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Thomas Bremer

University of Münster, Germany

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ROME AND MOSCOW, A STEP FURTHER

By Thomas Bremer

Dr. Thomas Bremer (Roman Catholic) is professor of ecumenical theology and Peace Studies at the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Münster, Germany. He received his education in theology and Slavic languages at Munich and Münster; in 1980/81 he studied at the Orthodox Theological School in Belgrade, Serbia. He has published several books and many articles on Orthodox theology, on the situation of churches in Eastern Europe (Russia, Ukraine, Former Yugoslavia) and on churches in conflict.

Since the beginning of 2002, the relations between the Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches (ROC) have reached a new low. The background is the decision of the Catholic Church to raise the four administratura apostolica [apostolic administrations] in Russia to bishoprics. The Church has also decided to establish an ecclesiastical province, with the archbishop of Moscow as metropolitan. This decision as well as the way in which it was prepared and carried out elicited strong criticism. The general functioning of the Catholic Church in Russia was also included in the criticism. The accusation of proselytism with which the Russian Orthodox Church has long reproached the Catholic Church was raised very vehemently once again.

Events need to be viewed and understood in a complex context. After centuries of dependency on the state and decades of the most horrible persecution, the Russian Orthodox Church is seeking to define its relationship with the government and Russian society. This is not to say that both state and society themselves are in any way stable or firmly established. The Catholic Church sees new spheres of influence in the formerly Communist Eastern European countries, while it also has the opportunity for the first time in many years to minister to the faithful within Russia itself who see themselves as Catholics. At the same time, the Catholic Church offers spiritual solace to such people as have grown up without religion and are now seeking religious dimensions in their lives. For the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), this is an unacceptable and forbidden alienation of religious people who are “potentially Orthodox.” On its “canonical territory” the Russian Orthodox Church asserts it is the only church that ought to be permitted to preach the gospel to ethnic Russians. This concept of “canonical territory” is rejected by the Catholic Church. Added to this is a further problem: almost all of the Catholic clergy and members of religious orders in Russia are foreigners, primarily from Poland. For the ROC this fact calls forth negative historical associations, because Polish overlords in earlier
centuries tried to conquer Moscow and exercise hegemony over Russia. This is something the Russians have always connected with Catholic attempts at conversion in Russia. The fact that the Eastern boundary of Poland and the corresponding Western border of Russia, or the erstwhile Soviet Union, have changed many times has contributed to the continually disputed status of many areas. Finally, the contemporary struggle must be viewed in the context of Catholic-Orthodox relations on the global level. These relations, too, have been in serious crisis for several years. This is connected, but not exclusively, with the events surrounding the collapse of the Soviet Union. (Here we need to mention most prominently the autonomy of the Ukraine with the concomitant revival of the Greek-Catholic church.)

Therefore this is not a question of a conflict that centers around an easily defined issue. Every statement and action has numerous implications that make the search for a solution more difficult. In the following pages, we intend to delineate the course of events, then examine and evaluate the main arguments on both sides. Finally, we will consider perspectives from which we can envision rapprochement between the two churches.

1. The Events or Who Started This?

In the Soviet Union there were two regions in which a majority of the population was Catholic: Lithuania, whose people were almost exclusively Roman Catholic, and the Western Ukraine, where the majority of the people are Greek Catholic. There were also Catholics of the Roman rite in Latvia, in the Western areas of Byelorussia and the Ukraine) as well as in those parts of the country where Germans traditionally lived or to which they and other Catholics had been deported during the [Stalinist] Terror. In Lithuania (as well as in Latvia), there was a Catholic hierarchy during the Communist era. But of course it was scarcely free to function, because of persecution. The Greek [Ukrainian] Catholic Church was forbidden and repressed in the Ukraine and could only eke out an underground existence. In all the other areas of the USSR there were no regular church structures on the Catholic side.

This state of affairs changed with Perestroika. Now the Greek [Ukrainian] Catholic Church was permitted to enjoy a legal existence and the Roman Catholic Church was granted the option of founding new congregations. When the USSR collapsed in 1991 the Vatican reorganized church relations in the countries that emerged from the collapse. The church set up first two and finally (1994) four apostolic administraturas in the Russian federation, specifically
in Moscow, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk and Saratov. At the same time, Catholic congregational life and charitable entities were created with strong financial support from Western countries. The new structure of Catholic Church organization was strongly criticized by the ROC. People questioned the necessity for such large structures, and speculated that their goal was actually the conversion of ethnic Russians. But these accusations were overshadowed by the fact that major conflict between both churches revolved around events in the Western Ukraine. Above all, the accusation of proselytism referred to the massive numbers of (formal) Orthodox church members who went over to the newly legalized Greek Catholic Church. The ROC in Russia also disapproved of the activities of the Roman Catholic Church, but these were not the crux of the controversy. At this time, there were always official encounters between both churches, a noteworthy fact in the face of the great reserve of the ROC about ecumenism in recent years.

