



**S T . S O P H I A**  
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**QUARTERLY - FALL 2024**

**HOŁY WISDOM~HOŁY SORPHIA**  
**СВЯТА ПРЕМУДРІСТЬ~СВЯТА СФІЯ**



**HOLY WISDOM-HOLY SOPHIA  
СВЯТА ПРЕМУДРІСТЬ-СВЯТА СОФІЯ**

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In the Eastern Orthodox Church, Christ is revered as the Incarnate Wisdom of God, a central truth that permeates our theology, liturgy, and spiritual life. The Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Church Fathers consistently reveal Christ as the Divine Logos, the eternal Word and Wisdom through whom all things were created and are sustained. St. Paul declares, Christ is *“the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.”* (1 Corinthians 1:24)

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.”* (John 1:1-3, 14) In the person of Jesus Christ our Lord, the Wisdom of God is not an abstract concept but a living reality. He is the perfect expression of God’s Will and Purpose, making visible the invisible and revealing the mysteries of Divine Life to humanity. This Divine Wisdom is manifest in His teachings, which offer a path to spiritual enlightenment and communion with God in the Holy Trinity, transcending mere intellectual knowledge.

The Orthodox Church sees Christ’s incarnation as the ultimate act of Divine Wisdom—God taking on human flesh to heal, sanctify, and restore creation. In Christ our Lord, Wisdom is not only a guide for moral and ethical living but is the very source of our salvation. The hymns and prayers of the Church often praise Christ as “Wisdom” (Sophia), calling the faithful to recognize and embrace Him as the True Light that enlightens every person who comes into the world. St. Athanasius of Alexandria: *“For the Son of God became man so that we might become God; He manifested Himself by means of a body*

*in order that we might perceive the Mind of the unseen Father; He endured shame from men that we might inherit immortality.” (On the Incarnation, 54:3)*

Orthodox spirituality is deeply rooted in the understanding that to follow Christ is to partake in the Divine Wisdom. This is evident in the Church’s emphasis on THEOSIS, the process by which we are one with God and transformed into His likeness. Through participation in the sacramental life of the Church, especially in the Eucharist, the faithful are invited to partake of the Divine Wisdom, which leads them from darkness to Light, from ignorance to understanding, and from death to Life. THEOSIS is the ultimate goal for each of our lives.

In the Divine Liturgy, the proclamation of “Wisdom! Let us attend!” calls the faithful to open their hearts and minds to Christ, who is both the source and fullness of all Wisdom. It is a call to live in accordance with the Divine Wisdom that leads to true Life, Peace, and Union with God.

As most aptly explained in the writings of St. Gregory Palamas, in our Eastern Orthodox comprehension, *“Christ as Wisdom is the Eternal and Uncreated Light that illumines our path to God, guiding us through the complexities of life and leading us into the fullness of Divine Love and Truth”...and to THEOSIS.*

We have chosen to identify our Quarterly as: HOLY WISDOM – HOLY SOPHIA and we pray that the words, which fill its pages in each issue will serve to emphasize the thought of St. Maximus the Confessor: *“The Word of God, who became incarnate in the fullness of time, revealed Himself as the Divine Wisdom that had been hidden in mystery from the foundation of the world. Through Christ, this Wisdom is made manifest and draws all creation back to the Father.”* May those words serve, indeed, to truly draw all who read them “back to the Father”.

**We look forward to lively interaction with our readers and we pray that all our conversations, correspondence and contributions will reflect the GRACE of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the LOVE of God the Father and the COMMUNION of the Holy Spirit.**

**PEACE BE WITH US ALL...**

***The Editorial Team***

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У Східній Православній Церкві Христос вшановується як Втілена Божя Премудрість, центральна істина, яка пронизує наше богослів'я, літургію та духовне життя. Святе Письмо та писання Отців Церкви послідовно розкривають Христа як Божественний Логос, вічне Слово і Премудрість, через Яку все було створено і підтримується. Св. Павло проголошує, що Христос є *«Божя Сила і Божя Премудрість»*. (1 Коринтян 1:24)

