

Protestantism in Ukraine: Achievements and Losses

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ABSTRACT

Ukrainian Protestantism has a long history, but is still searching for its own identity and its place in the social and cultural life of Ukraine. This article analyses the current state of Ukrainian Protestantism, looking at all the various denominations and church unions, and reveals the basic patterns of its formation and development in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The author aims to confirm the thesis that the positions of the Protestant churches in the political, social and religious life of the country are gradually strengthening, and also to show the ambiguous attitude of the different Protestant denominations to politics and public processes in Ukraine today. However, the paper offers a critical look at Ukrainian sociology and the conclusions of some Ukrainian analysts about a 'Protestant boom' in Ukraine. The author analyses the many contradictory processes which are affecting Ukrainian Protestantism today, and shows a decrease in the rate of its dynamics. The author gives particular emphasis to structural changes which are proving painful for Ukrainian Protestantism, and to the increasingly active role played by Charismatic communities, which is regarded in a negative light by traditional Protestant churches. These latter are less active than the Charismatics in missionary work, less receptive to religious innovation, and less open to society. Many believers, especially younger ones, see a crisis in Ukrainian Protestantism, specific features of which include the material and theological dependence of Ukrainian Protestant communities on foreign churches, the loss of many of their own traditions, inadequacies in religious education, an inclination towards emigration, and weak integration into Ukrainian national and spiritual life. The author links her ideas and conclusions with the example of the Pentecostal community in L'viv in western Ukraine, which reflects the general problems of Ukrainian Protestantism.

The Origins of Ukrainian Protestantism: Several Theses

For 25 years I have been studying the activity of one of the Pentecostal communities in L'viv in western Ukraine. The life of this community reflects in miniature the life of most of the Protestant churches in Ukraine. I shall look at the history and current activity of this community with the aim of drawing some conclusions about the processes at work within Ukrainian Protestantism.

The L'viv community has its origins in the evangelical awakening (often called 'late Protestantism' in postsoviet religious studies) which affected almost the whole of Ukraine at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹ Impetus for this religious movement was provided by social changes (the abolition of serfdom, the rise of a bourgeoisie) and religious changes (antichurch sentiments) in tsarist Russia. A leading role in the evangelical awakening was played by foreign missionaries.

Stundism was established in the Ukrainian lands by Johann Bonekemper and his son Karl (who translated into Russian a collection of pietistic German poems with the fulsome title *A Present to Orthodox Christians (Prinosheniye pravoslavnyim khristianam)*). The Baptist faith was established by the Mennonites Gerhard Wiler (or Willer, as it is sometimes spelled) and Abraham Unger and the Baptists Johann Pritskau, the author of *Geschichte der Baptisten in Süd-Russland* (Odessa, 1914), and Johann Gerhard Oncken, a pioneer of German Baptism, who visited the south of Russia several times and who was one of the drafters of the confession of faith (*Glaubensbekenntnis der Deutschen Baptisten*) adopted by the Baptists of Germany in 1847; this confession was translated into Russian by Vasili Pavlov and published in Rostov-on-Don in 1906. The first communities of Adventists were organised by the Germans Gerhard Perk and Ludwig Richard Conradi and the Pole Michał Belina Czechowski. In the early twentieth century communities of Baptists, Evangelical Christians and Adventists with Ukrainian and Russian members set up their own national structures, maintaining close connections with their fraternal churches abroad. Pentecostalism, which arrived somewhat later, was linked with the Assemblies of God, the largest Evangelical church in the USA.

Today Ukrainian Protestantism is still to a large extent defined by its western roots: not just by the fact that Protestant churches in Ukraine are members of world-wide religious structures like the Baptist World Alliance and the Euro-Asia Division of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, but also by those doctrinal and ritual traditions which were established by foreign missionaries and centres. This also applies to 'early Protestantism', that is, Lutheranism and Calvinism. At first these denominations comprised ethno-confessional groups (German, Dutch, Polish, Hungarian), but in the 1920s the first Ukrainian Lutheran and Reformed communities appeared in western Ukraine, supported by this time not only by the churches of Europe but also by the Ukrainian diaspora of the USA and Canada.

The perceived 'foreign' nature of Ukrainian Protestantism rendered a disservice to it. During the First World War many Lutherans, Mennonites, Baptists and Adventists were suspected of being German spies, and when most of Ukraine became part of the USSR many of them were regarded as 'political agents of the international bourgeoisie' (Orleansky, 1930, p. 7). In communist times Protestants were persecuted, and not only for simply religious reasons. As pacifists they were accused of betraying the homeland and there were mass arrests of those refusing to serve in the Red Army. Their economic success led to their being branded as kulaks and deported to the Virgin Lands. Their national identity led to their being regarded as potential 'fifth columnists', and before the Second World War German Mennonites and Lutherans were forced to emigrate to Kazakhstan and Siberia. In 1939 all political involvement on the part of Lutheran and Reformed Christians in western Ukraine was forbidden. It was only in 1945, when the Soviet authorities organised the Union of Evangelical Christians–Baptists (*Soyuz yevangel'skikh khristian–baptistov*) as a body which they could control, that Baptists, Pentecostals and later Mennonite Brethren received the legal (though very limited) right to practise their faith. The Reformed in Transcarpathia managed to survive as they were supported by the Reformed Church in Hungary. German and Ukrainian Lutherans and Reformed were less lucky: they were able to return to Ukraine only after Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary of the Communist Party.

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of a small group which grew during the 1930s. Many Pentecostal leaders did not support the 1945 accommodation with the authorities and in the 1950s and 1960s the L'viv community operated illegally.² In 1984 the present leader of the community, Bishop Vasili Boyechko, was imprisoned for antisoviet propaganda, but thanks to Gorbachev's perestroika he was released a year later. Many Protestant leaders arrested in the days of Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev never returned from their places of confinement, however.

L'viv Pentecostals talk about their history with a great deal of reverence. They see themselves as representatives of the world-wide Protestant movement who have been able to find their place in an Orthodox environment and survive long-term persecution. Probably there is no church community in Ukraine today which is indifferent to its past. There is something of a paradox here, however. Protestants make very modest claims about how long they have been in Ukraine. The Church of Evangelical Christians–Baptists (*Tserkov' yevangel'skikh khristian–baptistov*) gives 1867 as its date of birth. In 2006 the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (*Tserkov' adventistov sed'mogo dnya*) marked the 120th anniversary of its presence in Ukraine, and in 2001 the largest Pentecostal union marked its 80th. The German Lutherans count their history from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: their first community in Kiev was founded in 1765, but their main expansion in western and southern Ukraine took place in the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Protestantism has been present in Ukraine for almost five centuries. The first Protestant communities appeared in the Polish–Ukrainian borderlands as early as the 1530s–1540s, and in the mid-seventeenth century they were widespread not only in Galicia, Transcarpathia, Polesia and Volynia but also in the regions of Podolia, Zhytomyr and Kiev. In the first half of the seventeenth century there were some ten Lutheran, 80 Socinian and 100–120 Reformed communities in what is now Ukraine. To a large extent the product of the Polish Reformation, Protestantism attracted membership from amongst the Ukrainian magnates and gentry and thus began to influence the political and cultural spheres. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Protestants in Ukraine founded schools, publishing houses and cultural centres, which produced public figures, scientists, teachers and authors of theological and polemical works and translations of the Bible, including translations into the Slavonic-Russian language. Some translations (for example *Katekhizis* by Simon Budny) and original works (for example *Apokrysis* by Martin Bronevsky and *Antapologiya* by Yevstakhi Kisil') have held their place in Ukrainian literature (see Lyubashchenko, 1996). For today's Protestants, however, this is all rather like Atlantis: they regard it more as legend than as history, and this is understandable, because the events of the mid-seventeenth century³ made it impossible for Protestants to maintain their presence in eastern Ukraine, and they were only intermittently present in western Ukraine until the mid-nineteenth century. The nineteenth century therefore did indeed see the opening of a new chapter in Ukrainian Protestantism, with Baptist, Adventist, Lutheran and Reformed communities starting out virtually from scratch as tolerated or persecuted religious minorities.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Protestantism in Ukraine has entered a third stage of its history, once again starting in many respects from scratch. New unions, seminaries, missions and publishing houses have been set up. Usually aid from foreign churches has helped to build churches, missions and schools; this was especially the case in the 1990s, but continues today. The L'viv Pentecostal community is an example. It registered itself in 1991, aiming to remain independent. The autonomy of local churches, on the congregational pattern of late Protestantism, is especially

typical of Pentecostalism, and for a long time it was the best way for illegal communities to survive. However, in the new conditions it meant that the L'viv community was less able to hold its own. When it became part of the All-Ukraine Union of Churches of Christians of Evangelical Faith-Pentecostals (*Vseukrainsky soyuz tserkvei khristian very yevangel'skoi-pyatidesyatnikov*) it also became part of the International Assembly of Christians of Evangelical Faith (*Mezhdunarodnaya assambleya khristian very yevangel'skoi*) which includes most of the Pentecostals in the Commonwealth of Independent States (*Sodruzhestvo nezavisimyykh gosudarstv*) (CIS), and through that of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship. Foreign co-religionists have helped the L'viv community to restore a former Catholic church which it was given by the local-authorities and to organise the Good Samaritan Ukrainian Christian Mission of Revival and Charity (*Ukrainskaya khristianskaya missiya vozrozhdeniya a miloserdiya 'Dobry samaryanin'*), the programme of which includes publishing religious literature, building a rehabilitation centre for former prisoners and a children's refuge, market-gardening and farming. Some young members of the community have been able to have theological education abroad. This example is very typical.

