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The 1997 Russian Law on Religion: the Impact on Protestants*

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On 26 September 1997 President Boris Yel'tsin signed a new Russian law on religion restricting the activities of religious minorities and foreign missionaries.¹ This legislation replaced the October 1990 law on freedom of conscience, widely applauded for its careful safeguards of religious liberty.²

The September 1997 law is a somewhat revised form of the draft which Yel'tsin rejected on 23 July 1997, but it does not differ from the latter substantially. On 19 September the Russian Duma approved the bill *Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations* by a vote of 358 to 6. On 24 September the upper house of the Russian legislature, the Federation Council, voted its unanimous approval (137 to 0).³ On 1 October, after Yel'tsin had signed it, the new law was published and theoretically took effect. In reality it took over five months to produce implementing regulations, and these have proved to be as ambiguous and controversial as the law they are supposed to clarify.

The September 1997 legislation calls for a two-tier approach to state treatment of religious bodies. A privileged few 'traditional' religions are designated as 'religious organisations'. In contrast, less-favoured 'religious groups' face major impediments to free exercise of religious rights. Fifteen years of state registration on good behaviour are required before a 'religious group' can aspire to become a 'religious organisation'. To the extent that it is enforced as written, the law denies less-favoured, second-tier 'religious groups' the following rights: to operate educational institutions; to publish or distribute literature; to invite foreign guests to Russia; to have access to schools, hospitals, orphanages and prisons; to tax exemptions; and to exemption from military service for clergy and clergy candidates. Also troubling for non-Orthodox groups are the broad provisions for state prohibition of unwanted religious entities. Grounds for banning, which lend themselves to arbitrary interpretation, include: 'undermining the social order'; 'igniting social, racial, national or religious dissension'; 'forcing a family to disintegrate'; and 'inflicting damage ... on the morality or health of citizens'.⁴

The Russian Orthodox Church, communists and nationalists pressed hard for this legislation, while Catholics, Protestants, Old Believers and Orthodox not under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate opposed it.⁵ In evaluating the legislative

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process, human rights attorney Lauren B. Homer has noted the Duma's secretiveness and disregard for procedure. By these means quick passage forestalled effective domestic and international opposition.⁶

It appeared at first that those seeking to restrict freedom of conscience had succeeded. But implementation of the law to date has been uneven, quixotic and episodic. So far, a number of factors appear to have worked against its consistently harsh application. Mitigating factors include the following:

- (1) Moscow is increasingly unable to secure its provinces' compliance with national policy, which means that treatment of religious groups is sometimes worse but at other times more lenient than the law prescribes.⁷
- (2) The Russian population has centuries of experience in finding ways around official requirements. Keston Institute's director, Lawrence Uzzell, notes that 'the salvation of Russia is in the poor implementation of bad laws'.⁸
- (3) Certain ambiguities in the law and ambiguities and delays in the preparation of implementing regulations have sometimes ameliorated repressive provisions.
- (4) Western pressure in favour of lenient interpretation of the law has had an effect, at least in the short run.
- (5) The growing use of e-mail appears to be making it difficult, if not impossible, for local Russian authorities to engage in blatant religious discrimination without word reaching the whole country and the West in record time.
- (6) Russian human rights lawyers have made inventive use of an apparent loophole in the law to the advantage of religious minorities.

I shall consider these factors in more detail later in the article. In spite of their effect, however, it should be emphasised at the outset that life since the passage of the law has not been easy for many who wish to worship outside the fold of the Moscow Patriarchate. Appendix I to this article itemises 69 specific instances of state harassment, restriction or threat of restriction against non-Moscow Patriarchate religious communities in the Russian Republic in the first 15 months of the new law. A number of observations are relevant in considering this documentary material:

- (1) One instance of local authorities refusing to allow Pentecostals to rent a public facility, and another of the dismissal of an Orthodox deacon for refusing to sign a petition in support of the new law, occurred before 26 September 1997, actually in anticipation of the law's passage.
- (2) Without a doubt, Appendix I does not include every instance of state religious discrimination, simply because many groups prefer not to publicise their difficulties. I know of such cases, as do other researchers such as Lawrence Uzzell of Keston Institute. In the same vein, Protestant attorney Anatoli Pchelintsev, president of Moscow's Institute of Religion and Law, reports that instances of official restrictions against non-Orthodox groups come to his attention daily, and these are certainly not all itemised in Appendix I.⁹ Furthermore, most actions against religious minorities by Cossacks and Orthodox with the passive assent of the state are not recorded.¹⁰

- (3) On the other hand, reported instances of discrimination or repression to date have been relatively few, compared to what could have been expected considering the stringent language of the law.¹¹
- (4) While the listing is undoubtedly incomplete, it still may provide clues as to the patterns and demographics of discrimination under the new law on religion.¹²
 - (a) Fifty-two of the 69 reported incidents involve Protestants (37 indigenous groups, 11 foreign missionary organisations, and four both); eight incidents involve Catholics; six incidents involve Orthodox, including two reprisals against Moscow Patriarchate clergy not supportive of the new law; five incidents involve cults; one incident involves Old Believers; and one incident involves Jews. (Some incidents involve more than one group.)
 - (b) The months before the passage of the new law witnessed a barrage of press attacks on foreign cults and Protestant missionaries. However, cults (five instances, or 7.2 per cent) and Protestant missionaries (15 instances, or 21.7 per cent) together account for only 27.5 per cent (19 instances in total, including one affecting both Protestants and cults) of reported government restrictions or threats of restrictions. In contrast, 59.4 per cent (41 of 69) of reported incidents involve indigenous Protestants. As Lawrence Uzzell of Keston Institute has noted, the text of the law may indicate that 'foreign citizens and foreign Churches have fewer rights than Russian believers', but in 'actual practice ... the rights of minority believers depend less on objective legal norms than on political connections including connections to foreign states with which Moscow values good relations'.¹³
 - (c) Surprisingly, foreign cults have been comparatively unaffected by the latest wave of religious discrimination (only four reported incidents). And Mormons actually appear for the moment to be enjoying something of a privileged status, despite the minimal response of the Russian people to their missionaries. Three Mormons in the US Senate (Gordon Smith of Oregon and Robert Bennett and Orrin Hatch of Utah) travelled to Russia to voice their opposition to the 1997 law and spearheaded legislation in Washington aimed at rolling back Russian restrictions. In the opposite direction, Russian officials headed west in September 1997 to calm western fears about the law in what Lawrence Uzzell has characterised as a 'charm offensive'.¹⁴ They visited not only Brussels (the European Union) and Washington, but also Salt Lake City (the Mormon headquarters). And in March 1998 the Russian Federal Security Service, successor to the KGB, moved expeditiously and successfully to secure the release of two Mormon missionaries kidnapped in Saratov.¹⁵ Mormon leadership at present prefers not to publicise incidents such as those experienced by Mormon missionaries in Khabarovsk in the Russian Far East. Still, Mormons have been relatively unscathed by legislation widely advertised as a direct challenge to cults. The official recognition of the Mormons as a centralised religious organisation, a preferred status under the new Russian legislation,

came on 15 May 1998, just days before US action on Russian aid, which was contingent upon evidence that Moscow did not encourage religious discrimination.¹⁶

- (d) Pentecostals have had the greatest difficulty of any group to date (20 of 69 reported incidents, or 29 per cent).
- (e) Twelve reported incidents involve Evangelical Christians-Baptists (17.4 per cent), which is surprising, since this Church satisfies the '15-year rule' and theoretically should not face restrictions. Although the evidence had not supported him, a safe status has been the expectation of ECB president Petr Konoval'chik, who told a reporter in March 1998 that 'the law was not aimed at Russian Baptist churches and did not infringe their freedom'.¹⁷

Other observations relate to the geographic distribution of discrimination.

- (1) A disproportionate number of incidents have been reported in the Russian Far East: nine of 69 cases involving specific geographic locations, or 13 per cent, have occurred in the Far Eastern maritime provinces, while this region accounts for only 4.8 per cent of the population of the Russian Republic (7,430,751 in the Russian Far East out of 147 million in the Russian Republic as a whole). In addition, all three foreign missionaries expelled to date worked in the Russian Far East – a Korean in Khabarovsk, an American near Khabarovsk and a New Zealander in Vladivostok¹⁸ – and two of the three reported murders of missionaries, a Korean–American couple killed in March 1995, occurred in Khabarovsk.¹⁹ Could this disproportionate hostility be a consequence of decades of deportations of religious dissidents to Magadan and other Far Eastern outposts of the Soviet forced labour empire? And could it relate to a lingering xenophobic gulag mentality among local officials?
- (2) The largest number of reported incidents (20) occurred in the Moscow region (9 per cent of the Russian population, but 29 per cent of incidents). This may reflect better access to international media available in the capital.
- (3) Conversely, few or no incidents have been reported in a number of Russia's largest cities after Moscow: St Petersburg (2), Nizhni Novgorod (0), Novosibirsk (3), and Yekaterinburg (0). Salvation Army relations with St Petersburg officials and conditions for Pentecostals in nearby Gatchina have improved considerably since autumn 1997 (see Appendix I). In March 1997, prior to the passage of the September 1997 law, St Petersburg governor Vladimir Yakovlev vetoed for the second time proposed city council legislation that would have placed rigorous new registration requirements on religious communities.²⁰
- (4) A final observation on the catalogue of incidents of state harassment, restrictions and threats of restrictions against religious minorities: it is striking, to date, how often repressive measures by the authorities have been unsuccessful, or have been reversed, and how often believers have refused to be intimidated. In at least 15 instances officials have so far not had their way.²¹ In perhaps the most publicised case, for more than a year the Lutheran Transfiguration of the

