

## **"The New Battle for the Soul, Spirit, and Body of Russia in the 1990's"**

### **Introduction**

When I first visited the Russian cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg during a two week period in May 1992, I experienced some reflections of William Sargant in his writings three decades earlier. His work was entitled The Battle for the Mind.<sup>1</sup> Sargant was a psychologist and the son of a British Methodist clergy. The two populations which fueled his interests were persons, who in his appraisal, who used brain-washing techniques in promoting ideologies. The first were the Chinese communists which captivated his interests in the 1960s. Secondly, he studied American revivalists, particularly conservative branches of American Protestantism, and drew certain conclusions, as they utilized various methods of developing converts. The study population included snake handlers in the southern Appalachian Mountain area whose methods, in Sargant's opinion, drew parallels to the thought control processes used by the Chinese communists.

When one fast forwards three decades later when Mikhail Gorbachev introduced reforms in Russia, or the former Soviet Union, in the movement called "Perestroika", indeed there was a new battle raging. This battle called for the total personhood of the citizens of that vast Socialist Republic. My main focus will be on the souls, spirits, and bodies of Russia according to my observations and other research. I do not make the mistake of assuming there is a collective soul and spirit. Likewise, the body or the physical aspect of personhood has many shades of differences. I looked at the impact of environment and behavior

on health when I made a presentation before the Practical Theology working group here at the Oxford Institute in August 1992. The picture then and now is very distressing.

The body or bodies in Russia are still being acted upon by negative forces including environmental pollution of air, land, rivers, and streams. Despite some recent efforts to change advertising techniques in America the Marlboro Man and Joe Camel have been alive and well in Russia within the last decade. The result has been a high cancer rate due to the large tobacco consumption. Unfortunately, the young are becoming addicted early in life and do not have crusaders like the some 40 Attorneys General from our 50 American states to launch a reforming campaign around issues of nicotine.

Unfortunately, alcoholism a well documented public health problem, has also had little relief from either government or private campaigns. My own reflections (with tongue in cheek) have included a belief that we have found a way to win World War III by helping to promote destructive behavior in Russian and other CIS Country citizens as it increases bottom lines in multi-national corporations. For example, our fast food whose franchises now include Russia are lucrative and pass the same issues of developing clogged arteries in the citizens of Russia as we have in USA.

Likewise, the body is losing its battle for survival! For example, the average life span of a Russian male is 57 years. Abortion is the most accessible birth control method among women as evident by some women having as many as 10. Child health problems and mortality still remain high. Depression leading to suicide and addictions are leading health problems for adolescents and even

younger children. Beginning in 1992 the Young Pioneer Camps have ceased to function due to ideological shifts away from their earlier purpose of teaching communism. For the most part, there are no universal viable alternatives.

Even though briefly stated, my concept of the new battle for the body and mind is that through television, movies, VCR film production, and other means of mass media, Russia is copying the cultural artifacts which have put other Western countries in a collision course with nature and even human decency. Many of these products and practices are antithetical to the total well being of the person. Silently and often subtly the battle for the body is raging. The Russian society at the present time lacks physical fitness, including diet, exercise, and other health promoting programs for the masses.

In a separate section I will deal with the positive aspects of renewal in the Russian Orthodox Church pertaining to faith and the development of what I see as new thrusts in articulating a Practical Theology. They are in a strong position to expand on their base.

First, I want to offer an appraisal of what I see as other battles for the soul and spirit of Russia. Briefly stated, the ideologies are legion and militant. Dozens of groups are seeing Russia and other CIS Countries as "open season." I want to identify religious groups which pose a problem for Russia and in particular the Russian Orthodox Church. In surveying the situation in Russia in some form of cultural analysis, I have had very warm exchanges during each of my six visits there over the past five years and three months. These have included three visits in the Office of External Church Relations with Father Victor Petluchenko on the staff of the Patriarch at Saint Danielov Monastery in Moscow.

I have consulted with Father Daniel Hubiak, a representative from the Orthodox Church in America who serves as a liaison with the Russian Orthodox Church, and have met with priests including parish priests who are developing broad based spiritual development programs. They are concerned about family conflicts arising from alcoholism. They see these issues as spiritual problems.

