



**RELIGIONS, CHURCHES  
AND THE SCIENTIFIC STUDIES  
OF RELIGION: POLAND AND UKRAINE**

Edited by **Jerzy Borowik**

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## Introduction

All the countries of Central and Eastern Europe experienced rapid transformation after the collapse of communism. Revolutionary changes relate to many fields of social and individual life – including religion, churches, and personal beliefs – and studying them as an element of scientific life. Some crucial changes are common to all or a majority of the countries. One of the changes which is common to all countries concerns church-state relations, which means freeing churches from subordination to a state hostile towards any religion. Thus, in all countries of post-communist Europe freedom of religion is practised as a rule, prescribed in new constitutions – and model of friendly separation between state and church dominates. The past atheist model of studying religion has been replaced by the scientific formulation of religious studies. In most of the post-communist countries, especially those belonging to Eastern Europe, which were more strongly and strictly influenced by the Soviet Union, scientific studies of religion were impossible under communism. Thus, sometimes very good specialists prefer to escape in studying of the past religions or exotic regions in order to avoid direct ideologisation. Only after the collapse of communism did studies free from communist ideology and became possible.

The comparisons of any two countries would be interesting. Why has the attempt been made to compare Poland and Ukraine? The explanation is very simple. First of all, academics working on religion in both countries have long-term co-operation. Thus, preparing the book became a good opportunity to compare developments in scientific research, publications, teaching programs, conferences and plans for the future. The final chapters are devoted to this problem – by Anatoliy Kolodny and Ludmila Filipovych describing the situation of religious studies in Ukraine, and Andrzej Szyjewski writing about Poland. Although the articles describe many institutes and people in both countries working on religion, they concentrate on two leading institutes: the department of Religious Studies in the Institute of Philosophy of the Ukrainian

The UGCC has been (particularly in Ukraine) developing as a Catholic persuasion for a long time and not only formally, but in reality and the peculiarities of approaching modern Catholicism influence the religious being of Greek Catholics no less than the impact of their Eastern Christian heritage. The UGCC's development, meeting the present-day demands of believers, implements in it those features, similar to the ones of other Catholic Churches, especially since the period of the beginning of the adaptation to the culture in the Ecumenical Church. That is why, despite the parts of these processes – the resistance of the eastern Ukrainian population (supporters of the UGCC's Eastern heritage preservation), generally the activity of the Church and to a great extent the mentality of its members in fact more and more reminds the Catholic one (in particular, in the neighbouring Eastern and Central Europe). This on-going trend of the UGCC's development, despite some "internal" and "external" losses of such a complicated and quite problematic evolution (among the latter, in particular, the promotion of the country's regionalisation), demonstrates an aggregate balance, useful for the spiritual as well as the national and state interests of Ukrainians. So, Greek Catholics have a possibility to efficiently and reasonably develop Christian and spiritual traditions in common use and joint creation of such a Christian tradition, that very successfully keeps in step with the time, a tradition, that spiritualised the cultural formation of the European civilization, returning to the values of which the fundamentals of the development of the sovereign Ukraine have naturally and legally declared. Thus, in terms of the independence of Ukraine, such a trend has a serious chance to further development and to wider openness of its efficient potential.

# PROTESTANTISM

Victor Yelensky

## “Late” Protestants in Post-Communist Ukraine

### Legacy

Throughout the Soviet period the Protestant societies in Ukraine existed under conditions of a keen opposition with “the world” which tried to destroy their communities and prove the inconsistency of the Protestant way of life. This situation contributed to the formation of certain common features in the image of the Protestant communities. We should attribute to them such features as specific organisation type, based on a strictly fixed and informal membership, severe discipline, strictness combined with exclusive psychology, dissimilarity, confidence in the truthfulness of a chosen way, exercising strict community control over all areas of believers’ lives obligatory character of all community orders for all the members, elements of “critical distance” in relation to “the world”, existence of a very pronounced group self-awareness, group psychology, group memory, purposefulness toward the world’s salvation with the help of spreading Protestant beliefs and conversion of dissidents and unbelievers.

This pressure from the outside was the very force, which created sectarian features in the make-up of late Protestant communities. And although, for example, Evangelical Christian Baptists Union (ECBU) or Church of Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) almost overcame the majority of such features long time ago, the Protestant leaders for quite a long time were still aware of their actual presence in the congregations. “Nowadays, the days of blessed opportunities and changes, it is especially painful to realise that certain sectarian manifestations in our Church hinder it from accomplishing its ministry to the full” (Senin, 1988) –

wrote an Adventist author. “It is evident we will need a great deal of time before we are ready to admit that the traditions formed in the local churches and the spirit of evangelical teaching are not the identical concepts” – thinks a Baptist theologian. “No Christian denomination has escaped various traditional developments. Sad faces, secluded life, neglecting ethics, cultural heritage rejection – all this is a serious obstacle for many truth seekers (Serhienko, 1988: 65).