Lord Church, Tuim, Khakassia, Siberia, has been battling with regional authorities who wish to close it down. In September 1998 the Supreme Court of Khakassia ordered the church closed, but the Lutherans successfully appealed against this move to the Russian Federation Supreme Court. In Yoshkar-Ola, capital of the Mari El Autonomous Republic, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association evangelist Viktor Hamm, a Russian–German émigré with Canadian citizenship, organised a preaching crusade with the help of local Evangelical Christians–Baptists. Mari El authorities granted permission, withdrew permission, then reversed their decision, finally allowing the meetings to be held, after a blizzard of e-mail reports and e-mail appeals for readers to phone or fax the Mari El president opposing restrictions.²² The most recent instance of religious discrimination reversed, quite a dramatic one, involves Russia's denial in June 1998 of one-year visas for foreign missionaries, even as they continued to be issued to foreigners for business and cultural purposes. Without explanation Moscow began issuing only three-month visas to some foreign religious workers, and again without explanation on 26 August reverted to the previous practice, once again issuing some one-year visas to missionaries. As noted earlier, the rapid dissemination of information about restrictions via e-mail and human rights monitors may help explain this mercurial pattern of on-again, off-again discrimination, depending upon the degree of unwanted negative publicity.²³

Protestant Responses

Russian Protestant responses to the new 1997 law on religion have been variations on two themes to date: in some cases, protest, and in other cases, accommodation, with much more of the latter than the former, in keeping with the historic Russian Protestant pattern. Most Russian Evangelicals appear to be taking the new law in their stride. Their attitude is often 'The Bible tells Christians to expect persecution; we have endured it from the government and from the Orthodox before; we can endure it again; we have experience in survival; and the law might not be all that bad if it blocks the cults.'²⁴ At the same time, many Evangelical Christian–Baptist leaders, representing a group registered for more than 15 years, rightly or wrongly feel protected from the law's severities. Western concepts of religious rights for all and the championing of equality before the law are not nearly so deeply felt as is the old Russian saying 'For every law there is a way around it'.

Overall, western missionaries have been much more exercised by the new law than have Russian Protestants, which is understandable. Western missionaries have a keener sense of human rights, they appear to be more vulnerable, and they bear the brunt of press criticism inspired by antiwestern communists, nationalists and conservative Orthodox.

Protest

Ironically, in view of their name, protest has rarely been the Protestants' way in Russia; their usual approach involves lying low and getting by. Atypically, Evangelicals did participate in a public protest against the law at the entrance to Gorky

Park in Moscow on 7 October 1997; but this demonstration drew a decidedly modest crowd – perhaps 500, judging from the two sets of photos I have examined. US congressional action, in the form of the Smith Amendment to the 1997 Foreign Appropriations Act, has attracted far more attention, with its delay in aid to Russia tied to a presidential verification of Russia's observance of freedom of conscience.²⁵ Ironically, Washington's actions have been gleefully welcomed by communists, nationalists and the law's other supporters as concrete evidence of western interference in Russian domestic affairs. Western public protest did help scuttle restrictive legislation in 1993 and as recently as July 1997²⁶; but now, it is debatable whether or not this approach is advisable. In the long run western lobbying on behalf of Russian Protestants could be harmful to their conscious desire to be recognised as an indigenous religious phenomenon. The Chinese Communist expulsion of western missionaries after 1949 and their severe persecution of Christians, at least partially because of their western connections, might serve as a cautionary tale.²⁷ In the short run, however, highlighting specific instances of discrimination and arbitrariness, as in such cases as the Lutheran Mission in Siberia and the Baptists in Mari El, does still seem to be productive.

Another form of public protest involves a challenge to the new law now pending before the Russian Constitutional Court, which should underscore the law's violation of the Russian Constitution and various international treaties to which Russia is a signatory. Two Protestant lawyers, Anatoli Pchelintsev, president of the Institute for Religion and Law, and Vladimir Ryakhovsky, president of the Christian Legal Centre, filed an appeal to Russia's highest court on 1 July 1998 on behalf of the Christian Praise Centre and the Evangelical Lutheran Mission (both in Khakassia, Siberia), the New Generation Christian Centre (Yaroslavl') and Zion Presbyterian Church (Reutov, Moscow *oblast'*). Ryakhovsky contends that the September 1997 law gave officials the excuse they needed 'to obstruct activities of everyone except the Orthodox'.²⁸ Furthermore, it 'contradicts both the Russian Constitution and all western legal norms on human rights'.²⁹ More specifically, Pchelintsev maintains that the law 'violates 15 articles of the Russian Constitution'.³⁰ Duma deputies Valeri Borshchev and Galina Starovoitova, and even Andrei Loginov of President Yel'tsin's Internal Policy Department, voiced support for the court challenge.³¹ Both the Yel'tsin presidential administration and the Ministry of Justice have promised to support the Constitutional Court challenge regarding the law's retroactive annulment of religious registrations.³² In addition to the Pchelintsev–Ryakhovsky suit representing Lutheran, Pentecostal and Presbyterian churches, Yaroslavl' Jehovah's Witnesses filed a suit with the same court on 15 July, arguing that the 15-year provision for favoured status is unconstitutional.³³ On 5 November the Constitutional Court publicly acknowledged this pending case, which is likely to be heard in spring 1999.³⁴

The backdrop to the court challenge is a year of political manoeuvring by the Yel'tsin administration trying to have it both ways: attempting to placate the Russian Orthodox Church, and nationalist sentiment in general, by agreeing to the September 1997 law and paying it lip service, and at the same time reassuring the West that the law does not mean what it says. Lawrence Uzzell noted that 70 pages of draft implementing regulations released on 9 December 1997 contradicted previous 'reassuring statements made by Russian officials to western journalists and diplomats'.³⁵ A Russian delegation, including drafters of the law, had made their way west as early as September 1997, dispensing assurances that the law would not be interpreted rigorously and that groups already established in Russia had little to fear. Despite

these promises made to government officials, religious leaders and human rights advocates in Brussels, Washington and Salt Lake City, Lawrence Uzzell pointed out that the 9 December draft regulations still restricted 'religious rights of foreigners even more narrowly than the text of the law itself'. In addition, Uzzell noted, the proposed regulations 'fail[ed] to soften the threat to religious bodies which existed underground during the Soviet period'; 'fail[ed] to protect Churches which operated in Russia before 1917 but which were disbanded by the Bolsheviks'; 'fail[ed] to safeguard "centralised" religious bodies ... less than 15 years old'; and 'increase[d] opportunities for clergy of dominant religious bodies to block the activities of religious minorities'.³⁶

Nevertheless, several developments between late December 1997 and May 1998 seemed to indicate that the Constitutional Court, closely associated with the Yel'tsin administration, might take the Pchelintsev–Ryakhovsky court challenge seriously. Firstly, Justice Ministry informal guidelines, mailed to local authorities in late December 1997, 'openly declared one section of the new law on church-state relations to be unconstitutional'. In general, the late December directive is less restrictive than the draft implementing regulations made public on 9 December. 'For the first time in such an official form and in writing', Lawrence Uzzell pointed out, 'the guidelines echo the repeated statements of Russian government spokesmen that centralised religious organisations are exempt from the 15-year rule.'³⁷

A second positive sign came on 28–29 January 1998 as a high-level Russian delegation, including some of the actual framers of the controversial religion law, met US congressional staff and human rights advocates in Washington, trying their best to reassure all concerned that enforcement would cause few, if any, difficulties for existing groups. Andrei Loginov, head of Yel'tsin's presidential Internal Policy Department and one of the original drafters of the 1997 law, stated that 'the new rules will not affect 99 per cent of existing Religious Organisations (ROs) who are already registered'; 'Centralized Religious Organizations do not require fifteen-year-old existence'; 'the process of reregistration is the same for the Russian Orthodox as for the Mormon Church'; and Article 27 is a problem because 'it gives the rules a retroactive power which the Constitution prohibits. So we hope that this will be appealed to the Constitutional Court and that the Court will void the application of the article.'³⁸

Attorney Lauren Homer has noted that the American reaction to the 1997 Russian law also precipitated a flurry of visits by high-level US delegations to Moscow to register concern:

Russia hosted at least three major delegations from the Senate and other Congressional branches, including Senator Robert Bennett in September 1997, Senators Gordon Smith and Orrin Hatch in March 1998, Congressmen Christopher Smith, Frank Wolf, and Librarian of Congress James Billington in January 1998, and many other official visitors from the State Department and the White House. This issue has been raised at the highest levels of both Governments.³⁹

The Russian Ministry of Justice has also declared Article 27.3 unconstitutional because of its 'retroactive deprivation of rights for previously registered organizations and says that it should not be applied in the Methodological Guidelines. Thus, all currently registered local organizations are exempt from these restrictions, according to the federal Ministry of Justice.'⁴⁰

All these promises are heartening to Protestants, but they do not change the fact

that they are just that – promises. Dr Ariel Cohen of the Heritage Foundation, which hosted one of several Washington meetings for Russian officials, warned that ‘the promises might be designed to placate Western governments and human rights organisations. “We shall know them by their deeds”’, he concluded.⁴¹