Our brief historical excursus has highlighted the initial challenges which faced Ukrainian Protestantism; to a large extent they are still facing it today. Its western roots have made it difficult for it to establish its own ecclesiastical, theological and cultural traditions. With their European or American umbilical cords, most Protestant unions are not yet in a position to start their own churchbuilding or do their own theology. Meanwhile most Ukrainians still see Protestantism as a foreign religion, an aspect of spiritual westernisation. Several times during the last five centuries Protestantism in Ukraine has had to call a halt to its activities and limit itself to semi-legal, or more often illegal, existence. Its repeated removal from the historical stage has made it difficult for it to establish continuity in its development and to participate fully in social, political and cultural processes. Nevertheless, at various times in history Protestantism has found its niche in the religious and cultural life of the country; it has shown that it is well capable of adapting and compensating for its losses.

Since gaining independence the Ukrainian state has had a tolerant attitude towards Protestants. New laws on freedom of conscience introduced in some former Soviet republics (including Lithuania (1995), Russia (1997), Belarus' (2002) and Moldova (2007)), have limited the legal scope for Protestants, and particularly for Evangelical communities. Ukraine has never revised its Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations (*Zakon pro svobodu sovisti ta relihiini orhanizatsii*) adopted in 1991 on the early wave of democratic enthusiasm. There are no legal limitations on Protestant churches in Ukraine, and the last 20 years have provided the best conditions for self-realisation in their history. However, the question remains as to how effectively they will be able to continue to take advantage of their prospects.

Ukrainian Protestantism in the Sociological Dimension

At first sight, Protestants in Ukraine today look very successful. In a relatively short period they have set up national structures, built new churches, opened missions, charities, schools and medical centres of various kinds. New Protestant movements, mainly Charismatic, which have sprung up in Ukraine in recent years are especially active. Protestants are growing in number. Data from the State Committee on Nationalities and Religions of Ukraine⁴ show that at the beginning of 2009 out of 32,639 registered religious organisations⁵ in the country 9034 were Protestant.

The largest number of organisations (2679, most of which are communities) belongs to the All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christians–Baptists (*Vseukrainsky soyuz ob'yedinenii yevangel'skikh khristian–baptistov*) (AUAECB). A further 263 communities of Evangelical Christians–Baptists are autonomous or belong to the former Council of Churches of the ECB (*Sovet tserkvei YeKh-B*). Evangelical Christians, who are close to the Baptists, have 291 communities.

The second-largest number of communities (1553) belongs to the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Christians of Evangelical Faith–Pentecostals (*Vseukrainsky soyuz tserkvei khristian very yevangel'skoi–pyatidesyatnikov*) (AUCCEFP). Pentecostalism is also represented by the Union of Free Churches of Christians of Evangelical Faith (*Soyuz svobodnykh tserkvei khristian yevangel'skoi very*) (130 communities), the Church of God of Ukraine (*Tserkov' Bozh'ya Ukrainy*) (79), the Church of God of Christians of Evangelical Faith in Prophecies (*Bozh'ya tserkov' khristian very yevangel'skoi v prorochestvakh*) (76), the United Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith (*Ob'yedinennaya tserkov' khristian very yevangel'skoi*) (54) and independent communities (418). The Charismatic churches, genetically related to Pentecostalism, show comparable variety: the Full Gospel Church (*Tserkov' polnogo yevangeliya*) (620 communities), the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church (*Ukrainskaya khristianskaya yevangel'skaya tserkov'*) (178), the Church of the Living God (*Tserkov' Zhivogo Boga*) (49) and autonomous groups (425). Pentecostal and Charismatic communities taken together (3624) exceed the number of Baptist and Evangelical Christian communities (3233).

Another Protestant group comprises the Ukrainian Union Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (*Ukrainskaya unionnaya konferentsiya tserkvi adventistov sed'mogo dnya*) (UUCSDAC) (1022 communities) and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church of the Reform Movement in Ukraine (*Tserkov' adventistov sed'mogo dnya reformatzionnogo dvizheniya v Ukraine*) (26). The Church of Christ (*Tserkov' Khrista*) has 118 communities and the New Apostolic Church (*Novoapostol'skaya tserkov'*) has 52. Postsoviet religious studies count certain confessions which deny the Trinity and the Incarnation as Protestant (in the Unitarian-rationalist tradition). These include the Religious Organisation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Ukraine (*Religioznaya organizatsiya svidetelei Iyegovy v Ukraine*) (686) and the Ukrainian Pentecostal Church of Evangelical Christians in the Spirit of the Apostles (*Pyatidesyatnicheskaya tserkov' yevangel'skikh khristian v dukhe apostolov Ukrainy*) (21).

Early Protestantism has fewer communities in Ukraine. The German Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Ukraine (*Nemetskaya yevangel'skaya-lyuteranskaya tserkov' Ukrainy*) (GELCU) has 39 communities, the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (*Ukrainskaya lyuteranskaya tserkov'*) (ULC) 43, Lutheran Brethren in the pietistic tradition (*Bratskiye lyuterane (piyeticheskaya traditsiya)*) 19, Presbyterians (*Presviteriane*) 75 and the Reformed Church of Transcarpathia (*Reformatskaya tserkov' Zakarpat'ya*) 118.

Protestants have most missions (218 out of 340 registered in the country)⁶ and religious educational establishments (103 out of 196); they own almost 40 per cent of religious magazines (147 out of 377). Protestant representation is increasing in the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations (*Vseukrainsky sovet tserkvei i religioznykh organizatsii*) which reports to the president of Ukraine (9 members out of 19) and in the interconfessional Conference of Representatives of Christians Churches of Ukraine (*Soveshchaniye predstavitelei khristianskikh tserkvei Ukrainy*) (5 out of 9), and there are Protestants on the boards of the Ukrainian Bible Society (*Ukrainskoye bibleiskoye obshchestvo*), the Ukrainian branch of the International Association for Religious Freedom (*Mezhdunarodnaya assotsiatsiya religioznoi*

svobody), the Association of Christian Businessmen (*Assotsiatsiya khristian-predprinimatelei*), the Association of Christian Servicemen of Ukraine (*Ob'yedineniye voyennosluzhashchikh-khristian Ukrainy*), the Society of Christian Students of Ukraine (*Obshchestvo studentov-khristian Ukrainy*) and other public organisations.

In spite of substantial differences in the ideological and doctrinal positions of their churches⁷ and their ambiguous attitude toward politics, Protestants are becoming ever more visible in Ukrainian social and even political life. Protestants (including pastors) take part in election campaigns at local and national level and are active in political parties (such as the Christian-Democratic Union (*Khristiansko-demokratichesky soyuz*) and *Bat'kyvschina* (the the all-Ukrainian union 'Motherland') and public movements concerned with such issues as human rights, ecology and the preservation of historical sites. Only a few high-level politicians and officials are Protestants,⁸ and Protestants in general are much less active in the public social sphere than Orthodox or Greek Catholics. The Pentecostal and Baptist churches allow political involvement on the part of their members,⁹ and Charismatics endorse direct influence by the church on public policy,¹⁰ but Adventists forbid not only church leaders but also ordinary believers to involve themselves in this kind of activity.¹¹ At the same time the Adventists are the most active in monitoring Ukrainian legislation on freedom of conscience and the rights of religious minorities. The setting up of the Ukrainian branch of the International Association for Religious Freedom was an Adventist initiative.

Following the example of the unions of their co-religionists in Russia, who produced their Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Association of the Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (*Osnovy sotsial'noi kontseptsii Rossiiskogo ob'yedineniya soyuzov KhVYe*) and the Social Position of the Protestant Churches of Russia (*Sotsial'naya pozitsiya protestantskikh tserkvei Rossii*), some Ukrainian churches have also worked on similar documents. The UUCSDAC published a short version of various social studies by the World Church of ASD (*Osnovy*, 2003) adapted to the needs of the church in Ukraine and reflecting its attitude toward spiritual, cultural, public, ecological, scientific, domestic, interconfessional and other contemporary issues. A similar document is being drawn up by the Ukrainian Evangelical Alliance (*Ukrainsky yevangel'sky al'yans*), created in 2006 by the Council of Independent Evangelical Churches of Ukraine (*Sobor nezavisimykh yevangel'skikh tserkvei Ukrainy*), the Ukrainian Missionary Church (*Ukrainskaya missionerskaya tserkov'*) and a number of Pentecostal and Charismatic unions with the aim of 'representing the interests of the Evangelical movement in the state structures and the mass media' (Khristiane, 2007).