*«Споконвіку було Слово, а Слово в Бога було, і Бог було Слово. Воно в Бога було споконвіку. Усе через Нього повстало, і ніщо, що повстало, не повстало без Нього. ...! Слово сталося тілом, і перебувало між нами, повне благодаті та правди, і ми бачили славу Його, славу як Однородженого від Отця.»* (Івана 1:1-3, 14) В особі Ісуса Христа, нашого Господа, Премудрість Бога не є абстрактним поняттям, а живою реальністю. Він є досконалим вираженням Божої Волі та Призначення, робить видимим невидиме та відкриває людству таємниці Божественного життя. Ця Божественна Премудрість проявляється в Його вченнях, які стелять шлях до духовного просвітлення та спілкування з Богом у Святій Трійці, виходячи за межі простих інтелектуальних знань.

Православна Церква вбачає втілення Христа як найвищий акт Божественної Премудрості — Бог приймає людську плоть, щоб зцілити, освятити та відновити творіння. У Христі, нашому Господі, Премудрість є не лише дороговказом для морального та етичного життя, але й самим джерелом нашого спасіння. Піснеспіви та молитви Церкви часто оспівують Христа як *«Премудрість»* (Софію), *закликаючи вірних пізнати і прийняти Його як Правдиве Світло, що просвічує кожну людину, яка приходить у світ. Св. Афанасій Олександрійський: «Бо Син Божий став людиною, щоб ми стали Богом; Він явив Себе через тіло, щоб ми могли сприйняти Розум невидимого Батька; Він терпів ганьбу від людей, щоб ми могли успадкувати безсмертя».* (Про Втілення, 54:3)

Православна духовність глибоко вкорінена в твердженні того, що слідувати за Христом означає бути причетним до Божественної Премудрості. Це очевидно в тому, що Церква

наголошує на ТЕОЗІСІ (Обоженні), процесі, завдяки якому ми є єдиними з Богом і перетворюємося на Його подобу. Через участь у сакраментальному житті Церкви, особливо в Євхаристії, вірні покликані до участі в Божественній Премудрості, яка веде їх від темряви до Світла, від невігластва до розуміння і від смерті до Життя. ТЕОЗІС – це кінцева мета кожного з нас у житті.

У Божественній Літургії вигомос «Премудрість! Будьмо уважні!» закликає вірних відкрити свої серця та розум для Христа, Який є джерелом і повнотою всієї Премудрості. Це заклик жити згідно з Божественною Премудрістю, яка веде до правдивого Життя, Миру та Єдності з Богом.

Як найвлучніше пояснено у творах святого Григорія Палами, у нашому східно-православному розумінні «Христос як Премудрість є Вічне і Нетварне Світло, яке освітлює наш шлях до Бога, ведучи нас через складності життя і ведучи до повноти Божественної Любові і Правди»... та до ТЕОЗІСУ (Обоження).

Ми вирішили назвати наш Щоквартальний випуск: СВЯТА ПРЕМУДРІСТЬ – СВЯТА СОФІЯ і молимося, щоб слова, якими наповнюватимуться сторінки кожного випуску, підкреслювали думку св. Максима Сповідника: *«Слово Боже, яке втілюється в повноті часу, об'явилося як Божественна Премудрість, Яка була прихована в таємниці від заснування світу. Через Христа ця Премудрість проявляється і повертає все створіння назад до Отця»*. Нехай ці слова й дійсно, по-справжньому повернуть усіх, хто їх читає, «назад до Отця».

Ми з нетерпінням чекаємо живої взаємодії з нашими читачами та молимося, щоб все наше спілкування, листування та увесь вклад у ці щоквартальні випуски відображали **БЛАГОДАТЬ** нашого Господа і Спасителя Ісуса Христа, **ЛЮБОВ** Бога Отця і **ПРИЧАСТЯ** Святого Духа.

