

# CAREE Communicator

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## A TRIPLE ISSUE

I had hoped to get out issues of this newsletter during 2003. Not enough material had arrived for a spring or summer newsletter. The materials assembled in this issue all arrived during the fall, but I faced additional academic responsibilities at the institution where I teach, plus the sudden death of an elderly family member in late November, so everything got bumped back. Here we are, now, in early 2004 – and you are only now receiving the 2003 newsletters. I apologize for the delay, but I trust that you will find the materials included interesting.

You will note that the bulk of the newsletter consists of reports from CAREE members who have participated in conferences or meetings in Eastern Europe, or in meetings elsewhere in Europe at which Eastern European concerns were presented. We would be happy to include in upcoming issues of the *CAREE Communicator* reports about the activities of CAREE members in or about Eastern Europe – so please consider this an invitation to submit such reports to me (at either the “snail” mail or the e-mail address above).

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## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

By the time you receive this, the new year will already have begun. So, it is time for me to invite you to renew your CAREE membership – or, for those who are no longer or not yet members, to become a member. The last sheet of this newsletter reminds you of the fees for the two different categories of membership. Please fill out that sheet, tear it off and include a check (in U.S. funds) for the appropriate amount, and return it to me at the snail mail address above.

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## UPCOMING CAREE CONFERENCE

CAREE will be holding a conference and its annual meeting in the next couple of months. (The dates will be determined within the week or so.) One of the items on the agenda will be, at long last, to take the steps to develop a CAREE website. We have secured the services of a web-master who has set up attractive, smooth-running, and fast websites for other organizations; as well, he, has a prior interest in Eastern Europe and in CAREE’s mission. He has allocated sufficient time in his schedule to get a website up and running for us, and to oversee it on a regular basis. We on the executive are excited to get this going, since we have discovered how much such a website would facilitate other people becoming familiar with CAREE and what it has to offer.

As well, the conference will have presentations and discussion times, as well as CAREE's annual meeting. These details are currently being worked out. As soon as they are, I will forward the information to you – for those who have submitted their e-mail addresses, by e-mail; for the others by regular mail. We hope you will make plans to come and participate.

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## **“PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN CENTRAL EUROPE”**

**June 2003**

**– report by Charles C. West –**

What social theology can guide the church in its ministry to the countries of central Europe that until a few years ago were dominated by Marxist ideology and Communist control? This is the question which a group of 26 theologians gathered in Prague this past June to discuss. The consultation was sponsored by the Center of Theological Inquiry of Princeton NJ, with European collaborators. It was designed to initiate a conversation between theologians from that part of the world and western, mostly American, colleagues, from which both sides might learn and which they might continue.

It was a promising first step. Though the number from each side was equal, the encounter was less so. Papers from the west were offered by established scholars in their field: Denise Ackerman from South Africa, Jean Bethke Elshtain and William Schweiker of the University of Chicago, Max Stackhouse of Princeton Seminary, Konrad Schmid of the University of Zürich, James Skillen of the Center for Public Justice in Annapolis MD, Donald Shriver of Union Seminary New York, Ronald Thiemann of Harvard Divinity School, and Michael Welker of the University of Heidelberg. Of the central Europeans only two were veterans: Milan Opo\_ensky, who, though Czech, has straddled east and west for years as General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and Janos Pasztor of the Theological Academy in Budapest. The others were articulate younger theologians from faculties all over the area: four from the Czech Republic, three from Poland, two from Hungary, and one each from Bulgaria, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Germany (east). Tamas Kodácsy of the Theological Academy in Debrecen, Hungary, the only other central European presenter, filled in at short notice for an older colleague. On the whole the dialogue consisted of central European responses to six American (plus one German and one South African) social theologies. It was also a largely Protestant conversation, though two Roman Catholics from Poland made important contributions. There were no Orthodox participants.

