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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

In this and in the next issue we are pleased to be able to publish articles on Protestants in the Soviet Union. Professor J. A. Hebly from the Netherlands, who has undertaken many research projects on the church situation in Eastern Europe, particularly the Soviet Union, explores the New Confession of the Evangelical Christian Baptists, but goes beyond this to shed light on the general situation of the Evangelical Christian Baptists. The Soviet Protestants have been much in the news during the last few years (e.g. the Pentecostal families which took refuge in the American Embassy in Moscow, the exchange of Georgiy Vins and four other dissenters for two Soviet spies, the reports of the Council of Prisoners' Relatives on incarcerated and exiled Protestant leaders and church members, the publications of Keston College, and many others). They have been in the midst of controversies both in the Soviet Union and abroad and have sometimes been exploited for one or another cause by people of widely divergent interests. The articles by J. A. Hebly and the one by Walter Sawatsky which we plan to publish in the next issue hopefully shed more light than heat on this difficult subject.

Alf Johansen from Denmark has been a previous contributor to OPREE (see Vol. I, No. 7 and Vol. III No. 2). He is an expert on Eastern Orthodox theology. In this issue he reviews the work of the foremost Orthodox theologian in Eastern Europe, the Romanian Dumitru Stăniloae, whose work is increasingly well known outside Romania and whose writings are of ecumenical importance.

The last two articles deal with Hungary, both by native Hungarians. Emmerich András, S. J. is a sociologist of religion who is the leading figure in the Hungarian Institute for Sociology of Religion in Vienna. I would like to turn the readers' attention to the many publications of that institute dealing primarily with the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary. Most of them are in German, but many have also been translated into English. Those wishing to order their publications may write to the Ungarisches Kirchensoziologisches Institut, Linzenstrasse 263/18, A-1140 Vienna, Austria. Another writing of András on the Marxist-Catholic dialogue in Hungary appeared in OPREE, Vol. II, No. 5. We anticipate publishing a number of his articles. The present András article is a scholarly analysis of the Hungarian state's policies toward the

churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, as presented by the Secretary of State, Imre Miklós, who is in charge of the State Office for Church Affairs. In my judgment the Hungarian government's policies toward the churches are currently among the most flexible and subtle, and they follow the principle of enlightened self-interest. These policies are of considerable benefit to the churches, especially when compared with the Stalinist period or with some of the other Eastern European countries.

While András' emphasis is on the policies of the state toward the churches, Vilmos Vajta's emphasis is on one of the responses by the Protestant church leadership which seem to go harmoniously with the government policies. Vajta is a Lutheran theologian now residing in Sweden, well known in ecumenical circles around the world, who takes a critical look at the "Theology of Diaconia" which is the "official" Protestant theological response to the church's existence in a socialist context. One may expect that the Hungarian theologians who espouse this theology may not find his criticism to their liking. There are certainly many who would be less critical of their theological stance as well as many who would be much more harsh. I believe Vajta's analysis and evaluation to be well informed and penetrating, profused with a Christian spirit of charity and concern for the well being of Christ's churches in Hungary.

Finally a comment on our format. OPREE is growing both in subscriptions and in the number of submitted articles. We expect to publish more pages per issue in this volume. For technical reasons we intend to use the same color cover throughout one volume, changing it with each volume from now on rather than with each issue as in the past.

Paul Mojzes, Editor