### **Institutional changes**

A thorough and resolute break with extraneous sectarian features has become the major theme of the Protestant communities’ institutional changes in Ukraine since the beginning of Gorbachev’s reforms. These developments during late 1980s and in 1990s led to an essentially new institutional situation within Ukrainian Protestantism in comparison with the times beginning of Gorbachev’s reforms. The first step of these developments was the delimitation of the two greatest Protestant confessions – Evangelical Christian-Baptists and Evangelical Christians. Their union, which was ratified by the so-called “August treaty” (Agreement on “Evangelical Christians and Evangelical Christians-Baptists joining together in one union”, conducted in Moscow, August 24<sup>th</sup> 1945 between the leaders of Baptist Union and Pentecostals) was rather artificial<sup>1</sup>. It was forced by the government, for which a certain level of institutionalisation was a necessary prerequisite to exercise absolute control of religious organisations, where the union itself would be an instrument of assimilating the dynamic Pentecostal community with comparatively controlled Evangelical Baptist centre. This relatively conflict-free delimitation resulted in the creation of the Evangelical Christians’ Pentecostal Union (ECPU), which has united 80% of all the Pentecostals, while the rest of them joined the Union of Free Evangelical Christian Churches or became independent communities. Other components of institutional change processes within Ukrainian Protestantism were creation and official recognition of the Jehovah’s Witnesses organisation in Ukraine as well as granting independence to ECBU of Ukraine. The former, since February 1994 has officially been named

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of the agreement is available in *The Central State Archive of Public Organisations of Ukraine* in Kyiv, Stack 4648, Inventory 2, File 360, p. 43.



All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, which is an opportunity to gather Evangelical Christian-Baptist communities of the Ukrainian diaspora.

At the beginning of 2002, about 7,000 Protestant communities obtained official registration in Ukraine. One third of all theological educational institutions in the country and about one third of all Sunday schools have been founded by Protestants. In 2002, the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptist Associations comprised about 2,300 churches and 140,000 members – that is 59 people in church on average.

The All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians (Pentecostals) comprised 1,500 churches and 106,000 members, the Union Conference of Seventh Day Adventists about 65,000 members, Jehovah's Witnesses' communities numbered about 120,000 members. The members of other Late Protestant communities (mainly Charismatic movements) from 100,000 to 200,000 believers will be discussed later. In the course of public opinion surveys about 1.9-2% of the adult population of the country regard themselves as Protestants (although this number comprises not only late but early Protestants as well – Hungarian Reformats from Transcarpathia, also Lutherans, mainly Germans.)

Therefore, though there are a significant number of Protestant communities in Ukraine, this does not reflect their numerical importance in the general population and in the general Ukrainian confessional configuration. The Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church officially announced that, according to Church statistics (perhaps seriously exaggerated), the average parish in the UGCC's Ivano-Frankivsk eparchy has 1,448 members; the Lviv Archeparchy has 1,844; Ternopil has 1,899 (Dobroer, 2001: 83, 86, 90). This, as we can see, is a different type of data, even if we assume that many people treat their membership to a church as a mere formality. Statements that Ukraine is rapidly undergoing Protestantisation cannot be verified by any research. Since 1998, the number of Protestant religious organisations in Ukraine has grown at the same rate as the number of Orthodox communities.

Although worried Orthodox priests substantially exaggerate the growth speed of the Protestant Churches, Protestantism remains almost the most dynamic factor of changing the denominational situation in Ukraine.

### Socio-demographical profile

Especially rapid changes have taken place in the social-demographic make-up of Protestant Churches. In the Soviet period social status of a Protestant was artificially diminished – a member of a “sectarian” community could not obtain a job in administrative bodies, education or the social sciences. Since the end of the 1980s, the social structure of Protestant Churches has become more and more identical with the general society structure (Sawatsky, 1992: 273).

“Among the awakened souls”, as indicated in the report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of Evangelical Christian-Baptists (1994), there are a lot of highly educated people; among them are medical doctors, lawyers, professors, scientists, military officers, people occupying high public positions, politicians, writers and others” (*Summary report*, 1994). The President of the All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Gregory Komendant, states in particular that in 2001 the Union had over 180 working teachers, excluding those who had obtained pedagogical education, but were not currently involved in such work, and about 1,200 medical specialists. There are also lawyers, Ph.D. doctors, and at least one Parliamentary deputy in the Union (Komendant, 2001: 34).

The research on Protestants conducted by O. Nazarkina in Donetsk region has shown the following social-demographic picture of all respondents: average age – 38-39 years, 59% are women, 60% have secondary or secondary technical education, 28% have higher or uncompleted higher education. 18.3% of all respondents are retired, 18% are students and school pupils, 14% are housewives and temporarily unemployed people, 14% are miners. 10% occupy administrative positions or work in trade and private business, 9% work in the fields of education, culture, medicine, 5,3% are highly qualified technical specialists (Nazarkina, 2001: 18).