A third positive development that may bode well for the Protestant court challenge is Russia’s ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights in the spring of 1998. Lobbying in favour of ratification, Yel’tsin argued that this would ‘confirm our country’s commitment to the principles of democracy and the rule of law’.⁴² The two houses of the Russian Parliament ratified the accord in February–March and foreign minister Yevgeni Primakov signed it on 5 May 1998.⁴³ For the benefit of the court case, Moscow human rights attorney Yekaterina Smyslova wants to tie together Russia’s ratification of the European Convention and the September 1997 law’s violations of it: ‘Russia is now a member of the Council of Europe and a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights, so this law [September 1997] has attracted great interest abroad. Russia’s credentials as a free, open society that respects basic human rights are what is at stake here.’⁴⁴

Accommodation

Court case or not, most Russian Protestants appear more inclined to accommodate than to protest too openly. To date, proceeding as usual has been the rule for most, but with a lower profile. While the law, on paper, makes life extremely difficult, if not impossible, for most Protestants, life goes on, and the difference between the letter of the law and the present lack of systematic enforcement just underscores again the contradictions and complexity of Russian life. Most Protestant churches and western Protestant mission groups, however, do expect the law to grow teeth sooner or later, and are consequently making various accommodations. Some have considered seeking shelter under the Evangelical Christian–Baptist (ECB) umbrella. Aligning with the ECB, as a Church that qualifies under the law’s 15-year rule for favoured status, could very likely give some legal protection to some groups in some locations, but probably not uniformly. As noted earlier, even the ECB itself has faced various challenges from local authorities, although theoretically the law should not affect it. There is another consideration too. Representatives of several groups have told me that their denominations cooled to the idea of ECB affiliation when they came to realise that ECB officials had in mind that they would actually become Evangelical Christians–Baptists.

Accommodation in the form of quiet submission to bribery is likely to accentuate the unevenness of enforcement of the law across 11 time zones.⁴⁵ Pressure on Protestants to make payments to officials to expedite all manner of transactions and permissions appears to have been fairly commonplace before the new law, as has been the case for all vulnerable elements in society without ‘muscle’. Is there any reason to expect that cases of officials lining their pockets will not increase with over 70 pages of implementing regulations? For better or worse, this is how life is lived in Russia.

Circumstances for Protestant churches and western Protestant ministry efforts may become more difficult in the strongly communist ‘Red Belt’ cities of Orel, Kursk, Belgorod, Ulyanovsk and Volgograd, and Protestant activities may become even more concentrated in relatively democratic centres such as Moscow, St Petersburg, Nizhni Novgorod, Yekaterinburg and Saratov, and in Russian-speaking areas of other former Soviet republics (the ‘Near Abroad’).⁴⁶ Reregistration as a humanitarian or

educational organisation, with personnel using student, educational and business visas, will be the route some groups less favoured by the law will take. Presbyterian missionary Jim Foote, a retired engineer and businessman, has founded a cultural and educational centre in Tyumen', Siberia, that sponsors Bible studies, English classes and a lending library, but no Sunday worship, because it is registered as a social organisation rather than as a religious body.⁴⁷ In some parts of the Russian Far East many Unification Churches reregistered as public organisations after the passage of the September 1997 law.⁴⁸ Some groups will very likely succeed in these shifts and others will not; this will all depend on infinitely varied local circumstances and relationships. Almost everything depends upon relationships in Russia, no matter what the law.

Another form of accommodation has involved a close reading of the new law by Protestant lawyer Vladimir Ryakhovsky, who is convinced he has found a loophole for Protestants (and others) in the language of this rushed legislation. Ryakhovsky believes that the drafters by mistake failed to restrict 'centralised religious organizations' (CRO) and that forming a CRO should effectively circumvent most of the discriminatory and punitive provisions of the law. Because this approach has been widely adopted, not only by Protestants but also by Catholics, Jews and Mormons, its genesis deserves special comment. On 9 October 1997 western Protestant ministries and representatives of indigenous Protestant churches met in Moscow to discuss the ramifications of the new law. At this 'Gathering', as the group is informally called, Ryakhovsky outlined a rather remarkable mechanism which, he believed, would render much of the new law harmless. Because of the significance so many groups have come to attach to Ryakhovsky's stratagem, let me quote from his presentation at the 9 October meeting at some length.

We hear a lot about the aggressive offense of foreign religious organizations here [in Russia]. Do you remember the 850th anniversary of Moscow? Much entertainment was imported. Even some of the Russian performers live in America. However, it is only religious activity that is labeled a destructive influence. I can frankly say that all these problems that are talked about as the religious problem, the sectarian problem, all these are actually created. It's all a big show.

We are puzzled by the position of Yel'tsin who vetoed the law indicating violations of the constitution and a month later totally changed his position. On September 3 he sent the so-called 'compromise' variant back to the Duma and wrote in the letter to the deputies that his bill had been agreed upon with the confessions and approved by the confessions and all the contradictions with the constitution in the original bill had been eradicated. [However,] ... the contradictions that were in the July version of the bill have become even harsher in some ways in the September bill.

Along with the limitations introduced by the law there are loopholes in the same law. Not only does the law contradict the Constitution of the Russian Federation and international legal acts; the law contradicts itself on main points.⁴⁹ Article 3.3 forbids discrimination in any form based on religious views. However, in Chapter 2 and in the last article of this law we see how this principle is ignored.

We can find several ways around discriminatory points, several routes that religious organizations can follow. According to this law, the requirement of the 15 years probation is only valid for local religious organiza-

tions and is not valid for centralized religious organizations; and it says that the centralized religious organizations can be created out of three or more local religious organizations of the same faith. Actually, it is an oversight by the authors of this bill. To defeat this new law and the problems that it may cause for religious organizations, here is what we suggest: all of those organizations need to unite in a centralized religious organization.⁵⁰

As soon as the law's definitive implementing regulations were released on 10 March 1998 religious bodies began applying for legal recognition as centralised religious organisations (CROs), theoretically exempt from most of the discriminatory provisions of the 1997 law.⁵¹ To date at least 13 religious bodies have received such recognition. Surprisingly, the Pentecostal Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith, with 1,200 churches, received official recognition as a CRO on 17 March, just one week after the release of implementing regulations. The 13 religious bodies with CRO status include the Russian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholics, Jews, Mormons, four Pentecostal and charismatic Churches, Evangelical Christians–Baptists, Methodists, Adventists, and the Association for Spiritual Renewal, a Russian Protestant parachurch ministry closely affiliated with Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries based in the USA (see Appendix II). The Association of Christian Evangelical Churches of Russia, produced by a series of 'Gathering' meetings in Moscow and formally established on 27 May 1998, has also received CRO status. CRO status as a means of thwarting the harsh provisions of the 1997 law on religion appears to hold promise for Protestants and others, at least in the short run. However, the more successful this approach becomes, the greater becomes the likelihood that communists, nationalists and the Moscow Patriarchate will be motivated to prod the Duma to close this loophole.⁵²

Departures

Those western missionaries who do not protest, and who do not accommodate as best they can, may choose to leave. Despite the expulsion of three missionaries from the Russian Far East (Appendix I), I know of no denominations or parachurch groups that have decided upon this course so far; but, in time, some groups may choose to take it rather than abide the requirements of accommodation. Some ministries may redeploy to less restrictive postsoviet republics with sizeable Russian populations, including Ukraine, Moldova, Latvia, Estonia, and Kazakhstan, using them as bases for short-term ministry into Russia and as training locations for Russian citizens. Other missions may leave the former Soviet Union altogether, a shift that would accelerate regardless of Russian circumstances if China were to become more amenable to a western missionary presence.

Indigenous Protestants also might choose to emigrate in a new wave of departures should state measures against them continue to escalate, assuming western countries would accept them. Most Mennonites and substantial numbers of Slavic Pentecostals and Baptists have left the former Soviet Union in the past decade.⁵³

Ripple Effects

The new law will have an impact in various postsoviet republics, and East Central Europe is very likely to feel its impact too, especially if Orthodox Churches are

emboldened to follow the Russian legal precedent of discrimination against non-Orthodox. Macedonia has already done so: in July 1997 it passed legislation favouring Orthodox, Muslims and Catholics over other religious groups. In Bulgaria the Orthodox Church is putting pressure on parliament to follow the example of Russia and Macedonia. Attorney Karen S. Lord, with the US Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, fears a growing tide of intolerance in Europe. Noting that laws restricting religion had been passed in 1997–98 in Russia, Macedonia, Uzbekistan and Austria, she recently warned that Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia and Belarus 'were planning to follow suit'.⁵⁴ Human rights attorney Lauren Homer reported in a US Helsinki Commission hearing on 5 December 1997 that 'virtually all of the former Soviet republics and Eastern European countries are considering similar legislation' to that passed by Russia.⁵⁵ Nick Nedelchev, executive director of the Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance, put it quite succinctly in a letter of 5 November 1997: 'All people need to know that what happened in Russia very easily can happen in all other Eastern Orthodox countries, including Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia. It's already happened in Macedonia.'⁵⁶

The Smith Amendment to the US congressional Foreign Appropriations Act of 1997 delayed action on \$200 million in aid to Russia pending a finding by President Bill Clinton on Russian administration of the September 1997 law. Presidential Determination No. 98-23 of 26 May 1998 concluded that Russia was not applying the new law in a manner that would 'conflict with its international obligations on religious freedom', but found that 'this issue requires continued and close monitoring as the Law on Religion furnishes regional officials with an instrument that can be interpreted and used to restrict the activities of religious minorities'.⁵⁷

Seventy reports of regional restrictions based on the 1997 law on religion have come to light to date. In some cases measures taken were even stricter than the law required.⁵⁸ At the same time, however, indigenous resistance and domestic and international protests have led, in at least some cases, to reversals of decisions.