A further encounter on a higher level was planned for February 21, 2002. Cardinal Kasper, the new president of the Papal Council on Christian Unity, was expected to visit Moscow for the first time in his new capacity, and be received by the Office of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. A few days before this, on February 11th, it was announced in Rome that the administraturas apostolica in Russia were being elevated to the status of bishoprics, that the administratura of Moscow was becoming an archbishopric and that a church province was being created. Noteworthy was the fact that the bishoprics were not named according to their geographic location but according to the patron saints of the respective cathedrals. With this move the Catholic side wanted to make it clear that they did not seek to create any structures parallel to those of the ROC.

The Russian Orthodox Church was informed by the nuncio very shortly before the public announcement of the decision in Rome. On top of that, he brought this information at a time when neither Patriarch Aleksij nor the chief of the Foreign Office, Metropolitan Kirill, were in Moscow. The ROC reacted with a sharply formulated declaration and a refusal to receive the visit from Cardinal Kasper. In March 2002 Kasper published an article in the well known Jesuit newspaper, Civita Cattolica. The Moscow patriarchy responded to this with a declaration entitled “Catholic Proselytism among the Russian Orthodox Populace.” It was published at the end of June along with an explanation from Metropolitan Kirill. This “Information” was a response to a request from the Catholic side of the controversy for concrete examples to justify ROC accusations. After that, there came a further exchange of notes and explanations; Cardinal
Kasper and the Catholic archbishop of Moscow, Kondrusiewicz, took positions (the former with a “Clarification,” in which he commented upon the concrete accusations contained in the “Information.”) The ROC then responded again to these statements. Finally, Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk published a personal theological explanation as a response to the March article by the President of the Council on Unity, in which he particularly referred to the principle of canonical territory. Events were further complicated by the fact that the Bishop of Irkutsk, Mazur, a Polish citizen, had his visa revoked and was sent back to Poland. The Foreign Office and finally President Putin himself answered the complaints from Rome and Warsaw by declaring that the refusal to permit Mazur entry had been justified. Meanwhile, some seven Roman Catholic priests (Poles, Irishmen, Italians) had their permission of stay in the Russian Federation revoked. The ROC has declared that these acts were undertaken by state authorities because of legal reasons and that the Church does not have anything to do with these measures. In late 2002, Cardinal Kasper was invited to a conference in Minsk and met with Metropolitan Filaret, who is a member of the Synod of the ROC and who is regarded as open-minded. At the present moment, (March 2003), there appears to be no activity in the relations between both churches at the top level.

2. The Arguments or Who is Right?

What are the arguments being used to prove the points on both sides of this dispute? Basically, they can be divided into two groups, namely, the arguments referring to the formal aspect of the controversy and those on the margins of the issues.

The accusation that the kind of communication given here was not in the spirit of earlier relations between the parties has been raised primarily by the Russian side. The fact that there was no preliminary information or a consultation prior to the decision, although there had been a series of occasions on which this could have been done, is mentioned repeatedly. “This is the way war is declared” is a statement made in a contribution from the deputy chief of the foreign office of ROC. In the explanations, one can clearly discern that the dissatisfaction on the part of the ROC originates in the special significance that has always been placed on relations with the Catholic Church. In spite of difficulties, whenever the Russian Orthodox Church exhorted the laity about the numerous changes in today’s world (and here one may surely also add: difficult ecumenical relations on the international level), the Catholic Church was always seen as a
reliable partner that would never compromise with secular positions concerning these fundamental questions. This alliance (that was perhaps never perceived with such clarity on the Catholic side) is now viewed by the ROC as dissolved. The regret about this fact is clearly discernible in official ROC documents.

A further reproach from the “formal” perspective refers to a comment by Cardinal Kasper. The President of the Council on Christian Unity is commenting on the ROC’s fear of the pastoral efficiency of the Catholic Church, of its departure from the Constantinian era, in which the ROC still finds itself, and of the enlightenment which has not yet dawned on the ROC. These comments have been noted with thorough care and not without a little bitterness by the ROC. Even if there may be good reasons for these assertions, nonetheless, one ought to question whether it was prudent to utter statements about one’s own superiority. The ROC then also used the same polemical niveau when it warned that if Catholic clerical efficiency is as overwhelming as all that, perhaps the Catholic Church should apply it to Western European countries, where the churches stand empty.

