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In Lieu of a Review: Reminiscences on Reading *One Word of Truth; The Cold War Memoir of Michael Bourdeaux and Keston College* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2019).

Reviewer: Mark R. Elliott, former editor of the *East-West Church and Ministry Report* and retired professor of church history at several American universities.

I first met Michael Bourdeaux in October 1983, at the beginning of one month of research at his Keston College Library and Archive, located in a southwest suburb of London, England. The back story to what gave occasion for our first meeting dates back a decade, to 1974, the year I completed my Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky and the year my wife, Darlene, and I made our first trip to the Soviet Union.

With a specialization in modern European and Russian history, I had written my dissertation on Soviet prisoners-of-war and forced laborers and their involuntary repatriation to the Soviet Union from Germany at the end of World War II. Within days of completing my doctorate Darlene and I were off on a no-frills foray into the USSR. It was an arduous camping venture across Europe and the Soviet Union, creatively conceived by Alexander Lipson, professor of Russian at Harvard University. That July 1974 it seemed to rain constantly, making for a soggy sojourn. On the plus side, camping afforded us ready opportunities to experience the Brezhnev era on the ground (literally), without the same level of stifling “oversight” afforded Americans staying in Intourist hotels.

As people of faith, Darlene and I took advantage of our two weekends in the Soviet Union to worship with fellow believers in Moscow and Kyiv. I had obtained church addresses from Peter and Anita Deyneka, then leaders of the Slavic Gospel Association, who in time would become close friends. Those brief hours with Christians under duress were unforgettable and life-altering. In Moscow, wandering labyrinthine streets in the vicinity of the capital’s lone Evangelical Christian-Baptist church, a lady in Sunday dress passed us, pointed heavenward, and beckoned us to follow. Especially memorable were the warm greetings and the haunting, melancholic hymns, some of which we finally recognized as familiar, but at a deliberate tempo that seemed to speak more of endurance than triumph. In Kyiv, following a service, Darlene gave a little girl a pocket calendar with a reproduction of Sallman’s Head of Christ. You would have thought this was a gift of gold as some forty people in the church courtyard pressed close around to gain a glance at this popular rendering of the Savior.

In sharp contrast to our worship in two living churches was our visit to Leningrad's Kazan Cathedral, converted for use as the Soviet Union's premier anti-religious temple: The Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism. As a student of the history of religion and as a practicing believer, I was curious to observe first-hand the Soviet take on the subject, interpreted especially, so it seemed, for the benefit of youth, judging by the milling tide of school-age parties crowding the former cathedral. The hostility to religious belief was on full display, with exhibits exclusively upon negative chapters in church history. Here was a diorama of the Catholic Inquisition, a painting of the burning of a heretic at the stake, and in the section on Russian Orthodoxy an array of whips, thumbscrews, and heavy irons for the benefit of schismatics subjected to imprisonment and torture. In his memoir, Michael Bourdeaux relates a similar reaction upon his firsthand observation of the desecration of this same house of worship (64-65; 273). In time, I would write an article on this museum for Keston's journal, *Religion in Communist Lands*.¹

Professionally, I came back from the Soviet Union a different person. I vowed, given time, to change course from a research focus on Soviet military and diplomatic history to one devoted to Russian church history and current conditions facing people of faith in the USSR. In 1982 I published my revised dissertation under the title, *Pawns of Yalta; Soviet Refugees and America's Role in Their Repatriation*.² My heart went out to these millions who had been pawns in the hands of Hitler and Stalin, and my head did its best to give their story the documentation and public airing it deserved. At this point, 1982, as I had inwardly vowed, I did redirect my research to the struggle for freedom of conscience in the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, when a sabbatical was forthcoming from my employer, Asbury College, for fall 1983, I was off to England and Keston College to study the scope of Western missions that were rendering aid to Soviet-bloc believers.

Keston's resources for my project were abundant: vertical files on mission organizations, relevant monographs and serials, an archive of primary sources, including *samizdat* ("self-published," fugitive documents secreted from East to West), and an entrée to an unmatched coterie of specialists. That month at Keston gave me occasion to rub shoulders with perhaps the greatest concentration anywhere of scholars and activists keen to publicize the trials and "be the

¹ "Leningrad's Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism," *Religion in Communist Lands* 11 (Summer 1993): 125-29.

² Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982.

voice” of Soviet-bloc believers.³ In addition to Michael Bourdeaux, I made my first acquaintance with Russian Orthodox specialist Philip Walters, editor of Keston’s *Religion in Communist Lands* (later, *Religion, State and Society*); Jane Ellis, later author of two outstanding monographs, *The Russian Orthodox Church, A Contemporary History*⁴ and *The Russian Orthodox Church: Triumphalism and Defensiveness*;⁵ Walter Sawatsky, author of the still-must-read *Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II*;⁶ Marite Sapiets, later author of *True Witness: The Story of Seventh-Day Adventists in the Soviet Union*;⁷ John Anderson, later author of *Religion, State, and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States*;⁸ Ginte Damusis, later an ambassador in the service of an independent Lithuania—an eventuality unimaginable in 1983; Sandy Oestreich, later a missionary for decades in Russia and Armenia; and Malcolm Walker, Keston’s indefatigable librarian, at once self-effacing and highly efficient. All of these individuals enriched my understanding and broadened my horizons, for which I am eternally grateful. More concretely, my time at Keston gave access to indispensable sources preparatory to my publication of an *East European Missions Directory*⁹ and my collaboration with Sharon Linzey in the editing of *East West Christian Organizations*.¹⁰

Reading *One Word of Truth* brought back a flood of memories of many of the same people, places, and policy debates that have figured prominently in my professional life, parallel to those of Michael Bourdeaux. I do not presume, however, to elevate my own academic and ministry career to the rarefied heights of the recipient of the 1984 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion (163-70). Rather, Michael Bourdeaux and I have shared a common, longstanding, fixed focus upon the struggles of believers in communist lands. We both have been blessed by the examples of brave souls defending their faith against hostile states. And both of us have had to contend with their detractors, in the West as well as in the East, who have chosen to ignore, minimize, and even malign the stalwart stance of these same brave souls.

³ See Jenny Robertson, *Be Our Voice: The Story of Michael Bourdeaux and Keston College* (London: Longman and Todd, 1984).

⁴ London: Routledge, 1986.

⁵ London: Macmillan, 1996.

⁶ Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981.

⁷ Keston, Kent, England: Keston College, 1990.

