christ became the bridge between God and man, the Church brings about a union between God and the whole of the human race. The "Church" here is a direct reference to the Roman Catholic Church. Two, the Decree of Priestly Ministry and Life affirmed a clear distinction between priests and people. The former are given an exclusive power of sacred Order to offer sacrifices, forgive sins and in

[34] He announced plans for the Council on January 25, 1959. Although he did not live to see the completion of the Council, the pope lived to witness the early influence of the first session and preparations for the second session.

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the name of Christ publicly to exercise the role of priesthood. Three, the Church is incapable of being at fault in belief. It follows, therefore, that since the pope establishes church doctrine, he is infallible. Of course the pope can seek assistance for doctrinal interpretation and clarification from bishops. This acknowledgment led to the establishment of the Synod of Bishops by Pope Paul VI on September 15, 1965.[35] By instituting the Synod, the pope drew closer to the Orthodox Church; but there remains a clear distinction regarding ecclesiastical authority: for Catholics, the pope has final authority; for Orthodox, synod decisions are final.

Fourth, following the declaration of the First Vatican Council, Mary is again declared to be immaculate in conception, perpetually virgin and sinless, sharing in the work of atonement, and raised incorruptible to heaven where she reigns as queen. Fifth, both the Scriptures and tradition should be accepted with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence. Finally, in the Decree on Ecumenism, the reunion of Christian churches is stated as the will of Christ but is made possible only on the basis that non-Catholic churches look to Rome as the one true Church. In regard to Eastern Catholic churches, they have a special status owing to similarity with Rome in doctrine, church order and liturgy.

In line with the notion of ecumenism, the Second Vatican Council encourages Catholics to work with members of other religions for common human goals. Although the Roman Catholic Church never has joined the World Council of Churches, the Vatican sends observers to WCC meetings. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic

[35] The Synod is comprised of a representative group of bishops and others with whom the pope can consult on major issues.

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Church has moved away from previous practices of proselytizing, emphasizing rather the use of dialogues to address ecclesial differences of opinion.

When the Vatican first published changes introduced by the Council, it engendered considerable confusion for some years. Time and clarification later minimized the objections so that today the Church has become fundamentally stable. But if Catholic and Orthodox leaders aspire to promote ecclesiastical unity, there are dogmatic tenets on both sides that must be compromised or overlooked; namely, papal primacy on the part of the Catholic Church, and the *filioque* clause by the Orthodox Church.

Marxism, Biases, and Church Walls

The clashes characterizing Catholic-Orthodox relations from the fourth century to modern times shed light for interpreting political and social events in the twentieth century. Religious and ethnic roots have a tendency to sprout bitter fruit from one generation to another, as is evidenced today in the former Yugoslavia. The polarization characterizing relations between the Catholic and Orthodox churches leading up to the twentieth century undoubtedly aided the Bolshevik's drive to eliminate all vestiges of religion in the Soviet Union.

The rise of Marxism in the early part of the twentieth century was more detrimental to Roman Catholicism than to Orthodoxy or Protestantism. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, Protestants enjoyed a rather favored position in comparison to either Catholicism and Orthodoxy because officials believed that such favor would offset official maltreatment of non-Protestant peoples. While Orthodox believers were in no way appreciated by the new Marxist regime owing to their linkage to Russian culture and

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ties to the Tsars, Catholics were treated more severely owing to their loyalty to a foreign power and thus not susceptible to total governmental control. Regretfully, as the Kremlin increased its hostility toward religious bodies, Catholics and Orthodox fended for themselves rather than uniting to oppose Marxist atheism. Undoubtedly, centuries of Catholic-Orthodox antipathy contributed to the ecclesiastical independence and to the subsequent demise of Catholicism in Russia.

In December 1918, Catholic Archbishop deRopp of Mogilev openly opposed the nationalization of church property. Consequently he was arrested and replaced by Msgr. Cleplak whom the Soviets viewed as more cooperative toward newly instituted policies.[36] "By 1931," according to Shirley and Rowe, "there were only forty-six Catholic priests in the whole country [USSR], most of them in Byelorussia.... By 1936, not one open Catholic church or one active Catholic priest remained in the entire Byelorussian SSR."[37] In 1937, the NKVD (secret police) reported finding nests of spies among Catholic priests.[38] The Kremlin's anti-Vatican propaganda was certainly out of proportion to the size of the church's presence. An explanation for the inordinate treatment of Catholics probably lies in the fact that just to the west of the Soviet republics was Poland, the most adamant and determined Catholic nation in the world and the one which would pose a threat to the advance of Marxism inside the USSR as well as across Western Europe. One wonders, however, if Orthodox forces could have stepped to the side of Catholics at the time to combat Marxism jointly and to encourage each other?

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[36] Shirley and Rowe, p. 29.
[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-4.
[38] *Ibid.*

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The problem of Catholics in Russia approaches "ugly duckling" and "speckled bird" connotations, creatures disadvantaged by bias and more. All the animosity that developed between Orthodoxy and Catholicism over centuries has residual effects upon Russian people and culture in modern times. It affected the fervent Russian nationalist Fedor Dostoyevsky to such an extent that he placed Jesuits, a name in Russia almost synonymous with Catholicism, together with anarchists and nihilists in *The Idiot,* and associated them with "the Grand Inquisitor"--hungry for power, deceptive, a noble end justifying evil means--in *The Brothers Karamazov.*[39] In like manner, antagonism between the churches led the influential thinker Pavel Florensky to consider Jesuit teachings as prevarications:

> The academic and cultural achievements of the Jesuits may well deserve our admiration for attempting to generate a Christian culture for Christianity. Nonetheless they are completely mistaken. They create nothing genuine and are capable only of constructing pavilions of the type used to house art exhibitions ... such false culture can only fool witless apprentices.[40]

And in the *Dictionary of the Contemporary Russian Language*, published by the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1956, the definition of "Jesuit" is "a member of a Catholic monastic order, a militant ecclesiastical organization, serving as a bulwark of the pope and reaction." As Russians became increasingly exposed to such interpretations of Catholicism, negative biases developed which Orthodox churches must now strive to eliminate.

Adverse feelings go in both directions. The other side of the Catholic-Orthodox coin reflects suspicion by Catholics toward the Orthodox Church. In his article *U sten*

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[39] See Dennis Dircherl, S.J., *Dostevsky and the Catholic Church* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986), p. 120.
[40] Pavel Florensky, "Khristianstvo I kul'tura," in *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii* (no 4, 1983), p. 54.

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khersonitsa, Sergei Bulgakov expresses disgust with the Orthodox aversion to Roman Catholics as it conflicts with his concept of the universality of the Christian Church. He writes, "They tell me that on one particular holiday they [Greek Orthodox] invited the representatives of all the religious faiths to meet the patriarch--even Jewish rabbis--but not Catholics."[41] He then expresses his own feeling that western Christians, especially Roman Catholics, are closer to Russian Orthodox believers than Orthodox believers of Istanbul. But later, in 1922, Bulgakov met a well-educated Jesuit, Stanislas Tyszkiewicz, in charge of the Eastern-rite center in Istanbul, whose remarks against Orthodoxy led him to have second thoughts concerning Catholicism. Bulgakov writes, "Count Tyszkiewicz visited me and made a really negative impression .... The whole time he played the fool. He's really not very clever and repulsive in a Polish way .... It was clear to me that a person such as he, in spite of all his fervor, was out to seduce Russians."[42] When attitudes like this surface between church members, there is little wonder that antagonistic sentiments against church bodies come from secular sources.

Stalin became lenient toward Christian churches following the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War. A resurgence of Catholicism occurred in the western republics of the Soviet Union. Catholic bishops returned from exile in Siberia, seminaries were allowed to open in Lithuania and Latvia, and churches welcomed parishioners for worship. But under the anti-religious campaign initiated by Nikita Khrushchev in 1959, anti-Catholic propaganda took on new life and expanded, successfully negating previous Catholic progress. Later, when Khrushchev was obliged to step down in 1964, the Central

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[41] Sergius Bulgakov, "Iz dnevnika," in *Vestnik Rkhd* (no 129, 1979), p. 258.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

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Committee of the Communist Party acknowledged the folly of Khrushchev's anti-religious program and published a declaration entitled "On Errors Committed in the Conduct of Atheistic Propaganda" in which the Committee rejected administrative interference in church affairs.[43] By that time the Kremlin probably had heard the report from the Second Vatican Council indicating that Pope John XXIII had departed from the firm anti-Soviet line of his predecessors, choosing rather to promote dialogue between Rome and the Soviet government, as well as with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Roman Catholic Influence from Neighboring Republics

Religious differences inside a nation-state often have adverse ramifications across national borders. In many parts of the former Soviet Union ethnicity and religion are closely linked, whether one studies autonomous republics such as Tartarstan, Chechnya or Abkhasia, or full-fledged republics such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, or Estonia. Modern times reveal an increased number of conflicts erupting inside and outside national borders over religious and ethnic differences. In some states national consciousness is linked to ethnicism and religious convictions, as in Russia and Lithuania. History attests to the propensity of such forces to cross national boundaries, give rise to emotional sentiments, and disrupt congenial relationships. Whether the conflicts have a direct association with a neighboring state or not, what happens "next door" has ramifications for "backyard" affairs.

Cross-the-border energy of domestic strife is clearly seen in contemporary inter-state relations: in Canada and the United States from Quebec, in the Middle East and elsewhere from Israelis and Arabs, in the former Soviet Union from Georgians and

[43] Shirley and Rowe, p. 62.

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Abkhasians, and so on. In like manner strife in republics to the west of Russia transmit tensions to Russia proper. Catholicism has a large constituency in Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, and Latvia--where an estimated 11,125,000 Catholic adherents live. While this study does not highlight the "Polish question" in church affairs, the writer reminds readers that each of the states mentioned above with the exception of Latvia borders Poland, a country with a Catholic population of 35,877,000 and one which has considerable intercourse with Russia. Owing to the high percentage of Catholics in the region, the manner in which religious conflicts have multiplied since the Cold War in various global regions, and especially to the fact that a serious Catholic-Orthodox conflict has erupted recently in one of the bordering states (Ukraine), it is appropriate to study the Catholic presence to the west of Russia's borders.

Byelarus and Ukraine are the scene of a recurring confrontation between the Orthodox and the Eastern Rite Catholic Church which started in 1917 when Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytski under Exarch Leonid Fyodorov sought to unite Western and Eastern churches by instituting an organic union with Rome while retaining Orthodox liturgies, language, customs and rites. Among the non-Catholic rites sought by Eastern-rite churches were baptism by immersion and marriage of the clergy. Rome welcomed the Eastern Europeans; Russian Orthodox opponents labeled them "Uniates," a Latin term derived from *unia* but used in a derogatory sense.

World War II softened Stalin's attitude toward the Russian Orthodox Church to such an extent that not only was the Moscow patriarchate restored to power but its jurisdiction was expanded to include Orthodox churches in the Baltics and Transcarpathia.

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The government moved slowly against Eastern-rite churches owing to the popularity of Metropolitan Sheptytski. When Sheptytski died in 1944, according to Andrew Sorokowski,

> the government went ahead with what appears to have been a carefully crafted plan to liquidate the church. In early 1945 the newly installed Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexii publicly and falsely denounced the deceased metropolitan and the Uniate church as traitors and Nazi collaborators, calling on Ukrainian Eastern-rite Catholics to `return' to the Russian Orthodox fold.... Ultimately, Metropolitan Slipyj [successor to Sheptytski] and eight of the nine Ukrainian bishops, as well as hundreds of priests, religious [sic], and laity were sentenced and deported for their refusal to abandon the church.[44]

In 1946, Eastern-rite churches of Byelorussia and Ukraine were officially dissolved by Soviet authorities, members and church edifices were declared to be reunited with the Russian Orthodox Church and placed under the domain of Moscow. For over forty years thereafter Eastern-rite churches were forbidden legal status. Even as late as 1988, when the Soviet government granted the Hare Krishnas legal recognition, Ukrainian Catholics could not function legally.[45]

But official pronouncements and demands relating to Eastern-rite churches did not produce the intended results. Eastern-rite believers continued to meet after 1946 in "underground" or "catacomb" assemblies until *glasnost* and *perestroika* ultimately triumphed over Marxist expediency. During the interim, the Ukrainian Catholic Church became the largest illegal religious body in the Soviet Union.[46] In Ukraine today fifteen percent (5,915,000) of the population is identified with Catholicism while claiming an

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[44] *Ibid.*, p. 57.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

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annual growth rate of 7.9 percent. In Belarus, twenty-two percent (2,200,000) of the population professes the same identity while claiming a growth rate of 6.1 percent.[47]

The principal hurdle separating the Orthodox Church from the Uniates has been the property issue; but Archbishop Kondrusiewicz stated in September 1996 that all properties previously belonging to the Uniates in the Ukraine have been returned.[48] The pattern has been set; it is likely that similar action will take place in the other republics.

The Expansion of Catholic Churches

Through the efforts of Stalin and Khrushchev, Catholicism seemed to be buried in Russia while surviving quite well to the western republics. In 1995, there were only two Catholic churches functioning in Russia: one in Moscow; the other in St. Petersburg. With the dawn of religious freedom in Russia since the late 1980s, Catholicism has taken on new life. A map in the rectory of the archbishop conveys the story. It portrays European Russia extending from the Urals westward and from Murmansk to Chechnya. On the map, the Catholic vicar who assists the archbishop has placed 86 thumb-tacks to identify locations where Catholic parishes have emerged over the past decade. Catholic priests insist they do not proselytize; they only seek Catholics where they can be found. However, one hears frequently of Orthodox people turning to Roman Catholicism. Yakob Krotov, journalist and university professor, is alleged to be among the converts to Catholicism. When asked directly if the rumor is true, Krotov replied, "That is a very complicated question which takes too long to explain."[49]

[47] Johnstone, pp. 551 (Ukraine), 143 (Belarus).
[48] Personal interview with this writer in the rectory of the archbishop, Moscow, September 21, 1996.
[49] Personal interview by telephone with this writer, Moscow, September 26, 1996.

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Three serious problems confront the Catholic Church in Russia. One, there are only twelve priests to minister to parishioners in the widely separated 86 locations, and only two are Russian. Two, there are only eighteen churches in which to worship; some are still being renovated; property and building permits are difficult to obtain; and most Catholics meet in apartments or rented halls. Three, funding for priests, renovations, religious materials, and ordinary church costs is inadequate for the magnitude of the opportunities now facing the Catholic Church.

Some financial help is coming from Catholic churches in Italy which have become "sister churches" to Russian parishes. The Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D. C. is now entertaining the notion of being a "sister church" to one of the two Catholic churches now functioning in Moscow, the Cathedral of our Lady of Hope or the Church of St. Louis.. And, in regard to the prospect for more priests, there are forty Russians presently enrolled in the Catholic seminary of St. Petersburg.[50]

Present State of Catholic-Orthodox Relations

On the basis of resolutions from the Second Vatican Council and recent pronouncements of Pope John Paul II and Patriarchs Bartholomew, there is reason to expect increased understanding and appreciation for each other. Some strides are now being taken for a convergence of knowledge on background conditions contributing to ecclesiastical differences between the two churches, returning to the crossroads where the divergence took place, and seeking thereby ecclesial communion. Whereas no one should minimize differences of doctrines and structures that now separate Catholicism from

[50] Personal conversation between this writer and Archbishop Kondrusiewicz in the archdiocese rectory, Moscow, September 21, 1996.

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Orthodoxy, or expect either church to alter its positions on these matters in the foreseeable future, one can believe that both church hierarchies are now experiencing a relatively high degree of mutual respect and appreciation.

The strongest argument for expecting a closer relationship between the churches is based on the expressed will and determination of Pope John Paul II and of leading bishops of the Orthodox Church to strive toward unity. In an apostolic letter, *Orientale Lumen*, issued by Pope John Paul II in May 1995 there is a clear desire to seek a union between Christian East and West by the year 2000. The letter was directed to all churches in the West, but primarily to Eastern Catholic Churches.[51] Commenting on Catholic-Orthodox divisiveness, the pope said disunity is "one of the greatest sins," and added, "Ecclesial communion has been painfully wounded, a fact for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame. Such wounds openly contradict the will of Christ and are the cause of scandal in the world.[52] The agenda for realizing unity is so immense and the difficulties so profound that the achievement of such a goal is at this time a dream. Whereas the Istanbul patriarchate is in touch with Rome, the same cannot be said of Moscow, and the one does not govern the other.

Nevertheless, the combination of a common Christian theological orientation, on the one hand, and of mutual concern over the intrusion of secular and materialistic values, on the other, serve to lower the walls of ecclesiastical differentiation. For Catholics and Orthodox alike, God is real and almighty, Jesus Christ is the Redeemer who died vicariously and arose from the dead, the Holy Spirit is the Giver of life, the Bible is the

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[51] Weakland, R., "Reflections on the Dialogue," *Eastern Churches Journal* (vol. 2, no. 2, 1995), p. 212.
[52] David M. Petras, "Knowledge of the Eastern Tradition," *Eastern Church Journal* (vol. 2, no 2, 1995), p. 219.

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word of God, and eternal life is available to mankind because of God's love. While differences remain between the churches, they can wane in the light of commonly supported doctrines and mutual objectives.

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CHAPTER VI

NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS: ISLAM, JUDAISM, BUDDHISM

The spectacular demise of Communism caught the world by surprise. No segment of the population could have been more pleased than religious bodies which were obliged to endure the tyranny of atheistic demands and restrictions for over seven decades. Then, the ideology that sought to destroy all vestiges of religion within the Soviet Union fell into disrepute and became ineffective without achieving success with any of the world religions represented on its soil. As Christianity survived in spite of the most severe persecution ever leveled against it, so did Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism endure much persecution. In the new Russia, adherents of these non-Christian religions now enjoy the privilege and opportunity to regroup, have contact with their kin outside of Russia, and propagate their beliefs without fear of retaliation. Together they comprise almost fourteen percent of the total population of the Russian Federation.[1]

When analyzing these religions and assessing to what extent they constitute "contending forces" to the Russian Orthodox Church, some questions arise. One, what is the estimated population of each of these religious bodies inside Russia? Two, does the religion foster the proselytizing of outsiders? Three, does any activity of the religious body militate against the strength and goals of the Orthodox Church? Fourth, can the devotees be exploited by foreign forces so that Orthodoxy is seriously affected?

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[1] See Patrick J. Johnstone, *Operation World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), p. 467; *World Mark Encyclopedia of the Nations* (1995). Demographic data on these and other religious bodies are often challenged and perhaps justly.

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This chapter endeavors to respond to such questions. It also examines the historic backgrounds, doctrinal peculiarities, present activity, and potential strength of each of these non-Christian religions.