Three significant meetings have been with the Priest, Father Arkady, responsible for reestablishing a Russian Orthodox Church at a 1000-bed General Medical Surgical Hospital in Moscow. Also the three meetings with the Sisters of Saint Dimitri, a non-celibate religious order have been warm and cordial. They have established an orphanage and are building a combined orphanage and shelter in Moscow for females age three to eighteen. These functions are in Moscow. I'm convinced enough of the value of their ministry that I am a very willing benefactor of their work.

In May of 1997 I had two very cordial meetings of 90 minutes each with Bishop Constantin, Rector of the 600 student body Saint Petersburg Theological Academy. Formerly, he practiced medicine for nine years before he became a priest and then a bishop. Also, one of his Deans was very open to the thirty five persons delegation of which I was a part in a meaningful dialogue. We were invited to the seminary and we were given a tour. The student body consists of young males, second vocation men, and about 90 women studying in fields of both church music and church art. Bishop Constantin established a new seminary in Belarus. He reports that Orthodox seminaries in Russia have developed from three to 25 in the past 10 years.

The following is an appraisal of their views about foreign ideologies coming to stake out a claim in Russia. I am reminded of what it must have been like in the Gold Rush to California in America in the late 1840's and following years. Groups which official Russian Orthodoxy has difficulty with include: the Moonies, Hare Krishna, the Church of Scientology, and Mormons. Concerning the latter, one of the Deans cited above at St. Petersburg a Theological Academy accounted for 10 schools which Mormons have established in Saint Petersburg. To say the least his feelings about this initiative are not cordial.

The problem is that the religious activities of the above groups are seen as thrusting different ideologies on their "Motherland." I was not given a direct appraisal of the groups like the eight represented by CoMission, a Coalition of American Protestant Evangelical groups. The general official attitude is that Evangelical groups are not welcome. A number of other countries have had "missionaries" go forth to the former Iron Countries not only to Russian and the CIS, but to many of the other Eastern Bloc countries.

Also, I do not have a direct appraisal of the battle for the soul and spirit of Russians launched by American Methodism, James Dobson in his hundreds of radio stations carrying Focus on the Family, or hundreds of TV stations carrying religious programs from a spectrum of Evangelical and Charismatic positions originating in America. In the program originating weekly from the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, USA, the messages are dubbed in Russian. The Trinity Broadcasting Service also is having programs originating in California carry a Pentecostal and Charismatic flavor through dozens of stations to millions of persons in Russia.

There are even more subtle ways of trying, on the part of "outside" groups, to influence the souls and spirits of Russians. Efforts include the distribution of Bibles in Russian programs, and the offering of medical supplies, food, and clothing to Russia and other CIS Countries. I met a United Methodist clergy from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. He is a former psychiatrist and former Russian Orthodox priest. When I met him on a plane en route to Moscow he was wearing a very visible cross, beard, Texas hat and boots, and he was shepherding 15 huge boxes of clothing to a city in his native Siberia. Compassion and evangelical fervor have him replicating some of the earlier acts of John Wesley in going out to the poor. The Reverend Doctor George is going under a new banner. (He witnesses well now for Methodism).

He is living out his Practical Theology in reaching out to the needy in his homeland. I met a Pentecostal band of 28 men who had established 24 congregations in Russia and neighboring CIS countries in revival campaigns; all of this was in less than 30 days. I know another evangelist of the American Wesleyan (Methodist) Church and a widowed grandmother of a Wesleyan Minister who have been avid preachers and teachers to eager Russian masses. Doctor Clyde takes Bibles, Medical supplies, and gets support of local Russian leadership including the city mayor. His wife holds teas for women. The shortfall is: "Who does the follow-up?"

I have not been given a direct appraisal by official Russian Orthodoxy of the Methodist initiative in which 50 new congregations have been established in the past half dozen years. Probably a less threatening initiative to Russian Orthodoxy has been the work of Korean Methodists in Moscow led in part by a United Methodist clergy from the New York United Methodist Annual

Conference. It is reported that in shaping a ministry to some 8,000 Koreans in Moscow, they plan to build a million- dollar Korean Center which will have a worship center, a college, and a seminary. I'm told that the church led by Bishop Sun Do Kim of the 60,000 member Seoul Korean Methodist Congregation is pledging the \$1,000,000 to build this center in Moscow.

