

Oriental Affairs in the Moscow Academy of Sciences until he left last year. He will be working part-time at Keston College and part-time with the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. We have recently welcomed Judy Grieves as our new secretary. Keston College now has a warden in the person of Richard Ablitt, a young man but an old supporter, who is in charge of the finances and the administration of *RCL*.

We hope to publish the same number of pages in the journal in 1975 as we did in 1974. Provided that support for our work continues, we hope to publish a further issue before the end of the year.

We still need substantial new support, but recognise with deep gratitude that our efforts are now beginning to bear fruit.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX

Religious Broadcasting into the Soviet Union

Keston College has begun an extensive survey of Christian radio programmes broadcast into the Soviet Union. This report is a summary of progress made so far—it is by no means comprehensive. Research is being conducted into the following aspects of the broadcasts :

1. (a) Identification of radio stations broadcasting Christian programmes into the Soviet Union.

(b) The programmes and their purposes—a survey of (i) the technical side of the broadcasts—the frequency, target area, languages, etc. and (ii) their ideological basis, i.e. the “credo” that has led to their involvement in Christian broadcasting to the Soviet Union. (The content of this section is mainly dependent on material received from the radio stations themselves.)

(c) Sponsorship of programmes : involvement in broadcasting of missions to communist countries.

2. “Official” reactions to Christian broadcasts, as expressed in Soviet newspapers and books.

3. “Unofficial” reactions to Christian broadcasts, as expressed in letters to the radio stations from believers and unbelievers; and in conversations between believers and Western visitors.

1. (a) Identification of radio stations broadcasting Christian programmes into the Soviet Union.

These radio stations fall into two groups : those which broadcast only Christian programmes into the Soviet Union (1-8 and 12), and those

larger stations which broadcast Christian programmes as part of their output to the Soviet Union (9, 10, 11, 13).

Contact has been established with most of the stations listed below. We do not assume that the list is comprehensive.

1. TRANS-WORLD RADIO, Monaco. (TWR)
TRANS-WORLD RADIO, Bonaire Island.
2. FAR EASTERN BROADCASTING COMPANY, Seoul. (FEBC)
FAR EASTERN BROADCASTING COMPANY, Manila.
FAR EASTERN BROADCASTING COMPANY, San Francisco.
3. VOICE OF THE ANDES, Quito, Ecuador.
4. RADIO TRANS-EUROPE.
(a) IBRA RADIO, Stockholm.
(b) ADVENTIST WORLD RADIO.
5. TEAM RADIO FAR EAST, Seoul, Korea.
6. FAMILY RADIO NETWORK, Oakland, California.
7. RADIO KICY, Alaska.
8. RADIO FAIRBANKS, Alaska—part-time because of atmospheric conditions.
9. BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION, London (BBC).
10. DEUTSCHE WELLE, Germany (DW).
11. VOICE OF AMERICA (VoA).
12. RADIO VATICAN.
13. RADIO LIBERTY, Munich (RL).

1. (b) Programmes and their purposes.

Information about the programmes and their purposes is being sought from the radio stations themselves. So far we can give the following (incomplete) summary of the amount of Christian broadcasting.

<i>Station</i>	<i>Hours per Week Broadcast</i>	<i>Languages</i>	<i>Transmitters</i>
(1) TWR MONACO	27h 35m	Russian, Ukrainian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Armenian, Yiddish	2x100kw S/W 1x1.2mw M/W
TWR BONAIRE	4h 40m		50kw S/W
TWR CYPRUS	1h		600kw M/W
<i>Total</i>	33h 15m		
(2) FEBC MANILA	38h 30m	Russian	
FEBC SEOUL	7h 25m		250,000 watts
FEBC CALIFORNIA	14h		50,000 watts
<i>Total</i>	60h 5m		
(3) VOICE OF THE ANDES	66h 30m	Russian	100,000 watts