Islam--The Crescent and the Cross

The youngest of the world's great religions, Islam contains material drawn from both Judaism and Christianity. Founded in Arabia by Mohammed (c.570-632), Islam teaches that the Founder is the final revealer of the unity and will of God (Allah). The primary confession of Islam is simple, "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet," but the implication is total obedience, as the word "Islam" signifies.

Since Islam is post-Christian, claiming its own finality of divine revelation, and considers Jesus to be a forerunner of Mohammed, relations between the Orthodox Church and Islam have always been strained, and Islam has always been tenaciously resistant to the Christian message. Each religion travels on its own track and the two do not converge.

Islam occupies second place among religious communities in Russia, with its adherents representing twelve percent of the population.[2] In the absence of any official assessment, the total number of people in Russia identified with Islam is approximately 17.7 million. This figure compares with 55 percent of the population, or about 81.2 million people, claiming to be Orthodox, and 28.6 percent, or 42.3 million, who profess

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[2] Azim Nanji, ed. *The Muslim Almanac* (1996). Patrick Johnstone presents the figure at 8.7 percent of the total Russian population (p. 467). Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz of the Roman Catholic Church in Moscow cited to this writer a figure of 22,000,000 Muslims in Russia at this time (October, 1996), stating, "That is the figure published in our periodicals" (personal interview, Moscow, September 21, 1996). The most recent calculation of the total Russian population is 147.7 million.

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identified as non-religious.[3] Although estimates of total adherents in the two religious communities reflect a sizable disparity of representation, the potential influence of the smaller body probably transcends numerical comparisons for three reasons: one, Muslims are concentrated in specific regions of the Russian Federation where their corporate presence can destabilize local economies and politics which, in turn, can adversely affect operations of the central government; two, in the contemporary world, Muslims evince sufficient energy for their causes to offset their minority status, as witnessed in Chechnya today; three, although Muslims reveal considerable divisions within their own ranks, they manifest more unity when facing outsiders than do Orthodox and non-religious groups. On the basis of what has already been said, one can add that nowhere is the agenda for inter-religious dialogue more pressing than with the adherents of the two largest Russian religious communities, Orthodox Christianity and Islam.

Bennigsen and Broxup divide Muslims into eight categories: firm believers, believers by tradition, hesitants, non-believers who do not pray or fast, non-believers who observe religious rites under social pressure, indifferent atheists, emotional atheists, and convinced atheists.[4] Pursuing research in the early 1970s in the Karakalpak Republic, Bennigsen and Broxup found that young Muslims between the ages of 18 and 20 were close to unanimous in turning away from Islamic rites or seriously questioning the relevance if not the very existence of God. Over fifty percent (50.8%) either admitted that they do not pray or fast during the month of Ramadan or that they only observe Islamic

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[3] Johnstone estimates "non-believers" to represent 32.7% of the Russian population. The percentage used here is an extrapolation based on the *Muslim World* estimate of Muslims in Russia.
[4] Alexander Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, "*The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*" (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), pp.141.

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religious rites under pressure from their social and family environment. Slightly fewer Muslims of the same age bracket (47.8%) profess to be atheists. And even the minuscule number who acknowledge faith in God admitted to hesitancy which becomes manifest in their lack of commitment to the sacred rites and customs of Islam.[5] Not only did Bennigsen and Broxup find an aversion toward Islam among young people, but a similar attitude was apparent among individuals between the ages of 30 and 42. In this group 1.2 percent admit that tradition has been the principal motivator for believing in God.[6] When a professor from Tajikistan in the Lomonosov University of Moscow was asked concerning her religious affiliation, she responded, "Of course I was raised in a Muslim home, but really, there are not many Muslims in Moscow who take Islam seriously, perhaps ten percent."[7] In contrast to the younger generation, 67.6 percent of adult Muslims 54 and older claim to be either firm believers or believers by tradition.[8] These data evidence the apparent success of atheistic propaganda under Marxism, especially among youth, while attesting to seasoned loyalty to Islam among the older generation.

Clearly, the above statistics do not represent the Western image of Muslim youth because that image is largely based on news media reports from the Middle East. However, attitudes at this time in Moscow concerning Muslims may change. When Fr. Alexander Borisov of Moscow was asked about Islam constituting a contending force to

[5] *Ibid.*, p.142.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Personal interview with this writer at Lomonosov University, Moscow, September 26, 1996.
[8] Bennigsen and Broxup, p. 142.

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the Orthodox Church, he responded, "Not yet; of course we hear adverse reports occasionally from the Caucasus."[9]

Three important events occurred since the 1970s to turn the tables of Muslim youth away from religious indifference or atheism toward a renewal of Islamic life. First, the renewal received its initiative by the overthrow of the Shah in Iran and the ascendance of the Ayatollah Khomeini to power in 1979. Islamic youth were behind the coup d'état. Second, with the overthrow of the Shah and the incendiary rhetoric of the Ayatollah Khomeini, Islamic fundamentalism spread rapidly throughout the Middle East, signaling a cultural war against Western secularism and whatever regimes could be aligned to it, particularly that of Israel. Third, the breakup of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 motivated Muslim youth to seek and appreciate their own identity which encompassed not only ethnic identification but religious linkage.

Now, at the close of the twentieth century, young Muslims carry the banner of the Islamic crescent as a symbol of their cultural roots as well as of their religious commitment. Though Muslims inside Russia do not pose a serious threat to post-communist authorities in most of Russia, in geographical pockets where Islam is dominant, youth increasingly align themselves with their heritage, kin, and cultural traditions, a factor that could spell cultural clashes in the future. However, according to Bennigsen and Broxup, there is a demographic shift taking place among Russians in the former Soviet Union: "Muslims living in the RSFSR [Russian Federation] or in other non-Muslim republics of the USSR are immigrating into Central Asia. This shift is particularly evident

[9] Personal interview with this writer in the Church of St. Cosmos and St. Damian, Moscow, September 24, 1996.

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among the Tartars and Bashkirs from Siberia and European Russia with the result that, by 1979, over a million Volga Tartars ... and over 70,000 Bashkirs were living in Central Asia."[10] At the same time, Bennigsen and Broxup predict, "In the year 2000 the Muslims will be divided among the following three areas: Central Asia--50 million; Transcaucasia and Northern Caucasus--16 million; Middle Volga and the Urals--9 million."[11]

The Influence of External Forces

Relations between Muslims and Orthodox in Russia are not immune from exogenous influences. Whereas Russia has emancipated itself from isolation imposed by the Soviets, and now has a global playing field in which to act and react, it must submit itself to the court of global appraisal for its international influence, economic stability, and political welfare. Whereas Russia, and the former Soviet Union, could be classified as an island removed from the developed world prior to December 1991, it has become attached to the geopolitical mainland where intrastate and interstate affairs bring wounds, scars, and unimaginable surprises sometimes mixed with healing and meaningful accords.

Islamic forces outside Russia already evidence considerable influence upon Russian domestic affairs. One sees this illustrated in Tajikistan where Russian soldiers fight against Afghan forces; also in Bosnia, a republic toward which Orthodox Russians favor and support Serb forces while Russia's Islamic community supports Bosnian Muslims; and again, in Afghanistan where Taliban Islamic forces reveal increased strength against tribes favored by Moscow. Incidents of this nature lead Samuel Huntington to write, "Religion reinforces the revival of ethnic identities and restimulates Russian fears about the security

[10] Bennigsen and Broxup, pp. 131-32.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

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of their southern borders."[12] Even more ominous is a prediction of M. J. Akbar: "It is in the sweep of the Islamic nations from the Maghreb to Pakistan that the struggle for a new world order will begin."[13]

Moreover, Islamic influence is surely to come upon Russia from Middle East states where Muslims enjoy a majority status. The militant spirit of young Muslims today is readily grasped as one witnesses mass demonstrations in Gaza, Hebron and Jerusalem in Palestine, malicious activity of Jihad members in Egypt and of Hesbalah in Lebanon, and the strikes and processions in Jordan over the government's siding with the West against Iraq's endeavors to re-enter the global market of oil exporting states.

The notion first advanced by former President Richard Nixon that the Middle East is a "powder keg" surely has ramifications for the future of Russia. Now, all the way from Turkey to Iran and from Afghanistan to Syria one finds a caldron of social unrest energized by anti-secular, anti-Jewish, anti-Christian and anti-Western sentiments that have the potential of spreading to perimeter states, Russia included. The perception of the danger is caught by Bernard Lewis when he observes:

> We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations--the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.[14]

The growth and expansion of Islam must be of some concern to Russia's Orthodox community. If not now, or "yet", as Fr. Borisov responds, today's calm can lead to

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[12] Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993), p. 33.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[14] *Ibid.*

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tomorrow's storm. Followers of Mohammed are multiplying faster than devotees of any other major religion in the world. Moreover, as Ovey N. Mohammed reminds us,

> in sixty countries Muslims comprise the majority [of the population]. In another fifteen they comprise a substantial majority. In Europe, Islam is already the second largest religious tradition, collectively and virtually in every country. Demographers predict that in the early years of the next century, Muslims will surpass Jews as the second largest community in the United States and Canada.[15]

When these dimensions of Islam are understood, and the history of Islam in the former Russian Empire is taken into consideration, analysts should be able to perceive a difficult road ahead for the Russian Orthodox Church, especially in regions where Muslims maintain a plurality of the population.

Historical Background

The history of Islam in the Russian Empire is dotted by both animosity and respect. In the first half of the thirteenth century Christianity faced difficult times. Mongols swept into the area north of the Caspian and Black Seas becoming masters of the inhabitants. Being pagans, they were especially hostile toward Christians. Churches were burnt to the ground, many Christians perished, and service books and vestments were destroyed. Eventually masses among the Golden Horde, Russian Mongols, embraced Islam. Subsequently, Mongol leaders treated Christians in a more friendly manner, not attempting to force them to abandon their faith. The net result of the Mongol invasion was a strengthening of Orthodox convictions, new opportunities for Orthodox indoctrination of its adherents, and a corresponding wider spread of the Christian message. Kenneth Latourette writes,

> The Church was given authority over its members in moral and religious questions, especially in marriage, sex offenses, inheritance, and the duties of children to

[15] Ovey N. Mohammed, "Muslim-Christian Relations," *Ecumenism* (No 116, December 1994), p. 4.

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> parents. It was accorded immunity from some forms of taxation. The Church was regarded by Russians as the one institution which was peculiarly their own and became a symbol of what might be called Russian nationalism. It was the tie of Russian unity.[16]

Some Orthodox Russians opted to escape Mongol rule and migrated northward. Adopting monastic life styles, signaling abandonment from the world, these Russians sought greater religious freedom. After a while, their settlements became villages and the villages became towns. Monasteries were later converted into schools in which students learned methods of agriculture as well as Christian doctrines and norms of living. Animists and Muslims professed Christianity. Roads were built, marshes drained, and improved methods of cattle breeding and cultivating the soil were introduced. By then, the Russian language and culture were widely spread and Orthodoxy took on a more respectable image.

Early Orthodox-Islamic Relations

Conflicts that began in the sixteenth century continued up and through Soviet times, with vestiges of Russian-Muslim clashes seen today in the north Caucasus region. The first direct struggle between Russian forces and Islam began in 1552 when Ivan the Terrible (often a misnomer) desired to expand his control to the Tartar capital of Kazan. Adopting a pattern of state-church colonialism similar to that of Spanish and Portuguese governments which sent warriors and Catholic priests to Latin America, Ivan assigned trained clergy to discharge a missionary ministry in Kazan. Fanny Brian describes the motivation behind the assignment: "At the sunset of the Battle of Kazan, Ivan the Terrible entrusted the archbishop of Kazan, Archbishop Gurii, with the mission of conquering the

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[16] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity, vol. 2* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 400-401.

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heterodox populations by the spiritual sword, the Orthodox faith."[17] In 1564, Archbishop German succeeded Gurii as head of the Kazan diocese. Both men were later canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church.[18] A later successor, Archbishop Germögen (1589-1601), became the future patriarch of Russia. Annals of happenings in the Kazan region during the sixteenth century attest to the symbiotic relationship existing between the state and the church.

As the church cooperated with the state, it received financial assistance for building monasteries in the Middle-Volga region. In addition, according to Bryan, "the state provided help in the form of various economic and legal enticements for converts: exemptions from taxes, settlement on the best lands, and pardons for crimes in civil courts."[19] The combination of zealous clergy and a cooperative, generous state contributed to a measure of missionary success among the Muslim Tartärs.

Tartar converts to Christianity were first called *Kriashens*, a very appropriate term meaning "Christ-ones" that was adopted first in Antioch of Syria for disciples of Christ in AD 45.[20] Early Kazan converts later received the designation "Starokriashens" (old believers) to differentiate them from eighteenth century converts, called "Novokriashens" (new believers), who responded to Christianity under considerable duress.

It is wrong for anyone to believe that the three and a half centuries marking Orthodox-Muslim relations in Russia reveal a continuous account of strife, depredation,

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[17] Fanny E. Bryan, "Organization and Work of Missionaries in the Middle-Volga in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* (vol. 6, no 2, 1995), p.173. This statement may be misleading for Bryan herself acknowledges that Gurii did not begin his ministry until 1555 and one assumes that the title "archbishop of Kazan" was not given Gurii until the battle was over.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] Acts of the Apostles 11:26. The Greek word used in the original text is "Kristianous."

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and intolerance. Under the tsars, each ruler chose his or her own *modus operandi* in dealing with Muslims. Ivan himself was tolerant toward Muslims, accepting them as loyal subjects and ordering Orthodox leaders of Kazan to avoid brutality in dealing with Muslims. He demanded that conversions to Christianity be conducted "with love and sympathy and never by force."[21]

From the time of the first Romanov, Tsar Mikhail, in 1613 until the time of Catherine the Great in 1762, the state and church worked in close partnership to obtain conversions and to discourage Muslims. As incentives for conversion, new Christians received clothing and financial allowances, exemption from taxes for three years, and were freed from military service. As means to discourage Muslims, especially under Archbishop Lucas Konashevich (1738-1755), counter measures were initiated by the two pronged forces of state and church: 418 of the 536 mosques were destroyed, most Muslims schools were closed, thus forcing Muslim children to attend schools run by Orthodox missionaries, Islamic endowments for educational and charitable purposes were taken over by the state, and Muslim peasants were expelled from villages where Christian converts had settled.[22]

Although there were many people who professed conversion to Orthodoxy half-way through the eighteenth century, three factors militated against the strength of their commitment to Christianity: one, most converts were enticed to Christianity by corporal lures and not by spiritual needs, thus becoming mere "rice Christians," a term denoting profession in exchange for food and clothing; two, Orthodox clergy of the eighteenth century, lacking the spiritual zeal of sixteenth century clergy, depended on coercion and

[21] Marie Broxup, "Islam," in Eugene B. Shirley, Jr., and Michael Rowe, *Candle in the Wind* (Wash., D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1989), p. 185.
[22] Bryan, p. 174.

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sought numerical church growth as prime objectives rather than authentic transformation of lives; three, even if professions of faith were rendered in good conscience, the church was unprepared to educate the new converts in the true meaning of Christian discipleship, a fault later contributing to a high rate of apostasy.

Catherine II (the Great), following the pattern of Ivan the Terrible, looked upon Muslims with considerable favor, even believing the Islamic faith was more capable of civilizing Asian peoples than Orthodoxy.[23] She halted conversion aspirations of the Orthodox Church, reversed anti-Muslim practices, and decreed the toleration of faith (1773). Of course, the motivation for this action could have been Catherine's desire to drive a wedge between Russian Muslims and the Ottoman Empire which was blocking Russian expansionism into the Balkans. At any rate, the new freedom prompted Muslims to reinstitute a proselytizing program to draw animists, non-believers and Orthodox to Islam, an endeavor that witnessed steady conversions. From Orthodox ranks, the greatest success of Muslims was with the *Novokriashens* who were floundering in the Christian faith and thus were ready prey for Islam. Catherine did as much for Muslims as any of the tsars. She sought to win their favor by granting them special concessions such as the establishment of a Muslim Spiritual Board and permission to build mosques. She allowed for a status of equality between Russians and Muslims, and for Tartar nobility in Crimea to be acknowledged as Russian nobility without being converted. But the notion of Muslim nobility was more than Catherine's successors could endure.

Upon receiving the Russian crown in 1801, Alexander I turned the tables on Muslims within his realm. He opened Crimea to exiled Greeks and pushed out more than a

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 189

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million Tartars who were forced to seek refuge in arid regions of Central Asia. Later, along the Volga, Nikola Il'minsky of the Kazan Religious Academy sought to create a Tartar intelligentsia comprised of Orthodox converts who could speak and write the Tartar language and serve as missionaries among the Tartars. This effort was in response to gains made by Islam after Catherine II issued the edict for toleration of faith. So successful were the intellectuals that Marie Broxup reports "more than 100,000 Tartars converted to Christianity" between 1865 and 1900.[24]

In succeeding years, additional methods of Russification mixed with Orthodoxy were employed among Muslims. Vast migrations of Slavs moved into Muslim communities where the soil was rich, taking undo advantage of earlier settlers. In some cases, Muslims were kept isolated from the civilized world and forced to live as second-class citizens There was only one way by which Muslims could elevate their status to enjoy equal status with Russians; namely, "by cultural assimilation ... preferably through conversion to Orthodox Christianity."[25] Russians had not learned that whenever coercion is employed to change human wills, whether in politics or religion, the lasting results are minimal.

In the Caucasus the Russians applied another policy. The status of nobility was granted to cooperating feudal lords of restricted nationalities, such as Ossetians and Kabardians; but not to the Daghestani people who were held at bay by Russians owing to their support of Imam Shamil, the Caucasian resistance leader of the nineteenth century.

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[24] Broxup, p. 190.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

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Islamic Regions Inside Russia

There are two geographical areas within Russia where the Muslim population is concentrated: the Caucasus and the Middle-Volga. For centuries prior to the Russian conquest, Muslims in these regions "maintained the closest possible contact with the rest of the Muslim world, sharing as they did the same culture and history, being ruled by the same dynasties and speaking and writing the same language."[26] Even after the conquest, mobility of Muslims across international borders afforded ample opportunity to maintain strong ties with Muslims outside the region. Around 1924 an iron curtain was lowered to separate Soviet Muslims from their neighbors. Moscow later claimed total success in the goal of having the republics "integrated as equal and willing partners into a commonwealth of free socialist nations."[27] But this was not true. The identity of people belonging to each confession was clear. Rather than assimilation, there was appreciation.

In postcommunist Russia, there are Islamic organizations forming in various communities where Muslims represent a substantial portion of the population. In the early 1990s, the Islamic Way party was founded in the North Caucasus, particularly in Chechnya. Similar organizations were created in Dagestan, adopting such names as Zhamaatul Muslimi, the Islamic Democratic Party, and the Islamic Center.[28] More recently, emphasis is being placed on mutual cooperation among all Islamic groups inside Russia. One report suggests, "Some of the ideologists of Russia's Muslim community

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[26] Alexander Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 3.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Aleksei V. Malashenko, "Islam Returns to the Russian Political Stage," in *Transition* (vol. 1, no. 24, December 29, 1995), p. 38.