To say the least one would need to expand the title and say that these are new battle(s) for the soul and spirit of Russia. They must feel like native Americans felt with all these intrusions by foreigners. It is not easy to enter into dialogue as long as the Russian Orthodox Church prefers to be monolithic.

It is obvious that the genie is out of the bottle. Old Believers, Mennonites, Adventists, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Lutherans and even Methodist along with Jews of different persuasions who were present in Russia at the time of the October 1917 Revolution, groups are seeing a kind of new awakening of the Russian Orthodox Church. This is a contemporary scene accompanied by both Evangelical and New Age efforts to breathe new life into a country rich in resources, where one third of the population is below the poverty level, and where the intrusiveness of these new groups are not wanted by official Russian Orthodoxy.

### **"Practical Theology: A Critique of Russian Orthodox Positions on Spirit, Soul, and Body After Peristroika"**

The Russian Orthodox Church in Russia offers a new paradigm as would be applied to the field of Practical Theology. Their pastoral theology comes from the base of the scriptures as they understand them from the patristic writings

going back to at least the fourth century in Egypt. There is a perspective offered by Abba Anthony and other early founders of the monastic movement. Spirituality has a strong influence in what we would discern to be in the field of Practical Theology.

Father Vladimir articulates a Christian Anthropology which has captivated the interest of a number of us from the West. He is very gracious and accepts us as far as he can go in ecumenical dialogue. There is a profoundness about him that is captured by Methodist theologians like Professor Tom Oden at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. Father Vladimir in the words of the late O. Hobart Mowrer has not "sold his soul for a mess of psychological pottage."

The three parts of the human person which Father Vladimir accents is body, soul, and spirit. First, I recognize there is a difference in the concepts of body, mind, and spirit to which I have been accustomed. Father Vladimir identifies the "vertical relationships" of the human being to God. On the horizontal level, Father Vladimir's categories are mind, will, and feeling. In his paradigm he sees the three parts of the vertical aspects of the human relationship to God as combining with the three horizontal aspects of the human person. With the latter I find my long time concepts of intellect, emotion, and will as being closer to the horizontal categories of Father Vladimir.

Father Vladimir's doctorate is in Developmental Psychology from Saint Petersburg State University in 1971. He practiced as a Clinical Psychologist subsequent to his graduate work in psychology. He is a graduate of the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy where he became an ordained Russian Orthodox priest. Despite his formal psychological background, my perception is



that if one would scratch him he would first bleed theology. I find that he moves between what a number of us know as humanistic psychology to a new statement of "humanitarian psychology."

Father Vladimir makes a further three part characterization of the human being in spatial terms. First, there is the state of the human being in heaven. The Holy Father (I'm assuming this to be the Patriarch versus the Pope as Holy Father) called this the "nature state before the Fall." Here, I'm a little perplexed as to the human being having come to earth from having had a place in heaven before "the Fall." Even though Matthew Fox, an American Episcopal Priest recently converted to the Episcopal Church, does not place the human being in heaven, he does identify the human person as being in a state of "original goodness." The controversy lead to his being in disfavor with his Catholic order. (His ministry continues as an Episcopal Priest and Pastoral Theologian).

Father Vladimir places the human being in a second state after "the Fall." This is in a lower state than the first. The third state of the human being is the state of Jesus Christ after the resurrection. The hope here is that the human being would live forever, Father Vladimir states the Holy Father called this "the supernatural state." In the future prospect for the Christian the "creation of a new heaven and a new earth" referred to as God's kingdom and a new world.

During our new "spiritual" lifetime we take on the new life in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the head of the "new" body and we (the new creatures in Christ) are the new members. These changes take place in the church where we have the sacraments and learning of the gospel truth. Those who have entered the

new life are called holy and they (we) live in Jesus Christ. In Father Vladimir's words we are "restored."

In his application of the vertical dimension of the human being in relation to God, Father Vladimir sees the soul being "led by the grace of the Holy Spirit". We are directed by God and we keep (not just seek to keep) God's commandments. There is the spiritual being and inner being (in Father Vladimir's words the spiritual man or the inner man). In a statement as the main problem of Orthodox psychology we are to lead from the spiritual state to the soul state. (This needs further elaboration).

