

CO-CREATION by Vladimir Megré

Book 4 of *The Ringing Cedars Series*

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John Woodsworth, translator • Dr Leonid Sharashkin, editor

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HOPE FOR THE WORLD

Translator's and Editor's Afterword

Wow! Four books translated and counting. Not a bad record, when one considers that just a year ago (as of this writing) not a single page of this series had yet come off the Ringing Cedars presses in America.

The series was launched with the publication of Book 1, *Anastasia*, in February 2005, followed by Book 2, *The Ringing Cedars of Russia*, and Book 3, *The Space of Love*, later in the year. And now *Co-creation* makes four, with at least five volumes still to come. And for this swift progression we have *you* to thank, dear readers, for your ongoing support and encouragement, without which the publication of the new volumes would not have been possible. And needless to say, our gratitude goes out to our original source of support, the One whose inspiration inevitably underlies any legitimate act of 'co-creation'.

Equally noteworthy is the co-creation evident in the evolution of the original series itself, particularly the remarkable transformation of a hard-nosed Siberian commercial trader into one of Russia's best-selling authors. All the more amazing when one remembers that because of Vladimir Megré's initially 'choppy' writing style, the original Russian manuscript of *Anastasia* was rejected by publisher after publisher, leaving him no choice but to bring out the first edition on his own.¹ However, after several print-runs of the self-published *Anastasia* sold out simply by word of mouth, with no advertising campaign or bookstore exposure, professional publishers were only too eager to reconsider, and it was not long before the volumes in the Ringing Cedars Series were selling in the millions.

¹See Book 1, Chapter 30: "Author's message to readers".

And now in America, as elsewhere in the English-speaking world, *Anastasia* and its sequels are once again running counter to the book-industry's long-held axioms. Even though corporate wholesalers declined to distribute the Ringing Cedars Series to major retailers on the grounds that "no book sells by word of mouth alone, without a budget sufficient for a large advertising campaign", you the readers have proved otherwise, and the books have already spread around the globe without so much as a single advertisement or paid-for review in the press. Many of you have taken it upon yourself to purchase additional copies to give to the family and friends. Some have even gone further and become independent distributors, devoting considerable time and effort to making the books available in your local regions. Thus, as with their original editions, the success of the books in translation is once again the result of the resourcefulness of their readers — readers who have let a new splendid *image* live in their hearts — and the ideas these books set forth are already leaving their mark on the world.

Indeed, there are signs that the world is beginning to grasp the message that there is a better path to freedom, enlightenment and happiness than the one along which it has been hurtling forward at breakneck speed, and that the 'new millennium' on the Earth which Vladimir Megré welcomes on the final pages of *Co-creation* is already dawning with a most glorious radiance. Both in Russia and abroad, *Anastasia* and the Ringing Cedars Movement are already the subject of many day-to-day conversations and frequent reports in the press (some pertinent examples are detailed below).

Many might find these developments surprising. However, there have been numerous thinkers in both the distant and the recent past who have attempted to send a similar message to humanity: that *it is on the wrong path*. A few of these are worth noting here.

In the late 19th century the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy took special note of how "millions of people — men, women and children — working ten, twelve or fifteen hours a day, are being transformed into machines and perishing in factories that manufacture unnecessary and harmful gadgets... while more and more villages become deserted". He further observed that "in our time the human heart has been crying out more strongly, more strongly than ever before, against this false life, and calling people to the life demanded by revelation, reason and conscience".²

At the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, religious thinker and Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy was calling for a new approach to spiritual freedom from 'mental slavery' to long-held beliefs. She summed up this approach in her major work, *Science and health* (originally published in 1875) as follows: "The despotic tendencies, inherent in mortal mind and always germinating in new forms of tyranny, must be rooted out through the action of the divine Mind".³

In 1931 the American prophet Edgar Cayce established his Association for Research and Enlightenment to promote alternative solutions to humanity's problems based on, among other things, personal spirituality and holistic health. Interestingly enough, in one of his many 'readings' he received an intimation that "*on Russia's religious development will come the greater hope of the world*".⁴

Three years later the world-renowned humanitarian, Dr Albert Schweitzer, re-published the English translation of his book, *On the edge of the primeval forest*. While decrying the injustices inflicted on the indigenous peoples by European settlers,⁵ he intimates that the only path to successful colonialism is to

²Leo Tolstoy, *An appeal (Vozzvanie)*, 25 May 1889.

³Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and health with key to the Scriptures* (final edition, 1910), p. 225. Not unlike Megré, Eddy frequently used 'divine Mind' (with a capital *M*) as a synonym for God.

