

CAREE Communicator

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Spring/Summer 2000

New Series, #4

“WHITHER CAREE?”--AN UPDATE

Many of you have probably been wondering what happened at CAREE's conference and annual meeting on March 10 & 11, 2000. This issue of the *Communicator* will bring you up to date--and invite you to an important CAREE business meeting, to be held at the conclusion of an exciting upcoming conference on November 3 & 4, 2000. The conference theme is “Mission in Eastern and Central Europe”--it has some excellent speakers and offers good opportunities for interaction. (Specific information appears below.)

By now, you have received the June 2000 issue of *Religion in Eastern Europe* (Vol. 20, #3). In it you have the major presentations made at the conference, which dealt with the topic, “Whither CAREE?” You can get a good sense of the questions we dealt with, even if you could not be there to participate in the conference. As it came to an end, we moved into the annual meeting of CAREE. As usual, at that meeting, we received the regular reports involved in annual meetings; we also dealt with the question which was the topic of the conference.

Building on the presentations over the preceding day at the conference, the meeting engaged in extended discussion about CAREE's past, present, and possible future. It was noted that much of the membership had come into or was nearing retirement, and that younger members who might continue CAREE were not numerous at present; it was also noted that the clarity of purpose which CAREE knew during the height of the Cold War was gone.

Given the above, the meeting concluded that CAREE either needed to articulate a new purpose which could serve Christians and churches in Eastern Europe in the contemporary situation and could attract members, or else that CAREE should pass out of existence (as organizations sometimes do). The consensus in the meeting was that, whatever might be the outcome of the specific deliberations regarding a future for CAREE, *Religion in Eastern Europe* is a valuable tool and must be continued.

Discussion led to a recognition of two streams of activity for CAREE, if it should be continued: (1) the encouragement and enabling of interchange between academics in North America and Eastern Europe who are involved in the study of religion in Eastern Europe or academics of faith who study Eastern Europe; and (2) distribution of information among churches at denominational and local levels, information designed to encourage interest in, support of, and cooperation with Christians and churches in Eastern Europe.

After thorough discussion, at which various viewpoints were frankly expressed, the meeting then passed, by majority vote, a motion to have CAREE continue.

The meeting then appointed Charles West, Walter Sawatsky, Paul Wilson, and Jim

Payton as a task force to come up with a clarification of CAREE's mission (as per the streams indicated above), to specify CAREE's tasks and prioritize them, and to come with nominations of appropriate leadership (who have agreed, if elected, to accept such responsibilities).

The task force began its work shortly after the annual meeting and has been engaged in extensive deliberations and ongoing discussion. The result is a proposal that will be brought to the meeting to be held at the conclusion of the November 3 & 4 conference. That proposal will include nominations for officers to carry out the reconstituted responsibilities involved with CAREE's new foci. This will have to be voted on at the November 4 meeting; if the proposal is approved, the new officers and we the members of CAREE can begin to carry it out.

This is an exciting time for CAREE. Eastern Europe is in a far different situation than it was when CAREE was originally formed. What we have done over the last four decades has been valuable; we need, though, to retool our organization, so that we can offer relevant and helpful service to the Christians and churches in Eastern Europe in the situation(s) they now face. How can we contribute to the ongoing pursuit of peace, justice, and reconciliation in Eastern Europe? That is what the proposal will present--and what we, the members of CAREE, will have an opportunity to vote on. So, be sure to come to the meeting! We can look forward to a reinvigorated CAREE, engaged effectively in service to and for Eastern Europe.

CAREE Joint Meeting with Eastern Fellowship ASM
November 3-4, 2000
at Maryknoll Sisters in Ossining NY

The Eastern Fellowship of the American Society of Missiology (ASM) has invited CAREE to join with them for a special conference. CAREE's business meeting will follow lunch on Saturday afternoon.

*The theme of the gathering will be **Mission and Eastern and Central Europe Today**.* The three major presentations will be by:

Dr. Anne-Marie Kool, Director of the Protestant Center for Mission Studies in Budapest, Hungary;

Dr. Peter Kuzmic, President of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Croatia;

and **Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky**, Ecumenical Officer of the Orthodox Church in America.

For the program of the conference, see the following page. If you intend to come, please so advise the Executive Secretary of CAREE (by one of the addresses on the newsletter masthead). To register, please send information and payments as per the following instructions:

(Program for conference, as received from ASM)