⁸ Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

⁹ Wheaton, IL: Institute for the Study of Christianity and Marxism, 1989.

¹⁰ Evanston, IL: Berry Publishing, 1993.

At its height Keston College employed 21 specialists who, along with part-time volunteers, could read 19 East European languages (157). My own support was always dramatically more modest, but for many years much more robust than was the case for the average professor in an evangelical academic environment. I will forever be grateful for what I was able to research and publish and for the ministry projects I was able to undertake because of the help rendered by grants, graduate assistants, very capable secretaries, and partnerships with such ministry leaders as Peter and Anita Deyneka (Slavic Gospel Association; later Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries), Charlie Spicer and Jack Graves (Overseas Council for Theological Education), John Bernbaum (Russian-American Christian University), and George Steiner (Children's HopeChest and Orphan's Tree).

Returning to the Keston saga, Michael Bourdeaux and his researchers-in-residence have been, above all else, advocates for unfettered freedom of conscience in communist states. This positive defense of the right to believe was persistently under assault from a surprisingly diverse array of forces making light of or ignoring violations of religious liberty in the Soviet orbit. Those undermining Keston's advocacy, directly or by implication, included not only Soviet-bloc states and their security services, but East-bloc captive church spokesmen, most of the ecumenical movement, including the World Council of Churches (WCC), the U.S. National Council of Churches (NCC), and to a somewhat lesser extent, the British Council of Churches (BCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA).

Over time the ecumenical movement and most of the rest of the above players came to view socialism more favorably than capitalism. This political and economic stance contributed to the employment of what I for years have called selective compassion, which *One Word of Truth* similarly labels "selectivity of ...conscience" (158). It may be defined as a coupling of a justifiable condemnation of human rights' abuses on the right (in non-communist, authoritarian regimes) with a shameful downplaying or ignoring of human rights' abuses on the left (in communist states).

To be sure, during the Cold War, anti-communist groups and governments employed the same double standard in reverse: highlighting human rights' infringements in communist states while turning a blind eye to the same abuses in right-wing, authoritarian states. The difference as regards freedom of conscience was that the left-leaning ecumenical movement, and such

international denominational bodies as the Lutheran World Federation and Baptist World Alliance, were able to make their far-from-impartial case with the benefit of financial resources, an expansive international bureaucracy, and a global networking capacity that Keston and like-minded religious liberty advocates could not match.¹¹

Still, Bourdeaux and company have done their best-with limited resources-to be the voice of the voiceless by defending the powerless against Kremlin-inspired falsehoods and half-truths. Its sole instrument has been the pen, with which it has documented and publicized violations of freedom of conscience.

Representative of Soviet efforts to counter Keston's truth-telling was a 1969 article in *Nauka i religiya* [*Science and Religion*] that argued that "Bourdeaux's scribbles" formed part of "the arsenal of imperialist propaganda, poisoning the minds of people in the West with the venom of anti-Soviet ideas" (quoted in *One Word of Truth*, 119). Michael Bourdeaux and Keston College managed to withstand such Soviet attacks in print, while Soviet-bloc security services engaged in largely ineffectual surveillance. A fascinating appendix in *One Word of Truth* features highlights of Keston-related files previously in the possession of the East German Stasi (secret police), with Michael Bourdeaux's commentary on their accuracy and inaccuracy (296-300). No doubt, the equivalent KGB file on Keston would make for even more interesting reading.

In its disinformation efforts, the Soviet state also pressed into service the Russian Orthodox and the Evangelical Christian-Baptist churches. For example, one year after the publication of Michael Bourdeaux's 1965 *Opium of the People*,¹² which revealed the drastic extent of Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign, Patriarch Alexi wrote Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey, attacking the book. In his view "it portrays in a distorted manner our country's attitude to freedom of conscience" and "falsifies and misrepresents the position of religion and church life in the USSR" (110).

Just as much was required of state-recognized Evangelical Christian-Baptist (ECB) leaders. On a 1968 visit to England, Moscow ECB pastor and unofficial ECB "foreign minister," Mikhail Zhidkov, met with Bourdeaux and pointedly objected to the latter's defense of

¹¹ See William Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1945-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); Hans Hebl, *The Russians and the World Council of Churches* (Belfast: Christian Journals, 1928), and *Eastbound Ecumenism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986); and Kent R. Hill, *The Soviet Union on the Brink; An Inside Look at Christianity and Glasnost* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1991), especially 129-65.

¹² London: Faber and Faber, 1965.

unregistered Baptists in Bourdeaux's 1968 *Religious Ferment in Russia*.¹³ Rev. Alexei Bychkov, later ECB General Secretary, also objected to what he considered was Keston's maligning of Soviet church-state relations. For its part, the ECB house organ, *Bratsky vestnik* [*Fraternal Herald*], could assert, "Not only do the Russian Baptists not consider communism to be an obstacle to evangelism, but they contend that its socio-economic principles do not contradict the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁴ Soviet church functionaries, who were required to carry the water for Soviet church-state propaganda, bring to mind the pathos of an Old Testament psalm of exile. Soviet-bloc faithful under siege endured a fate not unlike that of Hebrews in Babylonian captivity:

By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps, upon the willows.... They that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion (Psalm 137: 1-3 [KJV]).

In 1986, I took a position at Wheaton College's Billy Graham Center as director of a new Institute for the Study of Christianity and Marxism. (This designation, not of my choosing, engendered distrust among believers in Marxist states until the Billy Graham Center agreed to my proposal for a change to the Institute for East-West Christian Studies, a name not given to misunderstanding.) That very fall of 1986 I had occasion to host Rev. Zhidkov and Rev. Bychkov on a visit to Wheaton. I was determined, if at all possible, to arrange a venue that would avoid the standard "passport speeches" Soviet churchmen were obliged to deliver in the West. To that end I arranged for a Wheaton-sponsored, by-invitation breakfast for area pastors with my request to Revs. Zhidkov and Bychkov that they share from their personal spiritual pilgrimages. I suspect they were relieved to forego another Soviet public relations performance. In any case, they spoke from the heart in moving terms how the Lord had worked in their personal lives, with not a hint of propaganda. It was a minor victory for the truth that I recall with satisfaction.