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returned to the idea of a single Muslim community and of allowing a common religion to prevail over the defense of purely national interests."[29] A prominent Islamic preacher, Geidar Dzhemal, promoted the idea of a Russian Muslim unity in 1994, arguing that such unity would be "the most important Muslim strategy," and "that Russia's Muslims should eventually form the nucleus of a European Muslim community."[30] The iman of the Saratov city mosque, Mukaddas Bibarsov, has "lobbied for an interlinkage between religion and politics."[31] Though the war in Chechnya was not at first considered to be religious in nature in that "both the Muslim and Orthodox clergy in Russia unanimously opposed" the notion of a "clash of two religions," Muslims in Dagestan, Ingushetiya, and even Tartarstan exhibit solidarity with the Chechens.[32] And supporters of the late Chechen leader, Dzhokhar Dudaev, "declared a *jihad*, or holy war," against Russian forces.[33] Factors of this sort lend credence to a concept of the emerging influence of Islam in Russia.

In regard to Muslim and Orthodox congenial relations, residents of Kazan, Tartarstan show the greatest promise. They unite because they have a common enemy, President Mentimer Shaimiyev, a champion of Tartar nationalism, who opposes both groups.[34] He promises them property for churches and mosques but does not fulfill the promises unless the property is of no real estate value. His style of government resembles that of the Soviets. Shaimiyev is more interested in establishing a secular state than one in

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[29] *Ibid.*p. 39.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] Lawrence Uzzell, "Orthodox and Muslims Build Common Front in Tartarstan," Keston News Service, September 24, 1996.

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which either Islamic extremism or radical Orthodoxy emerges to cause serious domestic problems. Tartarstan is indeed different from other communities; it has a high density of Muslims with a high representation of Orthodox adherents. Therefore, a demographic balance of the two confessions in Tartarstan is looked upon as a motivating factor for promoting harmony. There is also evidence of a willingness on the part of leaders on both sides to respect each other's beliefs and practices.

The Influence of Central Asia

Five republics constitute a geographical area called Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. The region is bordered on the north and northwest by Russia; on the southwest by the Caspian Sea; on the southeast and east by China; and on the south by Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. In assessing ramifications relating to Russia by the breakup of the Soviet Union, Graham Fuller justly comments, "The independence of the Central Asian republics represents overwhelmingly Russia's largest territorial loss, even if it evokes less psychological and cultural distress than the loss of Ukraine, the very heartland of ancient 'Rus'."[35]

A vast distinction in cultures exists between Russians and Central Asians. Orthodoxy dominates Russia; Islam dominates Central Asia. Moreover, Central Asians are rapidly renewing ties with the rest of the Muslim world, a hotbed of international politics. In these post-Soviet times, one discovers a continuous procession of foreign Muslim visitors, cultural delegations, technical missions, students and professors visiting Central Asia. On a smaller level, Central Asian Muslims have been abroad. And what

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[35] Graham E. Fuller, "Russia and Central Asia," in Michael Mendlebaum, ed., *Central Asia and the World* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994), p. 95.

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complicates Russian-Central Asian relations beyond brooding religious and ideological differences is the fact that an estimated ten million Russians reside in Central Asia who are viewed as meriting the attention and support of Russian people.

The importance of the region is so great that the segment of Russian society most opposed to the incursion of Western culture and values observes that such tendencies polarize Central Asians against Russians which can lead to grave political and social consequences. In 1969, Geoffrey Wheeler wrote about Muslim resistance to Soviet efforts to remove national distinctions in the Central Asian republics as prescribed by the 22nd CPSU Congress. He conjectured,

> As long as the republics remain in existence their political and economic stature is likely to increase, perhaps even to the point of their acquiring some degree of genuine independence, and of re-establishing contact with the non-Soviet Muslim world. Even if they remain socialist, which is highly probably, they would, with some possible exceptions, adhere even more closely to Islam, which is just as much an integral part of their national (Tartar, Azeri, Uzbek, Tajik, etc.) culture as the Russian Orthodox Church is of Russian culture.[36]

What Wheeler predicted over a quarter of a century ago has now, at least partially, become a reality. Socialism remains strong in Central Asia; in fact, Muslims consider socialism generally as superior to Western-type capitalism. But the cohesion among Central Asian Muslims, which was also expected if independence were achieved, has not materialized. What has happened, however, is a strengthening of Islamic identity in spite of the lack of unity, and more importantly, there is a unity in regard to religious values which is manifested in adverse attitudes towards Orthodoxy, Russian nationalism, and Western secularism.

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[36] Geoffrey Wheeler, "National and Religious Consciousness in Soviet Islam," in Max Hayward and William C. Fletcher, eds., *Religions and the Soviet State* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 179.

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Wrestling with Islamic Fundamentalism

One major concern to be addressed by Orthodox leaders touches Islamic fundamentalism, the waves of which recently engulfed Afghanistan by Taliban Islamic militia and stretch ominously into Central Asia with ripples reaching Chechnya. At this time there is an agreement between Orthodox and Islamic leaders in Central Asia to respect and not impede worship in each other's camp. They go even further to unite their influence to hold back other religious societies from encroaching upon Central Asian land. According to a 1995 report, Russian Orthodox and Muslim leaders from four predominately Muslim republics reached an unprecedented interfaith agreement to contain denominations and aberrant religious groups that are gaining influence in Central Asia. At an October meeting in the Uzbekistan capital, Tashkent, Muslim and Russian Orthodox leaders vowed to cooperate in stopping the influence of evangelical Christians, Baptists, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses."[37]

Analysts can justly expect such agreements to be sustained by the respective governments with some opposition arising against Orthodoxy in sectors within Central Asian states where foreign influence is present. For instance, the Wahabi fundamentalist movement, which is strong in Saudi Arabia, is a present danger in the Ferghana valley of Uzbekistan; and rebels in Tajikistan, who are supported by Afghanistan, battle both national and Russian forces in an effort to overthrow the government. What happens in Central Asia or Azerbaijan in response to the possible spread of Islamic fundamentalism will affect governmental and ecclesiastical responses to Islam in Russia. Martin Van Bruinessen compares Islamic fundamentalism to the emergence of Protestantism in pre-

[37] "News Briefs," in *Christianity Today* (November 11, 1995), p. 64.

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modern European history. Luther started the movement in Germany, but it soon spread across northern Europe.[38] As the intensity of beliefs among the early Protestants engaged a reaction from European governments and the Catholic Church, so can the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia lead Moscow to reassess its foreign policy toward the newly formed sovereign states and the Russian Church to defend its own religious, cultural and political interests.

One question emerges from this discussion: does Islamic fundamentalism pose a latent threat to Russia and to Orthodoxy? The question is debatable. Yuri Gankovsky posits, "The biggest myth would have us believe that Muslim fundamentalism is dangerous for Russia or for state interests." Its history goes back "about 1,000 years" and reveals harmlessness.[39] Supporters of this view consider Russia to be a greater threat to Central Asia than the other way around. An opposing view looks to Central Asia as a clear and present danger to Russia. Ahmed Rashid refers to the Wahabi movement in the Ferghana Valley of Uzbekistan, mentioned above, where one finds "the most determined and best-organized of all fundamentalist movements seeking the overthrow of the government."[40] Rashid argues, "Ferghana can explode at any time. People are just waiting for it to happen and nobody can do anything to stop it."[41] But Rashid's most ominous conviction is contained in his prediction, "First Ferghana, then Uzbekistan and then the whole of Central Asia will become an Islamic state."[42] Behind Islamic fundamentalism is a militancy

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[38] Bruinessen, "Muslim Fundamentalism: Something to be underderstood or to be explained away?" *Islam and Chrtistian-Muslim Relations* (vol. 6, no. 2, 1995), p. 157.
[39] Yuri V. Gankovsky, "Russia's Relations with the Central Asian States Since the Dissolution of the Soviet Union," in *Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 117-18.
[40] Ahmed Rishad, *The Resurgence of Central Asia* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 100.
[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Ibid.*

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not limited to political issues but embracing religious dogma and social mores. Rashid refers to "an intense religious and political polarization" resulting from the Wahabis insistence on Central Asians abandoning regional costumes in deference to white veils that cover the body from head to toe.[43] Meanwhile more Westernized people, particularly Russians, wear what fundamentalists view as scanty clothing that reveal blatant sensuality. So, forms of dress pit one culture against the other and have the potential of dividing civilizations in the Samuel Huntington sense.[44] On the basis of what one observes in Central Asia, analysts who perceive regional dangers resulting from Islamic fundamentalism extrapolate to caution Russians of intentional designs to broaden the fundamentalist base.

Which position is more likely to be true? Domestic and international relations constitute complex puzzles and imponderable variables. These often betray logic and comparative analyses. However, in regard to an effect of Islamic fundamentalism upon Russia and Orthodoxy, one can suggest that if the movement continues to flourish and to expand as it has since the Shah was overthrown in Iran in 1979, whatever problems now exist between Russians and Muslims will serve as faint images of future conflicts. The principal determining factor behind the future of the movement must be the orientation and ambitions of fundamentalist leaders; but economic, social and political conditions also play significant roles. Moscow at this time serves as a rather effective melting pot for

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[44] See introductory chapter, p. 1. Huntington wrote "the Clash of Civilizations" (*Foreign Affairs*, summer 1991, pp. 22-49), an essay arguing that contemporary civilizations are marked by the subjective self-identification of people based on religion, customs, language, and so on.

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ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, conflicts can arise in communities where Muslims are in the majority and where fundamentalists believe they can achieve power.

Four observations lead to ominous sentiments regarding Orthodox-Islamic affairs. One, recent events indicate that Islamic fundamentalists seek to increase the number of states under their control. At this time, Taliban fundamentalists claim to control two-thirds of Afghanistan and press toward greater conquests. It is feasible to conclude that Islamic fundamentalist could establish one or two Central Asian republics (and Azerbaijan) as legitimate goals, although present Central Asian leaders would oppose such aspirations. Lowell Bezanis interprets "the fear of militant Islam" as a myth in Russia, but he acknowledges, "The Russian media and foreign policy pundits also have focused considerable attention on the prospects for politicized Islam taking root in Central Asia. The fears of both Russia and the West seem to be exacerbated by the growing influence of militant or fundamentalist Islam in North Africa and Middle Eastern countries."[45] So Bezanis admits to the regional extension of Islam. Two, present-day regimes may be opposed to Islamic fundamentalism but the momentum and strength of the movement are capable of replacing such rulers. On July 8, 1996 an Islamic-led government acceded to power in Turkey, with Necmetin Erbakan appointed as prime minister. On September 30, 1996 Afghanistan's Taliban Islamic forces captured the stronghold of former government military chief Ahmad Shah Masood after having taken control of the capital city, Kabul, three days earlier. The Taliban immediately imposed a dress code upon all Afghan people under their control, thereby employing an Islamic symbol as a test of loyalty to Allah.

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[45] Lowell Bezanis, "Exploiting the Fear of Militant Islam," in *Transition* (vol. 1, no. 24, September 29, 1995), p. 7.

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These events are certainly coups in favor of Islam that can affect Russia. Three, Islamic governments in Iran and Iraq already enjoy a measure of favorable communication with Russia over the acquisition of military hardware and the employment of Russian technicians whose factories closed down and specializations are no longer needed. This factor gives Islamic states diplomatic advantages when discussing Orthodox-Islamic tensions. Fourth, Islamic autonomous regions and republics in the Russian Federation reveal signs of protest against Moscow. Tartarstan declared its independence in 1991. Chechnya has sought independence since 1992. If and when ambitions of Islamic fundamentalists reach Russian soil, there will be an adverse reaction to the endeavor initiated in Orthodox ranks so that legislation to check such forces will be proposed.

The Present State and Future of Islamic-Orthodox Relations

Nowhere has the past so strongly influenced the present than among the Muslims of the Russian and Soviet Empires. History reveals serious clashes between both religious bodies. At the present time, which must be interpreted as a transitional period for both the Russian state and its religious bodies, analysts do not discover serious conflicts between Muslims and Orthodox devotees. They do find a similarity in opposing Western missions and their representatives upon Russian soil. Interestingly, the Orthodox currently do not overtly declare their objection to the incursion of Islamic representatives coming from outside Russia, but such reaction is likely to surface. Neither do the Orthodox make much of the contrast between the biological procreation of Muslims and that of their own people which falls behind Muslim reproduction by as much as one third.[46] Nor does the Orthodox Church talk much about the revival of Islam in Central Asia and its potential

[46] See Bennigsen and Broxup, p. 125.

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influence upon Russians. But none of these features regarding Islam can be readily dismissed as being innocuous. On the basis of these realities, it is fitting to predict a strengthening of Islamic dominance in the region and an increasingly difficult time for Orthodoxy. The rise of radical Islam and its militant manifestations have already been cited. However, analysts must remember that the Muslim world is complex geographically and diverse culturally. This complexity and diversity have a bearing upon Orthodox-Islamic relations.

Questions arising in Orthodox circles must be focused on the probable spread of Islamic fundamentalism, the emerging revival within Islam itself, the goal among Islamic leaders to extend their political influence beyond current Islamic borders, and, above all else, the very real doctrinal cleavages existing between the two religious bodies. There are no simple black and white approaches to Orthodox-Islamic relations, but both religions are recognized as being part and parcel of the Russian cultural environment; therefore, leaders in both groups must come to terms with the need for civilized relations.

Judaism--Homogenizing Disparate Elements

Judaism registers as the first of the three major religions born in the Middle East. It preceded Christianity by over fifteen centuries and Islam by over two thousand years. While all three find common ground in accepting Old Testament scriptures, differences of doctrines and practices cause deep and broad chasms between the groups. Historically, these have bred militant clashes since the first Christian century when Jews cried for the release of Barabbas, the convicted criminal, preferring the crucifixion of Jesus;[47] the antagonism was manifested later when Jews stoned the Christian disciple Stephen in

[47] Luke 23:17.

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Jerusalem,[48] and when Saul of Tarsus pursued Christians to drag them in chains before civil authorities for alleged infringements against Roman and Hebrews laws.[49] The tensions mounted during the succeeding centuries--the period of the church fathers--as Christianity fought to survive and then grew though faced with hostility by Jews. As time went on, and the Roman government pressed for the persecution of Christians, Jewish participation dwindled to individual and local acts. By this time, however, "an indelible memory of Jewish persecution of Christians became embedded in Christian consciousness."[50] Some analysts contend that Christians then responded in a *quid pro quo* fashion, making the conflict with Judaism an essential ideological ingredient in Christian self-definition. Indeed, Mark R. Cohen writes,

> To be a Christian was (1) to refute Judaism on the basis of Jewish Scripture; (2) to believe that the promises of the Old Testament no longer applied to the people of Israel; (3) to emphasize that the stubborn defiance of contemporary Jews stemmed from a congenital rebelliousness manifested already in the children of Israel's backsliding into idolatry and their scoffing at their own prophets; and (4) to scorn and vigorously combat Christians who elevated Judaism by observing its commandments and customs.[51]

Not everyone will concur with such a characterization of a Christian; however, sufficient evidence is available to support *adversus judeos* tendencies in the Christian camp. So, in the early Christian centuries, a veritable conflict mounted between Judaism and Christianity which set the stage for more friction and discord in times to come.

With the birth of Islam, Jews and Christians alike became targets for persecution and oppression. Rejecting the Prophet Mohammed whom Muslims proclaimed as superior

[48] Acts of the Apostles 7:1-59.
[49] *Ibid.*, 9:1-2.
[50] Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 19.
[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

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to both Moses and Jesus Christ and the final revelation of God, Jews and Christians became listed as "infidels" by Muslims.

Any careful analysis of international relations based on ethnic and religious affairs must acknowledge the Jews as the most persecuted of all people groups in all the annals of human history. This is particularly true of Jews living in Russia whose experiences constitute a microcosm of experiences of Jews in many parts of the world.

Origins of the Jewish-Orthodox Conflict

Clashes between Orthodox Christianity and Judaism became pronounced in Russia as early as the fifteenth century. The history of the conflict starts with the alleged conversion of two Orthodox priests of Novgorod who were converted by a Lithuanian Jew in the 1470s.[52] Keeping their conversion secret, the two men remained in the Orthodox Church, but carried out missionary work on behalf of Judaism. Kenneth Latourette comments,

> Through them Judaism spread and numbered among its adherents clergy who were high in church and state or who, remaining crypto-Jews, attained high office, one of them as primate of the Russian Church and another as Chancellor of the Grand Prince of Moscow. They did not go over completely to Judaism but showed the influence of that faith in various ways, some in opposition to the use of icons, and others in an interest in Jewish philosophy and science, especially in astrology and Kabbala. If, as seems usual, they adopted some of the dogmas of Judaism, they were not circumcised nor did they conform to the Jewish ritual.[53]

In 1487, the Archbishop of Novgorod convened a church council to address the question of Judaic proselytism and deal with the converted Jews, but the council refused to propose capital punishment. At the time, the Grand Duke Ivan III tended to favor the Judaizing movement as a deterrent to the influence of monasteries. His own daughter-in-

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[52] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *History of Christianity, vol. 1* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 619.
[53] *Ibid.*

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law became a convert to Judaism. But in 1503 another council convened which prescribed drastic treatment for the "heretics" and even death in some cases.[54] From that time on, Judaism faced the harshest of persecution of all religions in Russia.

Anti-Semitism and Orthodoxy

Unfortunately, in the history of Jewish-Christian relations, antagonism and conflict are far more prevalent than appreciation and concord One of the saddest commentaries on the Christian church over the past twenty centuries has been what is usually labeled anti-Semitism. This term "anti-Semitism" is inaccurately applied in public discourse to denote alienation toward Jews because the term "Semite" has a broader meaning. It includes many groups of the Middle East in addition to the Jews, even people who evidence contempt toward contemporary Jews owing to the Arab-Israeli conflict.[55] One might add that there is a growing spirit today in the West, particularly in United States, that reveals a greater suspicion toward non-Jewish Semites than toward the Jews themselves, a phenomenon springing forth from Middle East oil reserves and OPEC resolutions. Owing to the broader interpretation of anti-Semitism, the relationship of Gentiles toward Jews previously labeled anti-Semitic might better be identified as "anti-Israeli" if the objects of alien feelings are living inside the present state of Israel, or simply "anti-Jewish" for others.[56]

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[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 619-20.

[55] According to the biblical record, the Semites derived from Noah's son Shem (Genesis 9:18, 19; 10:21-31) and identify a diverse group of ancient peoples whose languages are related and who resided in the region called the Fertile Crescent that stretches from Babylon to Palestine.