In the opening statement in this section I stated that one of the authorities for Orthodox practical theology is scripture. The parables which Father Vladimir highlights are those which deal with the Kingdom of God. These are the seed, the pearls, and the heaven.

The way in which the spiritual life of the human being is promoted is in spiritual worship including the sacraments, the use of icons, the shape of the Church building, the color of the priest's clothing and the priest's movement with incense.

The Orthodox Church has sought to observe this symbolism. The symbolism is a foundation of the new culture. Father Vladimir states that this should not be mixed with a humanistic world view.

For Father Vladimir the focus of a new anthropology for the Western culture is to focus on the subject and the symbolic. This will bring in a new

culture. The primary goal of Christian psychotherapy is to restore humankind and prepare for the resurrection. In words which are a part of our Methodist heritage, Father Vladimir sees a part of what we are about is getting sanctified; including one's will, one's heart, and one's feelings.

The goal is "whole mindedness." In his words Father Vladimir states that this means maintaining one's purity and abstaining from fornication. (For the married this would include abstaining from adultery). Whole-mindedness is making the human being whole. He states that Christian therapy should be used implicitly. I see him as the strongest embodiment in Russia where psychology and anthropology as behavioral science provides a basis for a newly emerging Practical Theology.

Practical theology from the Russian Orthodox perspective involves the healing of the soul and the spirit. The church is to be a kind of hospital which aids in the restoration of the whole person. In these functions a Russian psychologist or a psychiatrist is not a substitute for a priest. The challenge is to integrate these two formal professional backgrounds. The offering of sacraments including confession (reconciliation) is a key function of the priest. Part of the priestly function would include the performance of the role of the "staretz", a spiritual guide or spiritual director who would enable the person to experience the mysteries and to aid the person who experiences spiritual warfare. There is a strong sense of struggle with the focus of good and evil.

Whether it is the Russian Orthodox psychologist or the "staretz" the goal is to aid the person on one's way to God. The function of the Orthodox psychologist is to seek the cure of the soul by offering spiritual therapy,

according to Father Vladimir. In Galatians 5:17 he sees the ongoing conflict between the spirit and the body. A favorite parable of Father Vladimir is Luke 15. Here the younger son demonstrated the evidence of the Fall. As the son came back to the Father he was given a ring to wear and boots to wear (Father Vladimir's cultural adaptation of the text). He was given a white garment. The spirit of the person in Christian therapy is trying to reach God. The color white remains a symbol of purity- the prodigal son was cleansed.

The person of Christ is a very key part of Father Vladimir's Practical Theology. He sees Jesus Christ's humanity as a human being. He was tempted, tortured, and put to death. Christ's resurrection brought with it a new dimension. He could walk through a closed door and both appear and disappear. He could both eat and fast.

In the sacramental life of the church Father Vladimir sees the value of the offering by the priest, holy baptism, and anointing for healing. The human being is to seek repentance and purification. This parallels the historical experiences of justification and sanctification. (How Wesleyan Father Vladimir appears to be!) His concept of patriarchy is live and well. He sees the importance of obedience to the elders, those who are viewed as wise persons (men) of the Church. One way Father Vladimir's close affinity to the role of the "staretz" is to practice the Jesus Prayer. This was offered by gifted men. Their role as religious leaders was to teach and monitor the younger (men).

Father Vladimir sees alien thoughts as possibly being defined as fallen spirits. A person will be engaged in this fight the rest of his/her life. He sees light stages or facets of the struggle. These are:

1. Adultery
2. Excessive eating (gluttony)
3. Anger
4. Love of money
5. Pride
6. Arrogance
7. Sorrow
8. Depression

The psychologist (caregiver) needs psychotherapy. For instance this is a standard of American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) for its certified levels of membership. The goal of the Christian psychotherapist is to bring the soul to Jesus Christ. The emphasis on pluralism in the AAPC would not have a place as a viable option of the above. (Also the organization is also competing as a mental health resource and does not want to jeopardize this possibility with third party payers). As Father Vladimir reflects on the state of Russia in the 1990's, he views the crisis of the country as that of the prodigal son returning home.