(4) RTE				250,000 watts
(a) IBRA RADIO	13h	Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian		
(b) ADVENTIST WORLD RADIO	45m(?)	Russian, Ukrainian		
(5) TEAM RADIO	21h	Russian		50,000 watts
(6) FAMILY RADIO NETWORK	28h	Russian		
(7) RADIO KICY	3h 30m	Russian		5 or 10,000 watts
(8) RADIO FAIRBANKS (approx)	10h	Russian		50,000 watts
(9) BBC	1h	Russian		
(10) DEUTSCHE WELLE	specifically Christian programmes minimal	Russian		
(11) VOICE OF AMERICA	unknown; but regular talks by Archbishop John of San Francisco	Russian		
(12) RADIO VATICAN	7h plus Liturgy 2 or 3 times a month	Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Lithuanian, Latvian		
(13) RADIO LIBERTY	10m (to be increased)	Russian		1,000,000 watts S/W 11 transmitters
<i>Total</i>	243h 30m+			

As for the "credo" of the stations, statements received show the desire to communicate the Christian Gospel to those deprived of other means of hearing it. Most stations distinguish between "teaching" programmes for believers and "evangelistic" programmes for non-believers. TWR describe their purpose thus: ". . . we try to present the Gospel to people of all walks of life, to various age groups and to those of various levels of education. . . . We try to give the Russian listener the opportunity to hear the claims of Christ—to hear what the Bible has to say."

The aim of Voice of the Andes ". . . is to present to the Russian people the Word of God and its teachings about God and man." Music is important: it "usually takes up about 50 per cent of our programme time. We have found that music will reach the heart when words themselves are powerless."

1. (c) Sponsorship of programmes.

Most of the Christian radio stations say they are supported financially by freewill offerings. Some of this financial backing—it is difficult to estimate what proportion of it—is provided by missions to communist countries. The missions seem in most cases to limit themselves to financial sponsorship of the broadcasts and to have little or no involvement in their content. We know of no missions which broadcast their own programmes ; they seem rather to finance the work of the stations listed above.

2. “Official” Soviet reaction to Christian broadcasts.

Foreign radio broadcasts are frequently attacked in Soviet newspapers and books. The charges levelled against them include propagation of a Western/American/capitalist/bourgeois way of life, attacks on the Soviet way of life, interference in internal Soviet affairs, propaganda to break up the Soviet system, and so on.

Religious broadcasting is however considered a sufficiently important subject for additional individual treatment. Since 1970 the Soviet press has treated this subject in eight separate books and newspapers.¹ Two of these are long chapters in books devoted to Western centres for the study of religion in the Soviet Union. One is a major newspaper article devoted exclusively to foreign religious broadcasts. Three are newspaper articles on religion in the West in which the foreign radio broadcasts have significant mention. Two are references in books on scientific atheism.

The idea repeated *ad nauseam* in all the Soviet criticism of foreign religious broadcasts is that they are simply a cloak for propaganda in favour of the western way of life and against the Soviet system. Other criticism is little more than personal attacks on broadcasters. The ostensible aim of contact with Soviet believers and the wish to send them religious information is never taken seriously for an instant.

Many criticisms are repeated in the above articles in more than one place, indeed, whole sentences are more than once repeated verbatim. The overall impression is of stereotyped criticism, an automatic reaction, rather than of carefully thought out analysis.

3. Listeners' Reactions.

Listeners' reactions come partly from their letters to the West, published by missions to communist countries and by the radio stations themselves. One mission quotes a listener as writing :

. . . every believing family listens . . . and draws spiritual strength from them, especially those who are out in distant places (*Underground Evangelism Magazine*).

This is typical of the extracts printed, which give an overall impression of undiluted gratitude for the Christian broadcasts. This impression is also largely, though not entirely, given by the letters printed by radio stations.

Between September 1973 and August 1974 letters from listeners published by some of the Christian radio stations included 40 from the USSR. Four of these expressed unfavourable reactions to the Christian broadcasts, the rest were warmly favourable. One critical letter said :

We are very amused that you are broadcasting such programmes. Just the same, no one here will believe in God, except the old generation. We will never believe in God, but will continue to believe in the Soviet Government, in communism and in Lenin.