One can sympathize to some extent with church spokespersons under duress, pressured to sing the song of their captors. After all, those of us in the West should make allowances in light of the fact that we must contemplate how courageous or cowed we might have been under the same circumstances. It is altogether another matter, however, to absolve church folk in the West

¹³ London: Palgrave, 1968

¹⁴ Quoted in *One Word of Truth*, 197. See also 117-18, 194, and 198.

who knew better when they alleged greater religious liberty in the East than was the case, and when they lauded the superiority of socialism. In hyperbolic defense of conditions for believers in Soviet-bloc states, Paul Hansen of the Lutheran World Federation could thus contend, “For every story about congregations which come together secretly in the woods, we can tell about thousands of others which gather in their church buildings, with state permission” (quoted in *One Word of Truth*, 215). Similarly, Paul Oestreicher of the British Council of Churches’ East-West Relations Advisory Committee could tout “the enormous achievement of socialism” and could complain, “There is no real Christian socialist on the [Keston] staff with a genuine appreciation of the problems of Communism and the creative Christian witness in a socialist society” (165; 104).

Above all, the World Council of Churches came to put the best face it could on Soviet church-state policy. Once the Kremlin permitted its churches to join the WCC, beginning in 1961, it could rely upon its ecumenical representatives to work to suppress any negative publicity regarding conditions facing believers in the Soviet orbit. This brief was facilitated by the WCC’s political drift to the left which fostered an ecumenical climate more sympathetic to Soviet-style socialism than to Western capitalism. Thus, at the WCC’s Fifth General Assembly in Nairobi in 1975, in response to the courageous pleas of Father Gleb Yakunin for an ecumenical defense of believers’ rights in the Soviet Union, WCC apparatchiks worked overtime to delay, sidetrack, and undermine such an outcome. For his outspoken rejection of the party line on church-state relations, Soviet courts would later sentence Yakunin to eight years in prison (1980-88).

One Word of Truth devotes a whole chapter (XIII) to a detailed, penetrating, and sobering critique of the WCC’s ignoble temporizing and maneuvering to put the Soviet-bloc record on freedom of conscience in the best light (171-95). Perhaps no example of WCC malpractice better illustrates its political partiality than its Programme to Combat Racism, established at the WCC’s Uppsala General Assembly in 1963. Michael Bourdeaux’s critique of this initiative highlights the double standard of the ecumenical movement in stark relief, and as such deserves retelling in some detail:

I maintained that the idea of the programme was positive but the concept must be applied worldwide, not just in Africa and the USA, to which its criticisms seemed to be solely directed. Needless to say, the Russian participation in the Geneva administration prevented any discussion of the USSR from even being considered.

My experiences had taught me that Russians were the dominant race in the country. Republics like Lithuania or Turkmenistan might have a national as the titular head of the Communist Party in the region, but there was always a Russian in the number two position or close enough to the seat of power to ensure that no expression of nationalism would ever surface.

And why would such a Programme to Combat Racism ignore Soviet anti-Semitism? Bourdeaux notes,

My strongest case was the [Soviet] treatment of the Jews. Eventually Christian voices in high places did support their emigration campaign, but that was much later, and it never amounted to a demand that the Jewish community should be granted equal rights.

The disingenuousness of the Programme's "selective compassion" was painfully apparent. As Bourdeaux relates,

The continuing colonialism of the Soviet Union in its subjugation of the conquered nations of the Soviet bloc was then absolute, at a time when colonial rule in Africa had mainly ended (182-83).¹⁵

As regards ecumenical relations, Michael Bourdeaux's memoir treats in most detail his own Anglican communion, the British Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches, with which he had extensive—and frequently combative—interaction. What he does describe of the U.S. National Council of Churches' involvement with churches in the Soviet Union corresponds precisely with my own reading of that relationship, although, as an American, my own appraisal of the NCC, not surprisingly, extends beyond that of *One Word of Truth*. Bourdeaux and I both laud the expertise and sagacity of Episcopalian Paul Anderson, who for decades gave the NCC a clear-eyed picture of the fraught circumstances of Soviet church-state relations. We also both recognize that Anderson's 1972 retirement paralleled the problematic ascendancy of Rev. Bruce Rigdon as the primary interpreter of the Soviet Church for the NCC.

Anderson's insightful *People, Church and State in Modern Russia*¹⁶ was one of the rare, early volumes offering credible documentation on the subject, as did his much later memoir, *No East or West*.¹⁷ Bourdeaux, in praising the 1944 volume, relates, "Twenty years after he

¹⁵ For a more extensive critique of the WCC see Michael Bourdeaux, "The Russian Church, Religious Liberty and the World Council of Churches," *Religion in Communist Lands* 13 (Spring 1985), 4-27.

¹⁶ London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1944.

¹⁷ Paris: YMCA Press, 1985.

[Anderson] had written it, people were still quoting it as authoritative” (106). On a personal note, Paul Anderson is the only person Michael Bourdeaux and I have known who was an eyewitness to Lenin’s declaration of the October Russian Revolution. (As a YMCA staffer in Petrograd in 1917, Anderson was on hand in the headquarters of the revolution in the Smolny Convent when Lenin proclaimed his party’s revolutionary uprising [106].)

As an aside, I vividly recall first meeting Paul Anderson in 1976 at my first convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in St. Louis. As a newly minted Ph.D., I was given what was then for me the daunting assignment of respondent to papers in a session on the post-World War I refugee exodus from revolutionary Russia, including Anderson’s presentation detailing his YMCA work with this “displaced million.” Then in his early 80s, I was impressed by his mild-mannered, understated recollection of his actually out-sized role in relief work, so ably documented later in Matthew Miller’s outstanding biography of Anderson.¹⁸

One Word of Truth’s recitation of ecumenical disinformation on Soviet-bloc church life brought to mind my own discomfort with NCC misrepresentations of the same. In 1972, the year Paul Anderson retired from the NCC, he visited Keston College and shared his concern with Michael Bourdeaux over the “growing pro-Soviet mood in church circles” in the U.S. (130). In time, I reached the same conclusion. To the point, I researched the NCC’s role in downplaying church-state conflicts for a 1986 commissioned article for a failed volume, the longest I have ever written that was never published (51 pages): “Western-Soviet Christian Contacts: Fleshing Out a Typology.” I now share parts of this paper in edited excerpts, in print for the first time.

As of 1986, the National Council of Churches held to a rose-colored perspective of Soviet church-state relations, a view increasingly the case following the retirement of Paul Anderson in 1972. An eyewitness to the Russian Revolution, fluent in Russian, and balanced and dispassionate in his appraisal of conditions faced by Christians in the USSR, Anderson proved to be a very difficult person to replace.