The most negative critique I can offer the splendid work of Father Vladimir is the official position of the Russian Orthodox Church parallels the stance of the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople in having an all male clergy. The Roman Catholic Church is farther along in opening certain functions of the church to women than is Russian Orthodoxy. The one exception is the formal training of women in seminaries as cited above. In none of the positions of the bishop of Rome and the 14 Eastern Orthodox patriarchs has there been a place for the function of women as priests or bishops.

On the positive side their approach to Practical Theology is very scripture based (the Orthodox interpretation) and very sacramental. The Russian Orthodox Church is reclaiming its sacramental function in hospitals and other public institutions which take responsibility for the care of the person's total well-being. There has been a recent reclaiming of priestly functions in hospitals, hospices, and shelters for battered women and children. They are marvelous in their vision of the care of the poor, the sick, the abused and the incarcerated.

### **Official Eastern Orthodoxy Speaks after Perestroika is Activated in Russia**

Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All of Russia (his official title), His Holiness, made a captivating theological statement on November 11, 1991. The occasion was the receiving of the Doctorate Honoris Causa at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York. Just three weeks earlier on October 22, 1991 Metropolitan Bartholomew of Chalecdon was elected as the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Bishop Kallistos Ware reported on some significant theological positions.

A third statement of great theological significance was made by Kyril, Archbishop of Smolensk and Kalinigrad. Archbishop Kyril gave his report on "The Church in Relation to Society after Perestroika" to the Council of Bishops of the Church of Russia. The meeting was held at St. Danielov Monastery in Moscow on October 9-11, 1989. I will be examining these positions as it relates to my quest for a statement which articulates the present Orthodox stance after approximately 75 years of being dominated by an oppressive Communist regime in what was then the Soviet Union. (It is interesting to note that in other Eastern Bloc countries the Bishops, Archbishops, and Patriarchs were acknowledging

that their predecessors in office allowed themselves to be far too subservient to the respective Communist governments. Confessions of the sins of the Fathers is always good for the soul.

The pendulum swerved and in Turkey the government exercised its prerogative to have a list of names from which they would approve, to be used for the selection of the new Patriarch of Constantinople following the death of Patriarch Dimitrios who died on October 2, 1991. I state this shift to emphasize that church-state relations under authoritarian governments all have problems. Nonetheless, three courageous men, two are Patriarchs and one an Archbishop, have begun to make a witness to their faith in a new era.

There is a different perspective on ecumenical relations as stated by Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, including Patriarch Alexis II from Moscow along with all their fellow Bishops present except the Bishop of Georgia who's country was embroiled in civil war (in early 1992) and the Bishop of Cypress who's country did not have diplomatic relations with Turkey, these spiritual leaders had a significant summit meeting.

The following are positions articulated by Patriarch Bartholomew as proposed the first week of Lent in March 1992.

- The strengthening of pan-Orthodox unity
- The continuation of existing dialogues with other Christian communions.
- The summoning of a synaxis of the bishops of the ecumenical - patriarchate every two years.
- The reopening of the theological academy of Halki (in Turkey).
- The publication by the patriarchate of an official periodical and an annual calendar (all the patriarchate's publications were suspended by the Turks in the 1960s)<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Kallistos Ware reports the above to be a remarkable gathering and a remarkable initiative- an entirely new step.

..."no such gathering has ever been convened in the modern history of Orthodoxy." "In their concluding message, the hierarchs deplore what they saw as the encroachments by Roman Catholics- and by Protestant fundamentalists- in the traditionally Orthodox countries now liberated from communism. "Every form of proselytism- to be distinguished clearly from evangelization and mission- is absolutely condemned by the Orthodox", they stated. But nothing was said about breaking off official talks with Rome: here we may see the new patriarch's moderating hand.