Protestants are prominent in cultural, educational and medical associations and in young people's and women's organisations, and the effectiveness of their social projects, particularly in the social rehabilitation of alcoholics, drug addicts and people with AIDS and in collaboration with the penal system, rivals that of many state structures. The range of activities in which Protestant unions are involved, and possible lines of future development, are covered in the curricula of their seminaries and Bible institutes, which train not only pastors and missionaries but also specialists in pedagogics, journalism, management, psychology and the cultural and social sciences: local government, journalism, science, education and business are all fields in which Protestants are prominent.

In the early 1990s Protestants in Ukraine did not yet trust the authorities and were very cautious about whether they could involve themselves in the non-church sphere. Today they are trying to compensate as quickly as possible for their long-term social

isolation, and although the various Protestant churches are not all of one mind about how this should be done, and the political involvement of Protestants is at an individual level rather than on a mass scale, these tendencies I have been describing are evoking very emotional reactions on the part of some religious analysts. They dwell on the steadily growing number of Protestant communities in the country,¹² argue that ‘the influence of Protestant organisations on the civil consciousness of Ukrainians is strengthening’ and even predict the future ‘Protestantising of Ukraine’ (see Fenomen, 1996, p. 56; Relihiia, 1999; pp. 9–10; Lyubashchenko, 2001; Kolodnyi, 2003; Sagan, 2004).

In the light of comments such as these, let us look at some statistics relating to the Pentecostal community in L’viv.

‘Submarine Reefs’ of Ukrainian Sociology

In the mid-1980s the L’viv Pentecostal community had about 200 members. In 1991 it had about 80: some had emigrated during the period of perestroika¹³ and some had given up their registration. By the mid-1990s it had grown to about 400, and in 2009 it had 550–560 members. Thus the community grew very dynamically in the first years of Ukrainian independence, but in the last ten years its growth has slowed down. This is explicable: the religious ‘boom’ in Ukraine during the perestroika period was brought about not only by the removal of artificial restrictions on religious manifestation but also to a great extent by the legalisation of underground church activity, the return of leaders and active believers from prison, and the publication of statistics which even registered communities had been concealing during the Soviet period. The result was that in the late 1980s and early 1990s there was an average year-on-year increase of 15–20 per cent in the membership of Baptist, Adventist and Pentecostal communities. At the start of the twenty-first century only the Charismatics have been showing growth: they have been operating vigorously, and often at the expense of the ‘old’ Protestant churches. This Charismatic upsurge reflects general developments in Protestantism world-wide.

In 2009 just over 30 new converts were baptised in the L’viv Pentecostal community; in 1996–97 there had been at least two baptisms a year, each involving 40–45 people. While attracting new believers, over the last 20 years the L’viv Pentecostal community has at the same time lost more than half of its ‘old’ members: many have emigrated from Ukraine or moved to ‘daughter churches’;¹⁴ some have been excluded from the community for various reasons (usually for moral misconduct or for disagreement with the communal decisions of the church’s clergy and leaders); some young members have joined the Charismatics. Quite a few new converts who were initially enthusiastic about new life in the community have lost their zeal and stopped coming regularly to prayer meetings. It is clear that the L’viv Pentecostal community has passed the peak of its growth; nevertheless it still has its own future prospects. Is this typical of general tendencies in Ukrainian Protestantism?

Again, let us look at the figures. In 2004–2008 Protestants in Ukraine registered 1134 new communities, while the three main Orthodox churches registered 1677 parishes. From the beginning of 2008 to the beginning of 2009 the total number of new Protestant communities was 162: a 1.8 per cent annual increase. Figures for the three main Orthodox churches for the same period were: Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) 498; Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP) 258, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) 41: altogether 797 parishes, representing a 4.6 per cent annual increase. During the

same year the number of Roman Catholic parishes increased at an even greater rate: by 169 parishes, a 15.8 per cent annual growth rate. A comparison of the largest Protestant and Orthodox churches of Ukraine is particularly striking: over the period 2004–2008 the AUAECB grew by 190, the UOC-MP by 955 parishes.

All Christian and non-Christian confessions in Ukraine are still growing, but Protestant growth is less vigorous than it was ten years ago. In 1997 the AUAECB had 1688 communities, and in 2002 it had 2260: an increase of 572. In 2004 it had 2461 and in 2008 it had 2651: an increase of 190. Over the period 1997–2002 the AUCCEFP grew by 266, and in the period 2004–2008 by 86. Adventist growth also slowed: over the period 1997–2002 the UUCSDAC grew by 298, and in the period 2004–2008 by 81. Over the last six years the Reformed Church of Transcarpathia has registered only seven new communities; the New Apostolic Church has registered none. The number of communities belonging to the GELCU has not changed since 1997. The ULC grew by two communities in the period 2004–2008; and although the SCNRU reports contain information about 43 ULC communities the official ULC website gives the addresses of only 30 communities and missionary groups. Meanwhile over the last ten years the Church of Christ has doubled in size and the Full Gospel Church has almost quadrupled.

We should note, however, that statistics on Protestantism do not give the full picture. They do not necessarily reflect the real number of Protestant communities.¹⁵ Some communities are registered as foundations, associations, consultancies and training organisations (in foreign languages, business and management). The '*Ruka pomoshchi*' foundation, for example, which is the basis on which the Church of the Great Commission (*Tserkov' velikogo porucheniya*) operates, specialises in English teaching. The Salvation Army set up a Ukrainian division in its Eastern European territory in 1993 and now works widely in Ukraine. The Internet abounds with the sites of little-known churches which have only recently appeared on the map of world Protestantism but which are already present in Ukraine (for example Hillsong Church or the Church of Bible Believers). The bishop of the United Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith, Georgi Babi, says that most of his church's largest communities are registered as missions or educational centres (Babi, 2006). Of course there is similar variety within the Orthodox and Catholic churches in Ukraine, and statistical surveys do not as a rule take account of small Orthodox churches and unions,¹⁶ or of Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic associations of monastic type which operate 'in the world' and which specialise in working with families or young people, in education or culture.

We should also note that statistical changes within Protestantism are often the result of its constant reshaping or the reorganisation of its institutional network. For example, by no means all the new communities in the AUAECB are the result of successful evangelisation: this union continues to receive communities from the former Council of Churches of the ECB. Recent losses by the AUCCEFP are a result of the fact that the new Ukrainian Missionary Church was formed by a number of communities which left the largest Pentecostal union: this new association only nominally increases the Pentecostal segment of Ukrainian Protestantism. We should also remember that many new communities arise on the basis of 'daughter churches' (see note 14).

The Protestant example underlines an important failing in many sociological surveys of religion in Ukraine: they take account only of religious organisations, and this does not reflect the real religious situation in the country. This is true of Protestantism most of all: the number of Protestant communities is growing, but the

number of believers has not changed significantly over the years since Ukrainian independence.¹⁷ The average Protestant community is quite small (300–400 members; in rural areas half the size; only in big cities do some reach 1000); the average Orthodox parish is three to four times larger. It is hardly surprising, then, that while 52 per cent of the religious communities in Kiev are Protestant, just 1.5 per cent of the religious population are Protestants (according to a survey conducted in 2008 (Kyiany, 2008)). In L'viv the percentage is approximately the same (2 per cent) (Istoriya, 2007, vol. 3, p. 429). It is difficult to see how such small numbers might change the religious face of Ukraine.

Statistics on the actual achievements of Protestants seem likely to carry more weight. In the period 1997–2008, for example, the number of Protestant religious education establishments increased tenfold, taking a leading position amongst all religious denominations in Ukraine. But once again, appearances can be deceptive. Most Protestant educational establishments are one-year or two-year bible institutes and colleges (for example, of the 42 educational establishments which belong to the AUAECB only five are seminaries, and in the other Protestant unions the proportion is even smaller). They accept people of various ages and levels of education (except for one Lutheran seminary and one Baptist seminary which train only pastors and theologians)¹⁸ and they can offer only a relatively low level of general and religious training. The programmes of Protestant institutes and even seminaries are often aimed at improving the qualifications of missionaries, choir leaders and youth leaders. A few seminaries aspire to higher status: three Baptist (the Odesa theological seminary, the Donets'k Christian university and the Kiev Theological Seminary), one Pentecostal (the Ukrainian Evangelical theological seminary), and one Lutheran (the St Sophia seminary) (Adventists get theological education in Russia). Yet the programmes of even these establishments, providing a general introduction to theology, are still at a much lower level than those of the Orthodox and Catholic seminaries and academies. The children of leaders of Protestant unions and communities frequently go to study abroad in Europe and America where they can obtain master's degrees and doctorates and good prospects for top church positions in Ukraine and abroad. Meanwhile most pastors, who do not have higher education or advanced theological training, do not go on to institutes or seminaries; they can gain diplomas in theology and pastoral service by attending courses of lectures for church leaders. Until the 1990s, of course, there were few Ukrainian Protestants with higher education, because this was barred to active religious believers; and even today a pastor with higher education is still an exception. In Soviet times there were objective reasons for this (secret prohibitions on accepting 'sectarians' into higher education); today the reason is rather the absence of educational traditions in Ukrainian Protestantism and the desire to make up for this as quickly as possible, even if only formally.