Certainly it was not the new law that inaugurated arbitrary treatment of non-Orthodox religions. Approximately a quarter of Russian provinces had already enacted restrictive and discriminatory legislation on religion before September 1997;⁵⁹ and even without such legislation local authorities, often deferring to Orthodox wishes, had frequently been denying Protestants rental rights to public facilities and making it very difficult for them to purchase land or secure building permits. Discriminatory practice against non-Orthodox would be taking place with or without the 1997 law. What the new law does do is to legitimise and dramatically increase the probability of pervasive state interference in religious life in ways that undermine the Russian Constitution's guarantee of equal protection before the law.

Taking into account the infringements of religious liberty both before and after the passage of the 1997 law, it still cannot be said that Russia has embarked on anything like systematic religious repression so far. Many wondered if that might begin once the government issued implementing regulations. But the picture of implementation has been as inconsistent since 10 March as before. Others have argued that the teeth of the text may bite hard once the deadline for reregistration (December 1999) has passed. Viktor Nikulnikov, Khabarovsk regional official for relations with religious organisations, believes that 'the main battles on this front will occur closer to December 1999'.⁶⁰ Or perhaps rigorous enforcement will come at whatever point the West tires of the story and ceases to highlight unfair treatment. This is the opinion of Anatoli Krasikov of the International Religious Liberty Association, who has contended that 'serious repression' would not begin until the issue had faded from

the forefront of western diplomatic and media attention.⁶¹ Or might the fall of the Damocles sword be postponed indefinitely, but with the law's draconian provisions ever looming overhead to 'perpetuate a climate of intimidation'?⁶² Whatever happens, it is certainly possible that the Duma might move to eliminate the loophole for centralised religious organisations in the 1997 law. And what will be the fate of Protestants in the wake of the presidential election of 2000? Yel'tsin will very likely be succeeded by someone more beholden to nationalists who will be little swayed by western ideas of human rights.⁶³ Post-Yel'tsin repression is certainly possible; perhaps even probable. But it appears unlikely that any actions by the state will end a Protestant presence in Russia, short of an improbable return to Stalinism or its equivalent. Ten years of unprecedented opportunities (1989–98) have created enough of an infrastructure for the Protestant faith community to be able to weather any coming storm.

But what of the position of Russian Orthodoxy *vis-à-vis* Protestants? And what impact will legal discrimination against non-Orthodox have on Orthodoxy? Russian Orthodox are struggling to recover from seven decades of communist domination, and materially they find it difficult to compete with better-funded Protestants. On the financial dimension of the Protestant missionary presence, a 1997 study funded by a western trust revealed that 20 of the most active Evangelical ministries had a collective annual budget of \$29.25 million, about half North American and half Western European, not to mention hundreds of smaller missions.⁶⁴ Such a presence troubles Orthodox deeply and helps explain their support for political restrictions on freedom of conscience.

The visibility of western Protestant missions and their level of spending disturb Russian Orthodox who typically have a territorial understanding of faith. Since Russia has historically been Orthodox, the Moscow Patriarchate contends, it is wrong for Catholics or Protestants to proselytise on Russian soil. In response Protestants, native-born and western alike, emphasise communist secularisation of Russian society. Protestants contend that they can witness to tens of millions of Russian non-believers without ever proselytising Orthodox faithful. A recent survey by the Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research indicates that 46 per cent of Russians consider themselves non-believers,⁶⁵ and another recent poll indicates that only 2 per cent of Russians attend worship weekly.⁶⁶

If the new law comes to be rigorously enforced, the political advantages enjoyed by Orthodoxy in the short run will most likely prove debilitating in the long run because eliminating or radically curtailing non-Orthodox confessions could drastically reduce the possibility of Orthodox internal reform, which many believe is sorely needed. (Throughout history, it can be argued, state-favoured Churches have frequently lost their spiritual vitality.) On the one hand, the Moscow Patriarchate maintains that the 1997 law on religion is impartial in its treatment of various faiths. Metropolitan Kirill, for example, has stated flatly that the new law 'does not contain any privileges for any specific confessions' and that under its terms even worshippers of 'arctic [*sic*] penguins' would have few difficulties.⁶⁷ At the same time the Russian Orthodox Church maintains that the whole of Russia is its 'canonical territory' and that proselytising by other Christian faiths is inadmissible.⁶⁸

Ultimately, attorney Lauren Homer believes,

The law may drive many foreign missionaries and newer religious movements out of Russia, but it will not create greater respect for the Orthodox Church, provide moral or spiritual guidance for the masses who pursue

self interest rather than faith, or heal the incalculable damage caused by 75 years of state-imposed atheism.⁶⁹

It can be argued that Russia, debased since 1917 by Marxist moral relativism, needs the ethical teachings and spiritual underpinnings of all Christian confessions to provide the country with the necessary foundation for a workable economic and political system. A retrieval of the best of Russian spirituality, however, is impossible to imagine without a revitalisation of the Russian Orthodox Church. At the same time, it does not seem likely that a new moral framework for a humane Russian polity can be accomplished by the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church alone: the material destruction it has suffered and the Kremlin's compromising of its leadership were too comprehensive.⁷⁰ The unhealed wounds Russia bears today require the best efforts of all charitably inclined persons. Indigenous Protestants, and especially western Protestants, should be a great deal more culturally sensitive; at the same time, Russian Orthodox might be better served by foregoing dreams of the restoration of a state-imposed spiritual hegemony. Rather, it would seem preferable for Orthodoxy to concede the legitimacy of state and international protection for religious minorities, a precondition for a free society.⁷¹ Consider the perspective of Dan Pollard, an independent Baptist missionary who has had ongoing visa problems with the authorities in Khabarovsk:

What are we doing against the law that is so evil and harmful to the citizens of Russia? If this new law is supposed to protect the people from bad groups, while allowing good ones to continue, what am I doing that puts me in the bad category? My desire is to help the people of Russia, and as a result, be a benefit to the country. We don't charge the people for anything we do. All literature, Bibles, clothing, etc., are given without any charge. We are in Russia at our own expense, and give as much help to the people as we can. Why would a country want to deny its people this help, when we know of many who are suffering because they have not been paid for as long as a year?⁷²

Summary

From the perspective of a minority faith the 1997 Russian law on religion has been troubling, to say the least. However, infringements upon freedom of conscience in Russia are haphazard rather than systematic. In April 1998 Lawrence Uzzell published a masterful, carefully nuanced analysis in *Keston News Service* entitled 'Concrete effects of Russia's new religion law' in which he wove together the various complicated and contradictory strands of the story, and offered a well-balanced summary of Russian religious restrictions. He noted that fully-fledged religious persecution 'of the sort seen in China, where one can be arrested simply for organising a prayer group in one's own home' is 'virtually non-existent' in Russia today; religious repression, 'the denial to disfavoured confessions of the right to worship and proclaim their beliefs in public', is 'scattered, but growing'; while religious discrimination, 'preferential treatment for some religious bodies over others', is 'pervasive'.⁷³

Lauren Homer makes a similar point:

Although the new law leaves much to be desired, it is far from the worst law on freedom of conscience and religious organizations in the former

Soviet republics. ... Even with its many defects, [it] is superior in most respects to current laws in Belarus, Ukraine, and Romania, in the opinion of this writer, and it is generally more fairly applied. It is also superior to laws threatened recently in Israel and to those of several Islamic nations receiving U.S. foreign aid.⁷⁴

In an editorial for the Orthodox Church in America newspaper, *The Orthodox Church*, Fr Leonid Kishkovsky urges a twofold caution for West and East:

The Orthodox Church in America sees two dangers in the present situation in Russia. The first is the risk of chaos and deep divisions provoked by insensitive and aggressive methods of religious mission and proselytism. The second is the temptation of suppressive policies on the part of the state and society, which in the long run would have a negative impact also on the mission of the Russian Orthodox Church. We hope that in Russia both of these extremes will be avoided by wise and restrained implementation of the new legislation, in compliance with the Russian Constitution and its principles of religious liberty.⁷⁵

Protestants in Russia and in the West would do well to strive for the same restraint on their own part and hope for the same from the Russian Orthodox Church.