[56] Until modern times, the descendants of Abraham were called "Israelites," after his son, Israel. The term "Jew" does not appear in sacred literature until the time of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah (II Kings 16:6; 25) who began his prophetic ministry in 626 B.C. Originally, the term denoted one belonging to the tribe of Judah, but by the time of Esther in the 5th Century B.C. the term comprehended all of the Hebrew race (Esther 2:5). When modern Israel became a state for Jews in May 1948, Jewish

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Russia reveals a history of harsh treatment toward Jews. Tsar Ivan IV (the Terrible) set a pattern of suspicion toward Jews during his reign from 1533 to 1584.. Zvi Gitelman writes,

> Jews were barred by law from living in the Russian empire until 1772, when Russia, Prussia and Austria divided Poland, and to their chagrin, found that a large Jewish population came with that territory. After the Jews were reluctantly admitted to the empire they were confined to the Pale of Settlement, the fifteen western provinces that had been Polish and Lithuanian, so that they could not `infect' the rest of the population.[57]

Catherine the Great (1762-96) created the pale of settlement to contain the Jews in 1791. According to Gitelman, "At the turn of the nineteenth century 97 percent of Jews lived in the Pale."[58] Nicholas I (1825-55) was "one of the most anti-Semitic Russian tsars."[59] During his reign, few Jews were admitted into higher education institutions. "Jews were barred from owning land.... They were also effectively excluded from heavy industries that began to develop in the nineteenth century. Jews were totally excluded from the civil service and the officer corp.[60]

Seventy years after Catherine the Great established the Pale of Settlements, Alexander II lightened the official oppression against the Jews and in 1861-62 allowed them to publish two Jewish weeklies and to be treated as equals with the Gentiles. However, the public and the news media thought the Tsar had gone too far. They "rejected the notion that Jews could become full partners in a Christian state and exercise

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inhabitants of the land became identified as "Israelis," but the term is often applied to Jews of the modern *Diaspora*.

[57] Zvi Gitelman, "Glasnost, Perestroika and AntiSemitism," in *Foreign Affairs* (Spring, 1991), p. 142.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] Jerry Goodman, "Judaism," in *Candle in the Wind*, p. 219.

[60] Gitelman, p. 142..

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authority over Christians ... both the radical and the conservative circles portrayed the Jews as corrupt, anti-Christian exploiters who strove to dominate others."[61]

Twenty years later, Alexander III ascended the throne. Under the influence of his anti-Jewish tutor, Constantine Pobedonostsev, the reactionary chief prosecutor of the Russian Orthodox Church, Alexander III reverted to the harsh treatment against the Jews that characterized tsars prior to his father's reign. Gitelman again writes,

> Waves of pogroms hit the Jewish settlements, especially in the 1880s after the assassination of Alexander II, around 1903-05 and again in 1918-21. The well-known slogan of the pogromists was 'Bei zhidov, spasai Rossii' (Beat the kikes, save Russia). It is little wonder that between 1881 and 1914 about two million Jews fled the Russian empire for western Europe and North America.[62]

Bernard K. Johnpoll writes about the same migration of Russian Jews, looking particularly into the emigration of Jews to America between 1881 to 1917 and concludes that the principal explanation rest on repressive laws against the Jews.[63] One such law was that Jews who adopted Christian Orthodoxy will remain classified as Jews regardless of their religious denomination at the time of their induction into military service, but the Christian classification could be recognized after the induction.[64] Another law prescribed, "The family of the Jew who has evaded the fulfillment of his military duties will have to pay a fine of 300 rubles. The amount of a reward paid to anyone arresting a Jew who has evaded military duty will be fixed by the minister of the interior."[65] In addition to the laws affecting Jews of military age, the Tsar levied special taxes on animals and birds

[61] Ze've Shifman, *The Evolution of Anti-Semitism* (Jerusalem: The Center for Conservative Judaism, 1994), p.71.
[62] Gitelman, p. 142.
[63] Barnard K. Johnpoll, "Why They Left; Russian-Jewish Mass Migration and Repressive Laws, 1881-1917," in *American Jewish Archives*, p. 17.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[65] *Ibid.*

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slaughtered kosher, on every pound of meat sold as kosher, and on houses, shops, warehouses, and factories rented or owned "by Jews."[66] This sort of discrimination pervaded every phase of Jewish life in Russia at the time. And it continued under Tsar Nicholas II.

Under the last of the tsars, Jews "hoped for the evolution of tsarist absolutism toward parliamentary democracy. Therefore, young Jews, in increasing numbers, turned to helping to prepare the revolution."[67] In response, Tsar Nicholas "gave money to the anti-Semitic organization, the Black Hundreds, and made no secret of his personal membership and that of the crown prince in the organization. The body cooperated with the government in directly fomenting pogroms during the years 1903-04."[68] This treatment explains to a large extent why "the American Jewish population grew 836 percent from 250,000 to 2,349,754. More than two-thirds of the growth of the American Jewish population was the result of immigration, primarily from the Russian Empire (from which approximately 1,120,000 of the 1,562,900 immigrants came)."[69]

So, long before the Soviets stepped to power in Russia, Jews were victims of innumerable injustices causing them to cultivate animosity toward the Christians who were represented most by the "cultural" ecclesiastical body of the Motherland, the Russian Orthodox Church. The surge of anti-Semitism which emerged in Europe prior to World War II and which became most pronounced by the German holocaust fostered even

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[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.
[67] Shifman, p. 72.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[69] Johnpoll, p. 17.

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greater suspicion in Jewish-Christian relations. Then, as the Soviets sought to consolidate power, the Jews again found themselves drifting further away from popular Russian favor.

By the mid-seventies, during the regime of Leonid Brezhnev, new restrictions on education and employment affecting the Jews led to their clamor for emigration rights. The appeal was sufficiently clear and intense that the government interpreted the "Jewish problem" as serious enough to draft measures for countering adverse criticism. Mikhail Heifets presents an analysis of Brezhnev's strategy in his essay "Russian Orthodox-Jewish Relations: a Literary Review."[70] Reporting on Brezhnev's actions, Heifets relates how the Kremlin leader and his cohorts resorted to employ anti-Semitic literature as propaganda to justify whatever injustices were alleged to have been perpetrated by them against the Jews. At the heart of such propaganda was the notion of nationalism and nationalism was intimately linked to Orthodoxy.

Russian nationalists have a history of blaming the Jews for adverse events. They now suggest "that the Bolshevik Revolution was not really a Russian revolution at all but rather the work of a multinational cabal led by Jews, mainly Trotsky, and, of course, it was based on the theory of another Jew, Marx."[71] Sentiments of this nature are not new. They were reinforced in 1979 within a movement called Pamyat which is characterized by extreme right-wing, anti-Jewish protests that promotes incipient fascism. At one time, Pamyat "members wore black T-shirts and military greatcoats, and carried a banner with the double eagle of the Romanov dynasty and zigzag bolts of lightening that evoked Nazi

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[70] Mikhail Heifets, "Russian-Orthodox Relations: A Literary Review," in *Religion in Communist Lands* (vol. 17, no. 1, Spring 1989), pp. 34-44.
[71] Hedrick Smith, *The New Russians* (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 405.

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swastikas."[72] One does not read or hear much about Pamyat in Russia today, but the spirit lives on in segments of Russian society.

> At this time in the Russian Orthodox Church, Pamyat attitudes prevail through the All-Russian Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods. In its third congress in St. Petersburg in 1992, the Union declared that the patriarch was a Judeo-Mason for having presented a memorandum to the New York rabbinical college declaring a common Judeo-Christian Old Testament heritage. At the fourth congress in the spring of 1993 it listed as perpetrators of a 'Judaic heresy' the most active and intellectually influential priests of Moscow, from 'leftist' such as Fr. Georgi Kochetkov, Fr. Vsevolod Chaplin and Fr. Vitali Borovoy to right wing monarchists like Fr. Vladimir Vorob'yev, the dean of the St. Tikhon Institute."[73]

Though this nationalistic body claims to represent all "Orthodox Brotherhoods," the Brotherhood of the Merciful Savior, the biggest and one of the most active brotherhoods in Russia, has withdrawn from the Union. It is the latter Brotherhood that runs St. Tikhon Theological Institute and is responsible for many other educational institutions and charitable endeavors. Other Brotherhoods have likewise left the Union. Canadian Professor Dimitry Pospielovsky commends Patriarch Aleksi for repeatedly condemning "racism and extreme forms of nationalism in statements for the press," but he faults the Orthodox leader for not taking disciplinary action "against the Union of Brotherhoods, nor against its chairman, Archimandrite Krill Sakharov of the Danilov Monastery, of which the patriarch is the nominal abbot."[74]

Pospielovsky laments the current status of Russian-Jewish relations, saying, "[T]he vast majority of Russian nationalists take no account of the tragedy of the Jewish people: instead of mutual sympathy between these two persecuted peoples, unhappily we

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[72] *Ibid.*, p. 406.
[73] Dimitri Pospielovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church: Its Problems and Its Theological Education," in *Religion, State and Society* (vol. 23, no 3, 1995), p. 253.
[74] *Ibid.*

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see more often mutual antipathy and distrust."[75] Even though the total Jewish population in the new Russia is estimated to be about two million,[76] the number is sufficiently large to cause pains and hurts in Orthodox circles.

Can the Gap be Narrowed?

The new wave of religious freedom seen in Russia conveys a sign of increased tolerance and perhaps inter-religious appreciation. All religious bodies suffered immensely under the iron hand of Soviet Marxists But as *perestroika* and *glasnost* grant freedom to the Orthodox to worship as they please, it likewise grants the same freedom to Jews. In reality, Jews in Moscow today have greater freedom to display their religion and heritage than at any time in years. In early April 1996, Moscow's largest synagogue became jammed with Jews who turned out to purchase the holiday staple before Passover from the first truly kosher bakery in at least fifty years. The bakery prepared sheet after sheet of Mitzoh for eager Jews from across the country, a sign of what many have called the rebirth of Jewish life in Russia.[77] Three Jewish rabbis walking through a park off of Tverskaya Prospect in September 1996 confirmed the new sense of religious freedom: "We conduct our meetings. We need not report to local officials, nor do we suspect suspicious people in our gatherings. Yes, we are free."[78] Apparently, the bomb that exploded at the door of the Moscow synagogue one week earlier did not affect their assessment of the new Russia.

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[75] Dimitri Pospielovsky, "Russkii natsionalizm, marksizm-leninizm I sud'by Russii," in *Grani* (no. 111-12), p. 423.

[76] Johnstone cites the population of Jews in Russia in 1990 as 0.04 of the total population. Large discrepancies result from intermarriage and belief systems. The figure used here is an extrapolation based on personal interviews with rabbis and other Jews living in Moscow, September-October 1996.

[77] From "Why This Mitzoh is Different From All Others: It's Moscow's," in *The New York Times* (April 4, 1996), sec A, p. 5, col. 1.

[78] Personal interview with the writer, Moscow, September 29, 1996.

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Another factor offers a glimmer of additional hope. James Billington reminds us, "Some of the reformers [in the Russian Orthodox Church] (like the late Alexander Men) have partly Jewish ancestries and they bring to Orthodoxy an Old Testament passion for justice and a vision of building the church's revival on the faith of a righteous remnant from the Soviet era rather than on the imperial conquests of a righteous Russia."[79] However, with a long history of cleavage between Orthodox and Jews in Russia, neither the introduction of democracy nor the fact of Jewish blood in some Orthodox reformers is likely to eradicate the suspicion and adverse attitudes which have marked the Orthodox-Judaism divide since the fourteenth century.

Serious differences remain to separate the two groups. As pointed out earlier, anti-Judaism continues to be strong in Russia and historical annals place much of the blame on leaders of the Orthodox Church. What is needed today to narrow the gap separating the two groups is a determined effort by Orthodox leaders to seek rapprochement with Russian Jews This requires a forthright acknowledgment that flagrant injustices were committed in the past against Jews, a genuine spirit of repentance for adverse attitudes and injustices leveled against Jews, and a relentless program to strive toward common ground, mutual appreciation, and the expansion of human rights.

The difficulty of the task of narrowing the gap between Orthodox and Jews is exacerbated by the fact that Marxism was far more successful in fostering agnosticism and even atheism among Jews than among Orthodox believers. Jewish émigrés reveal less interest in theistic world views than in naturalism, enlightenment, and materialism. So in

[79] James H. Billington, "Notes on the Current State of the Russian Orthodox Church" (an undated monograph received by this writer from the Library of Congress in July, 1995).

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modern Russia, Jews often identify themselves as "non-religious" peoples. The word is "often," but, according to Fr. Georgi Kochetkov, there are several Jews in Russia who have studied in Orthodox seminaries and are now priests in their own parishes; moreover, it is estimated that as many as 20 to 25 percent of the Jews presently living in Russia have converted to Orthodoxy.[80] Hopefully, whatever the true percentage of converts is, the conversion experience will be manifest through a deeper mutual understanding of Judaism and Orthodoxy.

Buddhism--A Contending Force for Peace

In June 1996, General Alexander Lebed, whom President Yeltsin had just appointed Chief of National Security, publicly declared that there are only three legitimate religions in Russia: Orthodoxy, Islam, and Buddhism Though the statement may be interpreted as a political ploy to win the support of the three major religious bodies, and especially the 886,200 Buddhists reported to be living inside Russian borders, any religious body with millions of devotees merits serious attention.[81] As the majority of Russian Muslims live in specific geographical regions of Russia, so do Russian Buddhists. The areas, identified later in the chapter, offer the Russian Orthodox Church at least a measure of religious competition.

Origins of Buddhism

Buddhism is primarily an eastern religion. Its founder, Siddhartha Gautama (c. 566-486 B.C.) was the son of a petty ruler of northeast India. While surrounded with

[80] This information was conveyed to the writer in a group interview with Fr. Kochetkov, a Jew of his parish, and a leader of the same church, David, who had moved to Moscow from Armenia.
[81] Johnstone (p. 467) places the percentage of Buddhists at 0.06 of the Russian population. See Braker of the following footnote for more detailed estimates.

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luxury, according to tradition, Gautama saw four sights: a diseased man, an old man, a dead man, and a wandering ascetic. These visions convinced him of the inevitability of suffering and death. As a result, Gautama left his wife and son to seek enlightenment and release from inevitable reincarnation. Failing to find enlightenment through asceticism, he discovered it under a tree at Bodh Gaya. Thus he became "the Buddha," meaning the enlightened one. At first, Buddhism was little more than a surrogate Hindu school, but later, with the establishment of Buddhist monasteries founded by the Buddha, it began to expand. In the third century B. C., King Asoka personally endorsed Buddhism and contributed to its spread into Tibet, China, and Japan and then into Southeast Asia where it now has its strongest centers.

Teachings of Buddhism

According to the Buddha, there are four "excellent truths" for human beings to fathom: all existence involves suffering; suffering is caused by desire; suffering can be ended if desire can be conquered; and there is an eight step path for conquering desire. This path consist of right views, intentions, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration. Earnest disciples of the Buddha are called upon to live according to an elaborate ritual of monastic discipline. Classical Buddhists seek to abide by the "*Tripitaka*" (three baskets) scriptures.

Buddhism has suffered schisms throughout the centuries since its founding. The most important division is between the *Theravada* and *Mahayana* Buddhists. The former are conservatives who are alleged by their opponents to offer salvation only to monks. They hold to an atheistic philosophy. The latter tend to look to the Buddha as a savior-

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god. Hans Braker, professor of international politics at the University of Trier, Germany, writes, "Buddhism was originally an ethical atheistic system that developed into a kind of theistic religion in its Mahayana Lamaistic expression."[82] Buddhism demands the denunciation of "worldly" life and action, which is translated into one's withdrawal from the world and the adoption of social and political passivity. Buddhism rejects the notion of a transcendent God, holds to the doctrine of reincarnation, and emphasizes meditation for all its members.

Buddhism in Russia

The Russian Buddhist community is classified as *Mahayana Lamaism.* Historically, it came to Russia from Tibet through Mongolia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Buddhist monks spread their message to three ethnic groups inside Russian borders: the Buryats, who live around Lake Baikal in Siberia; the Kalmyks, the only European Buddhist people, who live to the northwest of the Caspian Sea; and the Tuvians who live above northwest Mongolia. In 1728, Lamaism was recognized as a "permitted" religion in the Russian Empire. Since 1764, an elected leader with the title of the Bandido Chambo Lama has been the titular head of the group. Like the Dalai Lama of Tibet, the Bandido Chambo Lama is responsible for both the administration and spiritual guidance of his community. The Edict of Toleration of 1905 allowed for a greater development of Buddhism in Russia through the establishment of numerous new monasteries, and prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, the Bandido Chambo Lama was confirmed by the imperial governor as the official Buddhist leader.[83] In 1927, the Soviets defined Buddhism kindly

[82] Hans Braker, "Buddhism," in Eugene B. Shirley, Jr. and Michael Rowe, eds., *Candle in the Wind* (Washington, D. C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1989), p. 175.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

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as "a kind of declaration of the rights of mankind, and of the rights of the citizens in the East."[84] By 1928, Buddhist monasteries produced nearly 16,000 monks among the Buryats, 2,840 among the Kalmyks, and approximately 2,000 among the Tuvians.[85]

During the early years of Soviet domination, not only did the number of lamas (monks) increase markedly, but the educational system improved and even Komsomol (the Soviet Youth League) recruited many of its cadre from Buddhist monastery schools. The three regions occupied by Buryat, Kalmyk and Tuvian Buddhists became Autonomous Republics within Russia by Soviet decree. The tranquil 1920s for Russian Buddhists led to turbulent 1930s.

In 1929, Stalin issued the Law on Religious Associations which led government forces to nearly annihilate all Buddhist practices in the Soviet Union by the second half of the 1930s."[86] The Japanese expansion into China from 1937 to 1939 served as an excuse for persecution against Buddhists. But toward the end of World War II, two Buddhist monasteries were permitted to reopen in the Buryat region. These have been maintained since their reopening by state funds.

Interaction with the Orthodox Church

The exiled Dalai Lama of Tibet, the best known of modern Buddhists, went to the Soviet Union in September 1982 at which time he visited the Involginski Monastery, the center of the Buddhist community in Moscow. The visit was reported positively by the Tass news agency. Patriarch Pimen sponsored a banquet in honor of the Dalai Lama and expressed his gratitude for the Buddhist promotion of peace, love, and education. On the

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[84] *Ibid.*, p. 177.
[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 177-78.
[86] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

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same occasion, the Dalai Lama was welcomed as an official guest by the government's Council for Religious Affairs, the agency that regulated religious life.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Tuvians have declared Lamaistic Buddhism the state religion. In the Buryat Republic, a working group responsible for drafting a new Law on Religion and Religious Organizations submitted its recommendation to the local parliament in October 1996. The new draft acknowledges four traditional religions: Buddhism, Shamanism, Russian Orthodoxy and the Old Believer faith.

