

CAREE COMMUNICATOR
Winter 2008

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CAREE CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL MEETING

CONFERENCE (9:15 a.m.-3:00 p.m.)

ANNUAL MEETING (3:15 p.m.-5:00 p.m.)

February 1, 2008
Reformed Church of America's Meeting Room
InterChurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY

Note: Please register for conference. Since the Interchurch Center is a limited-access building, the front desk needs to have an accurate list of those who are planning to attend. Anyone besides conference presenters please send an e-mail to Jim Payton at caree@redeemer.ca no later than noon on Wednesday, January 30, 2008.

Our designated conference hotel is Hotel Edison, located at 228 West 47th Street (just west of Broadway), New York, NY 10036. Telephone: (212) 840-5000. The hotel is three blocks from a subway line which can take riders within five blocks of the InterChurch Center: Go to the subway station at 50th Street: take IRT #1 or #9 and exit at the 116th Street station. Walk north to 120th Street, then one block west to Claremont Avenue (where the entrance to the Interchurch center is located). Special conference rates: Single \$160.00, Double/Twin \$160.00, Triple Room with 2 double beds, \$175.00. Note that these rates do not include applicable taxes (approx. \$25-\$30/night, depending on room costs). These rates are only available to CAREE conference participants; to

accommodate conference participants' travel plans, these rates are available for Thursday, January 31, through Saturday, February 2, 2008.

Refer to “CAREE Conference” when you make the reservation.

Presentations:

Joe Loya, “An ‘Orthodox Culture’ Course for Schools in Russia: Review and Update.”

Heather DeHaan, “Orthodoxy in Russian History: Inspiration or Challenge?”

Mark Elliott, “Christian Ministry to Russian Orphans at Risk.”

Krystyna Gorniak-Kocikowska, “One More Specter of Communism in Poland: The impact of the book *Ksieza wobec bezpieki* (‘Priests and The Communist Security Forces’), by Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zaleski.

Reports on involvements in the past year in Eastern Europe:

Walter Sawatsky – recent involvements in Ukraine and Russia

Krystyna Gorniak-Kocikowska – on sabbatical in Poland

Paul Crego – Conference at the National Manuscript Institute in Tbilisi, Georgia; Recent presidential elections.

Ines Murzaku – on sabbatical, and on book for the University of Bologna Press, *Quo Vadis Eastern Europe? Religion, State and Society after Communism*

Duncan Hanson (via telephone, from Berlin) – on the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Romania (September 4-9, 2007)

Paul Mojzes and Jim Payton – “The 4th International Conference on Jasenovac” (Banja Luka, Bosnia – May 29-31, 2007)

Paul Mojzes, Jim Payton, and Ines Murzaku – “The Contribution of Religion and Culture to Peace, Mutual Respect and Cooperation” (World Conference on Dialogue Among Religions and Civilizations [Ohrid, Macedonia – October 26-28, 2008])

Jim Payton – on team-teaching a course (with Peter Kuzmic) on “Ecumenical Relations with Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy” at Evangelical Theological Seminary (Osijek, Croatia – May 21-25, 2007)

Annual Meeting: (3:15-5:00 p.m.)

MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

Membership dues notices for 2008 will be sent after the Annual Meeting, so you may pay the \$50 at the meeting or, if you do not plan to attend, you may get ahead of the notice anytime between now and then. Retired persons may decide whether they can afford that amount or something different. Graduate students are covered by our gratis policy.

If you are not sure of your payment record, please feel free to contact Paul at pcrego@yahoo.com or at the above address. If you need an acknowledgement for 2007 dues and have not received one, please let me know.