Structural Changes in Ukrainian Protestantism

The statistics and examples we have been studying lead to two conclusions at this stage.

First, many of the statistical data give a very superficial picture of Ukrainian Protestantism, and conclusions based on them do not always reflect its real prospects. Over the last decade most Protestant unions have lost the dynamic of the 1990s. Over the period from 1985 to 1995 the share of Protestant communities increased from 17.2 to 24.3 per cent, an increase of 7.1 per cent; over the period from 1997 to 2008 from 24.7 to 27.7 per cent, an increase of 3 per cent. As noted above, the number of new

communities and unions has been significantly boosted by the emergence of unregistered communities and unions from underground and by the dissolution of old structures. In the early 1990s there were two registered Pentecostal unions in Ukraine, whereas today there are six; but the new unions largely consist of former 'daughter churches' and underground unregistered communities from communist times. In 1997 Charismatics in Ukraine mainly belonged to the Full Gospel Church; today there are another two new Charismatic unions, in which most of the leaders and active members are former Pentecostals and Baptists. (In L'viv, for example, all the Charismatic leaders are former Pentecostals.) All this means that despite the evident number of Protestant communities in Ukraine it would be premature to forecast a continuing substantial expansion of Protestantism.

Secondly, most of the 'old' Protestant churches, with their long history in Ukraine, are gradually losing ground. In 1994 40 per cent of Protestant communities of Ukraine were Evangelical Christian-Baptist (Suchasna, 1994, p. 210), but by 2008 the percentage had fallen to 35.9. A similar decline was shown by Pentecostals (from 28 to 25.6 per cent) and by Lutherans and Reformed (from 3.5 to 3.2 per cent). The number of Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses has increased somewhat; but most growth has been shown by the Charismatics: in 1994 they were 5 per cent of the Protestant presence, but 14 per cent by 2008. There are actually even more Charismatics in Ukraine than these statistics show. Just one church, the Church of the Embassy of God (*Tserkov' posol'stva Bozh'yego*) (known internationally as the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations), has between 30 and 45 communities in Kiev alone, according to press reports (Gudzik, 2006; Uspekh, 2007).¹⁹ Its leader, the Nigerian citizen Sunday Adelaja, says that the church has about 400 communities (Pavlov, 2007), although the church's official website has the addresses of 24 communities in Kiev and 103 communities in 25 regions of Ukraine: most of them are in Kiev *oblast'*, Odesa *oblast'* and Crimea (Docherniye, n.d.). The Church of the New Generation (*Tserkov' novogo pokoleniya*), which has its international centre in Riga, and is headed by the pastor Aleksei Ledyayev, who was once removed from office by the L'viv bishop Vasili Boyechko because of his charismatic preaching, has more than 120 communities in Ukraine, according to the press centre of Ledyayev's church in Ukraine (see Ledyayev, 2007; Silenko, 2007). Official statistics also fail to show the size of the new informal charismatic movement, which evades classification because of its interconfessional nature. It is difficult, for example, to determine the number of Catholic Pentecostal prayer groups meeting in Catholic parishes and monasteries.²⁰ The charismatic movement also involves Orthodox Christians, for example the Ukrainian Reformed Orthodox Church (*Ukrainskaya Reformatorskaya Pravoslavnyaya Tserkov'* (UROC)) of Fr Sergei Zhuravlev (Usatov, 2008; Arkhiyepiskop, 2008; Ukrainskaya, 2008).²¹ Catholic and Orthodox charismatics are part of renovation movements within their own churches, and do not identify themselves as Protestants; but nevertheless all charismatics consider themselves brothers and sisters.

Charismatics actively publicise themselves, with missionary work and types of church service which are untypical for traditional Ukrainian Protestantism: public events, mass healing sessions, rock concerts. They are big stars in the mass media, scaring people with the prospect of radical confessional changes in Ukraine. We should remember, however, that neo-Protestant organisations tend to exaggerate their own statistics, and that their communities are located mainly in the big cities of the east-central and southern regions of Ukraine, where there was a very low level of religiosity before the disintegration of the USSR.

In the 1990s the year-on-year increase in membership of new religious, including Protestant, associations was up to 200 per cent, but today, some experts think, it is only between 3 and 5 per cent (Tymkiv, 2003). These are average figures for the whole country. In the east-central region they will certainly be higher: here up to 70 per cent of Protestants are Charismatics and at the beginning of 2009 Protestant communities were 35.7 per cent of the total number of religious communities in the south-eastern *oblasti* and 27.8 per cent in the central *oblasti*. In the south-eastern region there are fewer Orthodox churches than in western Ukraine and the Greek Catholic Church is an insignificant presence. These are good conditions for Protestant mission (although in recent years the number of Catholics and Orthodox has been growing in the eastern region; these coexist peacefully with the Lutherans and Baptists, but resist the Charismatics). 'The time of rapid growth of Charismatic communities in Ukraine may have passed, but this does not mean that they do not have potential for further development' (Yelens'kyi, 2009).

There are virtually no Charismatics in the small towns and villages in western Ukraine which were the main bastion of Ukrainian Protestantism during Soviet times. The main target of Charismatic missionary activity is young people and the means of their mission is mass culture, and both of these are largely absent from the small towns and villages which predominate in the west of the country. The strong presence in the west of Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Orthodox and conservative Protestants also means that the prospects for Charismatic mission are smaller here. Over the past 20 years the centre of Protestantism in Ukraine has gradually moved from west to east. The number of Protestants in the east is growing, mainly as a result of Charismatic activity in the big cities there; the number of (traditional) Protestants in the west is not increasing so rapidly, mainly as a result of emigration and the strong position here of Greek Catholics and Orthodox. While the growth of Charismatic churches, then, has led to an increase in the number of Protestant communities in Ukraine it has not led to any overall increase in the actual number of Protestant believers.

Charismatic communities still attract people with their non-standard forms of service and new dynamic prospects which correspond to the image of a successful individual which is formed by modern mass culture. Groups studying banking, management and entrepreneurship have been formed within many Charismatic communities, encouraging believers to start their own businesses and to gain social status in the unstable political and economic conditions in Ukraine. Considerable numbers of well-educated people, especially in the humanities, who are tired of Soviet-style bureaucracy are seeking an emotional outlet and self-realisation in these communities. Well-known politicians, sportsmen and women, singers, journalists who are members of Charismatic communities are obvious examples of success in life; and this in turn has a great influence on the effectiveness of Charismatic evangelisation. Female pastors, unheard-of in other Ukrainian Protestant unions, play a notable role in Charismatic communities. In traditional Protestant circles there is evident growing dissatisfaction among women with their inferior status, which is being discussed ever more openly.²² Adapted to the dynamics of city life, unburdened by persisting traditions or the memory of persecuted martyrs, Charismatics demonstrate missionary zeal, openness to liberal ideas and innovations in religious practice which are especially attractive to Protestant young people.

The Charismatic movement in Ukraine evokes a negative reaction from secular and most church and religious organisations and the 'old' Protestant churches. The former hold that Charismatics are victims of manipulation or even fraud and their leaders

imposters who are furthering their own business projects under the guise of religion. The latter hold that they are dubious Christians who have departed from the Bible, clear doctrinal principles²³ and the traditions for which generations of Ukrainian Protestants have suffered (and the head of the AUCCEFP, Bishop Mykhailo Panochko, also holds that Charismatics are not Ukrainian patriots).²⁴ Scandals surrounding some Charismatic pastors and the story of the 'King's Capital' financial pyramid created by members of Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God (see for example, Sandei Adeladzha, 2008; Agitatsiya, 2008; Kings, n.d.; Po Adeladzhe, 2008) have indeed shaken the faith in the Charismatic movement on the part of potential sympathisers from traditional Protestantism.