The whole proceedings of the consultation will eventually be published under the auspices of the Center of Theological Inquiry. Three papers with a primarily central European focus – Opo\_ensky, “Theology between Yesterday and Tomorrow”; Kodácsy, “The Church and Democracy in Central Europe”; and Schmid, “In the Name of God? The Problem of Religious or Non-Religious Preambles to State Constitutions in Post-Atheistic Contexts” – will appear in a coming issue of *Religion in Eastern Europe*. Certain themes, however, emerged from central European perspectives, that may point the way toward future dialogue. Among them, which this participant perceived, are these:

1. The search for what eastern German participant Heinrich Bedford-Strohm called “critical interaction with human society in all its dimensions from the perspective of God’s word and action” underlay almost all that central Europeans reported and said. Ronald Thiemann’s concept of connected critics found general resonance. Some expressed it in terms of Bonhoeffer’s posture of penultimate responsibility determined by the ultimate. Others, especially the Czechs, drew on Josef Hromadka’s theology and witness which,

despite the events of recent years, still inspires and guides them. Martin Zikmund of Prague, for example, spoke of Hromadka's understanding of the church as a *communio viatorum*, a community on the way, responsibly involved in this world while anticipating the reign of God which has already broken into the world in the resurrection of Christ. Therefore he was, he said, critically loyal to the Czech state. Others put it differently, but all were seeking a theology and church witness at once relevant to the political and economic future and critically transcendent in the hope of the present and coming reign of God.

2. The memory of Communist society still influences these European colleagues in ways that many of us in the west cannot fully understand. For the older generation it was personal experience; for the younger it is social history with which they still live, even if subconsciously. This memory expresses itself in many ways. One of the most important is a profound awareness of ideology in all its post-Communist forms. Market economy, nationalism, globalization, and utopian ideals, were among those mentioned. Another is the concept of Central Europe, which was intended by many who spoke to indicate a society that still defines itself over against the ideological alternatives of the past, both east and west, concerned with social values rather than market forces, but with free democratic participation, not a command economy. A third is acceptance of a secularized pluralistic society, which was their response to the breakdown of Communist ideology, even while Communist control continued in its later years.
3. Given all this, what defines a nation, what is its role, and how can the church help it to discern both its function and its limits? It was clear that national experiences are quite different. Elzbieta Osewska from Poland spoke of the historic role of the Roman Catholic Church in maintaining a Christian value system and Polish identity through the Communist time, but warned that today it should continue to teach and worship, not become a political interest group in a new democratic society. Still, she said, reference to God in the preamble of the Polish constitution was natural and appropriate, an opinion strongly disputed by a Lutheran compatriot who sensed in the God reference a Roman Catholic claim to dominance. Tamas Kodácsy from Hungary saw no point in a constitution mentioning God. Religion is too closely identified with the Hungarian nation, a dangerous situation when half of the linguistically and culturally Hungarian people live outside the boundaries of the state. The church faces a great temptation to conform to reigning politics and culture, not to struggle for an independent witness to the society. Jind\_ich Halama regretted the polarization of church and state in the Czech Republic, a heritage of centuries of Roman Catholic Austrian domination. What positive cultural self-understanding, he asked, do we have as a nation? The questions raised were not answered but they simmered and flavored the whole discussion. They are agenda for a future meeting.
4. How is oppression to be faced, resisted, and overcome? What are the possibilities of repentance and reconciliation? Papers by Denise Ackerman of South Africa on the Black Sash resistance movement against apartheid, and by Donald Shriver on remembering the oppressed in American racial history, produced interesting responses. Our problem in central Europe, said Marian Hamari of Slovakia, is that our historical memories often conflict with one another. What for one group is oppression is for another liberation. The history of modern central Europe, Jind\_ich Halama continued, is too often an attempt to right injustices by separating the offending or offended peoples. But it cannot be done

that way. How, asked Heinrich Bedford Strohm, are East Germans to sort out the relation between oppression inflicted in Nazi times, and oppression suffered under Soviet invasion and Communist rule? How can repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation work in these complex situations? That they must work is clear, as practical politics and as witness of the Church to the reign of Christ. But each complex story of ethnic and ideological conflict presents a different challenge.

5. What is secularization and how do we confront it as Christians? This is more a question for some Europeans than for others. One, a Bulgarian evangelical, describes herself as “a marginal representative of Generation X, whose trans-contextual identity is profoundly impacted and shaped by the technological achievements and all-encompassing digital currents of the global information society.” She believes that “cyberspace is the emerging ‘open society’ of the post-modern generations.” She may be an extreme example, but such a combination of evangelical faith with cyber-society linked by the internet is a challenge to all the patterns of religion and culture that are traditional in central and eastern Europe. For others the break with tradition is not so great, but is nonetheless real. The Czech Republic is the most secular society in that part of the world. Is this to be accepted as the final breakdown of religious and other ideologies and an opportunity for the Gospel in its concreteness? Or is it the breakdown of all community in the name of individualism? The question remains open.