⁴From Cayce reading 3976-10 (February 1932). Edgar Cayce Readings are copyrighted (© 1971, 1993–2005) by the Edgar Cayce Foundation. This quotation is used by the kind permission of the copyright holder. Italics ours.

turn the indigenous people into more productive workers by *removing them from their native villages, families and plots of land*. Surprisingly, in the same piece Schweitzer even holds labour compulsion (forcing the African native peoples to provide labour in return for material ‘benefits’ bestowed on them) to be justifiable.⁶

Separating people from their own (or their family’s) land is a social trend that goes back centuries. Thomas More described it in Book 1 of his *Utopia* (published in 1516), accusing greedy landowners of taking land from their peasant farmers for their own enrichment. Stalin’s forced collectivisation of agriculture in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, the loss of family farms in the United States in the years following World War II and the establishing of huge ‘factory farms’ in present-day Canada (nearly always achieved by buying up small, family operations at an ‘irresistible’ price) are further examples of concerted efforts on the part of the ‘dark forces’ of this world to break Man’s ties to the land. This in turn has the effect of subduing his free will and destroying his independence.

All of which gives added weight to Anastasia’s proposal, so eloquently set forth by Vladimir Megré in *Co-creation*, of bringing Man (more specifically, a Man’s *family*) and his land back together again in the form of what is called in Russian *rodovoe pomestie* — translated in this book as ‘family domain’ or ‘kin’s domain’.⁷ This phrase is in turn linked, in terms of both meaning and etymology, to the Russian concept of *Rodina*, which has been rendered ‘Motherland’ in the Ringing Cedars Series, though it is equally translatable as ‘native land’.⁸

A brief word on the translation is in order here: inasmuch as both *Rodina* and *rodovoe pomestie* convey concepts that have deep roots in the Russian historical context, unparalleled in Western cultures, a good deal of thought — not to mention countless paragraphs of text and e-mail correspondence — has gone into selecting the most appropriate English equivalents.⁹

We were aided in this decision in part by two of our readers who were asked to voice their thoughts on the selection of an equivalent for *Rodina*. Here is a brief excerpt from each of their responses:

To me *Motherland* seems to invoke the most profound connection one can have to the land. It is the land in which you were likely born. But even more so, it is the land to which you have bonded through work, toil, sweat and blood, laughter, joy and sustenance.

I like *motherland*. It brings the “life giving” nature of the earth to my heart, “my mother”, evoking feelings of tenderness and responsibility. There is much meaning to women in the idea of being a mother

⁵He writes, for example: “Who can describe the injustice and cruelties that in the course of centuries they [the coloured peoples] have suffered at the hands of Europeans?... If a record could be compiled of all that has happened between the white and the coloured races, it would make a book containing numbers of pages which the reader would have to turn over unread because their contents would be too horrible” — A. Schweitzer, *On the edge of the primeval forest: experiences and observations of a doctor in Equatorial Africa* (London: A.&C. Black Ltd, 1934), p. 115.

⁶See A. Schweitzer, *On the edge of the primeval forest*, pp. 112–118.

⁷This proposal of Anastasia’s — a ‘family domain’ comprising one hectare of land — is presented throughout the latter part of *Co-creation*, beginning with Chapter 24: “Take back your Motherland, people!”. The origin of the Russian term rendered *family domain* (or *kin’s domain*) is discussed in footnote 7 in Chapter 33: “School, or the lessons of the gods”.

⁸For further discussion of the original meaning of *Rodina*, please see footnote 1 in Chapter 24.

⁹Even then the final results were, shall we say, less than unanimous, and involved a significant element of compromise on the part of both editor and translator. We can only hope our readers will be able to glean at least a glimmer of understanding from the choices we eventually decided upon.

and a common thread which relates to my personal life's experience and has a place in the emotional file cabinet of the brain for most people. The relationship between "life" and the earth is shattered in this country [America], as people are so removed from the idea the earth gives us our life.

The linkage made by the latter reader between one's 'personal life' and 'the Earth' is significant. Early in Chapter 24 (appropriately entitled "Take back your Motherland, people!") Anastasia acknowledges that "the whole Earth could be a Motherland [*Rodina*] for each one of its inhabitants", and she designates a family's personal plot of land (subsequently identified as one's *kin's domain*) as a "piece of the Motherland"¹⁰ — thus linking the feelings associated with one's personal family to the broader concept of the family of humanity as a whole. Indeed, perspectives on the concept of the family as revealed in *Co-creation* are by no means confined to the world of the early twenty-first century we call *home*, but reach out in both time and distance to look at *family* not only through the lenses of the past, the present and the future but from beyond our usual sense of planetary space as well.

On this basis, then, it may be seen that the concepts of both *Motherland* and *family domain* reach far beyond the borders of Russia alone. In fact, as indicated above, there are signs that Anastasia's appeal to "take back your Motherland" is already resonating in the hearts of many people in many parts of the world.