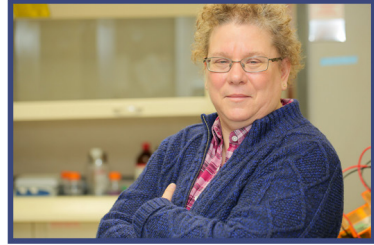
**МИР З УСІМА НАМИ...**

**Редакція**

# WISDOM

## Those Who Came Before Us

GAYLE E. WOLOSCHAK, PHD, FASTRO



This issue of “*HOLY WISDOM*” introduces a renewed publication into the life of the Church, a collection of articles that provides a reflection on the life of our Seminary—from writings by students to the listing of the activities of our faculty to articles of interest to our broad community. This Quarterly is intended to have a broad audience—not only seminarians and faculty, but also those parishioners, interested colleagues and others who want to learn more about our Church. The Quarterly is not designed to be a purely academic journal, but it will include writings by academics who will relate their work and perspectives to a broader audience.

At this initiation of the Quarterly, we must recall those previous quarterlies that provided the inspiration for this continued effort. In 1976, Fr. Frank Estocin then Dean of the St. Sophia’s started a bilingual “newsletter” with the purpose to “promote via written word, a knowledge and appreciation of the totality of that rich Heritage which makes us Ukrainian Orthodox.” We have used his model to include some of the sections in this revitalization of Fr. Frank’s original work. Only one issue of Wisdom was published with the stated direction that material be published in the Ukrainian Orthodox Word.

A second incarnation of the St Sophia Quarterly came about in 1995-96 under the leadership of Fr. Alexander Webster under the subtitle “Commentary from St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary.” The Quarterly included in each issue articles of interest from Orthodox scholars across the country as well as a collection of “Views on the News” from the world of Orthodoxy. Fr. Alexander noted that the publication was a continuation of a newsletter he had started at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, DC (the publication



was called American Orthodoxy), but the character and tone of the Quarterly were distinctly different from the parent publication with a greater focus on the life of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and St. Sophia Seminary. Six Quarterly issues from 1995-1996 were published until Fr. Alexander left the Seminary.

Since the final publication of the Quarterly in 1996, no new issues have been put forward until now. Following the vision and inspiration of our past, we have with the blessing of our hierarchs set out to renew our publication of St. Sophia Quarterly, HOLY WISDOM. We rely heavily on the insights and perspectives of our predecessors, and we thank all involved for their past work.

We welcome articles and ideas from all readers, and we anticipate the publication of Letters to the Editor where appropriate. We request that the articles be aimed at a broad audience and be reflective of the Orthodox Church and Seminary life. Please send your articles, thoughts, and ideas to Editor Gayle Woloschak, [gayle.woloschak@gmail.com](mailto:gayle.woloschak@gmail.com).

We entreat Almighty God for His blessing on this work, and we ask all readers for your prayers for this endeavor.

## **ПРЕМУДРІСТЬ: Ті, що були перед нами!**

ДР. ГЕЙЛ ВОЛОЩАК

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Цей випуск щоквартальника “СВЯТА ПРЕМУДРІСТЬ” (HOLY WISDOM) буде своєрідним відродженням публікації у житті Церкви. Ця публікація включатиме збірку статей, які міститимуть роздуми про життя нашої Семінарії – від робіт студентів, переліку діяльності нашого викладацького складу, до статей, які цікавлять людей назгал. Цей щоквартальник розрахований на широку аудиторію – не лише на семінаристів і викладачів, але й на парафіян, зацікавлених колег та інших людей, які хочуть дізнатися більше про нашу Церкву. Щоквартальник призначений не лише як суто академічний журнал, але він також включатиме статті науковців, які будуть ділитися своїми напрацюваннями та поглядами з ширшою аудиторією.