Notes and References

- ¹ I have taken portions of the present study from articles I wrote for *East–West Church & Ministry Report*: ‘New restrictive law on religion in Russia’, vol. 5, no. 3 (Summer 1997), pp. 1–2; ‘The New Russian law on religion: what is the fallout for evangelicals?’, vol. 5, no. 4 (Fall 1997), pp. 4–6; ‘The new Russian law on religion: will e-mail undermine draconian enforcement?’, vol. 5, no. 4 (Fall 1997), p. 16; ‘Reporting on religion at its best’, vol. 6, no. 2 (Spring 1998), p. 16, 15; and ‘“Centralized Religious Organizations” (CROs) registered under the 1997 Russian law on religion’, vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer 1998), p. 10.
- ² John Witte, Jr, ‘Introduction – Soul Wars: the problem and promise of proselytism in Russia’, *Emory International Law Review*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Winter 1998), pp. 5–6.
- ³ W. Cole Durham, Jr, and Lauren B. Homer, ‘Russia’s 1997 law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations: an analytical appraisal’, *Emory International Law Review*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Winter 1998), p. 234; T. Jeremy Gunn, ‘Caesar’s sword: the 1997 law of the Russian Federation on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations’, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- ⁴ Appendix A, ‘Russian Federation federal law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations’, *Emory International Law Review*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Winter 1998), pp. 657, 660–64, 672.
- ⁵ Mark Elliott, ‘New restrictive law on religion in Russia’, *East–West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Summer 1997), pp. 1–2.
- ⁶ ‘Human rights lawyer criticizes new Russian religion law’, *East–West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Summer 1997), p. 2.
- ⁷ ‘Christian group pressured by new law’, *Compass Direct*, 19 August 1998; Beverly Nickles, ‘Trouble in Russia’s Far East’, *Compass Direct*, 23 September 1998; Lauren B. Homer, *The 1997 Russian Federation Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations: Should the Smith Amendment Sanctions be Implemented?* (testimony presented to the Subcommittee on Europe of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 20 May 1998 (<http://www.senate.gov/~foreign/homer.htm>)).
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- ⁹ Beverly Nickles, 'More complications are expected in 1998 as religious groups attempt to re-register', *Compass Direct*, 19 December 1997, pp. 38–41.
- ¹⁰ For example, Roman Lunkin, 'Cossacks use whips against Protestants', *Keston News Service (KNS)*, 15 September 1998; and Lilia Solomonova, 'Radiotserkov', 16 September 1998.
- ¹¹ Homer, *The 1997 Russian Federation Law ...*; Lawrence Uzzell, 'Concrete effects of Russia's new religion law: an overview', *KNS*, 23 April 1998.
- ¹² Nickles, 'More Complications ...', pp. 38–41.
- ¹³ Uzzell, 'Concrete effects ...'.
- ¹⁴ Lawrence Uzzell, *KNS*, 29 March 1998.
- ¹⁵ *Associated Press*, 22 March 1998; *Religion Today*, 26 August 1998.
- ¹⁶ *Associated Press*, 15 May 1998.
- ¹⁷ Andrei Zolotov, 'Russian Baptists want same respect as Orthodox Church', *Ecumenical News International Bulletin*, 2 April 1998, p. 14.
- ¹⁸ See Appendix I, entries for late November and December 1997 and 18 March 1998.
- ¹⁹ 'Two missionaries murdered in Russia', *East–West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 3, no. 2 (Spring 1995), p. 4; 'Mormon missionary stabbed to death in Russia', *Associated Press*, 18 October 1998.
- ²⁰ *KNS*, 21 March 1997.
- ²¹ Salvation Army, St Petersburg; Lutheran, Tuim, Khakassia; Pentecostal, Gatchina; Evangelical Christian–Baptist (ECB), Syktyvkar; Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, Ryazan'; Presbyterian, Reutov; ECB, Yoshkar-Ola; Pentecostal, Yaroslavl'; Independent Baptist, Khabarovsk; Pentecostal, Abakan, Khakassia; ECB, Tula; Pentecostal, Magadan; Jehovah's Witnesses, Yaroslavl'; Protestant and Catholic visas, Moscow; and Jehovah's Witnesses court case, Moscow.
- ²² See Appendix I and Mark Elliott, 'The new Russian law on religion: will e-mail undermine draconian enforcement?', *East–West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Fall 1997), p. 16.
- ²³ *ibid.*; Beverly Nickles, 'Trouble in Russia's Far East', *Compass Direct*, 23 September 1998.
- ²⁴ Galina Obrovets to author, October 1997. See also Lyudmila Bredneva, quoted in *KNS*, 11 May 1998.
- ²⁵ Homer, *The 1997 Russian Federation Law*
- ²⁶ Anita Deyneka, 'Russia's restrictive law on religion: dead or delayed?', *East–West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Fall 1993), pp. 1–2.
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- ³⁰ Bronwyn McLaren, 'Religious law's critics go to highest court', *Moscow Times*, 15 July 1998.
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- ³² Ambassador-at-Large Stephen Sestanovich, special adviser to the secretary of state for the New Independent States, testimony before the Subcommittee for Europe of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 20 May 1998.
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- ³⁵ Lawrence Uzzell, 'Draft regulations fail to soften new religion law', *KNS*, 19 January 1998.
- ³⁶ *ibid.*

- ³⁷ Lawrence Uzzell, 'Justice Ministry guidelines soften interpretation of new religion law', *KNS*, 22 January 1998. See also Beverly Nickles, 'Restrictions on religion get uneven enforcement', *Christianity Today*, vol. 42 (6 April 1998), p. 20.
- ³⁸ Eugene Grosman, notes of Law and Liberty Trust meeting, 28 January 1998.
- ³⁹ Homer, *The 1997 Russian Federation Law ...*
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁴¹ 'Yeltsin offers hope to religious freedom in Russia', *Religion Today*, 4 February 1998.
- ⁴² Alastair Macdonald, 'Russia to ratify Human Rights Convention', Reuters, 21 February 1998. See also 'Upper House ratifies Rights Convention', Reuters, 13 March 1998; Homer, *The 1997 Russian Federation Law ...*
- ⁴³ *Europa40+*, vol. 2 (May 1998): <http://www.coe.fr/europa40/e/9805/main.htm>.
- ⁴⁴ Jones, 'Russian religion law ...', p. 11.
- ⁴⁵ Mark Elliott, 'The new Russian law on religion: what is the fallout for evangelicals?', *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Fall 1997), p. 4. See also three articles on bribery in *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 8–11.
- ⁴⁶ Uzzell, 'Concrete effects ...'.
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- ⁴⁸ Aleksei Ryabtsev, 'God posle zakona: vlasti poshli revolyutsionnym putem', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20 May 1998.
- ⁴⁹ Witte, 'Introduction ...', p. 26, concurs.
- ⁵⁰ Minutes of 'Gathering' meeting, Moscow, 9 October 1997.
- ⁵¹ The Russian Ministry of Justice released official implementing regulations for registration of foreign religious groups on 12 February and the same for Russian religious groups on 10 March 1998. Groups have until the end of 1999 to comply. *KNS*, 13 and 14 March 1998.
- ⁵² Durham and Homer, 'Russia's 1997 law ...', p. 233.
- ⁵³ Wally C. Schoon, 'The lure of the West', *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Spring 1996), pp. 1–2; Susan Hardwick, *Russian Refuge: Religion, Migration, and Settlement on the North American Pacific Rim* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1993); Zolotov, 'Russian Baptists ...', p. 15.
- ⁵⁴ Karen S. Lord, 'What exactly is religious freedom?', *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer 1998), p. 16.
- ⁵⁵ Lauren B. Homer, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Hearing, 5 December 1997.
- ⁵⁶ Nick Nedelchev, letter to East-West Institute, 5 November 1997.
- ⁵⁷ For the text of the Presidential Determination, consult the following website: <http://www.pub.whitehouse.gov/uri-res/12R?urn:pdi//oma.eop.gov.us/1998/5/27/7.text.1>.
- ⁵⁸ Homer, *The 1997 Russian Federation Law ...*
- ⁵⁹ Lauren B. Homer and Lawrence A. Uzzell, 'Federal and provincial religious freedom laws in Russia: a struggle for and against federalism and the rule of law', *Emory International Law Review*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Winter 1998), pp. 247–312.
- ⁶⁰ *KNS*, 3 April 1998.
- ⁶¹ *KNS*, 15 October 1997. See also Uzzell, 'Concrete effects ...'.
- ⁶² *ibid.*
- ⁶³ This is the argument of Alexis Malashenko, Moscow office of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: see Jones, 'Russian religion law ...', pp. 10–11.
- ⁶⁴ The trust which commissioned the study insists on anonymity. The report may not be circulated.
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- ⁶⁶ Richard Morin, 'Keeping the faith', *Washington Post*, 12 January 1998. See also Mark Elliott, 'What percentage of Russians are practising Christians?', *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Summer 1997), pp. 5–6.
- ⁶⁷ Valeriya Sycheva, 'Vne Tserkvi spaseniya net', *Segodnya*, 3 June 1998; Stephen Brown,

'Church leader dismisses claims that new Russian land is too restrictive', *Ecumenical News International*, 12 September 1997.

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⁷¹ Kent Hill and Mark Elliott, 'Are evangelicals interlopers?', *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Summer 1993), p. 3.

⁷² Roman Lunkin and Lawrence A. Uzzell, 'American Baptist denies his departure was voluntary', *KNS*, 3 April 1998.

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⁷⁵ *The Orthodox Church*, vol. 33 (November 1997), p. 11, reprinted in *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Fall 1997), p. 7.

Appendix I: The Impact of the 1997 Russian Law on Religion

Compiled by Mark Elliott, Sharyl Corrado and Gerald Elvey

Each entry gives the following pieces of information, in this order: Date; Location; Affiliation; Incident; Source.