In May 2005, for example, a massive power outage in Moscow reminded many of Anastasia's words concerning the inevitable collapse of artificial life-support systems.¹¹ This one accident paralysed Russia's capital city for several days in a row and, among other things, resulted in the sewage from millions of dwellings being flushed into the Moskva River untreated. In a radio programme devoted to possible solutions to this problem, one of Russia's most prominent ecologists — and President of the Centre for Russia's Environmental Policy — Academician Alexey Yablokov, made pointed reference not only to E.F. Schumacher's book *Small is Beautiful*¹² but also to the "hugely popular '*Anastasia*' movement of people building their family domains".¹³

In neighbouring Latvia, journalist Liudmila Stoma was curious about what was behind a movement of hundreds of people in Latgal Province — "all well-educated specialists in high demand in the labour market" — relocating to a newly formed eco-village in a remote rural area. Upon investigation, she was amazed by what she could only describe as a "new revolution":

Over the last few years Russia, Belarus and Ukraine have been experiencing a real eco-village boom: thousands of families are building 'family domains' on one hectare of land each, attaining remarkable self-sufficiency with only sparing use of all the technological achievements of the technocratic world. They are all united by the same goal: to build a Paradise on the Earth.¹⁴

She ended her article by wondering if "the settlers following Anastasia's advice" in building their own family domains might actually succeed where government subsidies had so miserably failed.

¹⁰See Chapter 31: "But who is to blame?".

¹¹See, for example, Book 2, Chapter 8: "The answer", and Book 3, Chapter 19: "What to agree with, what to believe?".

¹²E.F. Schumacher, *Small is beautiful: economics as if people mattered* (New York, Harper & Row, 1973).

¹³From Dr Yablokov's interview on ecological threats to Moscow resulting from electricity outages (*Problemy ekologicheskoy bezopasnosti Moskvy v sluchae otkliucheniya podachi elektroenergii*), aired on Radio Svoboda on 25 May 2005. Italics ours.

¹⁴Liudmila Stoma, *Vozvrashchenie v Edem* (Return to Eden). *Ezhenedelnik "Vesti"* (Weekly News), n° 8 (601), 24 February 2005. Interestingly enough, Israeli writer and poet Efim Kushner also used the term *revolution* (in the phrase "a global-scale moral revolution") in reference to the Ringing Cedars Series in his book *Beskrovnaya revoliutsiya* (*A bloodless revolution*), published in 2003.

In fact, thousands of new kin's domains are being established each year — not only in Russia and Latvia, but in many other countries as well. And *Dachnik Day* — an annual celebration of our connectedness to Mother Earth on 23 July, the idea of which was proposed in Book 2 (*The Ringing Cedars of Russia*) only eight years ago¹⁵ — has now become an international holiday, and in 2005 it was celebrated for the first time by readers of the series in both America and Canada.

These are but a few examples of a growing, world-wide phenomenon rounded out by international readers' conferences, bards' festivals and multitudes of new poems, songs, paintings and other forms of artistic expression. And already the reaction of readers of the English translation of the series in America, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere is indicating a real 'globalisation' of interest not only in *reading* the Ringing Cedars books, but in *acting on the ideas* they present as well, revealing new manifestations of a Motherland that completely transcends national boundaries.

And to think it all started from a single simple idea, which, multiplied through its first faltering attempts at implementation, still keeps on blossoming and helping people all over the world 'take back' their own Motherland — even as Vladimir Megré's blossoming series of publications started from a single simple proposal to write a book implanted in the thought of an inveterate 'non-writer'. And this former non-writer's initial 'choppy' attempts have now evolved into a flourishing trademark style of poetic prose which characterises Books 3 and 4 of the series. (How well we have succeeded on conveying this evolution of style in the English version, particularly the melodious effect his resulting poetic mode of expression can have on the one who reads it with a heart attuned to textual harmonies, will be up to you the readers to judge.)¹⁶

As translator and editor we have only to wish you as fascinating an experience in discovering this book on your own as we ourselves had in reading and 'co-translating' it (not to mention 'co-editing' the translation). For now we shall leave you with Anastasia's appeal from Chapter 26 ("Even today everyone can build a home"): "You must feel everything that I outline, and mentally complete yourself the whole design, and let everyone else draw it along with me. O, God! People, at least give it a try, I beg of you!"

We look forward to meeting you again on the pages of the next book — entitled *Who are we?* — which, like *Co-creation*, will offer ever greater hope for the world.

Ottawa, Canada

John Woodsworth

Ozark Mountains, USA

Leonid Sharashkin

February 2006

¹⁵See Book 2, Chapter 9: "Dachnik Day and an All-Earth holiday!"

¹⁶We are reminded here of the words of British poet Robert Graves: "The reason why the hairs stand on end, the eyes water, the throat is constricted, the skin crawls and a shiver runs down the spine when one writes or reads a true poem is that a true poem is necessarily an invocation of the White Goddess, or Muse, the Mother of All Living...". We feel that this 'goddess' — whom Anastasia calls *Love* — is invoked in this volume with tremendous power. The quote is from Robert Graves, *The White Goddess: a historical grammar of poetic myth* (London: Faber & Faber, 1946; now also published in New York by Noonday Press), pp. 24–25.

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Translated by **John Woodsworth** Edited by **Leonid Sharashkin**

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