Interestingly, Evangelical-Baptist congregations and Seventh-Day Adventists are omitted from this list even though representative congregations of each denomination functioned under the Soviets. Some suspect the omissions are due to non-Evangelical religious pressure upon the working committee. Lyubov Abayeva, a member of the working committee and a representative of the Buryat Institute of Social Sciences, affirms that the draft seeks to "defend" traditional religions and "protect" young people from newer religions, adding, "It will not be a ban on foreign missionaries working in Buryatia."[87] Abayeva relates that "relations between different religious groups in the republic are good and tensions are mainly found within religious groups."[88]

Prospects for Orthodoxy

There is no reason to believe at this time that Buddhism constitutes a threat to the Russian Orthodox Church. The fact that Tuvians recognize Buddhism as the state religion does not preclude the functioning of Orthodox churches in the Republic, and since

[87] This information was sent by Keston News Service in a memorandum to this writer dated October 10, 1996.

[88] *Ibid.*

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Buddhism is known for its pacifism, contention is unlikely between the two religious bodies. Yet, if problems do emerge with the Orthodox from any of the three Buddhist republics, they will probably start in Tuva. In regard to the Buryat Republic, as long as the Orthodox Church is recognized among the traditional religions of the region and possesses influence in legislative matters, a well-grounded assumption, it is unlikely that a feud of any consequence will emerge there. What is true concerning the Tuvians and Buryats is expected to be the case with the Kalmyks. However, in a day when feverish sentiments are aroused in other autonomous republics within the Russian Federation, no predictions of peace and cordiality can be guaranteed.

Conclusion

Inter-faith conflicts will emerge. In concluding this chapter, the thoughts of three seasoned clergymen merit attention as they deal directly with what is going on at present between the Orthodox Church and the three religions in question.

Dutch theologian J. H. Bavinck stresses the common religious ground on which all people stand and the need for interconfessional dialogue in *The Church between Temple and Mosque*.[89] He advocates that the Christian Church has the duty to speak honestly and with dignity with people of other religions. He posits, "It is time for us to acknowledge frankly that our modern civilization, disintegrated though it may seem, is based upon certain presuppositions about man, his place in the world and his responsibility towards God."[90] Man is a recipient of a "common religious consciousness" imparted by God through His general revelation. The contemporary world is marked by integration and

[89] J. H. Bavinck, *The Church between Temple and* Mosque (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1981). Bavinck occupied the Chair of Missions at the Free University in Amsterdam from 1939 to 1965.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

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pluralism, implying that churches, like governments, need intelligent statesmen to converse with leaders of other denominations and religions so that mutual understanding can be appreciated and fostered and regional conflicts avoided. This does not mean, of course, that differences in belief will be dissolved.[91] It does mean that mankind learns to live peaceably with the differences. Finally, the common religious consciousness in humankind "brings us on our knees and makes us tremble before the greatness of Him who holds our life and breath in His hands."[92]

Bishop Seraphim Sigrist, a veteran missionary to Japan and now under the Moscow patriarchate, says, "I think the work in Russia represents an opportunity for Christians to explore 'coherence' between Orthodoxy and other religions, to collaborate, each adding to the other without loss and each receiving from the others. Even if only a small percentage of representatives from each confession takes strides to experience this 'coherence,' this can be the greatest event of missionary work in Russia and significant for the whole body of Christ."[93] In the same communiqué, Bishop Seraphim emphasizes the meaning such interconfessional collaboration can transmit to people outside churches, mosques, and temples. The focus would be on non-religious peoples and not on other religious bodies.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, Patriarchate Exarch for Western Europe, reminds scholars that the most effective way to win the favor of others is by letting them know how much they have in their own belief system and then asking them to tell you more about their faith. He relates the following drama. A Russian missionary to China

[91] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 193.
[93] Personal e-mail communique sent to the writer, October 2, 1996.

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fails in his endeavor to have conversions. The missionary is disappointed; he begins to shout at the idolaters and chides them fiercely. The Chinese kick him and beat him until he is bloody. The missionary seeks counsel. A superior suggests that the missionary should return to China, seek to learn from the Chinese, share what they have taught him, and express his gratitude. Then he can add, "You have so much, but you lack something which I want to give you as a gift." Thus, the missionary makes a friend and shares the Christian message.[94] With clergymen like Bishop Seraphim and Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church and offering such sound advice and exhibiting by their own lives the same virtues, whatever friction there is at present between the Russian Orthodox Church and these non-Christian religions will be minimized and rapprochement made more likely.

If analysts seek the official Orthodox Church policy toward Islam, they will discover a measure of cooperation and concord in areas where Islam is the dominant religion.[95] In areas where Buddhism is dominant, there is the same cooperation. The official position of the Russian Orthodox Church toward Buddhism reflects respect based on the Buddhist promotion of peace, love and education.[96] For Jews, religious freedom in the new Russia is greatly appreciated and is not thwarted by the Russian Church.[97] These religious bodies are of less concern to Russian Orthodox leaders than non-Orthodox denominations and other minority religious movements.

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[94] *Ibid.*

[95] This is evidenced in Central Asia where the Orthodox Church and Islamic leaders vowed to respect each other's beliefs and practices while uniting to contain non-Orthodox denominations and aberrant religious gvroups. See page 243.

[96] The treatment of Russian Orthodox leaders in Moscow toward the Dalai Lama in 1982 when he was welcomed by Patriarch Pimen reflects this respect. See pages 262-263.

[97] See page 257.

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CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH IN THE BALANCE

The preceding chapters present a composite picture of contending forces confronting the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church. This chapter presents the thesis that the future status and influence of the Russian Orthodox Church will be decided by the conviction, determination and energetic will of the hierarchical leadership to focus on the principal purpose of the Church. This chapter is titled "The Church in the Balance" based on the belief that Church leaders should seek to perform the work prescribed for the Church. There is an orbit of behavior, character and activity prescribed scripturally and expected socially for the Christian Church which is unique from that of all other civic institutions.[1] To the extent that the Russian Orthodox Church chooses to reach that orbit and moves exclusively within that orbit, its influence will expand and its ministries will have a positive effect not only on masses of Russians but on ethnic groups in global regions where Orthodoxy currently has little or no witness. In a very true sense, the contemporary Russian Church stands at the crossroads of becoming a flagship of ecclesial global Orthodoxy or a domestic institution eclipsed by social and political lures and by non-Orthodox Christian denominations, internal world religions, and Eastern and Western cults.

A visitor to Moscow can be favorably impressed by stepping inside some of the Orthodox churches of the capital city on a Sunday morning. For example, at mass in the

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[1] International Relations scholars debate whether Russian culture should be considered *sui generis* (unique) or if there are similarities that afford comparison with other cultures.

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Church of St. Michael located on Vernadskovo Prospect south of the Yugo-Zapadnaya metro station, one will find 125 to 150 people of all ages in worship and be pleased to see several young couples conversing congenially outside, children by their side, while they wait for the next mass to start. Or, at the newly constructed Kazan Cathedral, opposite St. Basil Cathedral on Red Square, a visitor will worship with 200 to 250 people crowded together, standing throughout the liturgy in exemplary reverence. Afterwards, he may be reminded by secular Muscovites outside that Red Square attracts tourists every day and even spectators become religious on Sundays. In between the cathedrals at either end of Red Square is Lenin's tomb, a symbol of the earlier dominant Soviet ideology. The visitor cannot help but be impressed with the amazing ideological transformation that has reshaped Russia since December 1991.

Four blocks north of Red Square, just off of Tverskaya Prospect, is the Church of the Resurrection (*Voskresenia*), with the typical ornate Orthodox architecture, icons, candles, and subdued lighting. While the number of worshipers at mass in this church scarcely approaches 50, there is a sense of devotion and earnestness conveyed by people who are present, albeit mostly older women. A contrasting congregation comprises worshipers in the Church of St. Cosmas and St. Damian, across from the Moscow City Government building, farther north on Tverskaya Prospect. Here one finds a surprising array of younger people, couples, middle age devotees, and some Western young people--single and married--fostering an atmosphere of collegiality quite distinct from the somber and relatively quiet mood that characterizes most other Orthodox churches. This is the church reputed to be composed of university students, progressive minded Russians, and ecumenically minded foreigners. There is another church like it at the junction of Boulevard Ring and Lubyanka Bolshaya Street, the Church of the

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Dormition, which has grown in membership from a few dozen devotees in 1990 to over 1500. Both of these progressive churches have introduced the Russian language into the liturgy, thereby, in stages, getting away from the customary Old Church Slavonic. More will be said later in this chapter of these churches.

The immediate impression one receives upon visiting the Orthodox churches cited above lends credence to published and personal reports of a spiritual revival sweeping across the Russian Federation. No one can fail to perceive the radical social and ecclesiastical changes introduced first by *perestroika* and *glasnost* and later by the official declaration of freedom of religion. These are the changes that give substance to what is now called the New Russia. There are 10,000 Orthodox Churches functioning at present in Russia.[2] This compares with about 4,500 Orthodox churches holding services in 1988.[3]

First impressions of any phenomenon, however, can be misleading. Chapters IV and V of this study reveal a social, economic, and political culture in contemporary Russia which offers immense competition to Christianity. It is a secular culture with values and morals distinct from Orthodoxy, a culture with trappings of historic materialism popularized by past Marxist regimes, and a culture indifferent to, if not rejecting, the cardinal tenets of the Orthodox Church. Regardless of what one observes in Russia's churches at this time, and regardless of numerous reports of a religious revival extending across the Federation, current data reveal that the surge of interest in church life that emerged so rapidly following the fall of Communism began to wane in 1993 and continues to slide (see "Bryansk" below). Orthodox and non-Orthodox religious leaders alike acknowledge this shift of interest.

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[2] Patrick Henry, "Church Backing, More Symbol Than Votes," in *Moscow Times* (May 16, 1996), p. 1.
[3] This calculation is extrapolated from data given by Sergei Ivanenko, "Tserkov' Pomozhet Armii," in *Tserkobnii vestnik* (November 8, 1994).

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To arrive at a proper perspective of religious life in Russia, and particularly of popular loyalty to Orthodoxy, analysts are asked to consider the total population of the country, which is 147.7 million,[4] and make a comparison with the total number of people either gathered for worship on a Sunday morning, or, as another measurement, how many participate in Holy Communion on a regular basis. By both counts, according to conservative analyses, less than two percent of Russians evidence a strong commitment to the Orthodox Church.[5] The vast majority of Russians, a ration of 49 to 1, choose "other things" than Orthodox worship on Sunday mornings.

Owing to the influence of contending forces facing the Russian Church at this time, and the trend by Russians to prioritize social and economic values and norms above religious convictions and practices, it is imperative that church leaders reassess their practices and programs to attract outsiders back to church. The purpose and distinction of the Church make it unique from all other social institutions. The rich heritage and testimony of survival inherent in the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church constitute formidable arguments for its leaders to plan and work aggressively to influence Russian society in the spiritual realm and in daily life.

Such influence is contingent upon a disposition by the Church to herald a clear confession of Orthodox doctrines and practices and to have that confession accompanied by a communal consciousness that brings priests and parishioners into closer *koinonia*. Otherwise, Orthodoxy in Russia will forfeit one of the most significant opportunities facing any religious

[4] See "Population Shrinks," *Moscow Times* (October 1, 1996), p. 4, col. 5.

[5] Yakob Krotov, a Moscow journalist, cited to this writer that only 1.5 percent of the total Russian population attended Services on Easter Sunday, 1996, according to an official count (September 30, 1996), and Fr. Georgi Kotchetkov stated to this writer that only two percent of the Russians regularly take Holy Communion (September 29, 1996). This data is repeated below under "Imaging and Reality."

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body since the early centuries of Christianity. Such a path requires that the Russian Church come to terms with unproductive or questionable attitudes and disciplinary mechanisms employed to muster greater influence with the government and to contain the influence and growth of other religious denominations, churches, and religions. The Russian Orthodox Church has much to lose in efforts to curtail the growth of other religious bodies. It has much to gain through a focused attention to its purpose and earnest fulfillment of its mission.

A Focused Direction for the Orthodox Church

When Jesus Christ founded the Church in Jerusalem, as described in chapter I of this study, the Church was to be comprised of people "called out" (εκ-κλησια) from a naturalistic and carnal world to acknowledge a transcendent and loving God, and then to become transmission belts of the divine message to inform others of that love. Stated in other words, the Church is designed to introduce people to God and God to people. Obviously, then, the word "Church" denotes more than an edifice with attractive ornamentation, architecture, bells or carillons; the Church encompasses human lives knit together through a common salvation experience and commissioned to propagate a divine redemptive ευαγγελιον.[6] A tragedy occurs whenever the purpose of an institution is lost, thwarted or forfeited. When Marxists under Soviet regimes converted church buildings to museums, publishing houses and theaters, they became effective in shifting human interests away from theological foundations and toward the insidious notion of viewing human beings as no more than means to societal ends, or more graphically, human skeletons and separate bones used to construct a wall.

[6] The Greek term denotes "good news" or "good tidings," the clearest pronouncement of which is found in I Corinthians 10: 1-4 in which the Apostle Paul mentions the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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Unfortunately, when one talks to university students in Moscow or St. Petersburg today, such propaganda obviously was effective.

Communism has now lost its stranglehold on Russian politics and people. Church buildings confiscated by Marxists are reverting to their original purpose; and priests and pastors enjoy the freedom to nurture and expand the *εκκλησια* of Christ. A plethora of statistics reveals Catholics, Baptists, Pentecostals and some Orthodox leaders are now maximizing their opportunities to establish an increasing number of Christian congregations. These corporal entities constitute salt and light in numerous communities where for more than two generations people have been trampled down by Soviet deception, oppression and propaganda.

Not all Orthodox churches follow the above model. A pervading plague weakening the Russian Church is the popular suspicion that highly placed persons within the Church hierarchy cannot be trusted because their records are tainted with compromise with previous Soviet regimes.[7] Such suspicions are supported by facts. Fr. Gleb Yakunin, a member of a committee assigned to investigate the number of Orthodox priests who compromised with Soviet or KGB authorities--even when the compromise could bring physical or familial hardship to fellow priests or parishioners--estimates that 20 percent of the priests inside the Russian Orthodox Church became secret agents for the government.[8] Of course human weaknesses or failures need not be final. Transformation is possible.

[7] Dimitry Pospielovsky perceives a carry-over of Communist connections with Orthodoxy today in that "communists ... have become advisors and even ghost writers for some bishops." See "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church," in *Religion, State and Society* (vol. 23, no 3, 1995), p. 252.
[8] Barbara von der Heydt, *Candles Behind the Wall* (Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans, 1993), p. 58.

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The frightening phenomenon of the contemporary Orthodox Church is its apparent weakness in being an intermediary between God and human beings, and thus have a genuine Christian church posture. Whereas the frailty is not terminal, the very percentage of Russians who regularly participate in Holy Communion to celebrate the vicarious death of Christ and be reminded of His return, or even who attend mass on a weekly basis, is so low that any objective analyst will give the Church only marginal commendation. When a university class, in which all but one student stated that they do not attend church services, was asked "Why not?", the students responded with answers that place the Russian Church on trial: "Why should we?", "The priests are not interested in us," "Priests are more interested in buildings than people," or "The church is only a museum with relics and pieces of art on the inside." When the class was dismissed, the student who acknowledged attending church regularly expressed identification with the Baptists.[9] Though one may argue that one class does not necessarily reflect a true sample of university population, any analyst who spends time with Russian university students will discover that only a small minority affirm interest in church. So, when university students who represent the future ruling class of Russia reject in mass the existing format of Orthodox liturgy and distrust its leaders, when worshipers within the church acknowledge their bewilderment concerning the true meaning of the Church, and when political leaders reflect support for the Russian Orthodox Church only for expedient and exploitative reasons, it is time for the Church to awaken to a crisis of large proportions which can well jeopardize the religious and spiritual influence of the Church upon the society. The church is to serve as the guide toward spiritual renewal, pointing men and women to God and

[9] Class discussions with the writer on September 30, 1996 in the International Linguistics Institute of Moscow.

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presenting God to the people. Orthodoxy is failing with this mission. In the words of Dimitry Pospielovsky, "The tragedy for the Church is that it has proved incapable of filling the spiritual vacuum in society, of quenching the thirst for spiritual sustenance among the population in general, which is indeed being swamped by the outpourings of astrologers, television healers, occultists and fundamentalists preachers."[10]

There remains a daunting task for the Russian Orthodox Church to reassess its mission and its goals to the end that it registers well in popular Russian minds as a veritable church and not merely as a social or political institution. Though opinion polls now place the Russian Church even above the army among trusted institutions in Russia, such a categorization should not be taken as denoting massive popular support for the Church. Prior to reading too much into such polls, three questions should be asked. One, in an atmosphere of distrust engendered by Marxist prevarications, are there any institutions in Russia meriting popular, unreserved trust? Two, in this transitional period of Russian life, which institutions other than the army (or other branches of the military) and the Russian Church emit signals of stability which weigh heavily on popular evaluations? Three, when a high percentage of Russians candidly voice their distrust toward current Orthodox priests, should analysts not conclude that whatever image of trust might be conveyed through opinion polls that all Russian institutions might be suspect? These questions are presented not to question the potential efficacy of the Church but rather as caveats to caution church leaders against unwarranted dependence upon popular laurels, and, more importantly, to classify the Russian Church as at the crossroads of

[10] Pospielovsky, p. 257.

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ecclesiastical stagnation, on the one hand, and as an authentic, vibrant, and effective confessional church, on the other.

An Interconfessional Declaration

In July 1994, representatives from several Christian confessions met in Moscow to promote the revival of inter-Christian cooperation in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Baltic countries. The theme of the conference was "Christian Faith and Human Enmity." The theme was chosen by organizers of the gathering in response not only to an awareness of religious conflicts destroying communities and costing human lives, but also affecting adversely the regional and global witness of the Christian Church. Toward the conclusion of the conference, participants expressed hope for a continuation of the discussion, and, accordingly, selected a "Continuation Committee" with three cochairmen--Orthodox Metropolitan Kirill, Catholic Archbishop Tadeuzs Kondrusiewicz, and Baptist Union President Peter Konavalchik--to promote subsequent meetings.

A second Interconfessional Conference convened in Minsk, Belarus from October 1-3, 1996 to address a Pauline theme, "Called to one hope in the bond of peace," a text taken from Ephesians 4:3-4. Emphasis was placed upon the reconciliation of branches and denominations within the Christian community and means by which the Christian Church can become more effective in a turbulent world. Delegates from seven branches of Christianity attended the Minsk Conference, including the Orthodox, Apostolic, Lutheran, Baptist, Evangelical, Adventist, and Catholic churches. Observers from other confessions were also present. In the keynote address of the Conference, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad rhetorically asked, "What makes the Christian mission of reconciliation particularly effective,

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special, and quite unique in the context of numerous peace efforts?" He replied, "Every follower of Christ knows the answer to this question. The source of the Church's peace-keeping calling and power is our Lord Himself Who is 'our peace'."[11] Metropolitan Kirill clearly alluded to the distinction between governmental and civic peace conferences, on the one hand, and what church conferences can offer, on the other. It is the difference between exclusive human brainstorming and an acknowledgment of God's will and power coupled with common reason.