There is much further to discuss. The group that met in Prague, with some additions, will come together in Debrecen in late March of 2004. At that session central Europeans will present the papers, and westerners will be the respondents. The dialogue continues.

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## **12<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES**

**June 25-July 2, 2003**

**– report by Jim Payton –**

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) held its 12<sup>th</sup> assembly in the historic town of Trondheim, Norway, from June 25-July 2, 2003. Trondheim was the capital of the Kingdom of Norway from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In 1030, King Olav II Haraldsson – who played a major role in bringing Christianity to Norway – died near Trondheim in battle; he was subsequently embraced as the country’s patron saint. In 1078, Pope Gregory VII noted that the king of Norway ruled at the end of the earth and invited the far-off Christian monarch to send young men to be instructed in the faith in Rome, so that they could return and further the Christianization of the land. More than 900 years later, for CEC’s 12<sup>th</sup> assembly, nearly 800 Christian men and women came to the former capital from all over Europe (and beyond) to consult about the role of Christianity in contemporary Europe, from the Arctic to the Mediterranean. The historic city – with Oslo and Bergen, the main urban centers for tourism – proved to be a delightful venue for Europe’s regional ecumenical organization to meet in assembly.

The theme of the assembly was “Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles – Our Witness in Europe.” The opening worship service was held at Nidaros Cathedral; Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew brought the message. The closing service was held on the banks of the River Nidelven, just behind the cathedral; the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, preached at that service. Between those festive and celebratory worship services, the participants of the assembly attended plenary sessions and thematic hearings, deliberated in full assembly, engaged in discussions, and participated in “evening prayers” drawn from the liturgical practices of the

various traditions represented in CEC's membership. The schedule was full, but it left room for much interaction.

CEC is a fellowship of 125 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, and Old Catholic Churches, plus more than 40 associated organizations, from all countries on the European continent. While the Roman Catholic Church is not a member, it cooperates closely with CEC in many regards. The ecumenical regional organization for Europe, CEC is headquartered in Geneva. CEC assemblies meet every 6 years. (Information on CEC [including a wide range of documents and reports] is available on the website: [www.cec-kek.org](http://www.cec-kek.org).) CAREE received an invitation to send a representative, as a "partner organization" to CEC. The costs of my participation were covered partly by CAREE and partly by my home institution (Redeemer University College), with additional funding from the National Council of Churches.

Two informational plenaries – on the *Charta Oecumenica* and on Europe – were especially stimulating sessions. The *Charta Oecumenica* is a 10-page document which represents a theological consensus on how churches should relate to each other and to the needs of Europe. After much careful deliberation over the last few years, the *Charta* was adopted in 2001 by CEC and CCEE [the Council of European Catholic Bishops Conferences]; at the assembly, the hopefulness it engendered was palpable. The respect for the *Charta* across CEC's whole membership offers the promise of a richer ecumenism across Europe in the future and of better relationships among the various church bodies within the respective nations. This can only be a welcome development, from the perspective of CAREE's historic concerns.

The plenary on Europe was especially thought-provoking. The presentation (together with viewpoints expressed throughout the assembly) showed profound, thoughtful engagement with what Europe is and needs to be – not only with regard to itself and its various peoples (including immigrant communities from other continents), but also as it relates to other areas of the world. As a representative of CAREE, I was heartened to hear several people urge that reception into the European Union (and other forms of pan-European acceptance) should not depend on the countries of Eastern Europe having to ape Western European stances. The assembly theme resonated in these discussions: the delegates wanted to let the light of Christian faith and service shine in all the complex issues Europe faces at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In addition to these plenary sessions, I found two of the thematic hearings especially interesting as a representative from CAREE. The one on "Minority and Majority Churches in Europe: Conflict and Reconciliation" afforded representatives from both kinds of churches in Eastern Europe the opportunity to describe how they are trying to work in a spirit of greater ecumenical appreciation. Throughout the session, the impact which the *Charta Oecumenica* is already having became evident; of course, much yet remains to be done. In the other hearing, on "Christian and Muslim Encounter in a Pluralistic Europe," a representative of the Islamic Council of Norway dialogued with CEC leaders and session participants about how well the two religions are co-existing in contemporary Europe; in addition to the undeniable tensions that have arisen, the session pointed to numerous evidences of respectful appreciation and collaboration on matters of mutual concern. In the wake of the inter-religious tensions that some people claimed as at least an excuse for so much atrocity in the Balkans (and in other places in Eastern Europe) in the last few years, a session such as this was encouraging and hopeful, indeed.