A significant majority of Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian Protestants, primarily Evangelical Christians-Baptists, questioned during December 2000 and January 2001, answered „Strongly agree” or „Agree” when asked if devout believers should feel free to participate in civic organisations (94%) or city government (89%), serve in the military (66%), or become business leaders (69%). A majority approved of expressing opinions in newspapers (91%), watching movie videos at home (85%), watching TV at home (79%), and attending movies in

theaters (61%). All respondents agreed that the believers should feel free to attend university (Barnes, Kargina, Elliott, 2002).

The percentage of young people in Protestant Churches is almost identical to the relative percentage of people at the age level of 16-18 (when as a rule young people from Protestant homes receive water baptism) and up to 29-30 years (which is considered to be the limit of youth age according to demographers and sociologists) constituting Ukrainian population. Moreover, in big urban churches the discussed number of young people reached 25%, 30% or even 40% (Bunetchko, Phidenko, 1989: 126–137).

The growth of the number of young people in Protestant Churches is not least the result of flexible and very effective religious education of children and teaching programs undertaken directly in families which provided the continuity of the Protestant tradition under extremely unfavorable conditions. Traditions of fighting for the transformation of the family into a “family church” community or “spiritual fortress” go back to the time of exhausting resistance to the dominant church, when the weakening of confessional education in the family could result later on in the erosion of the Protestant community as soon as in the lifetimes of the next generation. This experience was one of the decisive factors, which strengthened the vitality of Protestantism during the Soviet period. On top of that all the Protestant denominations insist on unconditional adherence to Biblical commandments and definite rejection of any form of contraception. A high level of childbirth, and its unacceptable regulation is considered to be a religious duty, as well as an obligation to fellow believers, and also as a condition of the whole community well being. “All those who feel concern about the growth of the church”, emphasises the Adventist author, “are not afraid to have large families” (*Nastolnii kalendar*, 1986: 12). According to some research, for 100 Protestant families living in the city there were 348 children in the Soviet period (Saprikin, 1986: 3), while for 100 average urban families there were 140 children (Yankova, 1982:13). The research of the Moscow Jehovah’ Witnesses community has shown that in comparison with the population of the Russian capital there are more families with an average national number of children (at the expense of high proportion of single elderly women), but substantially more families having many children (Antonov, Medvedkov, 2001: 9).

Finally, considering the social-demographic structure of Ukrainian Protestantism we should note that it is mostly an urban confessional

community. Protestants whose existence in the Soviet period were close to the conditions of a social and spiritual ghetto, demonstrated nearly the most positive attitude to the first steps of Gorbachev's leadership, directed to the removal of all the obstacles on the way to satisfaction of one's basic religious needs, and generally to his attempt to reform society.

Sociological investigations conducted during 1988 among young Protestants in the Volyn, Transcarpathian, Dnipropetrovsk, Chernovtsy regions and Kyiv city, testified their unconditional support for the *perestroika* policy and desire to break out of the social isolation forced on Protestants by external circumstances (Materiali, 1988). In quite a short period of time Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostals have managed to bring about some specific and quite significant charity projects, aiming to take care of the elderly people, sick, lonely, orphans, prisoners etc. Protestants literally burst into society, which had been ignoring them for many decades and they have insistently tried to prove the benefits of their values.

### **Problems of making a new social teaching**

The break with sectarianism becomes particularly evident in Ukrainian Protestants' attitudes toward political issues. When on the eve of the 1994 Parliamentary elections, leaders of Baptists, Pentecostals and Adventists urged people to peculiar prayers for the 'right choice' it was for the first time. They were sensitive to the human rights and religious freedom issues and gave clear indication of their priorities on Church-State matters (the principle of Church non-establishment, the strict separation of Church from State and State from Church, and the equality of all religions before the law). While realising that the Protestants were not a key element of the Ukrainian religious scene, political circles looked to it for support. The high level of participation and strict inner discipline made the Protestant's Unions exceptionally attractive for persons and groups striving to acquire or retain positions of power.

At the same time, this new situation made concentrating theological and religious institutional efforts on responding adequately to its challenges a necessity. Active involvement of believers in social processes required theological grounds for this activity. In the late 1980s they began to work on creating a secular activity pattern, which could harmoniously combine the ministry to the world with the ministry to God. It required

appropriate intellectual potential and a theological school, which Ukrainian Protestants simply could not create at that time.

The trends in the practical leadership of Evangelical Christian Baptists, Adventists and Pentecostals in this sphere can be characterised in the following way. On the one hand, it is a policy of gradual removal of sectarian developments, which are expressed in unconditional rejection of culture outside the confession, obscurantist manifestations, denial of ecumenical movement, and general alienation from the world. On the other hand, it is entering "the world", without mixing with it, an "above the world" position, "salt of the world" status, a community, which purposefully influences the "world" and carefully screens its feedback impulses. That is why referring to conservative ideas, an old heritage, compensates for some very bright „breakthroughs" in social theology. Moreover, many believers, the elderly in particular, consider changes and innovations as the decline of the Church's high spiritual level and a concession to "the world". Therefore, in the sermons of Baptist ministers, for example, we used to hear warnings against an extreme church passion for "secular activities", appeals not to forget that church's main focus always has been and will be not a "horizontal" but a "vertical" ministry. It was mentioned at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of Evangelical Christian Baptists: "We often hear that Christians borrow different secular innovations... Strictly speaking, God does not need this kind of adjustment and it does not bring any blessing to the Church" (*Summary report*, 1994).