Ukrainian Protestantism today is experiencing some very painful transformations, involving the breaking of old traditions and of internal boundaries. The process is most dangerous for Pentecostalism, particularly for small conservative Pentecostal communities known for their strictness and suspiciousness of 'this world'; young believers in particular are turning away from them. The bishop of the L'viv Pentecostal community Vasili Boyechko is disturbed by the Charismatic movement. In his 2002 book *Pravda o kharizme (The Truth about Charisma)* he mounts a sharp critique, characterising it as a product of the Catholic Church which is now infecting world Christianity like a virus. Bishop Mykhailo Panochko says that ever since he has been head of the AUCCEFP his dream has been to unite all Pentecostals in one structure; but young believers and pastors are continuing to leave the AUCCEFP; many of them are joining the Ukrainian Missionary Church which is closer to the Charismatics. Other Protestant unions in Ukraine acknowledge similar unwelcome prospects.²⁵ They see the Charismatic upsurge as providing an opportunity to think about why the growth of 'old' churches is slowing and why they are yielding ground to the younger churches. Some analysts are seeking answers in a general crisis which they see affecting not only Ukrainian Protestantism, in spite of its evident successes, but postsoviet Protestantism generally. A series of conferences held in 2007–2009 in Russia, Latvia and Ukraine considered these tendencies.²⁶ Participants in the International Missionary Forum of the '*Dukhovnoye vozrozhdeniye*' ('Spiritual Revival') Association held near Kiev in 2008 discussed whether they ought to be talking about a systemic crisis rather than about particular shortcomings in Protestant media, missionary work and church growth. 'Participants emphasised that international help and the work of thousands of western missionaries in the CIS had not produced the expected results, and that national churches had not proved able to use their resources effectively and had missed unique opportunities for developing their own independent ministry' (V Ukraine, 2008).

Ukrainian Protestantism: the Problem of Identity

Where is Ukrainian Protestantism most vulnerable? Six years ago Mary Raber, a volunteer from the Mennonite Central Committee in the USA working in Protestant educational establishments in Ukraine, identified some deep psychological changes which had taken place over the previous 20 years amongst Evangelical Christians. Baptists she interviewed in Odesa talked about these changes regretfully: 'There's a lot of Western influence now We've lost reverence It used to be that everybody wanted to help. Now everybody wants money. Everybody wants their career.' But more symptomatic, in Raber's opinion, are 'the brain- and energy-drain caused by the departure of thousands of Ukrainian believers to the West'; 'the lack of experienced leadership to disciple new believers'; people coming to church who were expecting

more from it than it was able to give ('openness and honesty, real answers to life's questions, and non-judgmental acceptance'); and the fact that for many believers the Christian community has become just one aspect of life, but not its centre (Raber, 2004). Summing up the various changes, critical insiders see the main problem for Ukrainian Protestantism as its dependence on western churches.²⁷ Protestants in Ukraine are sure that their communities have succeeded in preserving pure teachings based on the Bible and not on Protestant philosophy, unlike western Christianity which has been struck down by secularisation. Now that it has again become possible to collaborate with their foreign brethren, Protestants in the postsoviet world have opened the doors to western influence and have proved to be defenceless against the export of Christian liberalism and modern doctrines which introduce theological discussion into the churches and break longstanding traditions. As early as 1990 a Ukrainian Baptist journal forecast the danger that western theology and church practice presented for eastern churches.²⁸ Today this danger is acknowledged as an accomplished fact:

They tell us: you are the ones who are out of step. You are destroying historical and spiritual traditions. You are the 'fifth column', 'westernisers'. We mutter something about being offended, but we often confirm these suspicions by the way we live our lives: financial dependence on the West, mass emigration, the dominant influence of foreign literature in translation, always looking westward theologically. (Popov, 2008, p. 288)

The young Baptist intellectual from Donetsk Mikhail Cherenkov, whose critical articles are regularly published in Protestant magazines and on the Internet, argues that this situation prevents Protestants from playing a more organic part in the social and spiritual life of Ukraine today. There is suspicion of alien influences on church life and Christian morality. Until quite recently Ukrainian Protestants considered their greatest achievement to be a chaste and strict ethical stance which helped them to resist the temptations of the secular environment: respect for the authorities, high standards of personal and domestic morality, a regulated community life, obedience in young people, modesty in women. Many in the church unions are disturbed by changes in longstanding methods of worship and evangelisation,²⁹ for example western-style mass missionary campaigns. An analysis carried out by the department for global mission of the UUCSDAC has shown that mass evangelisation campaigns are much less effective than the traditional Ukrainian Protestant approach through individual work based on 'personal experience of repentance and new life' (Zhukalyuk and Lyubashchenko, 2003, pp. 65–66). The analysis also shows that people accept the modernising of services, but not if this departs from Biblical principles.

Another question arises: what can 'our' Protestants offer this western influence in exchange? This question leads on to the question of how Ukrainian Protestant churches identify themselves in the world-wide Protestant movement and of how they are articulating their own theological and national cultural traditions. This is a question which is important for early and late Protestantism alike: it has to do with how a church might resist new ideological influences ('western theology') and religious movements (the Charismatic movement) and with defining its prospects (preserving and increasing its public, cultural and theological potential).

Let us take the example of the German Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Ukraine (GELCU). One of its essential features is preserving its national traditions, and this requires that Germans or people with German roots should join it. In the early 1990s

there were plenty of these in Ukraine, and many of them did indeed join the church. Very quickly, however, the church began to lose those members who saw their religious affiliation as a potential ticket to their historical motherland. At the end of the twentieth century Ukrainian Germans emigrated in huge numbers, and this altered the national look of the church. Today, for example, over 80 per cent of the L'viv GELCU community are Ukrainians and Russians who were attracted to Lutheranism by its intellectual potential and deep theological culture. The pastor of the community, Nikolai Bendus, acknowledges that of its national distinctiveness only the name remains; current believers revere this as a memorial to a 'glorious past'. Pastor Bendus is still hopeful that people of various nationalities will continue to join the church: for him today this is more important than following formal traditions. Fifteen years ago Akhim Rais, the pastor of the Kiev Church of St Catherine from 1992 to 1996, had an optimistic view about Ukrainians and Russians joining the GELCU, and saw no negative consequences for the church: 'a German community will transform itself into a community with a German tradition' (Kiyev, 2000, p. 100). However, this national tradition is by now discernible in only a few communities (in the main church in Kiev and in the largest parishes (Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson)) and mainly as a result of ongoing support (money and personnel) from co-religionists in Germany, Russia and Kazakhstan, which keeps the church going but has no effect on increasing its membership or the number of its communities. Meanwhile the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC), which is oriented towards the local population and its culture and language, is more persistent in preserving national traditions, aiming to realise the slogan of its pioneers in the 1920s and 1930s: 'Through Reformation to Ukrainisation!' The ULC is a rather original variant on Lutheranism,³⁰ having firmly decided on a course of creating of new national church with the purpose of 'awakening the spirituality and national consciousness of Ukrainians' (*Styag*, 1996, 9, p. 10). They derive this task from the Bible itself: 'Do not regard yourselves as orphans, aliens, strangers, but as rooted in your native Ukrainian land by the Word of God as the children of heavenly Father, who is not indifferent to the future of his people, their destiny, their path, their life choices, their faith' (*Styag*, 1997, 11, p. 1). 'Preach the Gospel as if it were personally addressed to the Ukrainian people: "For God so loved Ukraine, that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that if Ukraine believe in him, it shall not perish, but have eternal life"' (*Styag*, 1999, 2, p. 7). Evangelical Protestants are suspicious of this kind of synthesis of biblical and national, church and non-church, as going beyond the Gospel; and the German Lutherans consider that an uncritical approach to Orthodoxy is a vulgarisation of Lutheranism and that national-messianic appeals constitute political engagement and border on proselytising. It is interesting that the formation of the ULC as a new national church is being carried out mainly with the support of the Missouri and Wisconsin Confessional Lutheran synods in the USA.

The question of tradition is just as lively for late Protestantism, which essentially developed in opposition to church tradition, proclaiming the ideal of a 'church which is constantly changing'. Protestant brotherhoods are continuing to appear, particularly among young Pentecostals and Charismatics, which have no systematic theology and no unified principles of worship or church practice. The world-wide Baptist movement, which recently marked its 400th anniversary, continues to discuss important theological issues, as late Protestantism is used to doing, but Ukrainian Baptists have long been distant from the centres of theological thinking and have remained faithful to the teachings of the pioneers of the evangelical awakening of the nineteenth century, and they are not used to discussions of this kind, nor have they

built up a resource of their own 'Church Fathers' which would equip them. Students in Ukrainian Protestant seminaries still learn the elements of their faith from the works of American and European theologians.

For Ukrainian Protestants today one of the most important priorities is therefore to train home-grown theologians who will be able to make their theology accessible to those from an eastern Christian spiritual tradition and thus make Protestantism a more organic element of Ukrainian religious and cultural life. Programmes in contextual theology and ministry which are now being prioritised by the one Lutheran seminary in Ukraine (which belongs to the ULC) and some of the Baptist seminaries will help them to do this. However in the ULC seminary training of future Ukrainian pastors is being done mainly by foreign teachers following programmes developed by the conservative Lutheran synods of the USA. There is thus an inherent contradiction: the goal of shaping a contextual theology for Ukraine is being sought with the help of teachers from an entirely different cultural background. Baptist and Pentecostal educational establishments, which are typically financed by western churches, are in a similar situation. The Evangelical institutes and seminaries mainly offer practically oriented courses, training students for pastoral, missionary, youth and social service. Ukrainian schools are not yet ready to offer professional theological training; this is where western seminaries step into the breach.