For me as representing CAREE, the CEC assembly offered a rich opportunity to meet with church leaders from many nations in Eastern Europe. Some conversations were only brief ones, in which I could describe what CAREE does and offer our services as they might be

helpful. Some other interactions became ongoing and extended discussions of the situations in the respective countries of Eastern Europe, how those leaders view their situations, and how those of us from the West (including CAREE) can be of better help to them. One of these has led to the invitation for me to come with a group of students from my institution in the spring of 2004 for a work project assisting the Reformed Christian Church in Croatia on an endeavor in Osijek.

CEC's assembly had to wade through numerous business sessions, of course. Sometimes tedious, at times fascinating, they gave evidence of what concerns the member churches. Not surprisingly, tensions periodically surfaced, reflecting the quite different orientations of some of the Orthodox churches and some of the Protestant ones. This is nothing new for the ecumenical movement, to be sure; in the last few years, though, those tensions have been heightened. Consequently, it was especially encouraging, after an edgy interchange on such a difference, to hear Archbishop Anastasios of the Orthodox Church in Albania remind his fellow Orthodox that they find it necessary to show tolerance and love within their own fellowship, encouraging them to be as ready to do so with the non-Orthodox members of the ecumenical movement.

The 12<sup>th</sup> assembly showed that CEC has an important role to play for Christianity and its relationship to the whole continent of Europe. The churches of Eastern Europe find in CEC an organization that seeks their well-being, and that of their respective nations, in the new configuration of Europe emerging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. More information about the assembly, including presentations, papers, and reports, is available on the assembly website: [www.cecassembly.no](http://www.cecassembly.no).

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**“DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS”**  
**in Ohrid, Macedonia**  
**August 29-30, 2003**  
**– report by Paul Mojzes –**

In May 2002 the President of Macedonia, Boris Trajkovski announced to a group of us who organized and participated in the conference “Confidence Building Between the Churches and Religious Communities in Macedonia Through Dialogue” that he planned to organize a Regional Forum on “Dialogue Among Civilizations” with the help of the United Nations. After several postponements, the conference took place in Ohrid, an ancient city on a lake in southern Macedonia, August 29-30, 2003. His intention was to bring together some government leaders, including heads of state, representatives of culture and academia, and some religious leaders to respond to an initiative made at the UN by President Khatami of Iran several years ago.

As is often the case, the actual meeting was much larger than initially envisioned. Among the participants were the current Presidents of Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Albania, Bulgaria, and Macedonia, and the former Presidents of Bulgaria and Macedonia. Also present was the former President of Finland, Harri Holkeri, who is the current governor of Kosovo. The secretary-general of UNESCO, Koishiro Matsura, numerous diplomats from a very large number of countries and the UN, government officials from Macedonia, including the prime minister, and prominent academic and religious figures from neighboring countries, as well as the wider international community. Rabbi Arthur Schneier, founder and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, was one of the co-chairpersons of the conference, since the foundation was a co-sponsor of the conference. Along with him were Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington DC, and Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky, whom most of the readers of this report know. Several people from among the

participants of the May 2002 conference were present: Dr. Mehmet Aydin, who has become a Minister of State in the present government of Turkey, Fr. Vladimir Fedorov of St. Petersburg, Russia, Sr. Filo Hirota of Japan, and Paul Mojzes. Leonard Swidler was also invited but had to cancel his participation for family reasons.

Sr. Filo Hirota and I went to Skopje prior to the conference because we wanted to use the opportunity to promote the work of the newly founded Council on Interreligious Cooperation. I convened a meeting at which were present Fr. Ratomir Grozdanoski and Fr. Gjoko Gorgevski of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, Dean Ismail Bardhi and Dr. Metin Izeti of the Islamic Community, Rev. Mihail Cekov and several younger leaders of the Methodist Church, and Mr. Viktor Mizrahi of the Jewish Community. Regretfully the Catholic representatives were unable to attend. The meeting was business-like, discussing concrete projects for the future, among which are the publication of the collected papers of the May conference in the Macedonian and Albanian languages. Even though most of the papers have been finally translated into both languages and the person who promised to carry out the task of publication assured us that it will be done soon, there are reasons to believe that this will be “soon” according to Balkan time rather than our expectation. The English version of the same collected papers (to which collected papers of the Dubrovnik Conference of September 2002 about Bosnia were added) will be published by the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, both as a journal and a book, in late 2003.