Seventh Day Adventists rather quickly grasped the realities of the new time and without ambiguity announced their intent to use them in a productive way. Adventists' leaders repeatedly emphasised they clearly see the perspective of a painless rising evolution in Church and society, where Protestantism would not be a prevailing system of views and values, and so they strive for breaking as quickly as possible with old ideas, which today objectively hinder it. "Eternal abodes", they wrote, "can be trusted to those people, who learned to value, keep and love their earthly abodes... Christ never taught his followers to isolate themselves from the society around them and to look judgmentally and critically at the world from their narrow, closed circle" (*Nastolnii kalendar*, 1982: 32).

The leaders of Evangelical Christian-Baptists Union in Ukraine make considerable efforts to overcome isolation and alienation from the "world", which are explained by social-political conditions of a previous

time period. We should note that owing to a public relations campaign in the media, an extremely unfavorable and negative Pentecostal stereotype took root during this period. Thus, content-analysis of publications on this issue in Ukrainian national and regional newspapers during 1977-1987 produced very symptomatic results. In 37.7% of all the articles there were offensive attacks against Pentecostals; in 28.3% they were called mercenary-minded and dishonest people, in 35.8% - immoral people, in the same number of articles the past of Pentecostals and their leaders was described in a very unattractive way. In 17% of articles they were called "bigots", in 15% - religious extremists and only 8.6% of publications admitted that the majority of Pentecostals were honest citizens and diligent workers (Yelensky, 1989: 37).

Many years of persecutions, imprisonment of the majority of bishops and a considerable number of presbyters, and powerful social and psychological pressure must have influenced group conscience. At the same time new conditions contributed to a very quick opening of "hermetic" Pentecostal Churches.

Jehovah's Witnesses activity seemed to rather stand apart from the general socialisation process of Ukrainian Protestants. At the same time we should note that Jehovah's Witnesses' literature of recent years has softened its global-focused tendencies, producing so-called "dull pessimism", although the apocalyptic perspective, of course, remains a very real trend. Nevertheless, in the conditions of Ukraine, where philanthropic activity accompanies most missionary movements, Jehovah's Witnesses referred to some strictly charitable projects as well. For instance, at the time of the flood in Transcarpathia they sent to the victims more than 5 tons of clothes and shoes, hundreds of blankets, mattresses, pillows etc., 30 tons of food products, almost 7 tons of construction materials and so on (*Svidki Ehoivi*, 2000: 50).

Naturally, the new social situation revealed pressing problems in Protestant circles, and it created new ones as well. Hostile environment ceased to have its influential role for a Protestant community, which began to consolidate its members as before. In the Churches it has brought to life certain contradictions between believers with different social and spiritual backgrounds, levels of education and, most of all, between the generations. In the Evangelical-Baptist Brotherhood it had been quite a serious problem for a long time. Young believers tried to - and it would be too early to talk about it in the past tense - radically influence traditional organisational and dogmatic principles, openly

protesting against conservative elements in ideology and practice. In many big communities, young Baptists and Pentecostals criticised the level of preaching, archaic elements of community life, the community control of its members' daily life. ECBU leaders not only had to develop new guidelines, forms and methods of young believers' education, but also they had to create special organisational structures. Some compromises were made as well: thus, it was recognised that Baptist youth, being an integral part of religious community has its own specific needs and ways of their satisfaction (Losnikov, 1989).

There is another problem closely related to this one – the need to assimilate a large mass of newly converted young people, in comparison with the total number of Protestants, who came to the community not from the Protestant homes, but from “the world”. For instance, during 1994-2000 the Evangelical-Baptist Brotherhood renewed itself by more than half. Moreover, if before 1990 80% of newly baptized believers were from Baptist homes, at the end of the 1990s nearly 60% of new members did not have any previous connection to the Baptist denomination (Komendant, 2001: 33). At a certain moment, this mass could become critical for the Church and could potentially change its spiritual image in an essential way. There is another danger – newly converted people sometimes lose touch with the established community core and may fall into “heresy”. That is why Baptists need to carefully develop the patterns of fellowship with them and this trend of internal church work is acknowledged the main one.

Resolving this and many other problems that raised before the Protestant Churches became an issue of immediate enhancing its spiritual level through a definite revision of dimensions, forms and content of theological education. In the process of creating a modern educational system, which would be able to meet the needs of growing Protestant Churches, its leaders had to face, besides everything else, the necessity of overcoming an attitude toward theological education as toward something secondary in comparison with one's personal faith, passion, commitment to the brotherhood etc. Protestant congregations, which did not have any theological schools in Ukraine in the Soviet period, by the year 2002 had founded in Ukraine over 70 educational institutions: seminaries, Bible schools and colleges, where nearly 10,000 students could receive complete education. Protestant theological schools intensively assimilate the achievements of foreign Christian theological schools, their methodological and methodical developments.