1997-98. Kazan', 450 miles (720 km) E of Moscow. Pentecostal. Local officials have denied a Pentecostal congregation permission to rent public facilities. The church has been meeting in the forest for over a year. E-mail from Brent Trowbridge to 'Gathering' distribution list, 17 September 1998.

August 1997. Semnadsat', 25 miles (40 km) W of Moscow. Pentecostal. Authorities banned Pentecostal rental of local school for Sunday worship. Officials 'cited both the new federal legislation, which at that point was still more than four months away from final passage, and complaints by a local Orthodox priest'. *Keston News Service (KNS)*, 15 October 1997.

25 August 1997. Ivanovo, 200 miles (320 km) NE of Moscow. Orthodox. Orthodox deacon Sergei Shevchenko dismissed from position after refusing to sign a petition in support of the new religion law. *KNS*, 27 October 1997.

28 September 1997. St Petersburg. Salvation Army. Rental contracts for worship space in two locations were cancelled on the basis of the new law. One hospital director familiar with Salvation Army work with AIDS patients said 'We want them to stay, and if necessary, we will fight for them'. According to the head of Salvation Army work in Russia, relations with local officials improved markedly through the winter. John Varoli, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 30 October 1997; *KNS*, 15 October 1997; Lt Col. Ken Baillie to author, May 1998.

29 September 1997. Noginsk, 30 miles (50 km) NW of Moscow. Ukrainian Orthodox. Police transferred control of Epiphany Cathedral from Ukrainian Orthodox to Moscow Patriarchate, following a court ruling. *Moscow Times*, 11 October 1997, pp. 1-2; Reuters, 7 October 1997.

29 September 1997. Moscow. Hare Krishna. Police increased harassment of Hare Krishnas after Yel'tsin signed new religion law, including preventing activists from selling religious literature. BBC World Service, 29 September, cited in *CSCE Digest*, vol. 20 (October 1997), p. 107.

30 September 1997–27 November 1998. Tuim, Republic of Khakassia, 300 miles (480 km) E of Novosibirsk, Siberia. Lutheran. 30 September 1997: Local authorities sent a letter to the Evangelical Lutheran church cancelling its registration, on the basis of the new religion law; Khakassia Ministry of Justice reversed this decision on 10 October, following western protests and calls from Moscow from prime minister Chernomyrdin's office. 27 November: Local officials announced decision to seek annulment of Lutheran registration through the courts. 5 March 1998: Continued harassment of deacon Pavel Zayakin and parishioners by FSB security police and local authorities. Lutheran Mission taken to court to force it to stop distributing literature, cut international contacts and drop educational programmes (even for its own children). State security officials visited the pastor, his wife and other members of the congregation to check their passports. June: Church exonerated in local court. 19 August: Evangelical Lutheran Transfiguration of the Lord Church consecrated without incident. 23 September: Khakassia Supreme Court ruled against the Lutherans, thus cancelling their registration. 24 November: Russian Supreme Court rejected the verdict of the Khakassia Supreme Court, thus restoring the Lutherans' registration. Vsevolod Lytkin, Radiotserkov', 18 September and 13 October 1997; Yuri Kolesnikov, Radiotserkov', 27 March, 3 August and 25 September 1998; *KNS*, 1, 7 and 10 October and 1 and 3 December 1997; *KNS*, 13 March, 3 June and 30 September 1998; *Compass Direct*, 25 September 1998; e-mail from Pavel Zayakin, 23 September 1998; e-mail from Vsevolod Lytkin, 23 September and 27 November 1998.

September 1997. Ulan-Ude, Buryatia, Siberia, 1050 miles (1690 km) E of Novosibirsk. Evangelical Christian–Baptist (ECB). Local authorities required Baptist missionaries to submit sermons to a government employee 'for inspection and certification'. *Boston Globe*, 8 October 1997.

First week of October 1997. Gatchina, 25 miles (40 km) S of St Petersburg. Pentecostal. Local communists sought to ban Pentecostals from renting public facilities. Mayor defended Pentecostals for their charitable work. Igor' Nikitin, 'Communists fail to close church in Gatchina', forwarded by Ray Prigodich, 27 October 1997.

October 1997. Syktyvkar, capital of Komi Autonomous Republic, 600 miles (1000 km) NE of Moscow. Evangelical Christian–Baptist. The new, modern, centrally located ECB church and four-storey building with seminary and rehabilitation centre for paraplegics disturbed local Orthodox and Patriarch Aleksii II. Local officials intimidated pastor Pavel Kobzar with allegations of an improper building permit and tax issues. He feared officials would 'attempt to use the new law to close the church and possibly arrest him'. E-mail report from Beverly Nickles, 15 October 1997.

October 1997. Moscow. Eastern European Outreach (EEO) (Mission). The Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs informed Jeff Thompson, EEO executive director, that it would not renew its agreement with EEO for work in prisons in 1998. Letter from Jeff Thompson, 27 October 1997.

6 October 1997. Novosibirsk, Siberia. Protestant. Orthodox believers disrupted Protestant worship with shouting. Police were called in to restore order. Disruptions resumed after police left. Beverly Nickles, 'Abuses of Russia's new religion law continue', *Compass Direct*, 19 December 1997, pp. 38–41.

8 October 1997. Moscow. Evangelical Christian–Baptist. ECB leader Yuri Sipko noted increased discrimination by local authorities denying Protestants the right to rent public facilities for worship. *KNS*, 15 October 1997.

15 October 1997. Bryansk, 250 miles (350 km) SW of Moscow. Jewish. Rejection of synagogue registration application. *KNS*, 29 October 1997.

16 October 1997. Ryazan', 120 miles (200 km) SE of Moscow. Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA). Local court decision displaced ROCA congregation in favour of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Church of the Epiphany. Case is under appeal. *KNS*, 3 December 1997; *ITAR–TASS*, 30 October 1997.

19 October and 2 November 1997. Iskitim, Novosibirsk *oblast'*, 25 miles (40 km) SE of Novosibirsk, Siberia. Protestant. Six Orthodox believers broke up a service; 12 young men interrupted worship of 150, shouting 'Do not believe the foreign sect'. Yuri Kolesnikov, Radiotserkov', 20 November 1997.

30 October 1997 and 8 April 1998. Reutov, Moscow *oblast'*. Presbyterian. Authorities rejected two registration applications by Zion Presbyterian Church because it could not prove 15 years of existence. *KNS*, 26 November 1997; *Human Rights Without Frontiers*, 29 May 1998.

November 1997. Rostov-on-Don, 600 miles (960 km) S of Moscow. Hare Krishna. Two Orthodox priests and a group of Cossacks violently interrupted worship; 11 Krishnaites were hospitalised. Yuri Koslesnikov, Radiotserkov', 20 November 1997.

1 November 1997. Izmailovsky, just S of Moscow. Pentecostal. Local authorities halted school rental for Sunday worship by Zion Pentecostal Church. Pastor Igor' Tsyapak reported pressure from procommunist officials and Russian Orthodox. *KNS*, 10 March 1998.

12–13 November 1997. Moscow. Orthodox. Charitable cafeteria run by Orthodox Aleksandr Ogorodnikov closed and taken over by a group of unknown men, possibly connected to the district government. *KNS*, 14 November 1997.

13 November 1997–April 1998. Siberia. Catholic. Many foreign priests serving in Siberia experienced difficulties with visa renewals. Catholics also faced steep arbitrary rent increases. *KNS*, 24 November 1997; 30 April 1998.

18 November 1997. Buzuluk, Orenburg *oblast'*, Urals, 620 miles (1000 km) SE of Moscow. Adventist. Citing the new law on religion, city officials cancelled evangelistic services a few days before meetings were to begin. Regional authorities had granted permits. Buzuluk mayor refused to turn on fax machine in order not to receive notice from Moscow that Adventists, in Russia 110 years, should be allowed to hold meetings. Services were moved to Orenburg. *Adventist News Agency*, 25 November 1997; Adventist Department of Communications phone communication with East–West Institute, 17 December 1997.

19 November 1997–3 February 1998. Saransk, Mordovia, 340 miles (550 km) SE of Moscow. Non-denominational Protestant. 19 November 1997: Evangelical pastor Anatoli Bogatov faced vandalism, threats of physical violence and loss of housing. 3 February 1998: The Supreme Court of Mordovia approved the eviction of Bogatov and his family from their home. E-mail appeal distributed by Anatoli Bogatov, 19 November 1997; e-mail from Robert and Cheryl Hosken, 3 and 26

February 1998.

22 November 1997. Stary Oskol, 200 miles (320 km) S of Moscow. Pentecostal. Pastor Sergei Matyukh wrote a letter to the Helsinki Group summarising harassment: mayor tearing church sign from building, police intimidation, local press claiming American missionaries were secret intelligence agents. Igor' Alenin, Radiotserkov', 22 November 1997.

Late November 1997. Khabarovsk, Russian Far East, 375 miles (600 km) N of Vladivostok. Protestant (Mission). Local authorities expelled Korean 'missionary-spy' John Son on charges of visa violations and tax evasion. Radiotserkov', 20 January 1998.

29 November–7 December 1997. Yoshkar-Ola, Mari El Republic, 450 miles (725 km) E of Moscow. Evangelical Christian–Baptist; Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (Mission). On 29 November Mari El Republic president Vyacheslav Kilitsyn withdrew permission for a local ECB church to host preaching in the Lenin Palace of Culture by Billy Graham Evangelistic Association evangelist Viktor Hamm, scheduled for 10–14 December. Kilitsyn reversed his decision on 7 December and the meetings were held. E-mails from Robert Hoskens, 29 November and 2, 4, 5, 7 December; *KNS*, 5 December 1997.