In 1956 Anderson had helped arrange the National Council’s first exchange of church delegations with the Moscow Patriarchate. On that occasion American churchmen discomforted

¹⁸ Matthew Lee Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture; The Preservation and Expansion of Orthodox Christianity, 1900-1940* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013). For a brief summary of his life see Kenan Heise, “Paul Anderson, 90, Retired YMCA Exec,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 July 1985.

Metropolitan Nikolai by chiding the Russian Orthodox for supporting Kremlin allegations of U.S. germ warfare in Korea, an example of indelicacy that for many years disappeared from NCC-Soviet church relations.¹⁹ Throughout most of the 1960s and 70s formal NCC-Soviet church exchanges were in abeyance as ecumenical circles in the U.S. rightly supported campaigns against South African apartheid and in support of Black civil rights.

In 1979 Soviet and American ecumenists renewed contacts in a “Choose Life” conference in Geneva that addressed the threat of nuclear war.²⁰ Two years later, in 1981, the NCC established a US-USSR Church Relations Committee that pushed forward aggressively with stepped-up church exchanges. The committee quickly moved to the forefront of the religious wing of the American peace movement and sought to establish itself as *a*, if not *the*, major interpreter of the Soviet church to the American public. An NCC governing board member, Professor V. Bruce Rigdon of Chicago’s McCormick Theological Seminary, served as chairperson of the committee and became the driving force behind accelerated NCC efforts to relate to the Soviet church.

In 1983, Rigdon served as narrator and consultant for “The Church of the Russians,” a documentary film produced by the NCC in collaboration with NBC Television. This two-hour production, shown nationwide in 1983 and 1984, provoked considerable protest due to its exclusive focus on registered churches and its seeming acceptance of interviews with Soviet church and state officials at face value, without qualification.²¹

The NCC tour to the USSR which Rigdon led in June 1984 proved even more controversial.²² With 266 participants, this appears to have been the largest U.S. church

¹⁹ Anderson, *No East or West*, 131-38; William C. Fletcher, *Nikolai* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 163-69; Fletcher, *Religion*, 120; *New York Times*, 18 March 1956, 27, and 3 June 1956, 3.

²⁰ Arie R. Brouwer, “Together on the Way,” *Together on the Way; The Story of the United States and the Soviet Union* (New York: National Council of Churches, 1984), 15-17. For a more detailed chronology of NCC-Soviet contacts see “A Brief History of Relationships between the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and the Churches of the Soviet Union, 1956-1985,” unpublished typescript produced by the NCC, November, 1985.

²¹ “Critics See Red Over Russian Church Documentary,” Religious News Service dispatch in *The Tablet* (Queens and Brooklyn, New York), 16 June 1984; “Is the NCC Espousing Russian Religious Imperialism?” *The Ukrainian Quarterly* 39 (Autumn 1983), 29-39. On 15 July 1984, NBC aired a one-hour panel discussion on “Religion in the Soviet Union: Another Look,” which addressed human rights’ concerns and enumerated restrictions on Soviet churches. One of the panelists, Professor Peter Reddaway, formerly of the London School of Economics, appears to have prompted this second look through a series of communications with NBC executives.

²² “Deferential Reverends,” *Wall Street Journal*, 27 June 1984; Robert Gillette, “U.S. Clerics Assail Soviet Protesters,” *Los Angeles Times*, 21 June 1984; Ari L. Goldman, “Jewish Group Assails Report on Religion in Soviet,” *New York Times*, 24 June 1984; “In the Soviet Paradise,” *Washington Post*, 25 June 1984; “It’s a Miracle!” *Washington Times*, 26 June 1984; Seth Mydans, “U.S. Visitors Praise the Status of Religion in Soviet,” *New York Times*, 21 June 1984; Antero Pietila, “Soviets’ Protest Upsets Visiting U.S. Church Leader,” *Baltimore Sun*, 21 June

delegation ever to visit the Soviet Union. Tour leaders hailed the trip as an important step forward in fostering friendships between Soviet and American Christians and in lessening international tensions and safeguarding peace. Less sanguine commentators feared the NCC delegation better served the interests of Soviet foreign policy by helping Moscow cultivate a peace-loving image via the good offices of American mainline Christians. A news release issued from the NCC's uptown New York headquarters billed the event a "peace invasion." Downtown, a *Wall Street Journal* editorialist declared it, rather, an exercise in "rose-colored diplomacy." This much was clear: statements emanating from tour leaders and subsequently from NCC materials highlighting the trip did not accurately portray the reality of Soviet church life. NCC spokespersons, press releases, and published tour accounts downplayed difficulties faced by believers and accepted without reservation claims of improved conditions voiced by Kremlin and state-sanctioned church spokespersons.²³

In addition to its part in the NBC Russian church documentary and its 266-delegate Soviet pilgrimage of June, 1984, the NCC began serving in July 1985 as one of several sponsors for a new summer school program on religion in the Soviet Union at the John T. Conner Center for US-USSR Reconciliation, adjacent to the campus of Purdue University. In an odd turn of events, Rev. Rigdon invited—and then inexplicably disinvited—Michael Bourdeaux to teach in that first 1985 session (180).

Just one year prior, on 29 February 1984, Bourdeaux had been feted in New York City at the awards ceremony upon his receipt of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. At a press

1984; Joseph Sobran, "Church Council Kowtows to Soviet Line," *Waterbury Republican*, 28 June 1984; "The Wrong Pew," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 June 1984.

²³ *National Council of Churches News*, 22 June 1984; *Wall Street Journal*, 27 June 1984. See also Rael Jean and Erich Isaac, "Sanctifying Revolution: Churches in Pursuit of Perfection" in *The Coercive Utopians* (Chicago: Discipleship Books, 1985), 15-44; Joshua Muravchik, "The National Council of Churches and the U.S.S.R.," *This World* No. 9 (1984), 30-52; Frank Sysyn, "Clergy and Commissars," *New Republic* 192 (10 June 1985), 13-15. For a staunch NCC defense see Alan Geyer, "The NCC Takes another Beating: the Media and the Russians," *Christianity and Crisis* 44 (1 October 1984), 349-52. As of 1986 the Council's Riverside Drive offices were processing Soviet tour applications with greater care, no doubt in part to avoid "problems" associated with 1984 tour participants who were not wholly in sympathy with the NCC tour leadership's approach to church relations, bridge-building, and peacemaking. Application packet for August 1985 NCC USSR Travel Seminar; interview with Ginte Damusis, 1984 tour participant, 23 July 1985; interview with former U.S.-USSR Church Relations Committee Program Coordinator, Rev. John Lindner, 26 July 1985; back cover of *On the Way to Unity and Peace; Report of the 1984 Program of the U.S.-USSR Church Relations Committee of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.* (New York: NCC, 1985); "Plans for '88 NCC Pilgrimages Underway," (Spring/Summer 1987), 2; "'88 Plans Progressing," *MIRror* (Fall/Winter 1987), 3; lecture by Bruce Rigdon at the Conner Center, 20 June 1987; Scott Lingenfelter, "On the Way to Unity and Peace, An Examination of the Nature of Relations Between the US-USSR Church Relations Committee of the NCC and Churches in the Soviet Union," Wheaton College Graduate School Paper, 24 November 1987, 6-7.

