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tions available to him on the one side through controlled channels of information and on the other side through nationally prejudiced channels? How can one Christian judge whether another who takes the name of Christ is sincere in his profession? Does one Christian judge another Christian's *motives*? Can we say that we have Christian fellowship if we do not judge one another's words and deeds? Should a Christian compromise in order to be allowed to bear some witness, or should he defy and take prison or death, or should he try to flee to freedom? When should ministers and priests abandon their flocks?

We approached association with the leaders of the churches in the Soviet Union in a mood of humility before very basic questions, with a sense of grave responsibility because of what the venture meant for the Church of Christ and for the cause of peace, and—most significantly—in dependence upon God because, recognizing our own inability by our own wisdom to “handle the situation,” we looked to Him for guidance and strength.

When we arrived in Moscow in March 1956, we were confident that we were there in obedience to our faith that this is God's world, that He came into it in history uniquely in Christ, and that if the world is to be saved it is through Christ, who offered reconciliation of men to God and to one another. We had not checked our minds at the airport, nor did we think that we could solve all problems by our own unaided intelligence. Our dependence upon God in prayer was more obvious, articulate, and complete than it is usually.

Our hosts and the other church leaders seemed strange to us—as we doubtless did to them—in many obvious ways: garb, beards, and language, for example. Only one of our deputation understood the Russian language—Dr. Paul B. Anderson, who not only understood it but was so proficient as to be able to catch its inner meaning. None of the churchmen with whom we normally talked had any knowledge of English beyond the rudiments. We relied largely on interpreters.

Baptists were present for most of our discussions, also Lutherans from the Baltic states and Armenians. They seemed less strange in appearance and manners. But the Russian Orthodox who were our official hosts were quite different from the church people with whom we are accustomed to associate around our conference tables.

For most of those with whom we talked, this was the first discussion on matters of religion with Christians from overseas, from the United States, at least. The members of our deputation were experienced in ecumenical encounter in other settings, but for them this was the first of its kind. Understanding each other's ideas was not easy.

Despite all these barriers, some of us did communicate with one another. We did have fellowship. It was not our achievement. But God was among us. We knew it. Though our words and observable behavior had to be circumspect, genuine Christian rapport was achieved.

Even so, just when we would seem to be reaching a mutual understanding, a crucial difference in judgment with regard to the world situation would arise. The difficulties of communicating ideas at Geneva in 1939 or at Riverside in 1941 were trivial in comparison with the difficulties in Moscow in 1956.

The pendulum seemed to swing between success and failure regarding the specific items on our agenda. But in the general situation, the relations between two groups of Christians, there was no doubt. In the Soviet Union were people who were dedicated to Christ and were living out their faith according to the centuries-old tradition of their churches. We came to know another side of Metropolitan Nicholai.

As our conversations progressed, we came to a better mutual understanding at many points. Occasionally we reached agreements. But it did not disturb us too much if we did not arrive at agreements so long as we understood each other enough to be able to define and clarify our disagreements. This is not to say that we were content to define our disagreements, for we were uneasy about them. The impor-

One reason why Communists want to keep religious ideas from spreading is that both Judaism (the Jewish faith) and Christianity believe firmly in the dignity and worth of individuals. This is a viewpoint that Communism does not accept. Communism, you will recall, requires every individual to subordinate himself to the needs and interests of the Soviet government — a completely totalitarian, authoritarian viewpoint, as is stated earlier in this chapter. Moreover, the Communist Party has long felt that Jewish family life and religious practices would interfere with control of Russian life by the Communist-ruled government.

It is true that since 1941 there has been some religious toleration in Soviet Russia, but *toleration* does not necessarily mean *freedom*. In 1941 Hitler's armies were trampling their way across Russia. Stalin, the Communist dictator, therefore did everything possible to arouse and unite all Russians. He ordered that the long-closed Russian Orthodox churches in the villages be reopened and that services be resumed. Stalin's reason for doing this was, of course, not that he wanted to encourage Christianity, but that he wanted to protect Communism. Communist dictators have allowed church services to continue because: (1) they are using clergymen and religion to strengthen Communist ideas; and (2) they know this will give some people the impression that religious freedom exists in Communist Russia. But the patriarch, or head, of the Russian Orthodox Church and its bishops must follow the Communist Party line in what they preach and say about the Soviet government's dealings with Soviet citizens and with other countries.

Roman Catholic churchmen and churches in regions ruled by Communist dictators have been bitterly persecuted. You will read about Cardinal Mindszenty in Chapter 15, which tells about religion in Communist Russia and other countries where Communists are in control. Protestant clergymen have also been persecuted, although it is true that in some areas Communists have been successful in getting some Protestant groups to accept Communist policy toward religion (pages 99-101).

COMMUNISTS PRETEND TO SAFEGUARD RELIGIOUS FREEDOM:

In spite of all this hostility toward religion on the part of the Communists in Russia, Stalin's Constitution of 1936 pretended to safeguard religious freedom of the individual. Article 124 states:

“In order to ensure citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the state, and the school from the church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens.”

This constitutional provision for the religious freedom of the individual was, of course, a sham. The Communist Party and government not only permitted but encouraged all propaganda unfavorable to religion, while all favorable religious propaganda was openly discouraged and frequently prohibited. For example, a magazine or newspaper might print any number of articles attacking religion or a particular religious group, but no church or its members might publish even a page without the Party's consent. Thus when Vishinsky, the man who tried the victims of the Stalin purge, declared that Soviet workers have always enjoyed religious freedom, he merely meant that the Party had re-

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