So with surprising speed- especially by the standards of the Christian East- the new patriarch has begun his period of office with an impressive demonstration of Orthodox solidarity. 'The Orthodox Church', he insisted, "cannot remain speechless and indifferent to the challenge facing us at the end of this millennium." Certainly he is doing his utmost to assist Orthodoxy in finding its voice."<sup>3</sup>

Patriarch Alexis II in his address, just four months earlier, principally before an American audience at St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary in New York, gave a very good overview of what he perceived to be issues within Russian Orthodoxy versus the Pan-Orthodox position stated by the Patriarch of Constantinople. He viewed the Russian Orthodox Church as "facing great challenges both for its life and for its social ministry and witness."<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting that this perspective parallels the emphasis of John Wesley in his early focus on vital piety and social holiness as he begun what he hoped to be a renewal of his own Anglicanism. Patriarch Alexis II in stating his perspective, views the decade of the 1990s in Russia to be characterized by:

a growing moral lapse, and among the young generation in particular. This is manifested in the growing cruelty and number of crimes, in the number of people who have become captives of alcoholism and drug addiction, and in sexual dissoluteness which has become ordinary, and in the destruction of families.<sup>4</sup>



The Patriarch further elaborates on the problem and he outlines some steps which can be taken, and in fact already are being taken:

The trust in state and public institutions among our people is so low now, and social infrastructures appear so weak, that many people of different social status and political orientation turn their eyes to the Church, searching for help to solve their problems, be it international conflicts, social protection of deprived persons, saving the perishing monuments of national culture, or revival of the Russian village. As servants of the Church, lay activists are awaited eagerly in hospitals and prisons, homes for aged people and orphanages- in short, in all places where there is a special need for a pastorally consoling word, sensitive church care and effective Christian help inspired by love. The social non-uses of church structures for seven decades has now given way to these calls for help and protection, coming from everywhere.<sup>5</sup>

I find the Russian Patriarch to be very visionary for a new day for spiritual renewal and mission of Russian Orthodoxy in his own territory. He offers the following point of view:

Now that we have the opportunity to work openly toward the spiritual enlightenment of our people, we are facing an urgent need to teach the truths of the Orthodox faith to millions of people who consider themselves to be children of the Church. And nearly an equal number of our compatriots are on a spiritual quest, expecting as St. Paul said, an "accounting for the hope that is on you." This is why we need catechetical literature capable of influencing the mind and heart of the modern reader. In this regard, I would like to express my deep gratitude to your Theological School, which has prepared several wonderful books that are being reprinted now in our country and used by our catechists.<sup>6</sup>

This is expressing appreciation for St. Vladimir's seminary in New York for its role in assisting the Russia Orthodox church in its functioning after "Perestroika." Its thrust in 1988 began the second millennium in that the birth of the Russian Orthodox began with the first recorded baptism on its soil in 988 AD.

In the work of Theological Education the Russian Patriarch sees training for Pastoral Ministry to involve the following: "Bible Studies, patristic, liturgy, church history, and so forth, that will provide the Church with its own scientific

elite who will produce fundamental studies in various spheres of catechetical and church related social work."<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the main task of the theological schools of our Church- whose numbers are increasing, by the grace of God- is to train and educate pastors. It is they who must assume the laborious, everyday work of creating Christian community , united in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; just as they must be capable of bearing active witness to their faith and serving the needs of their neighbors. To realize such education, however, our entire system of theological education needs to be thoroughly restructured, in order to adapt it to the requirements of our times.<sup>8</sup>

The Patriarch is appreciative of the linkage with St. Vladimir's Theological Academy which has an organic linkage with the once glorious Russian Theological Academies and Seminaries. He thanked them for helping in developing adequate materials for the religious instruction including catechism of the young Christians. His single purpose is seen in carrying out the difficult task of "providing spiritual renewal for the people of Russia."<sup>9</sup>

The goal can only be realized if the following issues can be adhered adequately:

And in this regard we are facing still another urgent problem. Trusting in the grace of God, we believe that He will call many young people to serve Him: convinced Christians, honest and sincere in their determination to serve for the good of His Church. The duty of the Hierarchy, therefore, is to do everything possible to facilitate proper training of future pastors, that they might become true spiritual leaders of our long-suffering people.<sup>10</sup>

The seminary takes on a particular challenge as it surveys the backgrounds of its students who come from non-Orthodox backgrounds. Also at St. Vladimir's Seminary, a half of the students come from families outside the Orthodox faith.