conference at the Church Center of the United Nations, where Keston's work on behalf of believers under siege in the Soviet Union was being honored, NCC General Secretary Claire Randall delivered a decidedly contrary message. As Bourdeaux recalled,

She mentioned me in her introductory sentence and followed this by speaking for some ten minutes about how wonderful was the National Council of Churches' policy towards Moscow, paving the way for a new world order, in which the evil of capitalism would disappear. It occurred to me at the time how deeply distasteful it must have been for her to be there and how the award to me went against just about everything she stood for (165).

Fortunately for the truth, Father Leonid Kishkovsky, for many years the ecumenical officer of the Orthodox Church in America and president of the National Council of Churches in 1990-91, came to exert a positive influence upon NCC pronouncements regarding Soviet church-state affairs. The same fall of 1983 that I ventured to Keston College, I managed a shorter research trip to New York City, continuing my exploration of East-West church and parachurch ties. It was on this occasion over lunch that I first met Fr. Kishkovsky, with whom I felt an immediate rapport. His family had managed to avoid repatriation to the USSR at the end of World War II, thus escaping the perilous fate of millions of other *Pawns of Yalta*, and in time immigrated to the United States. Notwithstanding his Russian Orthodoxy and my evangelical branch of Methodism, I immediately came to sense a kindred spirit. Theologically, I quickly recognized I was closer in spirit to Fr. Leonid defending his faith once received than I was to many Methodist hierarchs and seminaries espousing what I perceived to be a less rigorous allegiance to our faith once received. And as to the plight of believers in the Soviet Union, we were on exactly the same page: They deserved our energetic support. It was the beginning of an appreciation of Father Leonid that has only deepened over the years. A decade after our first meeting, he agreed to contribute a cover article for my *East-West Church and Ministry Report* in its first year of publication: "The Mission of the Russian Orthodox Church after Communism;"²⁴ on several occasions we have been paired on conference panels on religion in Russia; and I have been the beneficiary of the expertise of Fr. Leonid's daughter, Sophia, with whom I met on numerous occasions during her years as *New York Times*' correspondent in Moscow.

In the waning years of the Cold War, Father Kishkovsky embodied a genuine desire for both human rights and peace vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Few if any in ecumenical circles in the

²⁴ 1 (Summer 1993), 1-3.

West possessed such an evenhanded vision of justice and peace. In those years, instead, two silos existed side by side, with little to no recognition of common ground between them. On the one hand were those who bemoaned a world encircled by a chain of nuclear weapons, and on the other hand were those who bemoaned a world in chains.

An example of the laudable corrective Fr. Kishkovsky brought to the NCC's portrayal of Soviet church life was J. Martin Bailey's *One Thousand Years; Stories from the History of Christianity in the USSR, 988-1988*, with a Foreword partly authored by Father Leonid.²⁵ Granted, this volume's chapter on ECB General Secretary Alexi Bychkov evidenced a decided predilection in favor of state-sanctioned registered over unregistered churches. And the title was misleading: As of 1989 the USSR accounted for only 72 of the one thousand years of Eastern Slavic Christianity, while only two of the seven biographical sketches concerned Christians of the Soviet era. But at least the title avoided the use of *Russian* and *Ukrainian*, thereby not fueling the polemics over whose millennium was being celebrated. Likewise, while the opening chapter on Olga and Vladimir did employ Russian spellings for these saints; otherwise, it was commendably scrupulous in not characterizing the conversion of Kyivan Rus as either a specifically Russian or Ukrainian phenomenon.²⁶

Even more heartening was the remarkable Foreword which Bruce Rigdon and Leonid Kishkovsky coauthored. Certain paragraphs treated the need for greater international understanding, the primary concern of peacemaker Rigdon, while other paragraphs treated Soviet infringements of religious rights, about which the well-versed Kishkovsky could speak with authority. Russian Orthodox dissident, Father Gleb Yakunin, did not rate a full chapter, but the Foreword did commend his courageous and prophetic rebuke of his superiors for "their subservience...to the government."²⁷ Since Paul Anderson's retirement, very rarely in NCC circles had such an admission, so pregnant with portent for East-West ecumenics, been given public expression.

In *One Thousand Years*, Rigdon and Kishkovsky were surely right to maintain that "both discretion and valor" were needful if Christians in the Soviet Union were going to be able "to witness faithfully to the Gospel."²⁸ The challenge for Christians, in the West as well as in the

²⁵ New York: Friendship Press, 1987.

²⁶ Bailey, *One Thousand Years*, 55-61.

²⁷ Bailey, *One Thousand Years*, viii.

²⁸ Bailey, *One Thousand Years*, ix-ix.

East, was to be able to discern when circumstances called for the one and when they called for the other.

Reference to *discretion* and *valor* in the *One Thousand Years* volume was no doubt borrowed from Trevor Beeson's highly regarded 1974 study, *Discretion and Valour: Religious Conditions in Russia and Eastern Europe*.²⁹ Michael Bourdeaux was intimately involved in both the initiation of this British Council of Churches project and in the preparation of its chapter on the Soviet Union, which amounted to more than a third of the volume's 348 pages. Myriad specialists worked through numerous drafts of country chapters in 26 sessions from October 1971 through 1973. Entrusted with the assignment of pulling together the disparate contributions of multiple authors was the Rev. Trevor Beeson, an Anglican priest and gifted journalist who later served as Canon of Westminster Abbey and chaplain of the House of Commons (184-86).