The most striking feature emerging from the Conference, however, was the interconfessional unanimity regarding the purpose and mission of the Christian church. In the "Final Document," conference representatives declared "that mission is inherent in the nature of the Church and lies in preaching the gospel to the whole creation (Mk. 16:15)."[12] They then added,

> This mission is included in the plan for our salvation, 'For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but has eternal life' (Jn. 3:16). Mission, as the message of salvation accomplished by the Lord, is the fulfillment of the commandment given by our Savior to His disciples: 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you' (Mt. 28:19-20).[13]

Such a paragraph can be accepted as the Magna Carta of the Christian Church. The text was not drafted nor motivated by Western sources. It is New Testamental in origin and is the indigenous product of Eastern European Christians, rooted in the Middle East environment. It sets forth the uniqueness of the purpose and mission of the Church without

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[11] The address is attached to the "Final Document" of the Interconfessional Conference, October 1-3, 1996, Minsk, Belarus.
[12] "Final Document," Interconfessional Conference Report, edited by Kaarina Cherniak, p. 3.
[13] *Ibid.*

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equivocation. Christian strategists might hope that the truths of the paragraph become so imbedded in the theological and social fabric of the representatives that the latter's respective congregations will become energized to demonstrate its truths.

Throughout the Interconfessional Conference Report one finds references to the unique role of the Christian Church as regional and global crises surface, peace negotiations crumble, and threats of conflicts multiply. The strength of local, regional, and global churches hinges upon their disposition and readiness to endorse the pronouncements of the Interconfessional Conference of Minsk, 1996.

Imaging Versus Reality

Metropolitan Kirill affords considerable hope to the Russian Orthodox Church. He confronts the task of ushering the Church from an image of popular greatness to the reality of spiritual and moral influence. The contemporary Russian Church claims to have the support of the majority of the Russian population, but such a calculation fails to denote allegiance either to the church or to its doctrines. Though the "majority" designation conveys an image of ecclesiastical strength and popular endorsement of the Church as a social institution, a cursory examination of popular attitudes and practices conveys a contrary image, i. e., that the Russian Church does not yield much influence over Russian people. Repeatedly one hears people comparing the local church to community "soviets," or councils, under Marxist regimes. In fact, the previous soviets may have offered greater magnetism to Russian people than the Church because soviet meetings allowed for clapping, singing, relevant exhortation and the dispensing of meaningful information, albeit by selected personnel of the Communist Party.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Russians experienced a philosophical and

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psychological vacuum. Many turned to churches for their new identity, thus transferring their interest to an entity which hopefully could fill a void. Some Russians then went to church earnestly seeking to find God; others as inquirers, sojourners or simply spectators. The trend to return to church was of limited duration. Several church leaders concur that the trend of going to church peaked during 1993 and since then a measure of stagnation has set in.[14]

Russian Orthodox leaders, as stated in the introductory chapter, do not generally convey statistical data to analysts, to the government or to other churches. Some analysts conjecture that trustworthy data reflect fewer adherents than Church leaders like to acknowledge. So, to cite many figures associated with Russia is risky business; but, generally speaking, approximate figures are better than nothing.

As stated earlier, the total population of Russia in 1996 is 147.7 million people.[15] This figure is slightly lower than the population of 1990 cited by Patrick Johnstone which was 147.97 million.[16] Johnstone estimates that the population of Orthodox believers in Russia in 1990 was 55 percent of the total, or 81,383,500, which is an impressive figure.[17] It gives considerable support to the notion that Orthodoxy is part of Russian culture. But it does not give much more. Researchers interested in gathering information concerning the strength of the Russian Church ask at least three questions. First, does the high percentage of persons claiming to be Orthodox transfer into political power? Second, can the Orthodox Church expect a majority of the total population to vote for persons and precepts approved by its leaders? Third, realistically, what percentage of Russian people are devoutly Orthodox?

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[14] Personal interviews with George Law, Fr. Georgi Kochetkov, and Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewics.
[15] "Population Shrinks," *Moscow Times* (October 1, 1996), p. 4, col. 5.
[16] Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), p. 466.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 467.

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In reference to political power, the Church indeed has clout. Earlier in this study, it was pointed out that presidential front-runners for the June 1996 elections in Russia struck a harmonious note among themselves in that each one was seen either going to the Orthodox Church or speaking to the Patriarch at an opportune moment. In addition, it has been noted that civilian officials in several oblasts of the Russian Federation often appeal to Orthodox hierarchs for their opinions when non-Orthodox denominations or religions seek civilian permission either to conduct services in government-owned buildings or to acquire land on which to build new churches. There is no doubt that Orthodox leaders have considerable leverage with political personnel owing to the assumed constituency of the Church.

In regard to Church influence upon the electorate to follow patriarchate dispositions, there is only marginal support. Patrick Henry, staff writer of the *Moscow Times*, observes, "Analysts say that while the church is a powerful patriotic symbol which all parties must treat with respect, the church and its clergy probably do not have much to say on how Russians will vote...."[18] Sergei Filatov, a professor at Moscow State University, compares "the Russian Church's role in politics to that of a national flag, respected but too ambiguous to have any direct effect."[19] He explains the metaphor in the following way: "If the flag were somehow to speak up and say new taxes were necessary, people would say the flag ought to just fly away and not meddle in politics. But when the flag is ripped down and stamped on, everyone is offended."[20] Yes, the Orthodox Church is indeed a part of Russian culture but popular allegiance to and confidence in the Church is minimal. Alexander Morozov, an editor of the interconfessional news agency Metafrazis, wrote in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* that "Russia's 10,000

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[18] Henry, p. 1.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*

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Orthodox parishes have an average of not more than 50 to 100 parishioners each." He says, "the number of believers so devout that their religious convictions would dictate their choice at the polls is 'very insignificant'."[21] So the vast majority of Russians do not follow the dictates of the Orthodox hierarchy.

The question concerning the devotion of Russian people to Orthodox doctrines is as tenuous as the expectation of Russians to follow patriarchate political choices. This question transcends cultural adaptation. Nearly half a century ago, H. Richard Niebuhr made a distinction between what he termed "the Christ of Culture" and "Christ above Culture."[22] What he wrote then is relevant to what one observes in Russia today. Contemporary scholars differentiate between trends in modern Russian Orthodoxy and trends in Russian Protestantism. Culture weighs heavily on the psyche of Russian people. It is fitting to affirm that the ship of Russian Orthodoxy navigates principally by the currents of East Slavic culture; but the sails of Protestantism in Russia are not affected so much by ethnic and nationalistic currents as by a conviction that culture is secondary to the Christ of the Church.

A vast chasm can separate cultural allegiance from spiritual convictions. One is reminded of the Nazis of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s. Culturally, most of them identified themselves with Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, but the holocaust stemmed from "cultural" Christians. The holocaust of Nazi Germany remains a glaring fact in Israeli minds and is identified by Jews as being of Christian origin. In defense, Christians appeal to the stark distinction between what one might call "cultural Christianity" and "authentic Christianity." As labels do not necessarily convey the nature or composition of a receptacle's content, neither

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[21] *Ibid.*

[22] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), chapters 3 and 4.

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does the label of Orthodoxy in Russia necessarily denote Christian character and devotion. For example, a mother in Moscow acknowledges she is the only member of the family--with a husband and two sons--who attends the local Orthodox Church of St. Michael the Archangel. When questioned as to why she goes to church, the mother responded, "It isn't because I believe in God but because my grandparents did and I go there to remember them."[23] A teacher in the International Linguistic Institute of Moscow said, "I go to church before leaving on a long trip and when I return; otherwise, I go there only for family rituals such a marriages and funerals."[24] The reality, then, of popular allegiance to the Russian Church even by people who attend Orthodox liturgy is at best tenuous. But another fact places the Russian Church in more uncertain straits.

Yakob Krotov, a former Orthodox priest, an oft-quoted journalist, scholar of church history, and consultant to the Religious Committee of the Russian Duma, declares,

> The Orthodox Church tends to inflate the number of attendees in their parishes, fewer Russians actually attend church liturgy than reports indicate. For instance, on Easter Sunday of 1996 there were approximately 150,000 people who attended Orthodox churches of metropolitan Moscow with a population of 10 million inhabitants. Moscow militia assigned to Orthodox churches on Easter Sunday counted all parishioners entering the churches. That means that only 1.5 percent of the total population of Moscow attended Orthodox churches on their most important day of the year.[25]

Furthermore, Krotov suggests, "only between 10 and 15 percent of the people who attend church understand its doctrines."[26]

[23] Personal interview, Moscow, September 28, 1996.
[24] Personal interview at the International Linguistic Institute, Moscow, September 30, 1996.
[25] Personal interview, Moscow, September 25, 1996. One should realize that militia may lack precision in counting parishioners due to their own indifference, to various entrances of churches, or to other factors.
[26] *Ibid.*

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When these statements were cited to Fr. Georgi Kochetkov, priest of the Orthodox Church of the Dormition in Moscow, he responded, "Well, we know that only about two percent of the Russian people take Holy Communion, a measurement I use to identify true believers."[27] For a church that casts an image of wide acclaim for its doctrines and ministry, such figures betray that image. There is no wonder, then, that Russian Church leaders are concerned over the growth of Protestant and Catholic churches.

Observations in the Bryansk Oblast[28]

The Bryansk oblast is located in the central part of the East European plain. It borders on Ukraine and Belarus. The demographic composition offers a parallel to what is found in much of the Russian Federation, and thus offers meaning to this study. The oblast covers the total area of 34,900 square kilometers within which are 15 cities and towns. The biggest cities are Bryansk (Bezhitsa included), Klintsy, Novozybkov, and Dyat'kovo. The population is 1,421,600 including 547,500 children and adolescents under 17 and 874,100 adults. Ninety-six percent of the oblast population is comprised of ethnic Russians. From a sociological survey conducted in the Bryansk oblast between April and August 1995, one learns much concerning Christian churches and their adherents. The statistical data in this report were collected from a portion of the churches: 39 Protestant and six Orthodox churches completed the questionnaire. There is no record of a Catholic church in the region. Table 4 presents the number of Christian churches by branches and denominations in the oblast; it also reveals the number of Orthodox churches to be 2.25 times higher than that of Protestant churches.

[27] Personal interview with the writer at the Church of the Domition, Moscow, September 30, 1996.
[28] Information on Bryansk in this study is from a statistical survey conducted by the Association for Spiritual Renewal in Moscow (Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries in the United States), published in 1996.

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Table 4. Christian Churches in the Bryansk Oblast

-Orthodox	
-Russian Orthodox	134
-Old Believers	3
-Total Number of Orthodox Churches	**137**
-Protestant	
-Baptists	50
-Pentecostal	10
-Seventh-Day Adventists	1
-Total Number of Protestant Churches	**61**
-Total Number of Churches	**198**

Source: Bryansk Survey, 1992-1995, Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow, published in 1996.

From churches responding to the survey questionnaire, broken down according to urban or rural locations and Christian branches of churches, the following data are given regarding church membership, starting with January 1, 1992 and ending June 30, 1995:

Table 5: Growth in Church Membership in the Bryansk Oblast (January 1, 1992-June 30, 1995):

	1992	**1993**	**1994**	**1995 (6 mos,)**
Urban	2979	3269	3479	3673
Growth over 3.5 years - 23.3%				
Rural	716	759	800	846
Growth over 3.5 years - 18.2%				
Orthodox Church	400	534	616	661
Growth over 3.5 years - 65.2%				
Protestant Church	3295	3494	3663	3858
Growth over 3.5 years - 17.1%				
TOTAL	3895	4028	4279	4519

Source: Bryansk Survey, 1992-1995, Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow.

Analysis of the data concerning church membership reveals that during the three and a half year period in question, Orthodox churches grew 3.8 times more than Protestant churches. (All the Orthodox churches responding were urban churches, and therefore the comparison in growth is made with urban Protestant churches.) Thus, if during every year each urban

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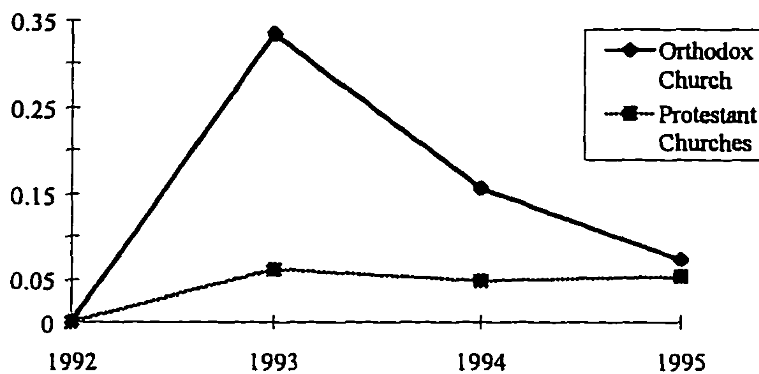
Protestant church gained 9 members, the comparable Orthodox church added more than 30. Protestants churches grew most from 1992-1993, then the growth pattern tapered off slightly, rising again from 1994-1995. Figure 6 reveals that the Orthodox Church grew most rapidly from 1992 to 1993; it also reveals that the growth pattern declined rapidly between 1993 and June of 1995 approaching that of Protestant churches.

Figure 6: Orthodox and Protestant Church Growth Ratios in Bryansk



Source: Based on data of Table 5; Bryansk Survey, Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow.

Baptisms performed in Orthodox Churches offer a significant contrast to that of Protestant Churches, as evidenced by Table 6 and Figure 7. The difference is enhanced by the fact that the survey included only six Orthodox Churches but 21 Protestant churches.

Table 6: Orthodox and Protestant Baptisms in the Bryansk Oblast

	1992	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**
Orthodox Baptisms	1462	1856	2013	2280
Protestant (Urban) Baptisms	181	210	210	149

Source: Bryansk Survey, 1992-1995, Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow.

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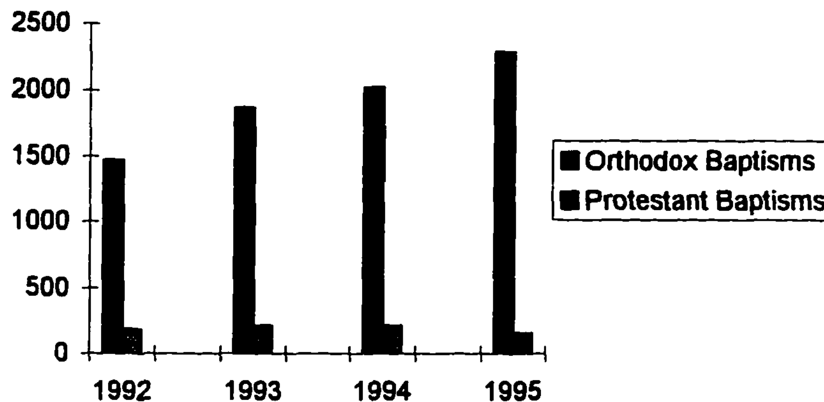
Figure7: Orthodox and Protestant Baptisms in the Bryansk Oblast



Source: Based on data of Table 6, Bryansk Survey, 1992-1995, Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow.

A total of 7,611 people were baptized in the six responding Orthodox churches of the Bryansk oblast during the period of three and a half years, but Orthodox Churches report only 661 Church members. Therefore, Orthodox church members comprise only 8.7 percent of the total number of people baptized. It is reasonable to propose that the nearly 7,000 baptized people who did not become church members represent Russians who are "culturally" Orthodox but whose identification with Orthodox beliefs and practices is nebulous or nonexistent. This also applies to parents of baptized children. These data corroborate what one often hears from people on the street: "Baptisms are fashionable today, just as marriages in churches are popular." As a result, the Orthodox Church faces the dual dilemma of serving as a revolving door for mere ritualists, and the reality of poor attendance in Orthodox services.

In contrast, since the Protestant church membership is 3858 as seen in Table 5, the people baptized during the three and a half year period in question constitute 23.8%, or 919, of the total membership of Protestant churches included in the questionnaire. So, analysts can conclude that the 3.5 year period was fruitful for most Protestant churches in that one out of

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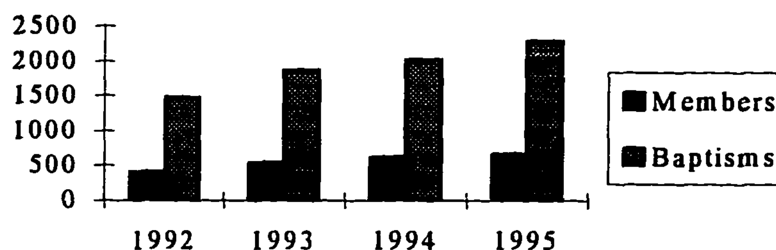
every four of the current members joined the church during this time. Figures 8 and 9 reveal the difference between the two confessions.

Figure 8. Orthodox Baptisms and Membership



Source: Based on data of Tables 5 and 6, Bryansk Survey, Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow.

Figure 9. Protestant Baptisms and Membership

Source: Based on data of Tables 5 and 6, Bryansk Survey, Association for Spritual Renewal, Moscow.

These are important data, but as analysts endeavor to make a comparison between the number of baptisms in Orthodox churches and that of Protestants, they should be conscious of traditions in each confession. In Orthodox churches, parents are encouraged to bring their infants to the church for baptism while also baptizing adult converts; in most Protestant churches of Russia an emphasis is placed upon adult baptism, with some practicing infant baptism, and the ordinance (or sacrament) of baptism is associated with a personal decision to believe in and be obedient to Jesus Christ. This distinction does not alter analytical interpretations of data which suggest that a high percentage of Orthodox adherents cling to

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cultural symbols and traditions of the Church while the majority of Protestants identify more with the Christian message while appreciating the richness of Russian culture.

George Law, director of the Association for Spiritual Renewal which conducted the survey of churches in Bryansk, cautions scholars who speak very enthusiastically about a spiritual revival within the Russian Orthodox Church. While not denying that Russians have returned to the Russian Church in large numbers and that now it is culturally proper to have babies baptized and couples married in the Church, Law perceives two weaknesses in contemporary Orthodoxy that can militate against a genuine spiritual awakening in Russia: one, the sacrament of baptism is performed without catechetical instruction regarding its meaning and without requiring parental or personal belief in God; two, some priests are satisfied to officiate in church liturgy but lack the heart for enhancing the moral and spiritual character of Russian people. Law adds, "The Church could have such a strong influence upon the whole of Russian society if its top leaders were not carry-overs from Soviet times."[29] He concurs with other analysts who suggest that popular interest in the church peaked in the fall of 1993 and that "Church leaders find it more difficult now to fill the churches."[30] Yet some Protestant churches continue to grow.