Під час відкриття «Щоквартального видання» ми повинні згадати ті попередні щоквартальні випуски, які стали джерелом натхнення для подальших зусиль. У 1976 році о. Франко Істочин, тодішній декан Семінарії Святої Софії, започаткував двомовний «інформаційний

бюлетень» з метою «сприяти через письмове слово пізнанню та поціновуванню цієї багатой спадщини, яка робить нас українськими православними». Ми використали його модель, включивши деякі розділи до відродження цього випуску з оригінальних робіт отця Франка. Було видано лише один випуск «Премудрості» із заявою, що матеріали публікуватимуться в «Українському Православному Слові».

Друге втілення “Щоквартальника Святої Софії” відбулося в 1995-96 рр. під керівництвом о. Олександра Вебстера під заголовком «Коментар від Української Православної Семінарії Святої Софії». Щоквартальник містив у кожному номері цікаві статті православних науковців з усієї країни, а також збірку «Поглядів на Новини» зі світу Православ'я. Отець Олександр зазначив, що видання було продовженням інформаційного бюлетеня, який він започаткував у Центрі етики та публічної політики у Вашингтоні, округ Колумбія (публікація називалася «Американське Православ'я»), але характер і тон Щоквартального видання виразно відрізнялися від материнського видання більшою увагою до життя Української Православної Церкви та Свято-Софіївської Семінарії. Шість випусків Щоквартальника з 1995 по 1996 рік були опубліковані до того часу, як о. Олександр залишив семінарію.

З моменту останньої публікації Щоквартальника в 1996 році до сьогодні не було жодного нового випуску. Наслідуючи бачення і натхнення нашого минулого, з благословення наших ієрархів ми вирішили відновити видання Щоквартальника Святої Софії, СВЯТА ПРЕМУДРІСТЬ. Ми значною мірою покладаємося на ідеї та погляди наших попередників і дякуємо всім причетним за їхню працю.

Ми з радістю прийматимемо статті та ідеї від усіх читачів, а також очікуємо публікації Листів до редакції, де це доречно. Ми просимо, щоб статті були спрямовані на широку аудиторію та відображали життя Православної Церкви та Семінарії. Будь ласка, надсилайте свої статті, думки та ідеї до редактора Гейл Волощак (Gayle Woloschak): [gayle.woloschak@gmail.com](mailto:gayle.woloschak@gmail.com).

Ми благаємо Всемогутнього Бога про благословення на цю працю, і просимо всіх читачів молитися за це починання.

# LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR QUARTERLY

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## LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR QUARTERLY

His Eminence  
METROPOLITAN ANTONY  
Seminary Quarterly Spiritual Director



Dear Esteemed Archbishop Daniel, Faculty, Students, Alumni, and Friends of St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary,

### **CHRIST IS AMONGST US!**

I am honored to announce the publication of the inaugural issue of the new St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary Quarterly, *HOLY WISDOM – HOLY SOPHIA*. This publication marks a significant milestone in our seminary’s mission to advance theological scholarship and deepen our shared understanding of the rich spiritual and liturgical heritage of our Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The quarterly will serve as a platform for theological reflection, pastoral insight, and scholarly discourse, featuring contributions from our esteemed faculty, students, and distinguished theologians, historians and other professionals who might provide insight into pastoral formation. Our goal is to create an environment where faith and reason coexist, where tradition is honored and where the challenges of contemporary society are met with Wisdom and compassion rooted in the teachings of our Lord and Eastern Orthodox Faith.

In this first issue, we explore themes central to our Orthodox identity, including reflections on the call to the Holy Priesthood, the historical context of Orthodoxy in Ukraine, pluralism and discernment, and more. Additionally, we are proud to present several articles that examine the enduring relevance of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the modern world.

We hope that *HOLY WISDOM – HOLY SOPHIA* will inspire thoughtful dialogue within our community and beyond, reinforcing our commitment to theological excellence and spiritual growth. This publication is not only an academic endeavor but also a testament to the Living Tradition of our Faith. I invite you to join us in celebrating this important achievement by reading and engaging with the content of our first issue by offering your own thoughts in response. Your support, prayers, and contributions are invaluable as we continue to build upon this foundation in the years to come.