But is readiness enough?

Ukrainian Protestantism: the Problem of Social and Cultural Integration

Between 2003 and 2005 a poll was conducted amongst graduates of the three largest Evangelical educational establishments in Ukraine, which offer a wide spectrum of theological disciplines, including contextual theology (Effektivnost', 2006).³¹ The poll showed that the most important things as far as the graduates were concerned were to learn a foreign language (59 per cent) and to gain skills in working with people (54 per cent); all theological subjects together polled only 38 per cent. The interviewers reported that although more than a third of those polled showed low levels of biblical and theological knowledge they still placed these subjects near the bottom on their scale of importance. In their assessment of aspects of the study programme respondents were most positive about the practical application of knowledge in general ministry in the church (50.4 per cent); they put the theological basis of the education in sixth place (31.6 per cent), the quality of the teaching in tenth place (21.9 per cent) and the quality of the programme itself in twelfth place (17.2 per cent). The proportion of respondents who were positive about the 'western principles' of the teaching was 28.3 per cent, while only 4 per cent were positive about its 'Slavic orientation'. The 'least useful' aspects of the programme included theology (in second place on a negative scale), and those seen as 'completely unnecessary' included specifically systematic theology, and also philosophy, Greek, Hebrew and the history of Ukraine (together 32 per cent). Contextual theology and Patristics were also rated amongst the least useful, and the study of intercultural relations and Christian ethics were the subjects judged to be the least well taught. Interestingly, no questions on Ukrainian language or Ukrainian culture were asked in the poll, a fact which again casts doubt on the effectiveness of the search to produce a contextual theology in Ukraine. The poll did not include educational establishments in western Ukraine, which offer a number of subjects relating to Ukrainian studies. However, in the western Ukrainian theological seminary of the AUAECB students do not want to study Orthodoxy and Greek Catholicism at all, although they see that they will in

future be working in an Orthodox and Catholic environment. For graduates of the Donets'k Christian university a master's contextual theology degree course on the study of Orthodox spirituality is being developed by Protestant seminaries in England; for some reason it is mainly confined to Orthodox thinkers of the emigration. Meanwhile future Protestant specialists on Orthodoxy go to Europe, the USA or South Africa to take a master's degree.

The poll reveals low levels of interest in theology and national culture among Protestant young people, and also that the educational process itself has not been thought through sufficiently to make it effective in inscribing Protestantism into the Ukrainian context. Some unions and educational establishments are keen to interest Protestant young people in national history, or at least in the history of their own churches. In Evangelical Baptist circles this task is carried out by the Theological Society of Eurasia (*Bogoslovskoye obshchestvo Yevrazii*) and in the ULC by the editorial department and seminary of St Sophia, and there have been some results. The Theological Society of Eurasia has held a number of conferences on Ukrainian Protestant history and literature, produced an issue of the Odesa-based journal *Bogoslovskiye razmyshleniya*, and organised a competition of historical and theological works by national authors, the best of which it has published. The UUCSDAC has opened a centre in Kiev to study of spiritual legacy of Ellen White and translate her works into Ukrainian. The editorial department of the ULC is reprinting the writings of the pioneers of the Ukrainian Lutheran movement in the 1920s and 1930s. But is all this enough? Given the shortage of professional theologians and the generally low educational level of the leaders of religious communities quite a lot has been achieved; but in view of the scale of the task – to build churches in Ukraine which will not be regarded as foreign – far more still needs to be done.

Not all Protestants share this aim. Many autonomous communities of Charismatics and Presbyterians and small unions and groups are still poorly integrated into the social and cultural context of Ukraine. Most ethno-confessional churches, including the Reformed Church of Transcarpathia (which historically and nationally is closely related to Hungary), have made very little mark on Ukrainian religious life, and the 'old' churches and large national unions are still losing members, including young and educated people, which is making it very difficult for them to develop an intellectual elite. There are no longer any serious objective reasons why people should emigrate (persecution, restrictions on religious and civil liberties), but there is still a mentality of emigration among Protestant communities, especially Evangelical ones. Since the Lautenberg Amendment of 1989 about 500,000 Evangelical Protestants have emigrated from the countries of the CIS to the USA alone (Yelens'kyi, 2009), and although US immigration policy has recently toughened, Ukrainian Protestants (mostly Pentecostals) are continuing to apply for refugee status.³² In 2002, for example, there were 3959 applications, of which 1618 were approved (Bezhenkaya, 2006). Let us focus again on the L'viv Pentecostal community. In the mid-1990s seven or eight families a year (30–40 people) were leaving it. Today the number is two or three families a year; some members gained refugee status in 2009. While Bishop Nikolai Mel'nik was the leader of the largest Pentecostal union and the Ukrainian Bible Society almost all his children emigrated, and this is typical of the families of most pastors, not just Pentecostal, whether in L'viv, Odesa, Kiev or Donets'k. The reasons why they leave are various: desire to rejoin their relatives (in the USSR Pentecostals were the religious group which made most applications to emigrate); search for work or a better life; fears for their future legal status if Ukrainian legislation on religion is amended. Emigration is sometimes concealed: young

Protestants who go abroad to train as theologians and church leaders often do not return; information about the numbers involved is unavailable, and such topics are not discussed, at least at church leadership level. The senior pastor of the L'viv association of the AUCCEFP, Roman Lyakhovsky, says that over the period of Ukrainian independence as many as 80 per cent of the members of the L'viv Pentecostal communities have emigrated, although thanks to successful evangelistic work the overall number of Pentecostals in L'viv has not declined.

Over the last 20 years Ukrainian Protestants have established quite a number of émigré churches. The Baptists have organised a network of Ukrainian communities and educational establishments in Portugal. In Sacramento in the USA the Ukrainian language can be heard everywhere: a large percentage of the Slav Pentecostals in the city are from Galicia. In these émigré churches, manned by Ukrainian pastors and graduates from seminaries, there is no shortage of preachers, while in L'viv the communities are chronically short of trained personnel. But the main problem is that the emigrants include families with a long religious past, who laid the foundations of today's communities in Ukraine, and their places are being taken by people 'from the world', most of whom are yesterday's unbelievers whose spiritual growth and adaptation to the new way of life require considerable time. The result is that today 'conservative churches whose basis was always traditional believing families are experiencing the most serious crisis', because believers 'who have come "from the world"' are shaping a new type of Evangelical Christianity', which means that 'the question of identity has ceased to be just theoretical and has taken on a vital importance' (Cherenkov, 2007). By no means all these newcomers stay in the communities, however. Some find their own organisational aspirations frustrated; others find archaic rules of communal life irksome or object to the absence of a 'spirit of freedom'. A dozen or so members of the L'viv Pentecostal community I am studying emigrated after five or six years.

Emigration and a personnel in flux is making the preservation of the religious subculture which long distinguished Ukrainian Protestantism problematic. This is evident in the L'viv Pentecostal community. Like other Evangelical Protestants in western Ukraine its members were until recently still proud of their respect for traditions and their doctrinal and communal conservatism. Today, however, a L'viv Pentecostal who visits Kiev or Donets'k feels very uncomfortable among fellow-believers who are more independent and active, better educated and open to new religious and cultural currents. In the 1960s and 1970s the western region was the most Protestant region of Ukraine; but today every year the rate of growth of Evangelical communities there falls further behind the rate of growth in the central and eastern regions.³³

Are all these processes we have been considering serious enough to hold back the further development of Ukrainian Protestantism? Or are they a natural symptom of its painful emergence from a Soviet past which still burdens many communities? May it even be that some negative tendencies in Protestantism might in fact be beneficial? A slowdown in the numerical growth of communities, for example, may be helping church leaders to focus attention on 'high-quality' indices of evangelisation, and the fact that in most unions (except among the Charismatics) no new educational establishments are being opened may promote the improvement of theological education. In their annual reports and speeches at church conferences the leaders of most Ukrainian Protestant unions usually highlight the positive achievements of their churches. Answering a question from a journalist about the challenges facing the Baptist churches in Ukraine today, the president of Ukrainian Bible Society and now

retired long-term leader of the AUAECB Grigori Komendant identified four: not to forget the past; to tell young people about it; to persist in personal witness; and to live in love and harmony (Malukha, 2009). But members of the movement ‘*Za zdorovuyu tserkov*’ (‘For a Healthy Church’), started in 2008 by a group of young believers, think that a lot of problems have accumulated in Evangelical Protestantism and that ‘it is essential to reassess ministry in the new realities’ (Nikityuk, 2008); and a representative of the Baptist mission ‘*Vozrozhdeniye*’ (‘Revival’) is even more critical: ‘We can call this crisis a total one. It is hard to identify any aspect of the life of the Evangelical churches today which is not affected by crisis. I would call this a crisis of identity: theological, liturgical, social, cultural, political To the most important question, Who are we, Evangelical Protestants? few can give an intelligible answer’ (Cherenkov, 2008). Who are right, the pessimists or the optimists? As so often, the answer probably lies somewhere in the middle, and hence is not simple. Only time will tell.

