I represent the National Council of Churches (and) as you know one of the sources of fear of the Soviet Union is on the religious Right in this country. And I want you to know, I want to testify here that the relationship of more than thirty years standing between the National Council of Churches and the churches in the Soviet Union have done a great deal in order to alleviate some of that concern and express appreciation to you for your policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* which have helped to improve our reputation, because people have begun to believe that what we've been saying for many years may be true. Thank you.

(Photographed from RELIGION & DEMOCRACY, JUNE, 1988)

U.S.S.R. Breakthroughs

The celebrations marking the 1,000th anniversary of the coming of Christianity to Russia appear to be leading to a historic breakthrough in Soviet Russia's religious life. For example, the wife of Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev and two state officials recently attended a commemorative ceremony in Moscow's historic Bolshoi Theater organized by the Orthodox Church. A widely circulated photograph depicted Raisa Gorbachev seated in the center of an array of Soviet officials and church dignitaries.

The heads of several member communions of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. were among 50 invited guests from the United States at the ceremony; another 200 guests had come from other nations. The U.S. delegation included Bishop Herbert Chilstrom of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; President Avery D. Post of the United Church of Christ; Metropolitan Theodosius of the Orthodox Church in America; and Donald Miller, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren.

Arie R. Brouwer, NCC general secretary, was one of the handful of leaders who addressed the gathering at the Bolshoi. In his speech, Brouwer noted that "in the providence of God" and through the "brilliant, tireless and courageous work" of Mikhail Gorbachev, *glasnost* and *perestroika* arrived "in time for this jubilee." He cited the prayer vigils sponsored by the NCC and the Soviet churches during the Reagan-Gorbachev summits in Geneva, Washington and Moscow as evidence of shared commitment. "Our bond to one another in Christ cannot be broken," Brouwer said. "We have extended the right hand of fellowship to one another and we shall never let go."

(Photographed from CHRISTIAN CENTURY)