The Russian Orthodox Church considers it important to view the relationship between the ROC and the Catholic church as “sister churches” (whereby it traces this concept, unhistorically, to Vatican II, where it was in fact not used for Catholic-Orthodox relations). For the Russian side, this designation means that the Christian world between Rome and the East is equally divided, so that therefore the concept of “canonical territory” is justified. Each church, the argument asserts, is permitted to engage in missionary activity only in “its” territory. In the domain of the other church, one also has the right to exercise pastoral care over church members of one’s own denomination. This concept is vehemently rejected by the Catholic side, which asserts that the message of the gospels is directed to all people, and therefore, there can be no limitations. It is of course incorrect to say that the Catholic Church is not acquainted with the idea of ecclesiastical “territory.” The territorial principle is one of the canonical foundations of Catholic Church structure. Clearly one sees here (as also in other examples) that both sides understand something different in interpreting the same concept. The interpretation of the ROC reveals a larger ecumenical closeness that was considered possible. The ROC sees in the Catholic and Orthodox churches the representatives, or perhaps the successors, of the Ancient Church. (That the churches of the Reformed tradition fall by the wayside here is another matter and is barely mentioned in discussions by either side.) So the ROC and the Catholic Church are
both part of one church. According to the old church tradition, however, it was actually not permissible for a patriarchate to set up congregations and bishoprics in the territory of another patriarchate. Thus, we can see that the Catholic Church accepts the factual and concrete situation of today’s multiple confessional society (which can basically also include a kind of competitive relationship), whereas for the ROC, the old church patriarchal structure continues to have supreme validity. As concerns the statements of the Second Vatican Council about the relationship of the Catholic Church to other churches, and specifically, to the Orthodox Churches, it would be entirely conceivable that the Catholic Church could adopt a position that would approach that of the ROC.

In the Catholic position two points are emphasized. One is that the Church concerns itself primarily with Catholics in Russia, those that come from the Catholic tradition and in many cases could only practice that faith now that Communism has ended. The right of the Catholic Church to minister in this way is not disputed at all by the ROC. But the situation is different when we speak of people who come out of the Orthodox tradition, but were themselves perhaps never religious and have now found a (new) spiritual home in the Catholic Church. According to the Orthodox view, it is exclusively a matter for the Orthodox Church to make spiritual overtures to such people and lead them back to the faith of their forefathers. The Catholic side advances the principle of religious freedom, that is, every person has the right to decide freely for whatever religious faith he or she chooses. The Catholic Church does not actively seek converts in Russia (the Church argues) but it cannot turn away people who want to come to the Catholic Church.

From the perspective of the Russian Orthodox Church, the situation looks very different. This church alleges that the Catholic Church is actively propagandizing, perhaps even proselytizing here. According to its description of the problem, there are numerous evidences to this effect. One is the numerous small (Catholic) religious orders introduced into Russia who often have the word “missionaries” in their name or who were founded as missionary orders. For the ROC this is a clear indication that the Catholic Church is engaged in missionary activities in Russia. Furthermore, in published “information,” many cases are mentioned in which Russians (mostly children) have been won over to the Catholic Church by members of these Catholic religious communities. We need to say on this point that the name that designates a religious community by itself is not proof that its members are engaged in mission work, because these names have historical meaning. One can ask critically whether it is really necessary to have so
many religious communities living in a country with so few Catholics (whereby certainly it is important to note the enormous size of the country, as well as the fact that there is no native Catholic clergy). In many cases, their activities can be viewed critically. Unfortunately, there has been, in fact, a series of unacceptable actions and public statements by representatives of the Catholic Church. Perhaps they were made with the best intentions, but they are just the kinds of things that serve to persistently disturb relations with the ROC. In his response to Metropolitan Kirill, Archbishop Kondrusiewicz did concede with sincere regret the validity of Orthodox criticism in some of these cases. We hear about other cases over and over. In this instance, it seems necessary for the ROC to limit its criticism to cases in which proselytism actually exists, and also that the Catholic Church for its part really take valid cases seriously and try to discontinue them.