A considerable number of Ukrainian Protestants study in Europe and the United States. For instance, in 2000 of 49 graduates of the Canadian Bible College "Living Word" there were 39 Ukrainians (Kuzmitch, 2001).

Protestant theology formation, which has almost never existed in Ukraine, shapes in many ways an essentially new situation and probably more than other factors contributes to a definitive evolution of Protestant communities into religious organisations of a church type (Lyubaschenko, 2001: 37–40; Reshetnikov, 2002: 10–13). Another keen problem is the Protestants' immigration to the West. In spite of many appeals of national and foreign Protestant leaders not to leave the home country and not to forsake their "spiritual vineyards", the departure rate of believers is not diminishing. G. Komendant, for example, estimates that 5,000 Baptist believers emigrate from Ukraine every year (Komendant, 2001: 34).

### **Protestants and religious freedom issues**

The tension in relation between the Churches claiming to comprise the majority of the population (although in Ukraine this problem is not as urgent as it is in other countries) became the general problem of Protestant communities in the post-totalitarian countries of Eastern Europe. Leaders of Protestant centers in Ukraine frequently protested against any attempts by one Church to dominate the others, they demanded equal rights for all denominations before the law and separation of the Churches from the state.

In this context, it is sufficient to say that in the second half of the 1980s many experts predicted that the growth of nationalism and the struggle for national identity in Ukraine would be followed immediately by especially strong persecution of religious and ethnic minorities. A decade later, one can assert that the transition period in Ukraine turned out to be more complicated than in many other post-communist countries. But there is something quite different as well; namely, in Ukraine, the religious and ethnic minorities feel far more comfortable than their partners in most of other eastern European countries. (As Volodymyr Matviiv, assistant to the head of the All-Ukraine Union of the Association of Evangelical Baptists has pointed out in an interview with the Religious Information Service of Ukraine: "Baptists in Russia, Belarus or the Baltic states do not have the freedom we enjoy in Ukraine today"). Ukrainian



religious freedoms meet with the approval of international community as has been pointed out by the US International Religious Freedom Report 2002: "The 1996 Constitution and the 1991 law on Freedom of Conscience provide for freedom of religion and the Government generally respects these rights in practice...There were no reports that the Government used the law to limit the activity of non-native religious organisations... There were no reports that non-native religions experienced difficulties in obtaining visas for foreign religious workers, registering, or carrying out their activities. The Government generally did not discriminate against individual believers of non-native religions."

Ukraine, which is not the best student in the school of democracy for post-communist countries, has relatively decent standards in the sphere of religious freedom for four principal reasons. The first is the religious configuration of Ukraine. Several centers of religious power exist in the country. This fact prevents any one of these power centers from dominating over the religious minorities or from conducting repressive or even restrictive policy towards them. These power centers function as rivals, addressing their own sectors of public opinion and their own corresponding circles of the political elite. They create a kind of balance that prevents the establishment of a religious institution that would dominate supremely over others and with which one might identify (*de facto* if not *de jure*) the Ukrainian state.

The second reason is the weakness of Ukrainian nationalism and the lack of strict denominational identity, which does not allow for the establishment of a religious monopoly. The Ukrainian national myth is not really connected with religion. When we speak about the Ukrainian person, we do not mean a religious identity as we do when we speak about Poles, Serbs, Georgians, or Croatians<sup>2</sup>. The third reason, very important in my opinion, is the type of religious culture. Because the essence of post-communist religious changes is the restoration of religious cultural types which have been created over centuries and were destroyed by communist regimes, Ukrainian religious cultural types need to be considered separately. However, at the present time, Ukrainian religious culture has a relatively high level of tolerance towards other

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<sup>2</sup> Indicatively, more than 50 % out of all who were questioned by Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies in 2000 considered that the belonging to certain religious tradition is not important for their national self-identity. For more information see: [http://www.uceps.com.ua/ukr/all/sociology/2000\\_06/12.gif](http://www.uceps.com.ua/ukr/all/sociology/2000_06/12.gif).

believers. The “Ukrainian Project,” which was largely based on the intentions of 19<sup>th</sup> century Halychyna thinkers that the Ukraine should not be Polish, Austrian, Russian, but instead a part of a greater Ukrainian nation, meant the deliberate abstraction of religious differences between Catholics and Orthodox. In a 1906 article, *Ukraine and Galycyina*, Michailo Hrushevsky warned compatriots of the reoccurring danger of Serbs and Croats, religiously divided nations, which have arisen on a common ethnic base. (Hrushevsky, 1906: 36). The final reason is that religious freedom in Ukraine never threatened the government’s position as, for instance, freedom of speech can. Therefore, the Ukrainian government had no reason to seek the destruction of religious freedom.