Notes

- 1 Before the 1917 Revolution central and south-eastern Ukraine were part of Russia, and in 1924 were included in the USSR. Galicia was part of the Austrian/Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1772 to 1918, and part of Poland from 1918 to 1939. Transcarpathia was part of the Austrian/Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1919, part of Czechoslovakia from 1919, and occupied by Hungary from 1938 to 1944. Bukovina was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1867 to 1918, and part of Romania from 1918 to 1940. Before and after the Second World War all these regions became part of the USSR.
- 2 According to estimates by Ukrainian and foreign analysts the Protestant underground in the USSR was 1.5–2 times larger than the legally operating structures incorporated into local authorities (see Durasoff, 1972; Bociurkiw and Strong, 1975; Bourdeaux, 1983; Sawatsky, 1981; Yelens’kyi, 2002).
- 3 During the period of hostilities on Ukrainian territory between 1648 and 1676 Protestants, especially Socinians, were persecuted by the Polish authorities and Ukrainian Cossacks and forced to emigrate. In the western parts of Ukraine which came under Polish control their activity was also banned (for example by decisions of the General Confederation in 1668 and the Sejm in 1764).
- 4 Here and elsewhere in my article I am quoting figures on churches and religious organisations in Ukraine from reports prepared between 1997 and 2009 by the State Committee on Religions of Ukraine (1997–2006) and the State Committee for Nationalities and Religions of Ukraine (*Derzhavnyi komitet u spravakh natsional’nostei ta relihii Ukrainy*) (SCNRU). These reports were unpublished until 2010, when the first one was published on the official website of the Committee, and I studied them in the archives of the Committee after obtaining official permission. I am considering only registered religious organisations.
- 5 ‘Organisations’ include not only communities or parishes under the various church unions but also other organisations (such as missions, brotherhoods and monasteries) which are integral parts of the church infrastructure and involve considerable numbers of believers. In the Protestant churches missions are normally registered as part of a church community, helping it to carry out its evangelistic, cultural, educational and charitable activities. A Protestant community is often registered as a mission and vice versa.
- 6 The SCNRU reports do not, however, include Protestant missions founded by foreign churches, of which there are a good many. For example, Music Mission Kiev (*Muzykal’naya missiya Kiyeva*), led by Roger McMurrin, was set up on the initiative of a number of Presbyterian unions in the USA. It finances the Kiev Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and is planning to build a Christian medical centre near Kiev.
- 7 When studying Protestantism we need to take account of its variety. Some of this is a result of genetics (the church tradition, linked to the Magisterial Reformation and represented by Lutheranism and Calvinism, and the evangelical tradition, linked to the Radical

- Reformation and represented by Baptism, Pentecostalism, Adventism and others). There is theological and liturgical variety; and also national-cultural variety. A good example of a Protestant church with a distinct national-cultural identity is the German Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Ukraine (*Nemetskaya yevangel'sko-lyuterskaya tserkov' Ukrainy*) (GELCU), which sees itself as the 'site of revival of German culture', officially declaring that it 'does not pursue a proselytising policy and does not seek to promote itself amongst believers of other confessions' (see its website <http://delku.org.ua/novosti-neltsu.html>). The GELCU is somewhat distanced from social and political life, and is cautious about involving itself in ecumenical processes.
- 8 A Baptist, Aleksandr Turchinov, is the former vice-premier in the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers and one of the leaders of the *Bat'kyvschina* party; another Baptist, Yuri Reshetnikov, is head of the SCNRU. According to the media and the religious press the mayor of Kiev, Leonid Chernovetsky, inclines towards the Charismatics and the chairman of the Supreme Court of Ukraine Vasili Onopenko towards the Pentecostals (see for example Kukharchuk, 2004).
 - 9 In the Credo of Faith of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Ukraine we read that 'Any member may participate in electoral bodies, parties and public organisations, according to his or her individual conscience, as long as the activity of such bodies does not depart from the principles of the Gospel. Such participation must not be in the name of the church, however, and is not desirable for a minister, who must be fully dedicated to Christ, but is possible only as a citizen's initiative on the part of an individual.' And further: 'We do not see any bar as far as our faith is concerned to anyone occupying posts in the state' (quoted in *Istoriya*, 1996, pp. 483, 433). In November 2004 the leaders of the largest Baptist, Evangelical Christian, Pentecostal and Charismatic unions took part in the mass gatherings on Independence Square in Kiev in public support for one of the political sides. This received a mixed reaction from other Protestant unions and from fraternal churches in other CIS countries.
 - 10 'The church can and must influence policy ... it is necessary to hold before the church the goal of influencing the situation in the country' (Dzyuba, 2005).
 - 11 'We cannot take on obligations in the field of political activity, since it will inevitably be necessary to renounce Christian principles in order to meet the current political requirements. It is impossible to be involved in politics and to remain a consistent Christian' (see *Tserkov'*, 1997).
 - 12 Aleksandr Sagan comments that 'thirty per cent of all religious organisations are Protestant, and Protestantism is spreading more and more in our country' (*V Ukraini*, 2009). Anatolii Kolodnyi says that the three main Orthodox churches comprise 50.2 per cent of the religious infrastructure and only 36–48 per cent of respondents identify themselves as Orthodox. He concludes that 'Ukraine is not an Orthodox country, as some people try to prove; it is a country in which Orthodoxy predominates' (Kolodnyi, 2009).
 - 13 After the US Congress adopted the 'Lautenberg Amendment' in 1989 hundreds of thousands of people from a number of countries in Asia and the former USSR were able to gain refugee status, and many Evangelical Protestants, mainly Pentecostals and Baptists, emigrated to the USA from Ukraine. 'Immediately after the adoption of the Lautenberg Amendment anyone falling into one of the persecuted categories in the former USSR (Jews, Evangelical Christians, members of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church) was able to obtain the status of refugee more or less automatically, and almost 90 per cent of those with whom an interview was conducted received the right to enter the USA' (*Bezhenskaya*, 2006).
 - 14 A typical Protestant community is formed on the principle of the extended family. If it gains too many members they will find problems actively participating in communal life. Smaller sub-groups will therefore be formed, bringing together for example the believers in a particular district of a city, and these will often develop into autonomous 'daughter churches'.
 - 15 In the SCNRU reports there is no information about the Methodist Church (which is officially incorporated in Russia but has eight communities in Ukraine), or about the closely

related Church of the Nazarene (eight communities). Information about small associations and ethno-confessional groups is not always available, but the following estimates relate to them: Subbotniks (28 communities), Free Christians of Transcarpathia, or Plymouth Brethren (14), Perfectionists (5), Evangelical Adventists (3), Mennonites (3), Ukrainian Reformed (2), Czech Brethren (2), Murashkovites (2), Anglicans (2), Swedish Lutherans, Korean Methodists and Presbyterians, Chinese Baptists and others. A number of recently created organisations are also missing from the statistics: for example, the Pentecostal Ukrainian Missionary Church (*Ukrainskaya missionerskaya tserkov'*) (over 50 communities). The latest SCNRU reports no longer include the Council of Independent Evangelical Churches of Ukraine (*Sobor nezavisimykh yevangel'skikh tserkvei Ukrainy*) which has been operating since the mid-1990s and which according to its leadership has 120 communities.