The definition of “freedom of religion” remains in dispute, however. The ROC has declared that there will always be instances in which individuals convert from one church to another (in the West relatively many people from the Western church become Orthodox Christians). The ROC has nothing against this. But it does enjoin the Catholic Church not to systematically encourage conversions from Russian Orthodoxy. It asserts that in that situation, freedom of religion, which the ROC fundamentally recognizes, is in fact abrogated. So the question is, which kinds of behavior of one church or the other are seen as injurious to religious freedom? Basically speaking, both sides could presumably reach consensus on this point, if they would engage in dialogue about such questions.

Finally, we need to consider the historical argument put forth primarily by the Catholic side. It goes this way: there were Catholic structures in place in Russia very early in Russian history. The bishoprics that were already established from the time of Czarina Catherine the Great are used as evidence that the Catholic Church is rooted in Russian history. To this argument, one can say that complicated historical relationships need to be taken into account. Simply mentioning previously existing bishoprics does not prove anything (in fact, one may ask what those who emphasize that bishoprics existed earlier are trying to prove). As already indicated, the political boundaries between the geographical regions with Orthodox or Catholic populations have shifted repeatedly, so that it proved necessary to find a solution for each respective minority population. The ROC points to the fact that in the old Russia there were far more Catholics than there are now. (In fact, practically speaking, the actual number of Catholics
in Russia simply cannot be determined; the numbers given by Catholic and Russian authorities differ appreciably.) The historic bishoprics in Tiraspol and other locations are the result of the fact that regions inhabited by Catholics were located in Russia or that Catholic settlers found new homes in these areas. However these circumstances cannot be used as an argument in today’s situation because it was so fundamentally altered during the Soviet period. Numerous regions with Catholic populations now belong to other independent countries like the Ukraine, Byelorussia or Moldavia. On the other hand, there is a Catholic population in Siberia, which to all intents and purposes did not even exist there before they were sent there as punishment by the Stalinist regime. Therefore, it makes no sense to refer to history when there are completely different circumstances today. Furthermore, it is totally out of place to point to the events of the 1920s. Bishoprics could be established at that time, but under circumstances that scarcely redound to the credit of Vatican policy on Eastern Europe. Thus, it is scarcely surprising that in its description of the situation, the ROC points to the fact that whenever Russia has been in a weak position, the Catholic Church has tried to exploit the situation. Therefore, Russian Orthodoxy interprets the present situation in the light of those historical experiences. But in effect, we should note that a historical justification of these questions does not help anyone. Even if one could prove beyond any doubt that this or that statement about historical events is entirely correct, nothing could be demonstrated or learned for today’s situation.

In summary, an overview of the arguments shows that on a whole series of subjects there is agreement: concrete events and actions are often judged in completely divergent ways. This truism has been clear since earlier phases of the relationship between Rome and Moscow, and perhaps emerged most clearly last summer over the Pope’s trip to the Ukraine and how both churches evaluated it. There is therefore a fundamental problem with mutual perceptions. And with this statement, we mention an important area that will be of great significance for future rapprochement.

3. Perspectives or How Can We Go Forward?

Without a doubt, relations between both churches must be improved, or better said, started again from scratch on the highest level, that of church leadership. The ROC has always emphasized the fact that there are numerous Catholics and Catholic establishments with which it has good relations. Official statements express the wish to continue being in contact with
Catholic organizations, monastic orders, scientific and social institutions. And in fact these contacts are indeed continuing. The Russian church sends scholarship recipients to Catholic theological institutions of higher learning; in July 2002 one of the regular meetings of the ROC with the Catholic peace movement, Pax Christi, took place in Brussels. Metropolitan Kirill participated in it and took this opportunity to meet for conversation with Cardinal Danneels of Mecheln and Brussels. The bishopric of Hildesheim (Germany) ran a camp in Byelorussia for Catholic and Orthodox youth, and voices in the Catholic Church that pose questions about financial and charitable help for the ROC remain marginal, thank God. Still, the problem of official relations between the churches persists at the highest levels.