We are blessed beyond words to have Dr. Gayle E. Woloschak – one of our own from Sts. Peter and Paul Parishes in Youngstown, OH and Palos Park, IL – as our Editor in Chief. Gayle is known throughout the world by Orthodox scholars and is a founding member of the International Orthodox Theological Association. She presently serves as President of the Executive Board of the Orthodox Christian Mission Commission and in many other leadership and educational roles in the world of Orthodox academia. We offer our most sincere gratitude to her and to the Holy Spirit, Who has inspired her to selfless service in Christ’s Body.

Thank you, dear readers, for being a part of our seminary’s mission. May God bless our efforts as we strive to glorify His name through this new endeavor.

In Christ,

**+ ANTONY**

*By the Grace of God, Rector*

*St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary*

# ВСТУПНЕ СЛОВО ДЛЯ ЩОКВАРТАЛЬНИКА

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Вельмишановний Архієпископе Даниїле, Викладачі, Студенти, Випускники та Друзі Свято-Софіївської Української Православної Духовної Семінарії,

## **ХРИСТОС ПОСЕРЕД НАС!**

Маю за честь оголосити про публікацію першого випуску нового щоквартального журналу Свято-Софіївської Української Православної Духовної Семінарії *СВЯТА ПРЕМУДРІСТЬ – СВЯТА СОФІЯ*. Ця публікація є важливим етапом місії нашої семінарії щодо розвитку богословської науки та поглиблення нашого спільного розуміння багатой духовної та літургійної спадщини нашої Святої Української Православної Церкви.

Щоквартальник слугуватиме платформою для богословських роздумів, пастирських думок і наукового дискурсу, в якому будуть представлені внески наших шановних викладачів, студентів і видатних богословів, істориків та інших професіоналів, які можуть надати корисне бачення душпастирського формування. Наша мета полягає в тому, щоб створити середовище, де співіснують віра та розум, де шанують традиції та де підхід щодо викликів сучасного суспільства базується на Мудрості та Співчутті, будучи вкоріненим у вченні нашого Господа та Східної Православної Віри.

У цьому першому випуску ми досліджуємо теми, які є центральними для нашої православної ідентичності, включаючи роздуми про покликання до Святого Священства, історичний контекст Православ'я в Україні, плюралізм і розсудливість. Крім того, ми з гордістю представляємо кілька статей, які досліджують незмінну актуальність Української Православної Церкви у сучасному світі.

Маємо надію, що *СВЯТА ПРЕМУДРІСТЬ – СВЯТА СОФІЯ* надихне на глибокий діалог серед нашої спільноти та поза її межами, зміцнюючи нашу відданість богословській досконалості та духовному зростанню. Це видання несе не лише наукове значення, а також є свідченням Живої Традиції нашої Віри. Я запрошую вас приєднатися до нас у святкуванні цього важливого досягнення, читаючи та проявляючи зацікавленість серед контексту нашого першого випуску, висловивши власні думки у відповідь. Ваша підтримка, молитви та внесок у цей щоквартальник є дуже цінними, оскільки ми продовжуємо будувати на цьому фундаменті в наступні роки.

Ми невимовно благословенні, що Доктор Гейл Е. Волощак – парафіянка храму Св. Петра і Павла в Янгстауні, Огайо, та Пейлос-Парк, Іллінойс – виступає нашим головним редактором. Гейл відома по всьому світі серед Православних вчених і є однією із засновників Міжнародної Православної Богословської Асоціації. На даний час вона є Президентом Виконавчої Ради Комісії Православної Християнської Місії та виконує багато інших керівних і освітніх функцій у світі Православної академії. Висловлюємо щирі вдячності їй і Святому Духу, Який надихнув її на віддане служіння в Тілі Христовому.

Дякуємо вам, дорогі читачі, що ви є частиною місії нашої семінарії. Нехай Бог благословить наші зусилля, прагнучи прославити Його ім'я через цю нову справу.