The Bryansk oblast survey touches upon another realm of ecclesiology which distinguishes Protestant churches from the Orthodox. Part of the survey treats "church activities" as cited by the clergy. Respondents were asked to prioritize current church activities in their respective parishes. The survey reveals that Protestant churches focus on preaching the Gospel, prayer services, the distribution of Christian literature and broad social assistance.

[29] Personal interview, September 23, 1996.
[30] *Ibid.*

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Orthodox respondents cited funerals, weddings, baptisms and charity for people inside the church as primary activities. These differences may account for the variance in church attendance between Protestant and Orthodox churches.

The survey indicates that there are 2.25 more Orthodox churches in the Bryansk oblast than Protestant churches, but on any one Sunday "there are twice as many Protestants in church than Orthodox."[31] How do analysts explain what seems to be a paradox? One can observe a distinction between cultural Christianity, illustrated by Russian Orthodoxy and cited above, and the emphasis on soteriology and personal discipleship, illustrated by Russian Protestants. This distinction, however, can distort reality, for within the ranks of Russian Orthodoxy there are priests and parishioners who place Christ above culture, who desire a stronger confession by the Church of the Christian message, who want the Church to do "excavation work," in Kurayev's words cited in chapter II, and who themselves currently are establishing a spiritual pace for other clergy and parishioners to follow.

Contemporary Reformers in Russian Orthodoxy[32]

Several authors have reported on the heroic and sacrificial lives of Orthodox leaders who constitute a remnant of veritable saints motivated to raise the Russian Church to a plateau of spiritual influence that will permeate all echelons of Russian society.[33] Barbara von der Heydt goes so far as to suggest that such men also played a significant role in the final collapse

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[31] *Ibid.*

[32] Innovative priests in the Russian Orthodox Church prefer not to be labeled "reformers."

[33] Nathaniel Davis, *A long Walk to Church* (Boulder: Westview, 1995); Eugene B. Shirley, Jr. and Michael Rowe, eds., *Candle in the Wind* (Washington, D. C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center 1989), Kent Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1991). Barbara von der Heydt, in *Candles Behind the Wall* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1993. Dimitry Pospielovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church," in *Religion, State and Society* (vol. 23, no 3, 1995), pp. 249-262.

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of the Soviet Union and Michael Bourdeaux of Keston Institute tends to agree with her.[34] All agree that the Russian Church needs people like these priests and leaders to meet the spiritual and moral vacuum of the New Russia.

At the foundation of the reform movement in the Russian Orthodox Church is the name of Fr. Alexander Men whose self-giving character, indefatigable Christian testimony and ten authored books now serve as motivating forces to a growing number of scholars, writers, professionals and people of all ages to be authentic Christians. Followers of Men afford much hope to people who crave a strong spiritual stance by the Orthodox Church for the welfare of Russian people and for a positive witness to other peoples of the world.

Alexander Men was a dynamic Russian Orthodox priest, apologist, artist, guitar player, singer and friend of Aleksandr Solzhenitzyn and Andrei Sakharov. Following ordination, Men was assigned to a church south of Moscow. His intellect and spiritual life attracted the attention of many Russians to the consternation of both state and church authorities. The local church under Men's leadership "became transformed from a church of *babushkas* (grandmothers) to a dynamic congregation of young people, scholars and writers."[35] He founded the Russian Orthodox Open University of Moscow in 1990 for the purpose of instructing and nurturing dedicated Christian youth as they faced opportunities in the rapidly changing Russian state. He established a standard for Orthodox clergy and Russian laity of sacrifice, service and love which bears fruit today in the Russian Church. But shortly after founding the Open University and just one day after he had given his first lecture in the University, Men was murdered. On the morning of September 9, 1990 as he walked to the

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[34] Von der Heydt. See "Forward.".
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

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train station where he anticipated taking a train to Novaya Derevnaya to preach, he was savagely attacked by unknown assailants and slain with an axe. While police investigators attributed the death to thieves, Men's briefcase contained nothing thieves would have coveted, only sermon notes, papers and a pencil, reading glasses and a few rubles. Two theories concerning his death are offered: having a Jewish father, Men may have been the victim of anti-Semites within the Orthodox Church; or, he may have been killed by KGB agents. But the death of Alexander Men, like that of numerous Russian Christians, serves justly as a "candle" today, lighting the way for Christian disciples to follow in his steps. Owing to reformation activities now evident in Russia by disciples of Alexander Men, one is reminded of Tertullian's dictum, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Three clergymen greatly influenced by Alexander Men are Gleb Yakunin, Alexander Borisov and Georgi Kochetkov. These are the men who constitute some of the leading reformers inside the Russian Orthodox Church today but many of their activities are viewed as suspect by their superiors.

The man best known in the West for his outspoken criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church is Fr. Gleb Yakunin. Yakunin and Alexander Men met while in Siberia and rapidly became friends. It was through Men that Yakunin regained his Christian faith which he had abandoned as a child "to the torrent of atheistic propaganda."[36] He became popular in 1974 when he and Lev Regelson, a physicist, sent a letter to the organizers of the World Council of Churches (WCC) General Assembly gathering in Nairobi, Kenya in which they requested that religious persecution be given prominence on the Assembly agenda . They wrote, "the matter

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

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of religious persecution has failed to take its due place--although it ought to become the central theme of Christian ecumenism" [37] Two days before the end of the Assembly, with the persuasion of the Swiss delegation, the WCC affirmed its concern "about restrictions to religious liberty, particularly in the USSR."[38] Though Soviet delegates subsequently blocked any strong statement of protest by the WCC against persecution in the former Soviet Union, from the time the letter from Yakunin and Regelson was submitted to the WCC leadership, both men became targets of religious oppression.

In his excellent work, *The Soviet Union on the Brink*, Kent Hill cites Yakunin as "the catalyst" behind the founding of the Christian Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Religious Believers in 1979.[39] This Committee was later silenced by a wave of arrests. On November 1, Yakunin himself was arrested; Regelson was taken into custody on Christmas Day. While Regelson yielded to pressure renouncing his activities, Yakunin adamantly refused. Eventually Yakunin was sentenced to five years in prison and five years in exile for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. Returning from exile, Yakunin continued to press for human rights in the Soviet Union in addition to sharing his conviction of the Christian Gospel. So moved was he of necessary changes by government personnel toward dissidents that he decided to enter the political arena.

In October 1993, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church decreed that clergy of all ranks were forbidden to run for political office at both the federal and local levels and that if they chose to do so such priests would be defrocked. Yakunin continued to run for parliament. "The patriarch personally tried to convince him to give up his parliamentary career

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[37] Hill, p. 142.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

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and as a compromise said that he would allow him to work in the executive branch of the government,"[40] Determined that he could accomplish more in the parliament than in a bureaucratic seat of government, Yakunin resisted the Patriarch's offer. He succeeded in his bid for the seat in the Russian Parliament. But Yakunin was not defrocked. According to the 1917-18 Local Council of clergy and laity meeting in Moscow, it was decreed that "clergy may engage in political and state activities as citizens....Moreover, a priest can be defrocked only for heresy, blasphemy or gross immorality."[41] In December 1994 Yakunin was defrocked. Though no longer a member of parliament, he continues to press for religious liberty and is currently involved in the redaction of the freedom of conscience bill before the Duma.

Other contemporary reformers among Russian Orthodox clergy are Alexander Borisov and Georgi Kochetkov. They have much in common. Both are former disciples of Alexander Men. Both are currently priests of parishes inside Moscow. Both run higher educational schools, large Sunday schools for children and catechetical institutes for the preparation of adults for baptism and church membership. Both engage in charity work for people of their own communities as well as across Moscow and elsewhere. The ministry of both priests is tremendously successful, revealing significant numerical growth through innovative programs and liturgy. Both use contemporary spoken Russian for Scripture readings in their churches instead of the largely incomprehensible Church Slavonic (the patriarch forbids them from using Russian in other portions of the liturgy). And both are sufficiently bold to introduce meaningful changes into their respective ministries and liturgies while believing that other church confessions can also be thoroughly Christian and biblically based.

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[40] Pospielovsky, p. 252.
[41] *Ibid.*

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As pastor of the Church of the Dormition on the Boulevard Ring on the north side of Moscow, Fr. Kochetkov "has produced dozens of competent theologians ready for ordination. Yet the patriarch refuses to ordain any of them, while ordaining hundreds each year who have no theological education or at the most a two-year junior seminary training after secondary school."[42] Kochetkov has come under particular attack from the Union of Brotherhoods, a group of Orthodox fanatics leveling charges of crime against priests who introduce changes into Orthodox services. Not only are they against any use of Russian in the liturgy, they dislike Kochetkov's practice of baptizing adults only at Easter and Pentecost and only after at least a year of preparation at his catechetical institute. Pospielovsky states that Fr. Kochetkov baptizes over 100 adults each year.[43]

Fr. Alexander Borisov leads the Church of St. Cosmas and St. Damian mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. In addition to conducting two masses on Sundays, Fr. Borisov opens the church for a praise and preaching service on Tuesday evenings in which even lay persons, men and women, are asked to preach. On Wednesday evenings four groups of catechumens, totaling in excess of 200, are lectured by lay people on the doctrines of Orthodoxy. Such sessions also afford time for individuals to ask questions and discuss problems they may have with Orthodoxy The Wednesday evening instruction and discussions contribute to the strength and greater effectiveness of potential church members. Fr. Borisov is usually close by to assist in the discussions.

One is impressed with the composition of people in the catechumen classes and the intensity of interest evidenced by all in the classes. Simultaneously, while classes are conducted

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 255.
[43] *Ibid.*

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for catechumens, there is a group of 15 to 25 members in another section of the church in prayer for all the people who are present in the other classes as well as for the special opportunities and needs of the church family. In addition to services inside the church, Fr. Borisov offers a summer camp for children and youth of the church to foster greater fellowship and nurture them in Orthodoxy. The Church of St. Cosmas and St. Damian offers a model for other Orthodox churches. It is a confessional church, a communal church, and a Christ-honoring Church. Hopefully, it serves as a microcosm of the future Russian Orthodox Church which today is positioned at the crossroads of vibrant Christianity or mere cultural affiliation.

In analyzing the churches led by Frs. Kochetkov and Borisov, one discovers several similarities that contribute to church growth. First, there is a notable conviction by both men of the truth and urgency of transmitting (confessing) the Christian message to the people. Catechism classes attest to their commitment to such a goal. Second, there is a warmth of friendship and trust between the priests and parishioners. One observes this by remaining after a mass and noticing the appreciative conversations going on between the clergy and the people. While communion with Christ is stressed during the liturgy, the priests are not reluctant to share personal communion with the people when the liturgy concludes. Third, one finds people from other Christian denominations who feel "at home" with Orthodoxy. They sense a welcome within the walls of these churches because there is no alienation expressed toward other Christian churches; rather one senses a real ecumenical atmosphere. Fourth, there is a clear desire to minister to the people in a language they can understand, acknowledging the difficulty of worship when what is said is foreign to one's comprehension. Fifth, there is a missionary spirit communicated to parishioners who are expected to go out from the church as

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veritable disciples of Jesus Christ. Sixth, there is a sense of spiritual expectation evidenced by parishioners as they talk with strangers about their beliefs, on the one hand, and their vital interest in having Orthodoxy penetrate contemporary Russian culture and society, on the other. Seventh, the reformers reveal an ability to reach Russian intellectuals who were formerly disenchanted with Orthodoxy and university students who grapple with relativism, secular philosophies, and Eastern mysticism. Finally, in Russia's reforming parishes, like many non-Orthodox churches, the ratio of baptisms to members is much closer than in rank and file Orthodox churches. Baptism is more than a social or cultural ritual; it is sacrament with a depth of meaning which should not be taken lightly. In sum, many worshipers in the churches mentioned above discover spiritual freshness not evidenced as clearly in non-reforming Orthodox--or even Protestant--churches.

Reformers inside the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church express hope for the future of the Church, but many of them suggest that only a significant Reformation like that which swept over Western Europe in the sixteenth century can enable the Church to avoid the abyss into which "state churches" around the world have drowned themselves in past centuries and recent decades. In a dialogue on "God and Business" presented by Alexander Zaichenko, former economic advisor to Mikhail Gorbachev, and Andrei Kurayev, dean in the Russian Orthodox Open University, the Orthodox Church was given two choices: "either to seek a 'progressive experience' and modernize its faith, or the renewing church will leave it in the market background."[44] Their reference was to the churches led by the reformers cited in this section and others like them.

[44] "Business and God," in *Literatura gazetta* (16, 21. IV.93).

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In Search of a Church Model

Are the so-called reforming Orthodox churches adopting a Western model of ecclesiastical liturgy and practice? Indeed not. Barbara von der Heydt candidly reveals a religious phenomenon of the twentieth century that should frighten Russian clergymen. She writes, "The twentieth century has taken the cultural and spiritual heritage of the West, lived off its capital, and handed it back depleted. The fruits have been consumed, the branches snipped, the roots long forgotten."[45] She alludes to the richness of the Western heritage that is characterized by firm convictions about a transcendent God coupled with a cultural premium for moral and spiritual values, but she perceives Western culture today is laden with concepts of free-marketing, liberal democracy, and utopian materialistic goals.

The Russian Orthodox Church, therefore, must develop its own ecclesiastical model to meet the moral and spiritual needs of Russia. Some priests prefer a model cast from pre-Revolutionary structures; but reformers reject such a notion, suggesting that the state of the Russian Church prior to the Bolshevik Revolution cannot escape partial blame for the success of the Bolshevik Revolution or for what transpired over the past 70 years. The state of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church desperately needs fresh nurturing not experienced by Russians at the time Lenin took control of government. Whatever the nature of the model, there is one priority that must not be overlooked. It is given by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, former Exarch for Western Europe in the Moscow patriarchate, who says, "It is the task of the Church to become such a society of people which will be a paragon for the non-Christian society, so that people will build themselves in a different way."[46]

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[45] Von der Heydt, p. 253.
[46] Printed from an interview with Nataliya Rodomanov of *Metafrasis*, June 26, 1996.

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The Primacy of Spiritual Renewal

There is a special task before the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church to rebuild the moral fiber and spiritual life of Russia. No other institution in Russia has as great an opportunity in this endeavor as does the Russian Church owing to its role in Russian culture, its witness of survival, and its freedom at this time. There are clusters of people in the upper echelons of society who clearly sense Russia's moral and spiritual needs. Constructing a foundation for morality in Russia constitutes an imperative for the Church. Only as the Church elevates the moral standards of the population will it possibly continue to enjoy a respectable status and an effective ministry. The basic requirement before church leaders is to carry out the purpose the church and not to be satisfied with it being just another institution within Russian society. Just as a priest or pastor has the distinct role of representing God before the people and the people before God, so should the Church discharge the same role.

As Russia is struggling to adopt to political democracy, a system of government that allows for divergent beliefs and ideologies, some favorable to the health of the nation and others destructive of a nation's highest values and reputable morals, it is incumbent on the Russian Church to set a pace for purity of heart, integrity of motivation, and, above all, an earnest devotion to and service for God.

When university students who represent the future ruling class of Russia in mass reject the existing *modus operandi* of Russian Orthodoxy and distrust its leaders, when worshippers within the Church acknowledge their bewilderment concerning the true meaning of the Church, and when political leaders side with the Russian Orthodox Church primarily for selfish reasons, it is time for the Church to serve notice to the whole of Russian society that spiritual renewal is

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paramount. The Russian Church must do everything possible to shed the image of its cathedrals and church buildings being museums of art and architecture, warehouses for ancient relics, mere meeting halls where priests pontificate and parishioners become spectators, or substitutes for the "soviets" of previous political regimes.

The sufferings which many Russians endured for their faith under the Soviet regime has had a purifying effect not only upon reformers in the priesthood but also upon their fellow believers. The fruits they have borne are not the products of superficial or shallow Christianity. They come from the hearts and lives of people "tried by fire." As von der Heydt writes, "Crystallized conviction and courage enabled those who resisted Communism to burst free in spirit."[47] When one talks with Christians who have suffered, it becomes evident that they are not driven by revenge; they reveal remarkable freedom by their willingness to forgive their oppressors. Concerning the persecuted, von der Heydt writes, "They have responded to the circumstances not with despair, but with thankfulness to their Creator for the good things He has given them."[48] The reformation or revival which reformers within the Russian Church aspire to experience will be based on the Church's willingness to turn to God for spiritual vitality and ultimate judgment, to focus on meeting the spiritual and social needs of the Russian people, and to abandon ill-will for past wrongs committed by the previous political system. Having experienced these changes, the Russian Church will then be prepared to extend the rich message of genuine Orthodoxy beyond its own domestic borders.

To a large extent, the realization of a spiritual revival rests upon the disposition of Orthodox leaders. The need for such a revival is glaringly apparent by Russian indifference to

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[47] Von der Heydt, p. 255.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

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and even ignorance of Church doctrines and the corresponding moral vacuum and rising wave of criminal activity in Russia's major cities. How the Orthodox hierarchy responds to these realities will determine the route that will be taken by the Russian Church at the crossroads of decision-making. Reformers within the Church opted to be true to their calling when Marxist leaders sought to destroy their faith. Others, faced with the same threats, succumbed to weakness. Von der Heydt illustrates the difference: "The formation of the spirit is like the formation of coal in the earth. The enormous pressure that is exerted over them creates either dust or diamonds."[49] Within the Russian Orthodox Church the richness of human diamonds can be found in human lives of both priests and people. The church is richer through the presence, the witness, and the writings of such diamonds. Yet, these diamonds can be buried by a pseudo Christianity. In the field of ecclesiology one occasionally hears the dictum, "As the seminaries go, so go the churches of the denomination." In regard to the Orthodox Church, it is fitting to say, "As the hierarchy leads, so will the people walk."

The Perils of State Churches

Repeatedly in this study Orthodoxy has been mentioned as a substantial part of Russian culture. The linkage, as earlier mentioned, goes back at least to the sixteenth century when Patriarch Nikon (1652-58) claimed to be superior to Tsar Alexii and was allowed by the latter to rule the Church and occasionally even govern the political realm. The same pattern, though reversed in its initiative, was enhanced when Peter I (the Great) took control of the Church, discharging the patriarch and replacing the post with a governing Synod or committee chosen by the Tsar himself, and in effect, "transforming the Church into a department of state."[50]

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[49] *Ibid.*, p. 257.
[50] John Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), p. 128.