GIGLIA TEDESCO

(1926-2007)

Giglia Tedesco, a highly respected and revered leader in Italian politics, died in Rome at the age of 81. She served as a vice president of the Italian Senate from 1977 to 1987 and was a member of the Senate from 1968-1992. A practicing Roman Catholic, Tedesco was a leading member of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), having entered it when the Catholic Communist Movement joined the PCI in 1945. In 1991 she became one of the founders of the Democratic Left Party and the Democratic Left Ds, a federation aiming to unify leftist political parties in Italy. From very early in her career she was a leader of the Italian cooperative movement and a founding member and president of the Union of Italian Women. Throughout her life she worked unceasingly for the liberation of women. She insisted that all efforts to gain equal rights and justice for women must begin with the experience of women, “the feminist movement’s irreplaceable resource.” One of her crowning legislative achievements was passage of the Family Planning Law (divorce, adoption and abortion) which she co-authored. Members of all parties feted Tedesco for her ability to listen carefully to everyone, to respect those who differed from her and to promote constructive dialogue—all in the pursuit of the common good. An active participant in Marxist-Christian Dialogues, Tedesco attended dialogues in the United States sponsored by Christians Associated for Relations with Eastern Europe (CAREE) and lectured at universities, churches and CAREE meetings in the U.S. in the early 1980s.

TRIP REPORT – KAZAKHSTAN AND RUSSIAN

Pt. 2

Walter Sawatsky

NOVOSIBIRSK, OMSK

Novosibirsk, Siberia (Sept. 30-Oct. 1)

Because my train arrived late and it took me several hours after getting a hotel to figure out how to reach Andrei Peters by telephone, I missed getting to the Sunday morning Thanksgiving service of the Church Mennonites, meeting on Projektnaia 17. In fact, currently Peters lives there to also provide security for the building. When I met Andrei Peters Monday evening for supper he also told me that in recent months at least 6 younger people had started to attend, and Sunday afternoon they had conducted a discussion group with them. By 3pm Sunday it started to rain, and continued all day Monday, so my movements were also restrained by that. Nevertheless I did have three very informative meetings Monday during the course of the day.

First Dr. Alexander Savin, researcher at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences met me at the hotel. He gave me his recent book on the German Mennonites in Siberia during the time of the Stalinist repressions, plus several articles in journals. Indeed he left me his CV with other publications and I will request digital copies of some of the articles. He had just returned from a conference on Russian Germans, held in Dnepropetrovsk. It was organized by Harvey Dyck; Paul Toews attended, as did Johannes Dyck of Germany. Later I learned a bit more about the conference from Dr. Peter P. Vibe (Omsk), who also presented a paper. Savin is not a practicing believer, but a good scholar able to work through the archival materials in Akademgorod, thanks to grants provided through Paul Toews, who is finalizing details to produce an English translation of Savin's latest book. I had been using his earlier dissertation on the repressions of the Evangelicals 1920-41 in my course of teaching in Almaty. Several students found the book very helpful.

Secondly I spent several hours with Alexander Alekseev, director of the Bible League in Siberia, including with a colleague named Kuznetsov, who showed me several presentations on contextual church planting in Altai and gave me DVD copies. I will try to use them in class, possibly show them in my local church. It was a rather impressive story of indigenous Russian missionaries, largely recent converts, who went to the Autonomous Altai Republic (borders on Mongolia) to apply the Bible League methods. Those were to introduce through discussion groups little booklets on Who is God, Who is Jesus, before asking persons to buy a Bible, read it and continue the discussions. The materials were translated into Altai; there were now 10 churches functioning with local leaders. The approach of the Bible league is to assist all churches in their mission endeavors. That is, in Siberia they cooperate not only with the ECB churches (Alekseev's own Baptist congregation is more open to contemporary styles than the other Baptist churches in Novosibirsk [there are 10]); they cooperate also with Pentecostals, Adventists, Charismatics, and Lutherans. I did not get to meet Eduard Adolfovich Henrikh, the ECB senior presbyter for the region, who is also the head of a Bible School, located near Akademgorod.