у Христі,

**+ АНТОНІЙ**

*З Благодаті Божої, Ректор*

*Свято-Софіївська Українська Православна Духовна Семінарія*

# WELCOME MESSAGE

His Eminence  
**ARCHBISHOP DANIEL**  
Academic Dean of St. Sophia Ukrainian  
Orthodox Theological Seminary



Beloved Readers, Faculty, Alumni, and Friends of St. Sophia Seminary,

It is with profound gratitude and joy that I welcome the reestablishment and publication of a new issue of St. Sophia Quarterly. This theological journal, which has long been a beacon of Orthodox Christian scholarship, has returned to our hands as a testament to the dedication and tireless labor of so many. We are especially grateful to His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, whose paternal blessing and unwavering support inspire all our endeavors. We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Gayle Woloschak and the contributors whose scholarly efforts have brought this publication to life once more.

Through its pages, St. Sophia Quarterly invites us to engage deeply with the theological concepts that underpin our faith, including the moral and spiritual virtues that shape our lives as Orthodox Christians. These reflections guide us as we prepare the next generation of spiritual leaders to serve our parishes, not only here in the United States but around the world.

Our Seminary has long been a home for students from diverse backgrounds, with alumni hailing from Canada, Brazil, Paraguay, and Ukraine, among other places. Looking to the future, we are committed to expanding educational opportunities for the next generation of students. The coming year promises exciting developments as we revise our academic catalog, reassess our course load, and collaborate with our distinguished faculty to offer

innovative programs. A particular focus will be placed on enhancing distance learning capabilities to meet the evolving needs of our students and professors as we march forward into the 21st century.

In an age defined by rapid communication and technological advancement, our social media platforms - whether Facebook, Instagram, our Seminary website, or other channels - offer us an invaluable means to stay connected with our broader Seminary family. This year, we are particularly committed to reengaging our alumni. We invite them to participate in formational and educational initiatives that not only enrich their own spiritual lives but also inspire and guide current students at St. Sophia Seminary.

One of our most significant achievements in recent years has been the strengthening of our academic foundation through accreditation by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). This accreditation has not only enhanced our programs but also opened doors for partnerships with theological institutions both domestically and internationally. We are honored to have signed a cooperative agreement with the Kyiv Theological Academy and to collaborate with other theological schools through the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States. These partnerships enable us to broaden our academic horizons and deepen our commitment to Orthodox Christian scholarship.

As we embark on this new chapter, I extend an inspirational call to all who are part of the St. Sophia Seminary community. Let us strive for academic and spiritual excellence in all that we do. The work of theological education is not simply an academic pursuit; it is a holy labor that equips us to proclaim the Gospel, nurture the faithful, and serve the Church. I humbly ask for your continued prayers and support for the educational efforts of St. Sophia Seminary.

May the pages of St. Sophia Quarterly inspire you to grow in faith and understanding, and may our collective efforts bear fruit for the glory of God and the benefit of His Holy Church.

With blessings and prayers,

**+Daniel**

*Archbishop of the UOC of the USA*

*Academic Dean of St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary*





Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we mark the solemn thousand-day anniversary of the brutal invasion of Ukraine, we gather in spirit with our suffering brothers and sisters across the ancestral homeland, and with all who stand with Ukraine in the defense of her people, her freedom, and her right to live in peace. We are humbled by the resilience, faith, and courage of Ukrainians, yet grieve deeply for the cost of this unrelenting war.

In these thousand days, we have witnessed the piercing suffering of innocent children, the unendurable loss borne by widows and parents, and the heartbreaking agony of the elderly who never dreamed that their final years would be marked by such cruelty. We have seen soldiers brave in their commitment to defend their homeland, many paying the ultimate sacrifice, leaving an unfillable void in their families and communities. This war has sown unimaginable loss into the soil of Ukraine, a pain that generations will carry long after the last bullet has fallen silent.