In committee work it was suggested that the title read, "Discretion *or* Valour," but in the end the consensus favored "Discretion *and* Valour." This title summed up the volume's succinct, three-word thesis, referring to the survival of Christians under Soviet siege by means of discretion (finesse in negotiations) *and* valor (the courage to take a public stance against oppression), not one or the other alone. This critical point is also arguably a key to understanding Michael Bourdeaux's long career championing freedom of conscience for those living in communist states. Bourdeaux writes, "The title [*Discretion and Valour*] for my way of thinking exactly expressed the bi-polar path which the churches of Eastern Europe could follow: some moving forward in a process of tortuous negotiation with an atheist regime (Catholics in Poland), others treading the path of suffering (unregistered Baptists in the Soviet Union)" (186).

The trouble was that most Western ecumenists were to the left of Keston in favoring discretion exclusively (quiet diplomacy), while others to the right of Keston, such as two particularly problematic East European missions, Joe Bass's Underground Evangelism and Richard Wurmbrand's Jesus to the Communist World, practiced combative, public protest that too often conflated the cause of religious liberty and politically charged anti-communism (103-04).³⁰ Michael Bourdeaux has frequently been accused of being in the latter camp, which I would argue is a misreading of his motives and actions. Keston's founder deserves to be heard directly on this critical issue. As early as 1966 in *Opium of the People*, he wrote:

²⁹ London: Collins, 1982.

³⁰ See also Mark Elliott, "Eastern Europe: Responding to Crisis in the Household of Faith," *Eternity* 37 (July/August 1986), 24-29.

Some take the attitude that any publicity about the real state of affairs in the Soviet Union is likely to make the situation for Christians very much worse. This may have been true in Stalin's time, but it is emphatically not so today. There has been every sign in the last few years that Khrushchev's Russia is sensitive to world opinion.... The Soviet Government would like to have a phantom Church—one which has no members at all within the USSR, but which has powerful international connections which can be used to support Soviet strategy. We must make it known that we see through this" (90).³¹

Throughout his career Bourdeaux was aware of the

constant debate whether publicizing abuses of human rights in the communist countries was "rocking the boat" (a phrase so often used), which meant that supporting the cause of the persecuted would turn governments against them with more ferocity and one could harm the very cause one wished to support. Any representations, the argument continued, must be done quietly and through diplomatic channels (183).

I never contradicted this mantra of quiet diplomacy and believed it had its role, but this paled in comparison with the urgency of publicly revealing the abuses.... [My] policy, which I would practice for all my working life [was that] quiet diplomacy in relations with the Russian Church or the Government could never replace responsible publicity as an effective tool for highlighting cruelty, deception and oppression, though the two approaches should go forward hand in hand (88).

Leningrad police arrested unregistered Baptist Aida Skripnikova on three occasions (1962, 1965, and 1968) for passing out handwritten Bible verses in public and for participation in unregistered worship services, spending 1965-66 and 1968-71 in the *gulag*. In 1972 Keston published her story of stalwart faith, which Bourdeaux reasonably contends, spared her an additional term in prison (123).³² Perhaps no case of the persecution of believers better illustrates the efficacy of public protest than the Soviet assault on the Pochaev Monastery in western Ukraine. Employing *samizdat* and his own firsthand, providential interviews with eyewitnesses, Bourdeaux publicized myriad state measures against defenseless Orthodox monks and pilgrims: arrests, confiscation of property, removal of elderly monastics to mental hospitals, conscription of novices into the army, and multiple injections of healthy monks to treat nonexistent dysentery (85-88).³³ These revelations in Bourdeaux's *Opium of the People* in 1965 "hit the press with some considerable force." And:

³¹ Bourdeaux, *Opium*, 231-33.

³² Michael Bourdeaux and Xenia Howard-Johnston, *Aida of Leningrad* (London: Gateway Outreach, 1972).

³³ Bourdeaux, *Opium*, 211-12; Bourdeaux, *Risen Indeed; Lessons in Faith from the USSR* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983), 5-9.

There were consequences. Perhaps the most important was that the Soviets never did succeed in closing down the Pochaev Monastery. World opinion had been alerted, and it seemed that now the Soviets wanted to hold back from such a scandalous act against one of the most influential monasteries of the Russian Orthodox Church. It would become a show place, and a limited number of monks were to be permitted to live and worship in it. Foreigners, especially a group of Americans, were soon taken there on an official visit and this was reported, in an act of supreme cynicism, in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*. To such visitors everything appeared completely normal (88).

Soviet authorities thus converted Pochaev into a Potemkin Village propaganda set, pretending to uphold freedom of religion. But at least Bourdeaux's public protest in print had spared the monastery dissolution.

In addressing Soviet church-state conflict, the World Council of Churches went beyond an affirmation of the efficacy of quiet diplomacy by disparaging proponents of public protest, Bourdeaux in particular. No document underscores WCC animus toward those who publicized the struggles of Soviet-bloc believers more pointedly than *Human Rights on the Ecumenical Agenda*, a 73-page report by Erich Weingärtner, a Canadian employee of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, a WCC affiliate housed in its Geneva headquarters (177-81). With Keston College and its ilk in mind, the author wrote,

These groups may wish to trap the WCC into actions in support of their political programmes, using human rights violations as the bait.... Rumours of the [Soviet] infringements have reached western Christians in an exaggerated and sometimes distorted form, provoking inappropriate reactions which complicate the resolution of internal church problems (178).

Revealing his sympathies with socialism in the USSR, Weingärtner alleged that it behooved churches in the Eastern orbit to promote "group rights" over "individual rights," which Bourdeaux correctly noted was "surely a Marxist concept if ever there was one" (178).

The heart of the matter is that during the Cold War the majority opinion in ecumenical circles was that Michael Bourdeaux was a "professional anti-communist," and Keston's work was "incompatible with genuine ecumenism" (103). To the contrary, Michael Bourdeaux rightly declared in a 1984 London Chatham House lecture that, sadly, "Geneva policy has misled the worldwide membership of the WCC on the real situation of Soviet believers" (179).

My own counter to WCC and NCC misrepresentations has been to affirm, instead, the noblest practitioners of ecumenism during the Cold War: Soviet bloc believers in prison who

found common cause in prayer and mutual support across confessional lines. Prisoners of conscience Nijole Sadunaite (Lithuanian Catholic) and Bishop Lajos Ordass (Hungarian Lutheran) were two whose fellowship of suffering transcended confessional allegiances, and in the process, embodied a genuine ecumenism more worthy of the name than WCC and NCC polemicists.