The remaining 90 per cent of the letters expressed gratitude for the programmes and said they were of great spiritual value. One listener wrote : "I cannot imagine that I could be a true Christian without your programmes."

There is no indication of what proportion of letters received are published by the radio stations, so the volume of correspondence is difficult to assess. Some stations or sponsoring organizations report receiving "many" letters or "hundreds" of letters. Voice of the Andes in Ecuador reports that in 1972 they received 948 letters from the Soviet Union, and in 1973, 570 letters.

However, recent visitors to Moscow have reported strong criticism of foreign Christian broadcasts. One drew the following tentative conclusions after discussing them with several leading Orthodox intellectuals :

Everyone I spoke to said the foreign broadcasts were bad. They felt strongly about it. When I asked what they would prefer to hear, the most frequent answer was "theology". They crave teaching, ideas, intellectual discussion of a high order. They complain that they are fed platitudes and things they already know. There was some feeling that religious broadcasts should aim to educate believers rather than to convert non-believers. The believers were in need of more advanced teaching. They do not need to have atheist teaching disproved all the time and be told that God does exist. This is elementary, and is already clear to them. They want to proceed from this point to more advanced ideas. When we discussed different radio stations, most people agreed that Radio Liberty was the best. However, (in Moscow) they can hardly ever hear it. Voice of America was unanimously held to be the worst station. The BBC and Deutsche Welle came somewhere in the middle.

One typical comment was :

The standard of Christian radio broadcasting to the Soviet Union is abysmal. The BBC is not very good, and the Protestant stations are awful, beginning from the fact that they speak Russian badly. Radio Liberty is better, (though jammed). Voice of America and Radio Vatican are also very poor. No one listens to the

Protestant radio stations except the Baptists, and he fears they don't get much out of it. What would he like instead? He mentioned various categories of programme: theological, devotional, etc. He said the broadcasters repeat platitudes: people need something more solid, something to think about.

One young Baptist had this to say specifically about the Protestant radio stations (1-8):

In the first place, the music was very bad. The choirs were poor; they were very small, they sang badly. Out there in the West they could easily get together much better choirs. The music must be improved because it was an insult to listeners, and new listeners would be put off by its poor quality.

He said some of the preaching wasn't very good. Often it was too simple, too basic. Young believers needed more advanced teaching. Another important point was that the style of preaching was wrong. It was far too emotional, too excited for Russians. The foreign preachers shouted too much trying to whip up the emotions.

Clearly it is difficult to make general statements on the basis of such conflicting views. What is not in dispute is that the programmes are vitally important for spreading the Christian Gospel and providing a whole Christian background for believers in a country where no information on religion (except negatively slanted information in atheist publications) has been published for over 50 years. Those who criticize the foreign Christian broadcasts do so because they feel a priceless opportunity is being wasted.

JANE ELLIS

¹ "Atheists Radio Broadcasts", A. I. Rogov, *Voprosy Nauchnogo Ateizma*, 9, "Mysl", Moscow, 1970, pp. 305-16.

"Religion in the Contemporary Ideological Struggle", E. Lisavtsev, *Agitator*, Sept. 1971, pp. 33-6.

"The Fourth Front", A. Belov and A. Shilkin, *Deversiya bez dinamita*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1972, pp. 100-132.

"Shares without Profits", A. Belov and A. Shilkin, *Trud*, 4 Jan. 1973.

"Under Cover of Religion", *Znamya yunosti*, 3 April, 1973, p. 3.

"Clerical Anti-Communism and Ideological Sabotage", I. Ivanchenko, *Turkmen-skaya iskra*, 2 Aug., 1974, pp. 2-3.

"Atheism and the Contemporary Ideological Struggle", *Nauchnyi Ateizm*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1974, p. 163.

"Religious Radio Centres in the System of Clerical Anti-communism", A. Belov and S. Shilkin, *Western Religious Centres in the Service of Anti-communism*, Belov and Shilkin, *Znanie*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 45-61.