December 1997. Klin, 40 miles (70 km) NW of Moscow. Evangelical Christian–Baptist. Pastor Anatoli Sokolov reported local authorities demanded church tax payment at three times the 1996 rate, while the Russian Orthodox Church paid 40 per cent of its assessment. *Compass Direct*, 20 February 1998, pp. 28–29; *Christianity Today*, 6 April 1998, p. 20.

December 1997. Vladivostok, Russian Far East. Protestant (Mission). On charges of visa irregularities and 'violation of the rules of missionary activity', local authorities expelled New Zealand missionary Nil Paterson who had been working for the Church of the Living Word. Authorities also closed a Bible college sponsored by the church. Radiotserkov', 20 January 1998.

5 December 1997. Prokhladny, Kabardino-Balkaria Republic, 1100 miles (1770 km) S of Moscow. Catholic. Local authorities ordered a Roman Catholic parish to apply for new registration, despite already being registered. *KNS*, 9 February 1998.

9 December 1997. Moscow. Catholic. Jesuits in Moscow visited and questioned by local militia. *KNS*, 19 December 1997.

1997. Orel, 200 miles (320 km) S of Moscow. Evangelical Christian–Baptist; Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (Mission). After an Orthodox bishop protested, the mayor refused permission for city-wide ECB evangelism featuring Canadian evangelist Viktor Hamm. *Ecumenical News International Bulletin*, 2 April 1998.

Late 1997. Cheropovets, 250 miles (400 km) N of Moscow. CoMission (Mission). CoMission worker Rick Erb and others forced to leave Russia before visas expired. Personal prayer letter, 5 November 1997.

January 1998. Kursk, 300 miles (480 km) S of Moscow. Catholic. Authorities forced a parish from its building which had been built by Catholics in the tsarist era. *KNS*, 21 March 1998.

January 1998. Khabarovsk, Russian Far East, 375 miles (600 km) N of Vladivostok. Independent Protestant. Orthodox Bishop Mark opposed two Protestant congregations' (Church of Jesus Christ and Church of World Mission) rental of a hospital auditorium that had been an Orthodox chapel prior to 1917. The Protestants, who had been renting from the hospital for five years, had the support of the medical staff because of the worshippers' helpful ministry with patients. The two churches lost their premises following the bishop's appeal to the provincial governor. Radiotserkov', 30 January 1998.

25 January–September 1998. Moscow. Josh McDowell Ministries (Mission). Operation Carelift, which has been providing Russia with humanitarian aid since 1992, had three aid containers impounded by customs officials in early 1998. Authorities released two of the three in November 1998. Radiotserkov', 21 February 1998; e-mail from Sharyn Schweder, Josh McDowell Ministries, to Sharyl Corrado, 21 September and 2 December 1998.

26 January 1998. Yaroslavl', 150 miles (240 km) NE of Moscow. Pentecostal. The Yaroslavl' procuracy, citing Article 27 of the new law on religion, mailed a letter to Viktor Tatach, pastor of the New Generation (Novoye pokoleniye) Christian Centre, demanding that the church halt its distribution of religious publications, cassettes, videos and e-mail bulletins. Similar verbal demands began in December 1997. As of June 1998 verbal threats were continuing. *KNS*, 6 February and 3 June 1998; Beverly Nickles, *Compass Direct*, 20 February 1998, p. 28; *Christianity Today*, 6 April 1998, p. 20.

February 1998. Venev, Tula *oblast'*, 100 miles (150 km) S of Moscow. Evangelical Christian–Baptist; Adventists. Local authorities evicted both churches from meetings in a rented cinema to avoid 'interconfessional strife'. A local decree now forbids such meetings in any municipal building. *Christian News*, 22 May 1998; Radiotserkov', 23 April and 29 May 1998.

13 February 1998. Narofominsk, Moscow *oblast'*, 50 miles (80 km) SW of Moscow. Pentecostal. Police interrupted a service in an apartment and arrested pastor Sergei Drozdov, holding him for 48 hours. Worship in apartments continues but the church may not rent public space. *KNS*, 6 May 1998; *Russian Religious News*, 17 February 1998.

27 February 1998. Moscow. Pentecostal. Pentecostal funeral in Hospital of St Aleksei interrupted and halted. The hospital has strong ties with the Russian Orthodox Church. *KNS*, 27 May 1998.

March 1998. Moscow. Old Believers. Seventy-four icons transferred from government storage to the Russian Orthodox Church were claimed by Old Believers as theirs, but Orthodox Fr Vsevolod Chaplin responded that the new law was silent on such questions. *KNS*, 3 June 1998; Aleksei Ryabtsev, 'God posle zakona: vlasti poshli revolyutsionnym putem', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20 May 1998.

18 March 1998–September 1998. Vanino, Khabarovsk *krai*, Russian Far East (on the coast of the Sea of Japan). Baptist Mid-Missions (Mission). Provincial authorities denied a visa renewal to US missionary Dan Pollard, pastor of an independent Baptist church in Vanino, affiliated with Baptist Mid-Missions. On 25 March he was forced to leave the country but returned to Khabarovsk *krai* briefly in May. *KNS*, 24 March, 3 April and 2 June 1998; *Human Rights Without Frontiers*,

29 May 1998.

20 March 1998. Abakan, Khakassia, Siberia, 350 miles (560 km) E of Novosibirsk. Pentecostal. Local authorities ordered a halt to the missionary and educational activities of Praise (Proslavleniye) Church (Swedish Word of Life-related). Pastor Ruslan Belosevich refused to comply. *KNS*, 13 and 20 March 1998.

Early 1998. Belgorod. Catholic. Catholics prevented from registering, even though their church was built in the nineteenth century. Their parish priest was not allowed to enter the city. *KNS*, 21 March 1998.

Early 1998. Russian villages. Independent missionaries (Mission). Various personal reports of increased difficulty in bringing in Bibles, conducting public baptisms, renting buildings and distributing literature. In particular, one sanatorium director was threatened with firing should he rent to western missionaries. *KNS*, 1 May 1998.

Early 1998. Amur *oblast'*, Russian Far East (capital Blagoveshchensk, 550 miles (880 km) NW of Vladivostok). Pentecostal. Justice administration sent letter to all regional Pentecostal churches requiring them to send copies of their meeting minutes and plans for the coming year. Radiotserkov', 14 May 1998.

25 March 1998. Tula, 100 miles (160 km) S of Moscow. Evangelical Christian-Baptist; East-West Ministries (Mission). A district administrator interrupted an evangelistic meeting in the local House of Culture because 15 Americans (East-West Ministries, Dallas, TX) were involved. Later, the procurator found nothing wrong with the meeting and it continued. Radiotserkov', 29 May 1998; e-mail from Tom Shelton, East-West Ministries, to author, 2 April 1998; e-mail from attorney Lauren Homer, 27 March 1998.

April 1998. Moscow. All confessions other than the Russian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate. Mayor Luzhkov exempted the Russian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate from property taxes, but no other religious confessions. *Christianity Today*, 6 April 1998, p. 20.

April 1998. Novokuznetsk *oblast'*, Siberia, 180 miles (300 km) SE of Novosibirsk. Pentecostal. Church evicted in April from theatre where it had been holding services. Pastor was taken to court in June for holding an illegal public meeting, but sentenced to only a fine. Radiotserkov', 23 and 25 June 1998; *Human Rights Without Frontiers*, 15 September 1998.

April 1998. Novokuznetsk *oblast'*, Siberia, 180 miles (300 km) SE of Novosibirsk. Evangelical Christian-Baptist. Prison officials halted ECB church work in labour colony 16/12, following a state order to admit 'only representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church'. Radiotserkov', 4 May 1998.

28 April 1998. Moscow. Pentecostal. Source of Life (Istochnik zhizni) Christian Centre barred from continued rental of Molodezhny cinema. Radiotserkov', 29 April 1998.

28 April 1998. Barnaul, Siberia, 125 miles (200 km) S of Novosibirsk. Pentecostal. City officials cancelled the New Life (Novaya zhizn') Pentecostal Church's five-year rental agreement with a local cinema. The Barnaul mayor's office has blocked the congregation's attempts to rent other facilities. Radiotserkov', 28 April 1998; *Human Rights Without Frontiers*, 29 May and 15 September 1998.

Early June 1998. Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Sakhalin, Russian Far East. Presbyterian. Under pressure from the local Russian Orthodox Church and the regional administration, Korean Presbyterian missionaries cancelled a conference planned to bring together more than 100 Presbyterian and other Protestant missionaries from around the former Soviet Union. *Moscow Times*, 17 June 1998, p. 4.

June 1998. Voronezh, 350 miles (560 km) S of Moscow. Evangelical Christian-Baptist; Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (Mission). BGEA Canadian evangelist Viktor Hamm cancelled outdoor preaching in Voronezh because city authorities denied permission to Evangelical Christians-Baptists, the local sponsors. *KNS*, 1 July 1998.

29 June 1998. Novosibirsk, Siberia. Mennonite. Local congregation denied registration, even though it had originally been registered in 1970. Radiotserkov', 11 August 1998; e-mail from Dmitri Suslov, Radiotserkov', to Sharyl Corrado, 21 September 1998.