In the evening I met with Andrei Peters, who described his life as local pastor, and who is still seeking to visit a small Mennonite group in Tomsk on a monthly basis. The financial support from Bielefeld ended. His computer that he used for maintaining church records, as well as to edit the Spasenie magazine that no longer appears, is broken, so communicating with email is limited. He tends to send sms via his cell phone. His father

Willi is home from the hospital after a heart attack but is under strict orders to rest, no travel, preaching, etc.

OMSK

On the train to Omsk, my neighbor was initially not talkative; we said only minimal things to each other in the evening. For some reason over morning tea we got introduced. It turned out he was the president of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian branch--that is, he ran Akademgorod. His training was in geology. This year they were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Siberian branch, so there had been a big event in Novosibirsk recently. He was headed for a similar celebration in Omsk that day. The Siberian division of the Academy of Sciences has 10 Filiale or satellites; Omsk was an important one, especially for research in natural gas. I told him of my involvement in history and began speaking a bit about the many studies, the sociological expeditions in particular, on the various religious traditions. Then we got on the gas theme. It turned out that most of the refineries were located around Omsk (partly explains its thriving economy right now), and he began to speak about a problem they were trying to resolve because their large oil reserves had large amounts of helium at the top and they were trying to devise a better way to use helium. Helium is not stable, has to be reduced to liquid at very low temperatures (140- centigrade) and is moved by air (road travel is too rough and the helium breaks down). Helium is particularly significant for nano-technology, as the controlled atmosphere within which time nano particles can be manipulated to create those amazing tiny machines that will continue to revolutionize our lives. The man kept stressing how now most large industrial developments and research had to be global or international. In his own case also, his children have been living in Chicago for 7 years, love it there and get paid well (educated scholars), but they want to return to Siberia because they have not found serious friends; things are too casual in America.

Konstantin & Galina Prokhorov hosted me in their house. I first met him several years ago at one of the conferences in Prague. He is now shifting from the completed MTh degree to work at a PhD in history through the University of Wales (i.e., fellow student with Mary Raber), with a focus on the Khrushchev years. He started his career in Pavlodar, Kazakhstan, moved to Omsk to teach in the Western Siberia Bible College about 3 years ago. A special interest for him for my trip was the opportunity it afforded him to become acquainted with persons in his region. So we started with setting an appointment with the archivist/museum director Peter P. Vibe (Wiebe), whom I had first met at a Mennonite history conference in 1999 in Zaporozh'e. Vibe just completed a dissertation on German Colonies in Siberia (the Dr. Nauk, like a habilitation, already had the first PhD). Vibe was soon interested in what Prokhorov was doing, offered to publish an essay by him in the museum's scholarly journal. We also got the royal tour of the museum, which is as good in quality as the main historical museum in Winnipeg. What struck me is that now there is a special theme on Admiral Kolchak, leader of the White Army in the Revolution, who had been a tsarist administrator of the region for 2 years, a

well educated man with broad interests. When we met again later, Vibe told me he had just talked by telephone to one of his students writing a master's thesis, who was reading my book like the Bible. So he likes to flatter, but I am also getting the sense that it is the style of approach I used, which is different from what was, perhaps also still is, written in Russia.