The prospects for amelioration of relations will depend to a large extent on whether it is possible to find a common language for many of the controversial points of dispute. Up to this point, correspondence is largely characterized by misunderstandings and widely different concepts. Just as people in Moscow either do not know or misunderstand many fundamental assumptions and elements of the Catholic Church, so essential aspects of Russian Orthodoxy are unknown to many decision-makers at the Vatican. Additionally, there are different factions in both churches with divergent interests. It is well known that in the ROC there is tension concerning ecumenism between those who are open to it (but as a rule still do not approve of the decision of the Vatican) and those who reject it. Likewise in Rome (and also in the Catholic Church in Russia) there are differing tendencies. One group is prepared to insist upon the correctness of the Catholic position, while another is more characterized by consideration for Russian Orthodoxy. A meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch of Moscow that John Paul II wants and that was definitely planned once already, is not definitively rejected by Moscow, but it is tied to an improvement in relations between the two churches. A Papal visit to Moscow, strongly desired by the Catholic Church there (and up until now also by President Putin, who seems to have stepped back a bit from this position in view of recent events), would have fatal consequences for the future of good relations, if it were carried out against the wishes of the Orthodox Church. It would also cause enormous ecumenical harm, quite apart from the question of the Pope’s right to visit Catholics, and quite apart from the wish of a local church to see the Pope in its midst.

Therefore, all of this means the following: the Catholic Church for its part should try to avoid any activity that can be viewed by the ROC as further expansion. The Catholic Church
should inform the ROC in a timely and deliberate way of any steps it undertakes. It should use and extend the presently existing channels as well as possibilities of cooperation on other levels than those of highest church leadership. Naturally, it is also desirable and necessary that the ROC change some of its positions. But it cannot be a matter for the Catholic side to ask for such a thing. It must come from Orthodoxy itself. In this regard, expansion of present relations should have first priority.

The Catholic Church already has a self-defined duty in regard to its conduct in Russia, namely, the document entitled “General Principles and Practical Norms for the Coordination of Evangelization and Ecumenical Efforts of the Catholic Church in Russia and the other Countries of the Russian Confederacy.” This document was drafted by a commission that has since been dissolved. It was called “Pro Russia.” But in practice the document has not been observed. That is all the more regrettable because the text addresses important and fundamental principles which could contribute to creating an atmosphere of trust between the two churches. It could be especially important if it were possible for the Catholic Church to turn these principles into practical realities in its activities in Russia. This could serve as a sign for the ROC that while the Catholic Church is not interested in diminution of care for people in its own churches, it is prepared for cordial, fraternal, ecumenical relations with the ROC. In this sense the overture from the Russian Orthodox Church, that is contained in its statements, despite all reproaches, could be accepted by the Catholic Church. This would certainly be a first step towards necessary reconciliation.

Translated from German by Dr. Erlis Wickersham, professor, Rosemont College, Rosemont, Pennsylvania.
Red Brick Without Onion Towers: Protestant Life in the Russian Enclave of Kaliningrad

by William E. Yoder

Bill Yoder is a Berlin-based church journalist who has been devoting extended periods of time in recent years to assist in the rebuilding of church life in Kaliningrad Region. A frequent contributor to REE for many years, Yoder, an American, received his Dr.phil. in Political Science from the Free University of Berlin (1991) with a dissertation on the views of Bishop Otto Dibelius about German unity.

There are certain parallels between the present Russian enclave of Kaliningrad (Königsberg) and the erstwhile political island of West Berlin. Kaliningrad, roughly 180 km from east to west, is larger and poorer than West Berlin was and suffers from indifferent parents. The pending acceptance of its only immediate neighbors (Poland and Lithuania) into the European Union will lead at least initially to a further isolation of the territory. The Cold War is over, yet border crossings into the enclave remain a protracted and bureaucratic affair - for which Polish and Lithuanian authorities are no less at fault. Different from Berlin is free access to the territory from the Motherland by sea (by ferry from St. Petersburg).

This region and its population of nearly 1 million may be one of Russia's poorhouses, but it has strong geographic pluses. Like East Berlin of yore, it has become a stepping stone to Europe's political West. Kaliningrad is located only 600 km. from Berlin; Moscow is twice as far. For Russians of German heritage, it is the most attractive locale for sniffing German air while remaining solidly within the familiar boundaries of the Russian Federation. Much red German brick remains; the onion towers of Russia are barely in evidence. The region remains for some Germans a highly emotive, special entity, for it was German for 700 years until 1945. Yet virtually all ethnic Germans who reside there now have arrived from Soviet Central Asia. Of the approximately 112 Germans - mostly young orphans - who were allowed to remain in the territory after 1948, only 12 are still alive.

There are also Germans, perhaps numbered in three digits, who have moved back to the region from Germany. Most of these are East Prussian-born pensioners.

Besides certain German and Polish circles, Lithuanian interests in particular lay claim to this terrain. One sign of this is Klaipeda's (Memel's) "Museum of Lithuania Minor" - Lithuania's term for most of the region of the Kaliningrad enclave. Soviet authorities had allowed Lithuanian
interests to restore the ruined church of Christian Donalitius, a Lutheran pastor and 18th century Lithuanian novelist, in Chistiye Prudy (Tollmingkehmen). This church in the southeastern corner of the Kaliningrad region was opened as a Lithuanian museum in 1979.