A considerable number of the students in our theological schools were also brought up in families who do not have even the most elementary notions of Christian teaching. The Lord has called these students at a mature age, and many of them are devoted to the Church. But as the Lord said, "the harvest is

plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Mt 9:37). Thousands of Orthodox communities have come into existence in recent years, and they await new laborers in Christ's vineyard.<sup>11</sup>

## **Summary and Conclusion**

My intention is to present evidence that a new battle for the soul, spirit, and body of Russia has existed for the past decade. As Russian Orthodoxy celebrated the beginning of its second millennium in 1988 this was continues with the "great liberation" under Peristroika. This has led into a great awakening of Russian Orthodoxy. In its early history it became a spiritual giant in both promoting and defending the historic Trinitarian Christian faith. As Methodists our early spiritual leader had been greatly influenced by the spirituality of Eastern Orthodoxy. This giant was virtually bound and gagged by Communist leadership for about 75 years - 1917 to 1992.

Since working with them in Russia beginning in May 1992, I have seen two major thrusts. First, the Russian Orthodox Church is awakening and using the bear as a metaphor for it is beginning to growl. It growls at a government which has struggled with "freedom of conscience" legislation which is officially a part of their constitution. Secondly, for those outside of official Russian Orthodoxy it growls at us.

Unfortunately, we in world wide Methodism are lumped with unlikely bed-fellows of Moonies, Hare Krishna, Church of Scientology, and even Japanese and other Asian "cults." We are seen as a sect in much the same way the Catholic Church, at least in America, viewed us before the convening of Vatican Two in the early to mid 1960s. Our relief efforts have been very welcome. Global Ministries, the United Methodist Commission on Relief, and outreach like

the Methodist Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, USA have made significant contributions which have been most welcome.

I have been a part of the faculty of the Moscow Christian School of Psychology and a Board member since 1992. Our Moscow relationship is with the Center for Psychology and Psychotherapy: A Christian perspective. In May of 1997, our graduating class consisted of 20 students including 18 believers, one non-believer, and one Muslim. They received Master's degrees in Counseling Psychology. They will be working in Orphanages, Hospices, and setting up counseling Centers in different parts of Russia.

Our dialogue and relationships with official Russian Orthodoxy has been very warm and cordial. Our umbrella there is the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Psychology.

Our graduates received diplomas from Moscow State University, the Harvard University of Russia. The Director of our school is Dr. Alexander Machnach a doctoral level Psychologist and a very dedicated Russian Orthodox Christian. Dr. Machnach (Sasha) and his boss, Dr. Andre Brushlinsk; Director of the Institute of Psychology, have been appointed to a Board by President Yeltsin of Russia to establish standards to regulate the practice of Psychology in Russia. Our leadership has high visibility and high credibility.

We have had three significant conferences on Integration of Theology and Psychology. Two were in Saint Petersburg and one was in Moscow. I have attended a conference which traced the History of Psychology in Eastern Europe for the period of the Communists Revolution in 1917 and traced the events in 1993. We met in the former Institute of Communism, on what is now a University

campus. They identified the persecution of Psychologists which lead to imprisonment and perhaps death. All this was on ideological grounds. Now Psychologists are conducting research on the impact of Religion on Culture. One paper sought to distinguish Soul from Spirit. It was a scholarly academic Psychology study. The potential is to conduct cross cultural research where values in their context and values in other national contexts are explored.

In closing, it is a new era. Practical Theology has a lot to offer along with the beauty of the Russian Orthodox liturgy. To enter into lives of the suffering is a real challenge. To bring hope is an ingredient they sorely desire. I plan more follow-up.

Thank you for the opportunity for sharing these perspectives.

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The Reverend O. Ray Fitzgerald, Member

United Methodist California Pacific Annual Conference

Present Position: Director of Spiritual Ministry, NIH Clinical Center. Bethesda, MD.

**Mailing and Phone Address:**

National Institute of Health Clinical Center

Bldg. 10, Room 14 South/ 231

Bethesda, MD 20892-1952

Phone (301) 496-3407

Pager (202) 597- 3771

e-mail: ray\_fitzgerald@nih.gov

**Home Address:**

6606 Greyswood Road

Bethesda, MD 20817

Phone (301) 365- 2234