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Suzanne Massie writes, "In his headlong rush to sever the links with the past, he [Peter the Great] threw out much that was good along with the bad. The Church had been above the monarch; he subordinated it to the State and the Church lost forever its independence and something of its close and unique relationship with the people."[51]

In the contemporary Russian Church, the Patriarch spends considerable time petitioning the Ministry of Justice for Orthodox favors and non-Orthodox restrictions.[52] Though the Patriarch publicly declares his rejection of "state-church" status for Orthodoxy, his actions sometimes follow a pattern of wanting Orthodoxy to be recognized as the official religion. Yet he is aware of the danger of political allegiance. At a meeting in Kostroma on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the diocese, the Patriarch said, "Proselytism and religious expansion from the West and the East ought to be challenged by the living witness of our own faith and life, not by legislative restrictions."[53] Yet, pressure from the patriarchate upon the Duma for Orthodox privileges raises doubts in other quarters. Pospielovsky wisely suggests, "If the government were to issue protective legislation, there would always be the danger that sooner or later the government would want its pound of flesh from the Church in return."[54]

Larry Uzzell of Keston News Service alludes to a glaring weakness in the contemporary Russian Church as it limits its ministry to domestic borders: "Historically the Russian Orthodox tradition emerged as one local expression of a universal Christian faith, but today's Moscow Patriarchate is increasingly treating that tradition as the privileged possession of Russians alone, a cult of Slavic self-worship. Russia's secular leaders have concluded that it

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[51] Suzanne Massie, *Land of the Firebird* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), p. 107.
[52] Pospielovsky, p. 256.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 257.
[54] *Ibid.*

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is in their short-term political interest to embrace this ugly trend. Depressingly, they may be right."[55] Uzzell, like other analysts, perceives a myopic scope of Russian Orthodox ministry.

The greatest danger confronting churches that become officially linked to government, however, is that in time they lose their unique ecclesiological character and mission. The unfolding of liberation theology in Latin America, regardless of arguments in favor of the movement, illustrates the perils of a church becoming so politically focused that its primary purpose and mission are eclipsed. In a similar vein, the story of the Lutheran Church in the German Democratic Republic in 1977 yielded to state pressure for a state-church (the order is important) alliance and the Church lost its spiritual compass until clergy and people in Leipzig sought freedom to regain spiritual fervor. In contrast, faced with the same threats and dangers by Moscow, the Catholics of Poland separated themselves from the state, resisting its intrigue, and thus Poland became a buffer zone against the advance of Communism.

State churches receive support for their premises and their clergy from the government. Already Orthodox and non-Orthodox Muscovites are expressing concern over the costs of constructing the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the capital city, estimates of which range from 250 to 500 million dollars, while multitudes of elderly struggle for daily sustenance. State churches may boast of the finest of architectural cathedrals, such as St. Paul's (Anglican) in London or St. Isaac's (Orthodox) in St. Petersburg, but architecture is only a structure; people comprise the Christian church. The largest local Christian congregation in the world gathers together in the so-called Central Church of Seoul, Korea which receives no support from the government. It's growth is attributed to a focused ministry that exhibits the uniqueness of

[55] Lawrence Uzzell, *Wall Street Journal* (vol. xiv, no 42 B, March 28, 1996), p. 8

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Christianity to care for the spiritual, social and economic needs of the people and to propagate the Christian message abroad. Church bodies of this nature in Korea are responsible for the establishment of 700 Christian parishes in Russia since the fall of Communism.[56] Growing and expanding congregations related to "state churches" are at best very scarce today and probably nonexistent. Non-state churches reveal strong patterns of growth. One visit to the Central Baptist Church of Moscow, pastored by Rev. Ivan Korablev, reveals the power of ecclesial life in contrast to churches aligned to government favors. The 800-1000 seat sanctuary is always filled to capacity during its Sunday services with people of all ages in attendance and side isles crowded with worshipers. Music of the choir approaches that of professional choral performances. This is not a "western" church, but one composed of people who understand the uniqueness of the Christian Church and strive to exhibit that uniqueness.

Prioritizing Goals for Maximizing Energy

Orthodox Bishop Seraphim Sigrist, formerly of Sendai and East Japan (in the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Japan) but placed under the oversight of the Patriarchate of Moscow, relates that "85 percent of the people seen in Russian Orthodox Churches are women."[57] To alter the balance, keeping the women but attracting men and young people, he suggests that the Church must

> consider how it appeals to some people and not to others. In reality the church lost contact with the people, the working people, and the kind of average people during the Communist period. Today we find in the churches a lot of simple, peasant people types and then a certain kind of intellectuals but few in between. We need more programs, social service, evangelism, and outreach which can appeal to men, young people and working people.[58]

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[56] Researched by George Law, Director of the Association for Spiritual Renewal, Moscow; and related to this writer in a personal interview in the Association office, September 24, 1996.
[57] Personal interview, October 3, 1996.
[58] *Ibid.*

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Bishop Seraphim goes on to say that the Russian Church "must ask itself to what an extent it is satisfied to perpetuate itself as a museum and repository of the national culture?"[59]

To expand on Bishop Seraphim's suggestion, students of ecclesiology can point to weaknesses within the Church that must be addressed and then measures to offset the frailties. The language used in the liturgy ought to be changed and new members need to receive doctrinal instruction. Pospielovsky writes, "As long as the Orthodox Church continues to use poorly understood Church Slavonic and does not develop some simplified form of worship for the beginner, supplement worship with catechism for adults, and make religious literature in a modern idiom readily available, its missionary role will remain minimum."[60] If these changes are to be implemented, either the current bishops must alter their interpretation of church liturgy or be replaced by bishops willing to make changes. A high percentage of bishops continue to insist on the usage of Church Slavonic which hardly anybody understands.

There is a degree of irony in the resistance of bishops to introduce the vernacular language into the liturgy. When Cyril and Methodius were sent from Constantinople to the Slavic people as missionaries in AD 863, they realized the virtue of relating the Gospel message in the language of the people, and thus provided their early disciples with "a written form of expression to the Slavonic dialect spoken in the area.... They did this in order to make the Christian message comprehensible to the Slavs"[61] By depriving Russians of worshipping in their own language, Orthodox bishops forfeit an opportunity for parishioners to understand the Christian message and to relate the true meaning and purpose of the Church.

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[59] *Ibid.*
[60] Pospielovsky, p. 257.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

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Having altered the language of the liturgy and commenced catechetical instruction "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ,"[62] the Orthodox Church will embark on a journey of communal interaction and corporate ministry that is not only prescribed by the Apostle Paul but which is rewarding for givers and takers alike. By establishing the priorities cited above, other weaknesses within the Orthodox Church will be remedied, whether they be compromising priests, uncaring priests, the Church as a substitute for previous "soviets", the classification of churches as "museums", or the perception of greater interest in buildings than in people.

If the Russian Church at this time fails to fulfill its God-given purpose to this generation, its ministry and message are doomed to be buried in wastelands of history. Such a prognosis does not mean that Russia will be left without hope. When one analyzes other religious efforts, such as that of the Baptists, Catholics, and Pentecostals, he becomes persuaded that these can fill voids left by the Russian Orthodox Church. The reality of this truth is interpreted as a terrible omen by some Orthodox Church leaders. However, it serves as a stimulus to motivate others to excavate their ecclesiastical premises to seek the human jewels and biblical riches which build churches and glorify God.

[62] Ephesians 4:12.

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CONCLUSION

The Russian Orthodox Church has emerged from numerous external and internal contending forces that have impeded its growth. The history of the Church is marked by devastating adversities. The Schism of 1054 adversely affected the infancy of Orthodoxy in Kievan Rus' as it did to its parent in Constantinople. The Mongol invasion in the fourteenth century and its rule that continued until 1480 demoralized the Church. When Ivan IV (the Terrible) favored Islamic Tartars to keep Orthodoxy in check in the sixteenth century, Orthodox ranks shivered. When Ukrainian priests in 1595 turned toward Rome to form the Uniate Church, another blow was inflicted. When Old Believers rebelled against western ecclesial innovations introduced by Patriarch Nikon in the middle of the seventeenth century, the fragile Orthodox unity in progress at the time rapidly dissipated.

In 1700, the action of Tsar Peter (the Great) to deny the Church permission to elect a new patriarch, placing himself rather in the role of church leadership, the Russian Church became intrinsically domesticated. The later reign of Catherine II (the Great), revealing her own profligacy and politically expedient practices, made a sham of Orthodox leadership and teachings. The cruel living conditions to which Russian serfs were subjected prior to and even after social reforms were enacted by Alexander II in 1861 were met with ecclesiastical silence, attesting to Church indifference regarding social justice while revealing the inefficacy of the Church to influence political and civic

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authorities. When church leaders withdraw from mitigating ethical and social injustices, reasonable citizens begin to question ecclesiastical doctrines, liturgy and practices, and often drift away from the Church.

With the onset of the February Revolution of 1917, there came the restoration of the Moscow patriarchate and expectations for significant religious opportunities. But with the Bolshevik Revolution, rays of optimism promoted by the abdication of Nicholas II soon waned. In 1922, Patriarch Tikhon was arrested by Soviet authorities and the Holy Synod was dissolved, thus signaling turbulent conditions for the Russian Orthodox Church, conditions that continued until the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

The pilgrimage of the Russian Orthodox Church has not been pleasant by any standards. Yet, the survival of the Russian Church is a reality to all analysts. The story of its survival affords a strong foundation for its future ministry. The Church has been "tried by fire," persecuted beyond imagination, targeted for extinction by atheistic rulers, corrupted by Marxist clerical impostors, and divided by human egos and frailties; yet, through all such adversities, the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church remains today as a microcosmic testimony of the larger universal Church concerning which Jesus said, "I will build my Church and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it."[1]

But Orthodox leaders must abandon the erroneous belief that the "Church" to which Jesus referred was exclusively the domesticated Orthodox Church of hierarchical conceptions. Jesus referred rather to a much broader base of believers, "called-out" (*ek-klesia*) of a self-centered population to a Christ-centered and divine mission. That mission

[1] Matthew 16:18.

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is to "excavate" human soil trampled by adverse forces to discover human gems that can be polished by divine grace and put into use as mirrors of divine light.

If the Orthodox Church aspires to move ahead, it must now alter its opposition to non-Orthodox churches, be motivated by agreements stipulated by the Interconfessional Conference at Minsk in October 1996, and address its internal weaknesses: nationalism, political dependence, Old Slavonic liturgy, clergy-laity estrangement, poorly trained clergy, and a narrowly prescribed vision of turbulent domestic and global communities. Each of these constitutes a significant barrier for the future success of Orthodoxy in Russia.

Twenty-five years ago, Franklin Littell described the German Church under the Nazi regime as "cut off from contacts with the world Christian fellowship."[2] The description parallels to a large extent the Russian Orthodox Church under Communism. But Littell then describes a large segment of the Church in post-World War II Germany, which reflects an even more shocking parallel between the two religious bodies:

> In the final paroxysms of 'Christendom,' as anxious powers strive to resist the process of secularization and the pattern of pluralism which modernity has thrust upon it, ... Christians of the pilgrim church have alike been sacrificed to bad politics and low-grade Gentile religion. The credibility faced by the churches, which has alienated the youth and students and driven the younger theologians to seek a new form of words, has created a wasteland where only a few flowers of renewal give color and bring hope.[3]

Within contemporary Orthodoxy, flowers of renewal movements and narrow but bright rays of hope breed optimism to clergy and parishioners alike, albeit to a decided minority of the Church constituency.

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[2] In *Jewish-Christian Relations in Today's World* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1971), p. 42.
[3] *Ibid.*

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To people like Vaclav Havel, the Czech dissident who became president, even a remnant of morally-charged citizens can become powerful when crises arise. When Havel sought to interpret events in central Europe between June 1989 and June 1990, he wrote, "It is ... becoming evident that a single seemingly powerless person who dares to cry out the word of truth and to stand behind it with all his person and with all his life, has surprisingly greater power, though formally disfranchised, than do thousands of anonymous voters."[4] There are priests within the Russian Church today who seem to be institutionally powerless but whose ministries are changing Russian lives in dramatic and favorable ways.

The Russian Orthodox Church stands today at the crossroads of proclaiming its rich distinctives of God, man, worship, salvation, and spiritual vitality, or of defending its own territory from non-Orthodox forces. While human nature may dictate a spirit of "fight the enemy," wisdom points to the challenge of proclaiming the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. This route offers the highest returns for the Russian Orthodox Church.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh describes the contemporary Orthodox Church as "boiling" with divisions, contentions, and a variety of problems.[5] As clergymen within the Church struggle with one another and with non-Orthodox forces, the Metropolitan offers splendid counsel for all believers. He reminds them of their own God-given task when he says,

> We are called upon to build the Kingdom of God on earth, as far as it can be built. We cannot wait for the kingdom of God in the future, after history ends. We should seek for the Kingdom of God in ourselves, in our minds, in our will, even in

[4] Quoted by Barbara von der Heydt, *Candles Behind the Walls* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), p. 247.

[5] The metropolitan's message was sent to the writer from Bishop Seraphim Sigrist who for sixteen years served as a missionary with the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Japan, October 15, 1996.

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> our flesh. We are called upon to preach, to go out to build the world, taking the Gospel as a paragon. What can we do as Christians? We label ourselves as 'the salt of the earth.' Remember, salt is not cast into the Kingdom of God; it is cast into dough and dough is people.[6]

Messages of this nature will surely motivate the Orthodox Church to take the right turn when confronted with the struggles of contending forces.

If Orthodox leaders are able to free the church from its weaknesses and "seize the moment" to purify its own ranks and extend its witness beyond domestic borders, it can become an effective moral and spiritual agent. It will then distinguish itself for the uniqueness expected of the Christian Church. No other social institution offers greater potential for altering the sociological maladies and spiritual moorings of Russian people as does the Russian Church. Few other church bodies, if any, have more to offer the peoples of the world through the witness of its survival and the pronouncement of God's love than the Russian Church.

The largest numerical and geographical Orthodox patriarchate in the world has its seat in Moscow. The Russian Orthodox Church has the largest constituency of any church in the World Council of Churches. The Russian Church itself is a product of missionary efforts rendered by Cyril and Methodius and their disciples. The patriarchate of Istanbul, "first among equals",[7] has neither the material resources nor the personnel to accomplish a broad missions task. Though Russian Orthodox finances are hardly sufficient now to send missionaries abroad, the Church's long-range plans should embrace the idea.

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[6] *Ibid.*

[7] The patriarchate of Istanbul claims only 4,000 parishioners and thirty priests. In 1971 it was obliged to close down its only seminary, and Patriarch Bartholomew is now researching the possibility of moving to another country (See "With no seminary, Orthodox leadership on shaky ground," *The State*, Columbia, SC, August 1, 1996).

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The potential wealth of Russia itself is enormous and through the promotion of ethical and moral standards and individual responsibility among its constituents, the Orthodox Church can play a significant role in the conversion of the resources into actual prosperity. Then the Church should establish an aggressive global endeavor for the cause of Christianity. Meanwhile, there is much work to do in its own backyard. A decade ago, when President Mikhail Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze, the foreign minister, acknowledged the need for drastic social and economic changes in the Soviet Union, they stressed "that there can be no authentic restructuring without moral renewal."[8]

No institution in any society carries more responsibility for promoting moral renewal than the Christian church. Russian Orthodox leaders may turn their backs to the Weberian notion of "the Protestant Ethic," but they cannot divorce themselves or the Church from inherent ecclesiastical moral, spiritual and social responsibilities--in essence, caring for others-- without jeopardizing its effectiveness and further impoverishing Russian society. Russia is the world's largest country, extending across eleven time zones. If contemporary Russian Orthodox leaders truly believe that Russia is *their* parish, then they must be willing to leave their ecclesiastical dwellings to feed and clothe the poor, minister to prisoners, care for the sick and wounded, encourage the depressed, love the unlovely, shelter the homeless, be eyes to the blind, promote peace, and proclaim righteousness through the redemptive message of the Gospel. These ministries describe the domestic agenda of the Christian Church. The benevolent returns of such endeavors will then motivate the Russian Orthodox Church for an agenda of global involvement.

[8] Terry Nardin, "Moral Renewal: The Lessons of Eastern Europe," *Ethics & International Affairs* (1991, vol. 5, pp. 1-14), pp. 1-2.

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As the Russian Church extends itself to offer the ministries mentioned above, its leaders can initiate two ventures that are certain to make the Church more effective domestically and internationally. First, the Orthodox Church needs reforms like those that came out of the Second Vatican Council to make it more relevant to the contemporary democratic, pluralistic world. As the Catholic Church made enormous changes through Vatican II sessions (1962-65), resulting in far more international respect and effectiveness for Catholicism than in previous times, so should the Orthodox Church seek the same experience. Two changes instituted by Vatican II should be considered by Orthodoxy. Priests were allowed to use vernacular languages in worship rather than insisting that the liturgy be conducted only in one language, Latin. Logical reasoning led Catholic representatives to agree that liturgy in Latin falls short of the clear ecclesial communication required for sound indoctrination and comprehensible exhortation and that liturgy conducted in vernacular languages could be more profitable. When the Orthodox Church allows the Russian language to be the *lingua franca* of the Russian Church, bishops and priests can expect more favorable responses to their messages and parishioners will understand the truth expressed by the Apostle Paul when he wrote, "The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right."[9] Liturgy restricted to an incomprehensible language fails to accomplish these ends.

[9] II Timothy 3:16 (Living Bible).

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The second significant change introduced by Vatican II relates to abandoning the notion that all non-Catholics are heretics, considering them rather as "separated brethren." The parallelism is obvious.

If an All-Orthodox Vatican II-type conference is called, drawing leading bishops and priests of all the Patriarchies together, the location of the sessions should be in a neutral geographical zones--Geneva, Singapore, London--without any trappings of "court advantage." London would be an appropriate place to start the sessions owing to the warmth of appreciation existing between Orthodox and Anglican Churches. Themes to be discussed might be "The Mission of the Church," "Orthodox-Catholic-Protestant *koinonia*," and "A Relevant Church for a Despairing World." If patriarchs outside Moscow are not disposed at this time for an All-Orthodox Conference, the Patriarch of Moscow has the right to initiate such an endeavor independent of other patriarchies. The location then could be an appropriate community within Russia, but where serious Church business can be conducted.

The second suggested venture is in tune with results of the first. While planning for a Vatican II-type conference, the Moscow patriarch can work toward fostering a top-level Ministerial Association for Moscow, comprising the principal bishops, priests, and denominational leaders of the region, for the purpose of sharing common goals, addressing ecclesiastical concerns, and fostering inter-church fellowship. Current leaders, including Patriarch Aleksi, Archbishop Kondrysivicz (Catholic), President Konavalchik (Baptist Union), and President Murza (Pentecostal Union), presently meet in sessions to discuss Duma legislative matters. For the sake of Christian unity and as a response to the

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declining moral and ethical standards of Russian society, such men can now expand their agenda toward more ecclesial goals. Efforts in this direction were evidenced at the Interconfessional Conference in Minsk, Belarus in October 1996. Hopefully, pronouncements made in Minsk will carry-over to Moscow to promote the reality of "oneness" among the churches while Russian people still search for the truth and love of God and aspire to see the same revealed in the contemporary disciples of Christ.

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