The story of the recovery of church life in the Kaliningradskaya Oblast is a remarkable one. As a Soviet military zone and socialist model territory off-limits to Westerners, all public church life was forbidden after 1948. For 40 years, believers wanting to attend church were forced to travel to Lithuania. Strangely enough, it was the Baptists who were registered first, in 1967. But it still was not smooth sailing for them: Soon thereafter a meeting house was bulldozed because of supposed legal irregularities. Not until 1985 did the Orthodox and somewhat later other religious communities such as the New Apostolic attain official registration.

The most remarkable story of recovery is perhaps the Lutheran one. Since 1989 the Propstei Kaliningrad, part of the St. Petersburg-based "Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States" (ELCROS), has blossomed from 0 to 43 parishes with 3,000 baptized members. This has occurred despite the fact that the enclave serves as a turnstile: At least that many Lutherans have already emigrated to Germany only to be replaced by new ethnic Germans and their families from further East. The 800 "registered" Baptists remaining in the region have been seriously weakened by the exodus of their own westward. In contrast to the Baptists or Pentecostals, Lutherans have a decidedly German flavor. Most of their services are bilingual, they receive major material and personnel support from Germany.

The situation of the 18,000 Lutherans in neighboring Lithuania is quite different: The competing influences between a liberal German Lutheranism and the confessionalist Lutheranism of the US-based Missouri - and Wisconsin - Synod is apparent in Lithuania. Yet this divide remains strangely absent from the enclave. This is surely due to the close alliance between the parishes of the enclave and Germany. Elsewhere in Russia, competition between North American, German and Finnish Lutheran missions has lead to a partial unraveling of Lutheran structures. This is especially true in Belarus. Kiev, Ukraine boasts five different Lutheran denominations, Novosibirsk, approximately four.

In stark contrast to Polish East Prussia, Russian East Prussia remains a land pockmarked by church ruins, some of them dating to the Crusader period in the 14th and 15th centuries. Of its
224 churches, 158 of them have been completely destroyed or exist only as ruins. The Lutheran church regularly uses only one of the original structures: the diminutive and consequently well-suited Salzburg church in Gusev (Gumbinnen). The 14th-century church at Gvardeyskoye (Mühlhausen), where Martin Luther's daughter Margarethe von Kuenheim lies somewhere buried, is one of several churches being restored by private German foundations. Parsonages and secular buildings of similar size are seen as best-suited to the modest needs of the budding Lutheran communities. The Lutherans have constructed only one new church: Kaliningrad's grand "Church of the Resurrection" was dedicated in April 1999.

Cathedrals have always been a political statement of a people's self-understanding and intentions. The massive Orthodox cathedral slowly climbing skyward behind the statue of Lenin on Kaliningrad's Victory Square is no exception. Traditional Russians do not regard East Prussia's churches as part of a shared European cultural heritage. During tumultuous scenes at a Kaliningrad roundtable last November, politicians insisted that "no German cultural monument is comparable to the sacrifices which the Soviet Union brought in the war against fascism".

The 1991-registered Roman Catholic church, which has strong Polish support and is in ethnic terms heavily Polish and Lithuanian, seems particularly well-organized. Its prefabricated, plywood chapels, children's homes and humanitarian projects seem a model of Prussian orderliness. They have roughly 15 clerics in the region - probably more than the Orthodox. Their strong presence surely supports the continued downward slide of ecumenical relations with the Orthodox. Yet worsening ecumenical relations are also a simple reflection of the larger Russian trend.

Kaliningrad with its population of 450,000 lists seven charismatic and Pentecostal congregations: Two better-known ones stem from the Baltimore-based "Greater Grace" mission and the Russian "Novoye Pokolenie" (New Generation) denomination. Today's Kaliningrad boasts a small Jewish synagogue, a mosque is in the planning stages.

Convincing Russians of working age to remain and not continue their trip westward remains a formidable challenge to those concerned about the future of the local church. "Rat und Tat" (Word and Deed), a fledgling Lutheran initiative for training small entrepreneurs and supplying them with loans, is attempting to give local persons an economic reason for staying. Without a viable economy, the region's churches - and their members - will remain dependent
upon outside sources for continued survival. It is not the "New Russian" economic elite which demonstrates an affinity for Protestantism.