It should be added that Ukraine has quite liberal Church-State legislation. This legislative model has defects typical for the post-Soviet countries. Towards the end of 1993, the government in Kyiv began to take a more strict attitude toward foreign missions, and the communities created by them. This severe attitude developed because the state authority experienced pressure from the hierarchs of the historical churches, from the mass media, and from the anti-cult movement that became considerably stronger during the trial of the leaders of the White Brotherhood. In December 1993, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted the Amendment to Article 24 of the Law on “Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations”<sup>3</sup> that was directed against foreign missionary (predominantly Evangelical’s) activity. During the years that followed, statements of officials revealed the strengthening of the movement against so-called totalitarian destructive sects and missionaries from abroad. During celebrations of the fifth anniversary of Ukraine’s independence, President Leonid Kuchma spoke openly against the “build-up of the active foreign missionary organisations in the Ukrainian religious space” (*Rabochaya Gazeta*, 1996).

The activity of foreign missionaries in Ukraine, as in other post-Soviet countries, was not always perfect. The president of the Slavic Gospel Association, Peter Deineka, admits: “The hostile reaction to Western missions is often caused by the doubtful actions of separate

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<sup>3</sup> The Amendment to Article 24 of the 1991 Law stated: “Clergymen, preachers of religion, instructors (teachers) and other representatives of foreign organisations who are foreign citizens temporarily staying in Ukraine, may preach religious dogmas, perform religious rites and practice other canonic activities only in those religious organisations on whose invitations they came, and upon an official agreement with the state body which has registered the statute of the corresponding religious organisation.”

missionaries. Some Western missions committed morally doubtful or harmful actions [including], for example, attacks on the Orthodox Church" (Smirnov, Avvakumov, 1996: 106). At the same time, one can easily understand the desire of the Ukrainian political elite to use the myth of "the sect's danger." Under the conditions of this many-sided and exhausting inter-church conflict, this "danger" operated as an external factor in reconciling competing church institutions.

Yet in 1994, after the Amendment to Article 24 had been introduced, Ukraine remained the most favorable place for foreign missionaries among all the post-communist countries. In 1994, 1,113 foreign Protestant missionaries worked in Ukraine, as compared with 505 in Russia, 213 in Hungary, 182 in Albania, 165 in Romania, 87 in Czech Republic, 77 in Bulgaria, 77 in Poland, 53 in Serbia, and 45 in Estonia (*East-West Church and Ministry Report 2*, no. 1).

### **Protestants and national identity issues**

Another mighty challenge of the time, which requires a solution from Protestant communities, is national awareness. It is impossible to escape this issue for believers willing to endure the way from forced existence in sectarian conditions to a complete Church. Despite the very fact that the Pentecostals, the Adventists, and the Jehovah's Witnesses in Soviet Ukraine consisted of 95% of ethnic Ukrainians (Markus, 1985: 69), many national problems remained neglected of their social context for a long time. This caused acute criticism of Ukrainian Protestants by researchers and commentators of national-democratic trend, as well as by politicians from this camp. Thus, analyzing the statement of ECB Union representative, saying: "Our brotherhood is not national and not an international one. It is trans-national ... I love the Ukrainian nation, but I don't forget the words of Jesus Christ, that there will be neither Jew nor Scythian", the famous Ukrainian right defender and political prisoner Mykhailo Goryn came to rather an unexpected conclusion. "Unfortunately, this is the very theory of «nations' merging» – only under religious cover" (*Ukrainsky Visnik*, 1989: 11,12).

Publicist Katerina Gorbach holds the same point of view. "Ukrainian Baptists are not interested in national issue", she wrote. "It is not accidental that from the beginning the Baptist Union was not called Ukrainian, but the Union of Ukrainian Baptists – such nuances were

and are used, for instance by the communists in the names of their parties. Great state power influence, therefore, is not changed, even if it is performed in the name of God” (Gorbach, 1986: 101).

As for the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Ukrainian dissenter, as twice sentenced history lecturer Valentine Moroz characterised them in 1970 as “our fiercest enemies, the most reliable agent of Russification, because having become a Jehovah’s Witnesses member a Ukrainian becomes hopelessly indifferent to the national problem” (Moroz, 1971). For this very reason, as dissident movement researchers estimate, Ukrainian legislators paid very little attention and interest to the struggle of Baptist initiators. Accusing Protestants of indifference toward the national problems did not cease after Ukraine attained its independence.

Protestants responded to the challenge of the nation building process by trying to prove that social-political development of Ukraine was preparing an original, unique kind of reformation. For instance, the roots of Evangelical-Baptist teaching were planted in the religious-philosophical search of educated people from *raznochinets*, peasants’ representatives with high moral standards, who did not accept the formalism of a “state” church. Protestantism therefore did not seem to be a “foreign” doctrine brought from the West but an autochthonous spiritual phenomenon, the natural result of God-seeking work of common people.

