antine rite Catholics throughout Eastern Europe and the Middle East could be used as a vehicle to bring about a concordat between the Vatican and all the Christian East.

These plans failed, of course, and Beshoner is at his best describing obstacles that could not be overcome by Gagarin's energetic missionary spirit. Nor are similar obstacles likely to be overcome easily by today's missionaries attempting a version of the same task the nineteenth-century Russian Jesuit set out to accomplish. The author gives abundant examples of the overall Eastern Christian suspicions of Rome and of much of Western culture. He realistically describes the complicated political and linguistic problems that dogged Gagarin and will quickly discourage any impatient modern enthusiast. He recognizes the strong attachment Orthodox churches have to their traditions as well as their determination to hold fast to theological arguments on the filioque, to say nothing of papal supremacy, regardless how trivial Western intellectuals suppose these matters to be. Looming behind these pitfalls, Beshoner correctly sees the giant shadow of the secular authorities that wielded and continue to wield power too often without having to justify either tactics or motivation.

There is no question about the high quality of Fr. Beshoner's work. He has carefully consulted all of Gagarin's many writings. In addition, he has examined the evidence published by Gagarin's enemies in Union chrétienne as well as documents collected by the Russian government and now housed in St. Petersburg and Moscow archives. Beshoner has made good use of records from the Society of Jesus cataloged in Rome and accounts from the many secondary works written in a number of European languages, including the recent studies of E. N. Tsimbaeva. The book is clearly written, and the copious notes contain a great deal of important information to supplement the narrative. This volume will be of considerable interest to all people watching Russian Orthodoxy as it copes with the challenges put forth by foreign religious ideas and associations.

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In Russia's intriguing empire, religion was at once everything and something less. On the one hand, every one of the tsar's subjects had to have a confession, some confessions were considered vastly better than others, and the best confession of all was Orthodoxy, the state's official "ruling faith." At the same time, official persecution of non-Orthodox believers was rare and good subjecthood (*poddanstvo*) was traditionally defined by one's loyalty to the dynasty rather than by the content of one's prayer book. Iakut shamans and Tatar mullahs could therefore, theoretically, be just as well considered as Russian Orthodox priests because, as the center's paternalist spokesmen often noted, all the tsar's diverse peoples were his children and he was father to them all, equally – even if many of them were victims of unfortunate religious "delusion." Paul Werth's engaging new book explores these and other contradictions of imperial
religious politics as they unfolded in the mixed Christian/semi-Christian/pagan/Muslim world of Russia's Volga-Kama region in the nineteenth century up to 1905. His work is one of the first to take a close look at the meanings and dynamics of religious change in the local non-Russian worlds of the empire, and the picture that emerges is important and fascinating.

Werth's main concern is with religion as a tool of imperial governance and the driving line of his work focuses accordingly on state and Church religious policies. Of these, the most central to the book are those that were directed towards the so-called "new Christians" (novokreshchenye) — that is, the pagan and Muslim Finnic and Turkic peoples of the Volga-Kama region who were baptized largely as a result of mass conversion campaigns in the 1700s. By the late 1820s, as Werth makes clear, these new Christians were at the center of official attention because they began agitating, sometimes in large numbers, for permission to return to "the faith of [their] fathers," whether Muslim or animist. Of course, reversions of this sort were utterly intolerable to the imperial rulership since Orthodox status once acquired could not be abandoned, and thus what followed was a vigorous effort to keep all the region's wayward and insufficiently Christian Christians in the right faith by deploying special missionaries to non-Russian parishes and sponsoring policies encouraging resettlement, education, and Russian-non-Russian intermarriage. Old-fashioned "administrative-repressive measures" as well as newer efforts to open non-Russian monasteries and "alien"-friendly Il'minskii schools, then followed after the 1860s when a new spate of large-scale Tatar apostasies and a pro-Orthodox religious movement among the highland Mari brought more religious change. In the very last decade of the nineteenth century, clearly frustrated by the difficulty of steering religious change in certain directions while immobilizing it in others, the government (hesitantly) began to soften its stand on the impossibility of exiting Orthodoxy; and in the revolutionary year of 1905 apostasy was formally decriminalized. However, as Werth points out, people leaving the "ruling faith" were only allowed to do so for other Christian denominations; and even as a new religious order seemed realizable and Orthodoxy began for the first time "to compete much more openly with other confessions" (p. 254), distinct limits to "freedom of conscience" still prevailed.

Werth's presentation of the tsarist government's meandering and incomplete path towards religious toleration is original and insightful, but what makes the book especially valuable is the fact that he links the story of policy with a nuanced reading of the social milieu of indigenous religious life and with a careful analysis of what religious politics in the Volga-Kama region reveal about the broader evolution of Russian imperialism. Governance here is treated as a process created through interaction and negotiation between state officials, Orthodox clerics, and the (mostly) Tatars, Chuvash, Udmurts, and Maris whose religious views and practices the former so wished to change. Consequently, Werth's characters include horrified or sympathetic missionaries, corrupt or confused intendants, and a sprawling list of non-Russian petitioners and would-be apostates pleading, haggling, dragging their feet, fabricating, bribing, and occasionally openly resisting missionary admonitions and tsarist decrees. The menu peuple here are neither omniscient nor uniformly oppressed nor driven by the purposeful agency that some writers seem to find in every peasant soul; yet they are