In *A Radiance in the Gulag*, Sadunaite spoke movingly of her spiritual communion with Orthodox believers. One Nadia Usoyeva was “a girl of remarkable goodness, ... a very decent and high-minded Russian Orthodox. We are like sisters” (79). Most of one chapter of this gripping memoir is devoted to Orthodox women of unshakeable faith for whom Sadunaite held deep respect and with whom she sought God’s consolation:

Sometimes all of the Orthodox women, gathered in some out-of-the-way corner, would quietly begin singing hymns. Once I learned them, I used to join in. I would feel as though I were in some shrine, such goodness and light would my soul experience.³⁴

Similarly, Bishop Lajos Ordass exhibited extraordinary courage in defending Jews against the Nazis in World War II and in his imprisonment at the hands of communists (1948-50). Like Sadunaite, he was an exemplary practitioner of prison-house, refiners-fire ecumenism. His biographer relates,

Ordass...lived together with fifteen Roman Catholic priests...for fifteen months. As a rule, Hungarian church history of the last 450 years is depicted as an unceasing battle between Protestants and Catholics. Not only spiritual weapons were used in this battle. Protestants were often persecuted and oppressed at times when the house of Hapsburg ruled its Catholic inheritance with a hard hand. Protestant textbooks consciously kept alive the memory of the persecutions. The result was a division between the two communions so complete that any reconciliation or dialogue was out of the question.

For this reason, the life in the ‘cell of the priests’ was truly remarkable: a Lutheran bishop was able to share a cell for fifteen months with Catholic priests without any incident of hurtful remarks or outbreaks of impatience. The nerves of the prisoners must have been frequently so tense as to burst, but the good spirit of comradery was maintained. Ordass contributed to the good atmosphere already at his arrival. He gave a brief speech before his fellow prisoners. Their confessional differences should not prevent them from living together like siblings, he said, for they had in common Jesus and his gospel. They had all been in his service, and their will to remain loyal to him had delivered them to this

³⁴ Manassas, VA: Trinity Communications, 1987, 79 and 77.

common fate. His cellmates agreed, and life together in the cell developed not only into a good human relationship, but into a true Christian community.³⁵

Even an ardent Orthodox believer like Alexander Solzhenitsyn, himself a *gulag* veteran, extended sympathy across confessional lines in his charitable portrait of Alyosha, a Baptist prisoner of conscience, in his celebrated *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.³⁶

The clash between proponents of quiet diplomacy and public protest paralleled a debate between opponents of Bible smuggling and its practitioners. The 1968 publication of Brother Andrew's *God's Smuggler* and its multiple reprintings vastly increased Western public awareness of the issue.³⁷ In counterpoint, a misinformed Paul Hansen of the Lutheran World Federation claimed that "the vast majority of people in the USSR...look upon 'smugglers' with disgust, as a kind of criminal." He also contended that Bibles brought into the Soviet Union without state sanction worsened conditions for the country's Christians (215). In contrast, my own limited experience passing on Bibles to Soviet citizens on trips East bore no resemblance to Hansen's depiction of circumstances faced by Christians. Without exception I witnessed believers and non-believers alike accepting Scriptures with deep gratitude.

Bourdeaux, for his part, did not engage in Bible smuggling and "attempted to keep out of the conflict." However, he did contradict Hansen and other like-minded ecumenists by noting that "Keston has documents from believers claiming the exact opposite [of Hansen's contentions]. Rather, *samizdat* smuggled out to Keston indicated that Bibles imported from the West "forced the Government occasionally to relieve the pressure and grant licenses for official printing" (215). My own investigation of Bible deliveries to the USSR during Gorbachev's *glasnost* quoted Mennonite scholar Walter Sawatsky's figures for the pre-*glasnost* decades as a basis of comparison: 4.1 million Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospels made available to the Soviet population, 1917-1986, with only some 450,000 copies printed or imported with government permission.³⁸

³⁵ Laslo G. Terray, *He Could Not Do Otherwise: Bishop Lajos Ordass, 1901-1978* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 86-87. See also Tibor Fabiny, *The Veil of God; Testimonies of Bishop Lajos Ordass in Communist Hungary* (Budapest: Center for Hermeneutical Research, 2008).

³⁶New York: Signet, New American Library, 1962.

³⁷ New York: Signet, New American Library, 1968.

³⁸ Walter Sawatsky, "Another Look at Mission in Eastern Europe," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (January 1987), 15, quoted in Mark Elliott, "Bibles East, Letters West: Religious Glasnost and the Availability of Scriptures in the Soviet Union," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 9 (November 1989), 28.

Two biblical injunctions, taken in tandem, would seem to reinforce the stratagem of discretion *and* valor. Romans 13:1 (NIV) reads, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established,” while Acts 5:29 reads, “We must obey God rather than men.” Should believers hold to either imperative apart from the other? Or should the whole counsel of Scripture taken together be our guide? Perhaps we should heed each instruction in turn, depending upon a given circumstance and prayerful employment of our God-given faculties as guides. The New Testament letter to Timothy, St. Paul’s understudy, written in the context of a hostile Roman Empire, undergirds this “mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16) in reminding believers, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (II Timothy 1:7). Throughout his decades of leadership of Keston College, Michael Bourdeaux strove to document infringements of freedom of conscience based upon hard evidence, while challenging those who minimized or ignored such abuses of human rights. On the other end of the ideological spectrum, he also took to task leaders of East European missions who sensationalized persecution in counterproductive ways, Joe Bass and Richard Wurmbrand being examples, as noted. At the same time, he has valued the ministry of a host of other missions, especially the U.S. Slavic Gospel Association (while led by Peter and Anita Deyneka), the Dutch-German Aid to the Church in Need (Father Werenfried van Straaten), the German Licht im Osten/Light in the East (Bernd Dyck), and smaller but quite agile Scandinavian endeavors: the Swedish Ljus i Oster/Light in the East—formerly Slaviska Missionen (Ingemar Martinsson), the Norwegian Misjon bak Jernteppet/Mission Behind the Iron Curtain (Gulbrand Overbye and Lasse Traedal), and the Danish European Mission (Hans-Kristian Neerskov) (139 and 263).

My own parallel efforts—documenting, commending, and where it appeared efficacious, critiquing East European missions—took place to a good extent on the pages of the *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, which I edited for 25 years (1993-2017).³⁹ My ongoing research and publications on the theme of appropriate witness in Eastern Europe brought me an opportunity in the late 1990s to collaborate with Michael Bourdeaux as he co-directed a Pew Charitable Trust grant on the subject with Emory University Law School Professor John Witte, Jr. Working conferences held in Oxford and Atlanta in 1996-97 led to the publication of

³⁹ “The East-West Church and Ministry Report,” *Religion in Eastern Europe* 23 (June 2003), 1-11; <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/>.

Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia; The New War for Souls, edited by Witte and Bourdeaux.⁴⁰ With extensive guidelines for missionaries in three chapters by Anita Deyneka, Lawrence Uzzell, and this author, Michael Bourdeaux observed, “This work should have been essential reading for all those involved, whether in the mission field or at home.... [but] I doubt whether the caliber of missionary work improved as a result of it” (261; See also 263.).

Working with prospective missionaries heading East, I sometimes have been just as disheartened in my attempts to promote greater cross-cultural discernment and sensitivity. To this day I believe an essential study for anyone preparing for church work of any kind in the former Soviet Union and majority-Orthodox East European states should read Donald Fairbairn’s *Eastern Orthodoxy through Western Eyes*.⁴¹ Years before its publication, the author gave me permission to distribute an early, 40-page version in missionary orientation sessions, in which, too often, I was told, it was too much to read on Orthodoxy!

I would be remiss, however, not to commend a host of other missionaries who have served selflessly alongside their more problematic colleagues. I personally have known many missionaries to the Slavic world who have a heart of compassion for those they serve and who have worked hard to understand their cultural context, including contributors to the *East-West Church and Ministry Report* too numerous to mention.

The question is often asked, on balance, have missionaries from abroad working in post-Soviet states brought upon themselves the growing restrictions governments have placed on their work? Certainly, cross-cultural miscues by too many short-term and not-a-few long-term missionaries have energized nationalistic governments and traditional faiths to curtail foreign missionary activities. But another, more compelling explanation for opposition is at hand. As Peter Deyneka, Jr., explained to me, the Russian Orthodox Church and its state patrons in power may be more troubled by what missionaries have been doing right than by those missionaries who have been culturally clueless. As examples, outreach has included exemplary ministry to orphans, street children, alcoholics, substance abusers, and the poor. Yet very often in the Russian Republic state authorities and the de facto state church have preferred to restrict or ban such charitable efforts if proffered by non-Orthodox.⁴²

⁴⁰ Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.

⁴¹ Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

⁴² Mark Elliott and Sharyl Corrado, “The Protestant Missionary Presence in the Former Soviet Union,” *Religion, State and Society* 25 (No. 4, 1997), 338-39.

Although my 13 years at Wheaton College and the Billy Graham Center (1986-99) was my longest, single academic appointment, as a believer of Wesleyan persuasion it was not always a comfortable fit. (On more than one occasion, around a cafeteria table, with other faculty present, Wheaton's president inappropriately grilled me on what he considered my theological deficiencies.) Nevertheless, I will always be grateful to Wheaton and the Billy Graham Center for the unusual opportunities I was afforded to tell the story, where possible be of assistance to, and in some ways similar to Michael Bourdeaux, "be the voice" of believers in the Soviet and post-Soviet realm.

As noted earlier, reading Michael Bourdeaux's commendably detailed and comprehensive memoir has been for me a trip down memory lane. God willing, in time, I will put to print more memories of blessings bestowed upon me and insights gleaned from the opportunities I have had to associate with the likes of Michael Bourdeaux, Paul Anderson, Peter and Anita Deyneka, Philip Walters, Jane Ellis, and Malcolm Walker. As well, I would hope to relate recollections of others in the Keston orbit with whom I also related: Irina Ratushinskaya, *gulag* poetess and author of *Grey Is the Color of Hope*, whose ordeal Keston decried and who later, following release from prison, I was privileged to introduce for an address to an overflow Wheaton College audience; Roman Lunkin and Sergei Filatov, Keston researchers who have made generous contributions to my *East-West Church and Ministry Report*; Larry Uzzell, Keston News Service Moscow correspondent and later Bourdeaux successor who also has contributed to the *East-West Church and Ministry Report*; Geraldine Fagan, one-time Keston Moscow reporter and now my successor as editor of the *East-West Church Report*; and Russian Orthodox dissident priest Father Georgi Edelstein, with whom I have worked closely on behalf of Russian orphans, Orthodox church restoration projects, and theological education.

In conclusion, I would like to share an account of my call to service in defense of Soviet bloc believers, a call in which Keston's founder unknowingly played a part. (I do not believe I ever shared this account with Michael Bourdeaux, not even on occasions when we stayed in each other's homes.) In 1985, in connection with my research on East European missions, Peter and Anita Deyneka generously gave me overnight accommodations and access to the wonderful library then housed in their Slavic Gospel Association headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois. One volume I found there, which I had missed in 1983 during my sabbatical at Keston, was Michael

Bourdeaux's *Risen Indeed; Lessons in Faith from the USSR*. In this brief volume I read of the author's wrestling with a decision to move from the security of Anglican parish appointments to some as-yet-undefined career championing the cause of religious liberty behind the Iron Curtain:

I had been happy in my first three years as a curate and by now had a wife and infant daughter for whom I had to plan also. In the fourth year the horizons of the parish seemed to become constricting. Those cherished words of Milton came insistently into my mind: "And that one talent which is death to hide, Lodged with me useless."⁴³

These words, read at night in an SGA apartment above its headquarters, struck me like a bolt of lightning. Similarly, I was in a secure, tenured position at Asbury College, a school with which I held—and still hold—close and valued spiritual, family, and professional ties. Yet I too, like Bourdeaux before me, felt an ill-defined yearning to find some way to employ more directly my academic preparations in Russian studies in service to much-abused believers in the East. The providential consequence for me was that the Deynekas suggested my name to Dr. James Kraakevik, director of Wheaton College's Billy Graham Center, who was searching for an academic to head a new BGC program focused on Christianity in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I was offered and accepted the position, was given the opportunity in good measure to write my own job description, and began my new combined academic/ministry appointment in July 1986. As a result, for what I believe was a God-given opportunity, I owe thanks to the Deynekas, to Dr. Kraakevik, to John Milton's Sonnet 19, and to Michael Bourdeaux's *Risen Indeed*.

In a sentence, *One Word of Truth* is a rewarding read for anyone wanting to understand conditions faced by Christians in the Soviet Union in the post-World War II era and the conflicting Western responses to their plight.

⁴³ Bourdeaux, *Risen Indeed*, 4; John Milton, Sonnet 19, "When I Consider How My Light Is Spent."