For this reason, according to theologians, the Protestant tradition does not contradict the Orthodox one, but, on the contrary, flows out of it and develops it. The ground on which it was developed, as a famous Baptist figure O.V. Karayev wrote, “was Orthodoxy. We may be quite sure, it is difficult to find more beneficial ground for planting seeds of Christianity in the whole history of Christianity.” Protestantism not only does not reject the cultural layer, being formed in the heart of Orthodoxy, but it absorbs the most precious from it, not limiting itself to “the splendor of the temple alone and its solemn liturgy”. The last President of ECBU, O.M. Bychkov described the Evangelical movement in Russia (we should remember, nevertheless, that the first “Evangelical revivals” took place in Ukrainian land) as one born in the depths of Russian Orthodoxy and only later formed according to the Protestant pattern (*Ukrainian Protestantism*, 1993:36). This movement, as noted in *Ukrainian Pentecostal Journal*, “was not generated in the offices of theologians, but in ordinary peasant houses, and the bearer of the Gospel, as Prohanov said, were people wearing *armiaks* [peasant’s cloth coats – V.Y.] and *bast* shoes” (Blahovisnyk, 2001: 25). The debt to the

philosophic inheritance of G.C Skovoroda is very characteristic in this respect, whose works the deceased chairman of Ukrainian Baptist brotherhood Y.K. Duhonchenko estimated as the "beginning of Baptism in Ukraine", and called the thinker "the first Ukrainian Baptist" (*Hristiyanske zchyttya*, 1989).

Generally speaking, Evangelical-Baptist Brotherhood has considerably diminished the cosmopolitan emphasis of its preaching. After the evangelical maxim "neither Jew nor Scythian" came the statement that Christ loved all the people, but He loved His nation most ardently. Rather visible ethnic specific features are present as well in the activities of the Uniate conference SDA and Union of ECB of Ukraine. At the same time, Protestants emphasise that they, for example, do not intend to make the language of the church service and other national identification problems a dividing factor in their communities.

### **Protestants in economical transitions**

Naturally, by virtue of their origin, Protestant communities turned out to be nearly the most prepared for market reforms. The ability to work and diligence of Protestants used to surprise the leaders in Soviet times, especially when they had to deal with poorly paid workers or workers of unpopular professions. It is evident, however, that alongside with the Protestant tradition there were other active factors as well. Under conditions of secular environment pressure, which rejected confessional values, irreproachable work became a way of Christian life style affirmation, testimony in favour of choosing Protestant perspective of life. Even in the beginning of reforms the communities of fellow believers organised different cooperative societies, first of all in the field of construction works. Henceforth business activity started to developing, performed under the motto "Earning money as a way of serving the Lord." Leaning for support on foreign fellow-believers, this activity at the same time is based on a strong ethical foundation, which theoretically could provide it with a chance to avoid disappointing extremes of uncivilized national market. However, the real conditions of Ukrainian market economy development do not allow any possibility of applying in the frames of its "rules of the game" moral imperatives and virtues, traditionally connected with the phenomena of "Protestant economy". High corruption levels, tax policy which does not conform to the industry

development and creation of new working places, confusing and unstable economic legislation, great number of inspecting institutions, business success dependent on the authorities' attitude etc., places the business person (if of course he or she is consistent in confessing Christian moral values) in a serious ethical conflict. These are the chief reasons why different types of Christian businessmen and entrepreneurs associations, which loudly announced their existence in the beginning of 1990s, have still not moved out of their beginning stage.

### **The missionary activity**

Whereas the business activity of Protestants is weakly perceived in Ukrainian society, their missionary activity touched almost the majority of its citizens. Protestants created prevailing majority of all officially registered religious missions in Ukraine. We should add to this that Jehovah's Witnesses, who do not have any officially registered mission, place missionary work at the centre of their activity. For rather limited time periods missionary activity, accomplished in half-legal or sometimes absolutely illegal forms by Protestant communities never ceased but became institutional. Missionary associations developed their own specialisations and activities' location: some of them work with prisoners, mentally handicapped people, others among young people or the elderly, in hospitals etc. Ukrainian Protestants (with exception of Charismatic believers) received "stadium Evangelism" with reserve, they were immediately warned by Western experts about its low effectiveness (*Bratskii vestnik*, 1990: 63). The research done by O. Nazarkina, has shown that 67% of interviewed Protestants visited the church for the first time on the invitation of their relatives or friends, 18% responded to advertisements in the mass media or in advertising booklets, and only 8% accidentally heard a sermon during evangelism campaigns (Nazarkina, 2001: 19).

### **The neo-Charismatic movements**

The success of neo-Charismatic movements is a separate question. Before turning to this problem, it is important to consider that the Charismatic movement is clearly not „a professor's religion," as Serhii Bulgakov remarked of contemporary Protestantism in 1910: „Theological

knowledge, serving God in a faithful and true search for intellectual truth" (Bulgakov, 1996: 102). Continuing Bulgakov's comparison, it would be helpful to call the Charismatic movement „a manager's religion." In contrast with Orthodoxy, it proposes visible blessing, carrying out God's will, which unfolds not only in the eschatological perspective, but also in „this world." God's grace is a consequence of the concrete actions of each individual, and his or her success in life witnesses God's acceptance of him or her, how adequately s/he understands and implements the divine will. Researching the value orientation of members of the Union of Pentecostal Churches in the USA, M. Dearman concluded that they call for a return to those values, which in their opinion made America great. Achievement and success, practicality and effectiveness, material comfort and equality have a special place among these values. Today Ukrainian Charismatics use this rhetoric and these ideas in their religious services. As M. Dearman has pointed out: "From their sermons it appears that a Christlike life is not one of pacifism, sacrifice, humility, and poverty. Instead, "victory", "go on the offensive", "a disciplined mind that will think positively", and similar exhortations are so often heard that one could get the impression that he had wandered into a Dale Carnegie meeting" (Dearman, 1974: 443).