The Ohrid Forum was characterized by *many* speeches, well crafted in careful diplomatic language, emphasizing the positive will toward cooperation, the recognition that without it the countries of the region will be unable to climb out of poverty and conflict. Perhaps the most interesting was the profuse use of the word “dialogue” for all types of encounter. Even though the word was used loosely and perhaps even overused, it is significant to what degree it has become a “must” word in current discourse, which strikes me as being a positive development. Perhaps it was not what was being said that was so important,<sup>1</sup> but that presidents of countries that had been at war with each other in the recent past and maintain both ancient and recent hostilities toward each other conducted both collective and bilateral talks is significant. President Trajkovski provided leadership by saying, “I understand dialogue among different peoples, cultures and civilizations as a continuing process that should have a global dimension, promoting equality, the rule of law, protection of human rights, and respect for cultural treasures and differences, while contributing to the construction of trust at the local, national, regional and international levels.”

In addition to the plenary meetings at which all the lofty speeches were made there were also three sessions which they called panels but which we would more likely call discussion sections, the topics of which were “Peace and Stability,” “Democracy and Civil Society,” and “Culture and Diversity.” The reports of these groups were presented at the last plenary session. The collected speeches, background papers, and contributions brought by some participants are to be published, probably in the English and Macedonian languages.

A higher degree of organization probably would have enhanced such a large conference.

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<sup>1</sup>There was little that could be characterized as new or ground-breaking, except perhaps the statement by the former President of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov, who stated that the wars in the former Yugoslavia did not start in the 1980s, but in the 1960s, when the professors and language experts of Serbia and Croatia could not agree on harmonizing the languages but split in bitter dispute, leading to a greater polarization and increased nationalism.

Power failed several times (but with a much shorter duration than the great blackout in the Northeast in August or hurricane “Isabel” in September). The food was excellent, the receptions lavish, the lake-water cold, the town of Ohrid an archeological and architectural treasure, and the panorama enchanting. But for several of us most enigmatic was the absence of a representative of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The Reis-I-Ulema of the Islamic Community, Arif Emini, came to a session with a few colleagues but left after one session. Leonid Kishkovsky went with Fr. Vladimir Fedorov to visit the local Metropolitan Timotej and tried to find out why the Orthodox did not attend, but did not get a clear understanding. Both of us regretted their absence, as it would have provided more visibility to the religious communities.

While the Ohrid Forum is not likely to be viewed as some sort of turning point in regional history, nevertheless it is very commendable that President Trajkovski is seeking to bring dialogue and cooperation in his country and the region to a more visible and effective level. The road will not be smooth, because while we were talking about dialogue and peace in Ohrid, segments of the terrorist Albanian National Army bombed simultaneously three targets in Skopje, increasing the concern that ethnic strife is still being fanned by some extremists – which is likely to bring retaliation from extremists on the other side.

After the Ohrid Conference I had a long personal meeting with President Trajkovski, at which we talked about the continued need for us from abroad to facilitate the processes of interreligious dialogue and cooperation. In that spirit I also met individually Orthodox and Muslim leaders, as well as some secular scholars who are interested in religion, to support their willingness to lead in that direction. It is my hope that we can be of help to them in that effort.

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## **TRIP TO KIEV, UKRAINE**

**11-28 September 2003**

**– report by Walter Sawatsky –**

Toward the end of my travels in Ukraine and Russia during April of 2003, I received an invitation to come teach at a leadership training program in Kiev sponsored by an organization named REALIS. Founded by Sergei Timchenko upon his return from studies at Denver Seminary (about 1994), its two-fold purpose has been to organize seminars on faith and societal issues for societal leaders in Ukrainian society, and in particular to help the new evangelical leaders of mission societies and theological schools obtain Master's level theological education in a way that would enable them to continue to function in their ministries. The approach was to run 3-4 week intensive teaching sessions four times per year. Mary Raber and I were invited this time to teach Church history. She presented a general church history survey, using the newly translated text by Gonzalez, and I was asked to focus on Slavic evangelical history.