- 16 For example the Russian Orthodox Old Believer Church of the Belokrinitsa Concord (*Russkaya pravoslavnaya staroobryadcheskaya tserkov' belokrinitskogo soglasiya*) (which according to data from early 2009 had 56 communities), the Russian Orthodox Old Believer Church of the Priestless Concord (*Russkaya pravoslavnaya staroobryadcheskaya tserkov' bezpopovskogo soglasiya*) (10), the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (*Russkaya pravoslavnaya tserkov' zagranitse*) (933), the Russian True Orthodox Church (*Russkaya istinno-pravoslavnaya tserkov'*) (31) and various autonomous Orthodox communities (82). Although these comprise only a small portion of the Ukrainian Orthodox landscape, as far as their numbers of communities are concerned they are quite comparable with some Protestant associations, and should also be taken into account when making sociological comparisons.
- 17 In 2008 a survey on religiosity in Ukraine was conducted under the auspices of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) (*Religioznost'*, 2009). According to this survey 39 per cent of believers said they belonged to the UOC-MP, the UOC-KP and the UAOC, 44 per cent simply said they were Orthodox, 8 per cent said they were Greek Catholics and 1 per cent said they were Protestants or followers of other religions. Many religious studies publications say that 2–3 per cent of believers in Ukraine are Protestants. The International Religious Freedom Report for Ukraine for 2008 issued by the State Department of the USA identifies religious groups with less than 5 per cent of the population: as well as Protestants, these include Jews, Buddhists, Mormons and Krishnaites (Ukraine, 2008).
- 18 Unlike Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic seminaries these seminaries take only a small number of students. For example, there are no more than 8–12 students on the three-year programme of the western Ukrainian theological seminary of the AUAECB (in Boryslav, L'viv *oblast'*), compared with up to 50 or 60 on the four-year programme at the L'viv seminary of the UOC-KP, up to 30 or 40 on the six-year programme at the L'viv St Joseph higher theological seminary of the Roman Catholic Church, and a similar number on the six-year programme at the L'viv Holy Spirit theological seminary of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Most teachers at Orthodox and Catholic seminaries have theology degrees, and their graduating students go to higher theological education in academies. Of course the L'viv Catholic seminary dates back to 1703 and the L'viv Greek Catholic seminary to 1783, and the L'viv Orthodox seminary is grounded in the old traditions of the Kiev Theological Academy; until the early 1990s Protestants in Ukraine did not have any secondary or higher educational establishments at all.
- 19 It is also difficult to determine how many individual believers there are in the various Charismatic communities. Speaking about the number of people who come to his church, Pastor Adelaja is also in fact speaking about how late Protestantism generally reckons the number of its followers: 'They don't have to come only to us. The main thing is that they go to Christian churches. We only count the people who come to us every week' (*Osnovatel'*, 2007). I have myself observed how some of the members of the Pentecostal community in L'viv go to other Protestant and even Orthodox churches, on the grounds that they do not accept the 'spirit of law' which is alive in traditional Pentecostalism, and that they are searching for new truth.

- 20 In 1993 the Catholic Church recognised the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, active in 220 countries for the purpose of promoting Catholic charismatic renewal. According to our data, in 1997 there were 15 groups of Catholic Pentecostals in Vinnytsa, Zhytomyr, Khmel'nyts'kyi and Ternopil' *oblasti*. Currently the largest groups are in Kiev and L'viv; they attract monks and Catholic young people. It seems that today about 2 per cent of Ukrainian Catholics of both rites are charismatics. In September 2008 clergy and laypeople from the various CIS countries took part in the second Ukrainian Catholic charismatic conference 'Ogon' ('Fire') in Kiev (V Kiyev, 2005). Bible courses called 'Dabar' are organised for Catholic Charismatics by the Kiev priest Roman Laba, a graduate of the higher theological seminary of the Pauline order (Katoliki-kharizmaty, 2008).
- 21 Between 2002 and 2008 the UROC held a number of councils in Kiev and opened a spiritual centre called 'Vozrozhdeniye' in Dnipropetrovs'k. It now has eight parishes in Ukraine. Its leader, Sergei Zhuravlev, who was forbidden to serve as a priest by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1996, is now ordaining bishops for other CIS countries (Pravoslavny, 2008).
- 22 'Most discussion is about the ordination of women . . . in the West women have been able to be pastors for a long time now We need to think about how we can better integrate the service of our sisters' (Geletsky, 2008). For Ukrainian Lutherans, however, even raising the question of women pastors is evidence of a liberalism which undermines the basis of Christianity (Zhenshchina, 1996).
- 23 There is particular disagreement about the doctrine of prosperity which Charismatics proclaim. In answer to an interviewer's question 'Why does the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God pay so much attention to business and to helping parishioners to get rich?' Pastor Adelaja replied: 'It's very simple. I know that if people believe in God they are not supposed to be poor' (Osnovatel', 2007). Contrast this with the view of the head of the AUCCEFP, Bishop Mykhailo Panochko: Pentecostals 'do not agree with the doctrine of prosperity. We do not agree with the doctrine that everyone should be healthy. Doctrines like "as you give to God, so He will give to you" smell of profit, gain. This is not the way of the Gospel' (Vavriniuk, 2006).
- 24 Panochko: 'We need to separate the chaff from the grain. Charismatics do not take into account the mentality of Ukrainians. We Pentecostals love Ukrainian, we hold our services in the Ukrainian language, we cherish patriotism and love of our Motherland' (quoted from Istorii, 2007, p. 623).
- 25 According to a representative of the Baptist mission 'Vozrozhdeniye' 'the growth of Charismatic churches is a challenge to the unity of the Evangelical churches which make up the ECB and CEFPP unions, as it results in the departure of young people, their most creative and active members' (Cherenkov, n.d.). In 2006 a Ukrainian Lutheran magazine published an article written as long ago as 1977 by the Missouri Synod in the USA to counteract Charismatic influences (Rukovodstvo, 2006).
- 26 See for example materials from the conference 'Krizisnyye yavleniya v sovremennom rossiiskom protestantizme i sposoby ikh preodoleniya' ('The Crisis in Russian Protestantism Today and How to Combat It') held in 2008 in the academy of the Commonwealth of Evangelical Christians of Russia (*Sodruzhestvo yevangel'skikh khristian Rossii*) (<http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=fresh&id=852;evangelie.ru/forum/t48900.html>) (last accessed 6 April 2010), and also issues discussed at the conference '400 let baptizmu i printsip svobody sovesti' ('The 400th Anniversary of the Baptist Movement and the Principle of Freedom of Conscience') held in Odesa in 2009 (<http://cherenkoff.blogspot.com/2009/09/400.html>) (last accessed 6 April 2010).
- 27 See, for example, articles by Baptist authors Mikhail Cherenkov, Igor' Podberezsky, Mikhail Nevolin, Aleksandr Sorokin and others in the Evangelical newspaper *Mirt*, <http://gazeta.mirt.ru/?2-8-1/2>
- 28 'The active influence of guests from abroad encourages the essentially external and showy aspects of evangelisation Together with evangelisation, western theology has penetrated our fraternity. It may be better structured and systematised, with philosophical and

- historical approaches; but it is not our theology! The point is not that there may be various doctrinal differences, but that western theology has developed in a different culture and on different traditions' (*Bogomysliye*, 1990, 1, p. 3).
- 29 'All the loud talking, applause, theatrical tricks, worship groups, rhythmic music, familiar attitudes towards the Bible, artistry in sermons are against the true nature of the spirit of Gospel and are blasphemous towards persecuted Christianity' (Diordiyenko, n.d.).
- 30 Doctrinally the ULC follows confessional Lutheranism, the classical legacy of Martin Luther (and complete rejects Protestant philosophy); in worship it uses an eastern rite which retains many elements of Orthodox liturgy, and it follows the Julian calendar. It sees much in common between the Orthodox and Lutheran churches: infant baptism; married priests; Holy Communion in both kinds (with the cup and bread); the real rather than symbolic presence of Christ in the Eucharist, which can be served only by ordained clergy; an understanding of baptism as a means of grace; confession and forgiveness of sins by a priest; services in the native language; the use of elements of Byzantine architecture; the internal decoration of its churches; clergy vestments; retaining the sanctuary; veneration of crucifixes and icons, which 'are not personifications of Christ or the saints, but reminders of salvation'; observing Orthodox holidays; bowing; making the sign of the cross; ceremonial procession (*krestny khod*); candles; Easter cake (*kulich*); coloured eggs.... The ULC sees its adherence to the 'pure teaching of Luther' as its special calling: to put a stop to the ideological dissolution of Lutheranism in the countries of the CIS, where it is falling prey to religious liberalism, and to revive its spiritual principles. The ULC wants to adapt Lutheranism to Orthodox culture.
- 31 The project was initiated and organised by Overseas Council International. The poll was conducted with the help of the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association (*Yevro-aziatskaya akkreditatsionnaya assosiatziya*) which includes Protestant educational establishments in CIS countries and the Baltic states.
- 32 An application from two Pentecostal sisters and the reason for its rejection in 2004 can be seen at <http://bulk.resource.org/courts.gov/c/F3/358/358.F3d.1128.02-72312.02-72311.html>
- 33 In 1997 48 per cent of all religious communities in the city of Kiev were Protestant, 29 per cent in Donets'k *oblast'*, 46 per cent in Zaporizhzhia *oblast'*, about 39 per cent in Kirovohrad and Luhans'k *oblasti*, 8.6 per cent in L'viv *oblast'* and 7 per cent in Ternopil' *oblast'*. In 2004 the number of Protestant communities in the city of Kiev and in Donets'k *oblast'* was already over 50 per cent, and in Zaporizhzhia and Kirovohrad *oblasti* over 40 per cent, while in five western *oblasti* it was 22 per cent. By 2009 the percentage of Protestant communities in the western region had fallen to 20.9.

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