July 1998. Magadan, Russian Far East, 750 miles (1200 km) NW of Vladivostok. Pentecostal. Local prosecutor charged Word of Life (Slovo zhizni) Church with cult activities and filed charges in attempt to close the church. Charges were dismissed as being unsubstantiated, and the case has been postponed for an indefinite period. Reuters, 20 July 1998; *Compass Direct*, 19 August 1998; Radiotserkov', 16 September 1998.

July 1998. Yaroslavl', 150 miles (240 km) NE of Moscow. Jehovah's Witnesses. Yaroslavl' Jehovah's Witnesses filed a complaint with the Russian Constitutional Court arguing that local authorities' demand for proof of their existence for 15 years violated their constitutional right to equal protection before the law. *Human Rights Without Frontiers*, 27 July 1998.

July 1998. Novokuznetsk, Siberia, 180 miles (300 km) SE of Novosibirsk. Gideons (Mission). Mayor barred Gideons from distributing New Testaments in schools, although their government-approved charter states they may do so. Radiotserkov', 28 July and 1 August 1998.

23 July 1998. Anapa, Krasnodar *krai*, 700 miles (1125 km) S of Moscow. Adventist. Cossacks detained and whipped an Adventist distributing Bibles in a public park. Fr Aleksandr, the local Cossacks' spiritual leader, contended the 1997 law was inadequate because it 'allows sectarians to exist'. *KNS*, 15 September 1998.

July–October 1998. Moscow. Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries (Mission). New visa regulation limited foreigners coming for 'humanitarian' or 'religious' purposes to a three-month period, down from the previous one-year period. Business and cultural visas were not changed. Authorities rescinded the new restriction on 26 August 1998. Pronouncements of various government ministries were conflicting and practice continued to be more restrictive than various official statements. *KNS*, 5 August and 6 October 1998; *Associated Press*, 7 August 1998; Beverly Nickles, 'Trouble in Russia's Far East', *Compass Direct*, 23 September 1998.

August–November 1998. Rostov-on-Don, 600 miles (960 km) S of Moscow. Pentecostal. Local officials cancelled a rental agreement permitting the Shield of Faith Pentecostal Church to sponsor a 'Jesus Festival' concert in a sports complex. Chairman of the city's department for Cossacks and religion refused permission to

hold the event. At the end of September 1998 city authorities required a cinema to cancel its rental agreement with the Shield of Faith congregation. E-mail from Beverly Nickles to Sharyl Corrado, 17 September 1998; *KNS*, 20 and 24 November 1998.

August–September 1998. Vanino, Khabarovsk *krai*, Russian Far East. Baptist Mid-Missions (Mission). Arthur Bristol, American missionary with Baptist Mid-Missions, was subjected to systematic harassment, repeated interrogations and threats of imprisonment by local authorities and Federal Security Bureau (FSB) agents. FSB agents warned members of the autonomous Baptist church affiliated with Baptist Mid-Missions to stop attending. Beverly Nickles, ‘Trouble in Russia’s Far East’, *Compass Direct*, 23 September 1998; *KNS*, 25 September 1998.

6 August–18 November 1998. Moscow. Jehovah’s Witnesses. Local prosecutor A. V. Viktorov filed a court motion to ‘liquidate’ Jehovah’s Witnesses and to ban their activities. Trial to ban the group, which began 17 November 1998, was postponed by Judge Yelena Prokhorycheva on 18 November, to give the prosecution additional time to prepare its case. Russian Orthodox Church official Aleksandr Dvorkin was assisting the prosecution. *Human Rights Without Frontiers*, 11 August, 15 September and 13 October 1998; *Ekspress khronika*, 14 September 1998; *Ecumenical News International News Service*, 9 October 1998; *Segodnya*, 23 and 24 November 1998; *Washington Post*, 29 September 1998; *Associated Press*, 18 November 1998.

26 August 1998. Moscow. Orthodox. Fr Martiri Bagin suspended from duties due to his criticism of the 1997 religion law and ‘having dealings with foreigners and other denominations’. *The Tablet*, 29 August 1998; *KNS*, 5 August 1998.

Summer 1998. Village of Kasplya, Smolensk *oblast’*, 200 miles (320 km) SW of Moscow. Evangelical Christian–Baptist. Authorities closed a Sunday school and prohibited worship services. Radiotserkov’, 13 August 1998.

18 September 1998. Moscow. Unregistered Baptist. Moscow Technical College principal ordered guards not to admit an unregistered Baptist congregation to premises it had rented. The action allegedly stemmed from the intervention of the FSB (secret police). *Compass Direct*, 25 September 1998.

October 1998. Osa, Perm’ *oblast’*, 850 miles (1370 km) E of Moscow. Pentecostal. Local authorities were pressuring a Pentecostal church to register, whereas the 1997 law does not require this of a congregation identifying itself as a ‘religious group’. The Orthodox priest and the local press objected to the presence of Pentecostals in Osa. *KNS*, 13 October 1998.

8 November 1998. Kemerovo, Siberia, 125 miles (200 km) E of Novosibirsk. New Life (Novaya zhizn’) Mission. Local authorities banned New Life Mission from working with the city’s troubled teenagers. Radiotserkov’, 8 November 1998.

20 November 1998. Orel, 300 miles (480 km) S of Moscow. Catholic. A Russian Orthodox archbishop persuaded the provincial governor to reverse a government decision to return to Catholics a sanctuary built by Catholics in the 19th century. *KNS*, 20 November 1998.

November 1998. Khabarovsk, Russian Far East. Pentecostal; Methodist; independent Protestant. Regional department of justice blocked three Protestant churches

from reregistration as required by the 1997 law on religion. Radiotserkov', 6 November 1998.

Incidents Evidently Unconnected with the 1997 Law

On 18 March 1998 two former Mormons kidnapped Mormon missionaries Travis Tuttle and Andrew Propst in Saratov, 450 miles (720 km) E of Moscow, and held them for \$300,000 in ransom. The missionaries were released with minor injuries on 22 March. Two suspects were arrested on 24 March and one was sentenced to four years in prison in August. (*Associated Press*, 20–22 March 1998; Reuters, 21–24 March 1998; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23–24 March 1998; *Religion Today*, 26 August 1998.)

Ten religious workers were kidnapped in the Caucasus. (*East–West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Fall 1997), p. 14; *East–West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer 1998), p. 11; Judith Ingram, 'Chechens free two British captives', *Associated Press*, 20 September 1998; Radiotserkov', 7 November 1998; and *Russian Regional Report*, vol. 3 (12 November 1998).

Appendix II: 'Centralised Religious Organisations' (CROs) Registered under the 1997 Russian Law on Religion

Each entry gives the following pieces of information, in this order: Date; Church/ Association; Number of churches; Source.

17 March 1998. Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostal; Vladimir M. Murza, president). Nearly 1200. E-mail from Roman Lunkin, *Keston News Service (KNS)*, 11 August 1998.

30 March 1998. Associated Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostal; Sergei Ryakhovsky, president). 1000. Radiotserkov', 1 April 1998; *KNS*, 30 April 1998.

22 April 1998. Union of Evangelical Christians–Baptists. 1200. Radiotserkov', 6 May 1998.

14 May 1998. Roman Catholics. 233 (or 300). *KNS*, 3 June 1998; Michael Bourdeaux, 'Soul wars in Moscow', *The Tablet*, 22 August 1998; e-mail from Roman Lunkin, *KNS*, 18 September 1998.

15 May 1998. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). 128. *Associated Press*, 15 May 1998.

21 May 1998. Seventh-Day Adventists. 513. *KNS*, 15 September 1998; *Adventist News Network*, 28 August 1998; e-mail from C. Lee Huff, president of Euro-Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 22 September 1998; e-mail from Roman Lunkin, *KNS*, 23 September 1998.

26 May 1998. Christian Charismatic Association. 30. Radiotserkov', 1 June 1998.

10 June 1998. Association for Spiritual Renewal (a parachurch body affiliated with US-based Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries). Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries news release, 22 June 1998.

22 June 1998. Association of Christian Churches in Russia (Charismatic). 63. *ChristianNet*, 3 August 1998.

26 November 1998. Russian Orthodox Church. 17,000. *Metaphrasis*, 27 November 1998.

27 November 1998. Congress of Jewish Religious Organisations and Associations. 50. *Metaphrasis*, 27 November 1998.

26 January 1999. United Methodist Church. 46. *Christian Daily News*, 9 February 1999.

12 March 1999. Council for Christian Evangelical Churches of Russia. Unavailable. E-mail from George Law, Association for Spiritual Renewal, 22 March 1999.

Notes

The Islamic directorates of Russia have not formally received CRO status, but they enjoy this status *de facto*.

Churches not confirmed to have been present in Russia for 15 years and those not registered as CROs face potentially severe restrictions under the 1997 law. See *East-West Church & Ministry Report*, vol. 5, nos 3 and 4 and vol. 6, no. 2.

A recently published article mistakenly asserts that only Russian Orthodoxy, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam 'can qualify today as religious organizations'. (William J. Kovatch, Jr, 'All religions are equal, but some are more equal than others: Russia's 1997 restrictive law of religious practices', *Demokratizatsiya: the Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, vol. 6 (Spring 1998), p. 420.)