*1. Teaching time* – The structure was for me to teach from 9:00am through 5:15pm, with an hour and forty-five minute lunch break. That meant a total of 38 sessions, at 90 minutes each– so, 57 hours of lecture time. I spent further time in lecture preparation and grading the work of 37 students. Total time spent was 17 days, averaging 16 hours of work time per day, including preparing and preaching one sermon, and one seminar in Kiev. Rarely have my trips been so singularly focused, though I did manage a meeting for 2 hours with Dr. Anatoly Kolodniy of the Institute of Philosophy of the Ukrainian Academy of Science.

*2. Teaching setting* – The students had ministry experience, were mostly in their late 20s and early 30s, but in this teaching setting we lacked books and journal articles (in Russian). REALIS relies on Christian & Missionary Alliance sponsorship of its students. Apparently Alliance Seminary decided to cut funding to the preparatory program late in the planning. So these

preparatory students were suddenly being asked to pay more for their part of the costs. In addition, for the first time they were renting space at a Christian camp 40 kms outside Kiev, in Vorzel. This camp, newly acquired by the Ukrainian branch of Scripture Union, called Otkrytaia Biblia (Open Bible) had only two phone lines, one to the kitchen, another to the housekeeper in the dormitory. REALIS has developed an adequate library of theological books at its own office (heavily English, though), using several rooms rented from Licht im Osten Mission in Kiev. The copying and online access facilities there are modern, but our students did not have access to them.

Fortunately, I had brought along some articles and books, and was able to print out a few more items from my computer (with the portable printer I had brought along) for some of the later readings. Other than that, REALIS borrowed enough copies of my book in Russian, plus a two-volume Russian history of Baptists by Savinsky. I had also urged them to make available to each student copies of the first CD from the Euro-Asiatic Accrediting Association (EAAA, Odessa), which contained archival and oral history materials, as well as many articles scanned from early Russian Evangelical journals. Fortunately, I had also brought along the second disc, which contained three books, two journals, etc. REALIS made copies of it, so maybe half the students chose to buy that one as well. The end result should be that they were introduced to some rather amazing materials available on CD disc that they might otherwise have had less need to examine.

My style was to require daily 1-2 page papers on a discussion question, where I expected them to refer to lectures and readings. By the third day all were taking this seriously, some students going out of their way to tell me at the end of the class how helpful and valuable that approach had been - it enabled them to integrate. Four students wrote their papers on computer, and gave me floppy disk copies to grade.

3. *The Students* – After a few days of teaching and grading, I started to learn more about the students, and many of them would talk at some length over lunch or supper. So I was learning things about several different branches of newly emerging independent evangelical churches. Two persons, for example, were involved in something called International Partnership. This meant they were doing church planting in Kiev and by now in about nine other Ukrainian cities. These were areas where Co-Mission had attempted its ministries and had attracted some educated people (many teachers) who did not fit well into regular Baptist or Evangelical churches. Their leader, Nikolai Mikhailiuk, with whom I talked several times, acknowledged that Co-Mission had made many mistakes, but he kept defending what many individual missionaries had been attempting to do – they were decent committed people, just not having much background on the context. At least a third of the group had roots in the Initsiativniki or Council of Churches of ECB but were now critical of its separatistic ways. About as many were from ECB churches in Ukraine and usually from their newer churches that were less rigid in Baptist rituals of dress and church discipline. Particularly interesting were several persons from as far away as Yakutia (7,500 kms) where they had a dozen churches in the Yakut language (Yakuts are experiencing a rebirth of their animist religiosity).

4. *Other Activities* – On Saturday, in addition to final grading and email tasks, I managed to visit the Evangelical book Bazaar, held in rented quarters on the last Saturday of the month. I actually met a student there, who introduced me to the editor of *Khristianstvo* magazine. I had already seen six issues of this magazine, which looked as thick and glossy as *Christianity Today*. They are in a new financial crisis, are combining with several other groups trying to publish books, and hope to continue. What I found most sobering at the book bazaar was the vast

quantity of books by a dozen activist American Evangelical missions, virtually everything published in translation. No doubt it is through this overwhelming of the local book publication work that the American Evangelical style is making its biggest impact. The REALIS group appears rather close to the American missionaries, even though Timchenko is also seeking a more indigenous approach and is critical of too American a style. But they appear not to have very many options so far.