Sociologists have been trying for a long time to separate the components which have led to the unprecedented dynamic growth of Charismatic movements, even in comparison with communities which are closely related to them. Obviously, it will be agreed that especially attractive are the manifestations of the spiritual gifts which members receive, healings, prophecies, speaking in tongues (and interpretation of tongues), miracles, exorcisms. (These gifts are nine in number and classified according to three principles: three gifts of power, three of revelation and three of language). Among other factors which determine the record growth of the Charismatic movement, observers on its growth in the USA mention its special doctrines, the effectiveness of which is not grounded in content but in the degree of conviction with which it is preached; encouragement to action and certainty in carrying out God's plans; effective organisation and system of increasing the number of faithful (Gerlach, Hine, 1968: 23-29).

It is worth mentioning that the „Charismatic Awakening" which dates back to the 1950s encompassed both Americas, and, in contrast to the first Pentecostal wave at the beginning of the century made great progress at the margins of society, among the lower classes and the

social periphery. It touched Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians and Catholics. The range of this „awakening” became extremely evident after the first contacts of American and Scandinavian Charismatics with Ukrainian Pentecostals.

The Charismatic Churches encourage their members in the direction of successful living, a clear sign of which is financial abundance, professional proficiency, career achievements and physical health. Tithing and other donations and prayers for healing play important roles as ways to carry out the word of God, and special success is an indicator of the righteousness of one’s spiritual life. Small and middle businessmen sorely feel unstable conditions and the absence of dependable guarantees for keeping one’s status and one’s business in transitional societies. So „New Protestantism” becomes rather attractive to people who need a „new spirituality,” guaranteed by the consequences of relations with the transcendent. Obviously, we see in Charismatic communities more people of success than compared to, let’s say „old Protestantism” („old” and „new” here are relative to their appearance in Ukraine). Compared to these Churches, Charismatic Churches are, without a doubt, more „capitalistic”: not only does wealth not cause suspicion and distrust but it is entirely desirable<sup>4</sup> (Shushkevych, 2000: 49).

## Conclusion

Summarizing the development of Protestantism in Ukraine during the 1990s we should note that its image has greatly changed. The main trends of changes are: consistent institutionalisation, further diversity of the denominational picture, more precise definition of doctrinal teaching, formulating “doctrinal minimum”, national theology formation, raising of Protestants’ social status, their active engagement in the wide spectrum of social-political and economical processes, equalisation of social-demographic make-up of Protestant congregations, their quick resignation from “sectarian” features and the achievement of a more noticeable place on the religious map of the country.

<sup>4</sup> It is sufficient to add that research into motivations for joining the Charismatic movement, carried out among the faithful of the largest Christian community in the world, Seoul, Korea’s Central Church of the Full Gospel, provides evidence: 37.6% out of 921 respondents named „material blessings” as the main motivation for their joining the Church; another 30.6% healing; but only 16.9% salvation and 7% „eternal life” (Kim, 2000: 121).



## **Protestantism in Poland 1989–2000, with Particular Reference to New Evangelical Communities**

In 1988 about thirty churches and religious unions were registered in Poland. Such a situation had been maintained since the 1950s (a growth up to several denominations). Following the fall of communism, the number increased dramatically, to almost triple currently the number of 1988. On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1995, there were 112, and on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001, 154 churches.

The years 1980-1981 came to be seen as a turning-point in the internal policy of the state in the real interruption of the public persecution of the church and religious minorities in Poland. The non-Catholic denominations, above all Protestantism and the Eastern religious systems (mainly Buddhism and Hinduism), made use of the subsequent liberalisation in the second half of the 1980s. The first leaders of new religious movements appeared in Poland (Doktór, 1990; Urban, 1994; Pawłowicz, 1992).

The first signs of this process were, for example, the registration in 1988 of the Jehovah's Witnesses (made illegal in 1950) which currently have 112,000 followers in Poland and who constitute the third-largest religious group after the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. It must be admitted that this community endured well the period of illegality.

Another example of change was the announced abolition of administrative constraints, for example the collapse of *Zjednoczony Kościół Ewangelicki* [United Evangelical Church] in 1988, which was made up of five different groups (among others Pentecostal Church and the Free Church of the Second Reformation). Marxism announced that programs against religion would be introduced for the development of social consciousness. As a result, communist officials, in order to demonstrate their loyalty and to improve the statistics, in the 1950s forced Churches, which in their opinion were similar in doctrine, into a