Omsk Brotherhood

On the second day early (7:00am) we left the apartment to go to the central Baptist Church where our driver Andrei (has own business selling welding supplies) was, as deacon, leading morning meditation for about 40 people, mostly women. At 8:00 am he drove us to the town of Marianovka, where Nickolai Martinovich Dyckman, with wife Katrina, still live in their house. It turned out to be October 3, his 78th birthday. Also present was Peter P. Epp, who had driven 100km from the other direction to meet with me. Soon also Viktor Nickolaevich Dyckman, who lives a few streets away, joined us. With Prokhorov present, we spoke Russian whenever he was involved. But then he started paging through the 850-page history of the Omsk Brotherhood that Epp had written---thought it a real treasure trove of information---and at times chatted with Epp while Dyckman and I conversed in Low German dialect, or even some high German. As far as the primary group of leaders is concerned, Low German is the primary means of discourse. Around 1990 they took a deliberate decision to switch all worship services to Russian, for evangelism purposes, and to incorporate the new believers. I will say more about the big book elsewhere. Suffice it to say here that they went out of their way to stress that at the very beginning there was a German Baptist as first leader of their church (1907) and that in the past nearly 2 decades they are again fully part of the Russian evangelical community. So for Prokhorov, eventually after several hours of trying to locate the Brotherhood in the spectrum of unions or independents, Epp finally said explicitly in Russian (had already explained to me in Low German well before that) that they were basically a Mennonite Brethren community: that was and remained their core, but they had always sought to be inclusive in relating to many groups, but always knew their own center as Mennonite Brethren who as group related to the other church groups.

If the visit turned out to be very helpful for Prokhorov's interests, that was also true for Peter Epp. He was certainly delighted to talk about his book and the type of research it had entailed, the challenge of writing and framing things. During the hour of driving back to Omsk where Epp drove us, therefore needing to drive a further 100km to get back home himself, he talked almost the whole time. We did more of that in Low German since I was sitting in the front with him, and he was telling me about their church life in Issil Kul. Another man is the leading minister, but Epp is also a minister and the meeting house till now is registered in his name, with his family living in quarters that are part of the building. Getting registered as a recognized union was difficult, and since 1991 they have not reached consensus on obtaining registration. So they do mission and service project accounting as a Brotherhood, but in legal terms local persons bear personal responsibility. I asked about their leadership patterns. They have tended to

follow election and ordination for life, and do not use term limits for the brotherhood leadership. So Dyckman remains the leader, until his health fails or he dies. Yet the impression is that their style of working is such that they need broad consensus for decisions, with no major conflicts that caused problems. The exception would be persons moving over into the Council of churches ECB, or a more recent case where one congregation that had lost many members to immigration, then suddenly had some Council of Churches persons move in to take over, only to sell the building almost immediately, so the brotherhood leaders went to see the CCECB leaders and admonished them that such an action was not right, and it got reversed. While at the Prokhorov's, where Epp stayed another 3 hours, he received a DVD full of documents, including all four CDs with documents, books, interviews from the EAAA project, several dissertations on Christians in Siberia. Prokhorov urged him to keep on writing. One focus that Prokhorov and I both stressed was for him to put together stories of faith under trial and the meditations that persons suffering imprisonment or other harassment had shared with him through interviews, or on paper. So it felt as if he went home energized to keep on working at assessing the story and teaching it to the coming generation.

(Part 3 will appear in the next *Communicator*.)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Dear Friends of the Religion in Europe Consultation,

Thanks to all of you who attended our sessions and business meeting at the 2007 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. The sessions were strong, and our business meeting generated many excellent ideas for our 2008 sessions.

I am writing to inform you in advance of our 2008 call for papers. It reads as follows:

The Religion in Europe Consultation is devoted to the interdisciplinary study of religion and the social, cultural, and political evolution of Europe. We welcome papers on any religion in any historical period, and we encourage submissions from a wide variety of disciplines. This year we especially seek proposals related to the following themes: (1) migration of religious groups in and out of Europe and identity/integration dynamics; (2) religion, values, and educational policy; (3) secularization and the secular character of contemporary society/culture; (4) the impact of the natural environment in European religious thought/practice; (5) assessing Philip Jenkins' *God's Continent*; (6) religion in European cinema. We welcome proposals that do not correspond to these themes, as well as proposals for complete sessions on European topics.

Please consider submitting a proposal for possible inclusion in our 2008 sessions. You are also encouraged to share this call with other scholars who might be interested in presenting their research.

Best wishes,

Robert Alvis

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[If you have received this by regular mail and would like it mailed electronically, let Paul know at pcrego@yahoo.com. Thanks.]