Timchenko took me to the Arizona Restaurant Sunday morning for breakfast. This is a gathering place for many missionaries and their Ukrainian colleagues. Most of the churches that are part of the missionary association headed by Timchenko and Vasili Davidiuk in Kiev are using rented buildings that are available in the afternoon or evening. It is also an adaptation to the style, not to be too churchy, by having the gatherings later on Sunday. It seemed to me that many of the missionaries focus on one-to-one relationships (discipling), and come regularly to one of these emerging churches for their own worship and that becomes the church to direct their new converts to.

On Sunday the service was held at a large new church building that had been built by Phil Barnett, an American Pentecostal/Charismatic, all the funding raised in America. In the afternoon, a Presbyterian church used that facility, and at 5:30 the Spring of Hope church had its service. I watched the Presbyterian group, and my host even suggested that more of their members were middle-aged, whereas Spring of Hope had mostly single and newly married young people. I think too that the Presbyterians seemed to have attracted a professional group, also attracted by the English language.

At Spring of Hope, worship was led by six people singing with microphones, accompanied by an electronic piano. All the songs were personal praise of God songs, projected via laptop and projector on a screen, often with nature photos as background. Perhaps a third of the songs suggested a Ukrainian or Russian origin – beat and type of lyrics – with the rest translations from such songs in American community churches. There were at least four or five missionaries listening to my sermon critically, then apparently appreciatively. Later one of the missionaries led a consecration service for a group (perhaps 16-18 young people) who were starting a new church. They had already been meeting for discussion groups for some time, and the next Sunday they planned to start their own worship in a rented facility. (Their leader was another American missionary.) What I found rather odd was that both these missionaries, although they had lived about 8 years in Ukraine so far, preferred to speak through translators. My excuse often is that I do not stay long enough to get into the language deeply enough, the way I am accustomed to in German. Watching Steve Shirk or Mary Raber speak in Russian is to see them simply think in that cultural frame. By contrast, the two missionaries spoke in a style that was completely at home in a US setting – their references to Ukrainian society were not there, yet they do at least converse with their local friends in Russian. But even then they spoke Russian with a very pronounced American accent.

It was a pleasure to watch Yuri Reshetnikov, now Pro-Rector of the Kiev Christian University, perform. I asked him to come and give a guest lecture, which he did very well – giving the students an insight into what one of the new historian/theologians of the Evangelicals does. Reshetnikov gets called in to serve as outside reader on all Protestant theses at the Institute of Philosophy, as well as to make presentations at consultations. A further task is to be the expert for the ECB union on church and state matters. Ukraine is debating a somewhat tougher draft of legislation on religion; Reshetnikov and others have presented critiques and are hopeful the Rada will opt to stay with the old law of 1990 – still one of the most liberal in the CIS.

As one can read between the lines, this was a very rich experience for me, but also very tiring. The value to students seems so direct and obvious that I am of course ready to attempt it again, though I am not sure whether it needs to be in Kiev next time. There appear to be much greater needs for assistance and encouragement in Siberia, Central Asia, and even in central and eastern Russia, than in Ukraine.

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## **VISIT TO EKATERINBURG, RUSSIA**

**October 12-17, 2003**

**– report by Paul Mojzes –**

I received an invitation to attend a conference celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department of Archeography of the Urals State University. The Richard Stockton State College of New Jersey, where I am teaching during the current semester (fall 2003), paid for my travel. It was my fourteenth trip to Russia and my fourth to Ekaterinburg. The Archeography Department focuses on the Old Believers who settled in Ukraine, as well as on the missionary activities of the Russian Orthodox Church in Siberia and the religion of the native tribes of Siberia.

The conference took place on October 14-16, 2003, with about 40 participants, mostly from the Urals State University, but also from universities of Novosibirsk, Siktivkar, Tomsk, Tyumen, Novouralsk, Moscow, and Saint Petersburg. I was the sole participant from outside Russia. The conference language was Russian; my lecture was translated into Russian. I dealt with “The Role of Religion in the Balkan Wars of the Twentieth Century,” a lecture which was attended, in addition to conference participants, also by about 30 students who came to the Ekaterinburg Library for that occasion. I had also delivered two other lectures at the university – one to a class of about 50 modern history students which is taught by a professor who spent some time studying in Yugoslavia, and the other to a class of over 100 students of international relations. Both lectures were in English, with no need to translate, as the students were able to follow what I said, ask questions, and discuss in English. The students left a very positive impression on me. The conference itself was on a high level. Russian scholars have engaged in careful analyses of the Old Believers (five of whom had also attended the conference) and were free of the former obligatory Marxist analyses. The mood of the conference was positive – their discussion was constructive, with none of the one-upmanship that sometimes mars our scholarly meetings.

Several students approached me, telling me of their scholarly interest in religion and their interest in contributing articles to *Religion in Eastern Europe*. One had done some research about the Christian Peace Conference and another on teaching about religion in schools. They all have good skills in exploring the internet, making me more aware of the need for CAREE and *Religion in Eastern Europe* to have easily accessed internet sites, if we are to share our own work more widely.

I hesitate to make any generalizations based on a short trip, but let me share some impressions. Ekaterinburg is the fourth largest city of Russia. I visited it last four years ago, when it was so bitterly cold that I was mostly focused on getting indoors. This time the weather was mild and I was able to enjoy the city. In contrast to the earlier visit, the city seemed colorful and lively. Lots of new stores and restaurants had opened and there were many advertisements for a wide variety of products. The stores and supermarkets had a variety of products, and there were no longer the formerly ubiquitous long lines waiting to be served. Street cars and buses were no longer all of the same colors but were actually each differently painted in bright colors – blues, yellows, reds, purples, oranges, stripes and what have you. People seemed well dressed,

but I was told that the poverty of many, especially older people, does not meet the eye. It seems to me that, on the whole, the economic situation has improved in comparison to the early 1990s. During my last visit at Urals State University the buildings were unheated in sub-zero temperatures and a number of the window panes were broken, making both teaching and learning difficult. This time the windows were fixed and the buildings were heated.

I visited two churches, one Russian Orthodox and the other United Methodist. The Russian Orthodox is an enormous, recently built edifice near the site where the last emperor and his family had been murdered, called “Khram vo imya vsekh svyatyh v zemle Rossiiskoi prosiyavshikh” (“Temple of the Blood of All Saints Shed on Russian Soil”) or its secular name “Khram-Pamyatnik na krovi vo imya vsekh svyatyh v zemle Rossiiskoi prosiyavshikh” (“Memorial Temple of the Blood of All Saints Shed on Russian Soil”). The church attractively complements the sky-line of Ekaterinburg. It was a week-day afternoon, but a fair number of people came to worship or sightsee. While there was no liturgy at the time, a priest was chanting. People individually prayed, especially in front of the central icon. Elderly women prostrated themselves repeatedly. Quite a few school girls in their early teens also were present, reverently crossing themselves and praying and lighting candles.

As a United Methodist I was eager to see what the United Methodist Church looked like. I expected that it would resemble most Methodist churches of my childhood and youth in Yugoslavia – namely, be residential buildings with a hall dedicated for worship. To my surprise I found a rather attractive medium-sized modern church building situated in a residential district. The building contained a very attractive sanctuary and numerous classrooms and office space. Judging from the billboard, there are one or more clergywomen who are pastors of the congregation. It was early evening on a week-day, so there was only a doorman who let us in. It was obvious that both the building and the lot around it were carefully tended. I regret that I did not have a chance to talk to one of the clergywomen to get a better insight about the workings of the church.

Travel to Ekaterinburg has been made much easier. Lufthansa flies three times a week non-stop from Frankfurt. The narrow old road from the airport to the city has been widened into a modern highway. Curiously there was no duty-free shop; once the passengers go through passport control and customs, there is no food or anything else to be purchased. They are moving toward a consumer society but they aren't there yet. Some might find it attractive.

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### **APPRECIATION FOR CAREE AND RELIGION IN EASTERN EUROPE**

For your interest: CAREE and *Religion in Eastern Europe* receive a favorable write-up in the winter 2003 (6<sup>th</sup>) issue of the electronic *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*. Michael Jones – a CAREE member, and one of the editors of JSRI – authored the comments (which can be found on pp. 213-216). The electronic address of the journal is:  
[www.hiphhi.ubbcluj.ro/JSRI](http://www.hiphhi.ubbcluj.ro/JSRI)

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