Our Holy Scriptures call us to love one another and to bear each other's burdens, as St. Paul exhorts: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Yet today, Ukraine bears the crushing burden of a violent onslaught that the world cannot allow to continue. This is not merely a political struggle; it is a spiritual battle against the forces of darkness that seek to undermine the sacred gift of human life and the God-given right to live in peace, with dignity, and in freedom. We must not stand silent!

This aggression, this calculated genocide of a people and their culture, their language, and their sacred identity, seeks to obliterate God's gift of human diversity and freedom. It is a violation of the divine image stamped upon every soul. We are reminded of the words of St. John Chrysostom, who taught, "For when you despise one, you have insulted all; for all are one, though they are many, and they bear one another's burdens." Indeed, each life lost, each child orphaned, each mother left to grieve her son is an injury to all of humanity. We cannot, in good conscience, turn a blind eye.

Our message to the world is clear: Look to the pages of history! Remember the horrors of past wars and the pain that ensues when the world turns away from the cries of the oppressed. The actions of ruthless tyrants and dictators have shown us time and again the catastrophic results of unchecked evil. We implore every nation, every leader, every individual to act with the wisdom drawn from the bitter lessons of our past.

Our Lord, in His Sermon on the Mount, blessed the peacemakers, calling them "children of God" (Matthew 5:9). We call on all people of faith to pray for Ukraine and for her right to a future of peace, integrity, and freedom. We call on the global community to intervene, to act, to speak loudly against this injustice. Evil grows when the righteous remain silent; it is our duty, as Christians and as citizens of this world, to defend those who are vulnerable and oppressed.

To our beloved people of Ukraine, we say: You are not alone! Your suffering is seen by our merciful God, who is close to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18). Your courage and unyielding spirit inspire us all, and we remain steadfast in our support, knowing that the God of all comfort stands with you, wiping every tear, holding every fallen soul in His tender embrace.

In the face of such darkness, we must not lose heart. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). Let us hold fast to the truth that Christ has overcome the world, and that all the powers of darkness cannot extinguish the light of one soul filled with hope and love.

May the Prince of Peace guide the hearts of leaders, comfort those who mourn, heal the wounded, and bring a swift and righteous end

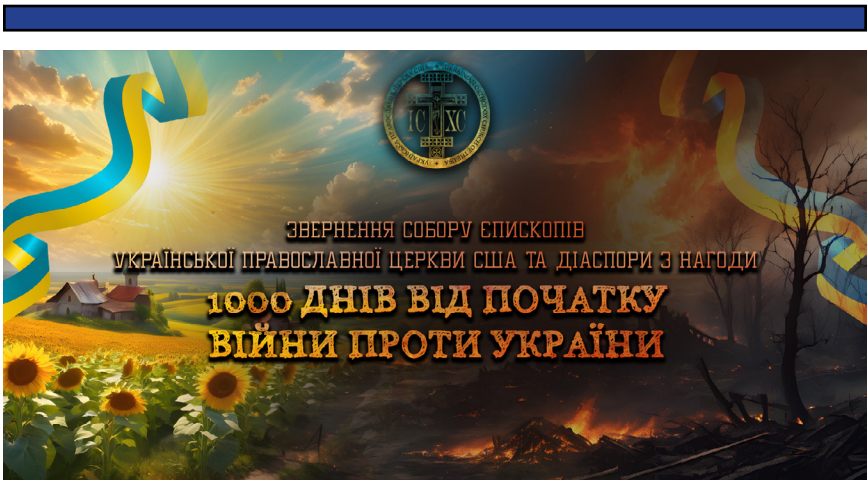
to this conflict. We pray that, through God's mercy, the world may witness the triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness, of love over hate.

In faith, hope, and the love of Christ,

**+Antony**, Metropolitan of the UOC of the USA and Diaspora

**+Jeremiah**, Archbishop of South American Eparchy

**+Daniel**, Archbishop of the UOC of the USA and Western Europe



Улюблені брати і сестри у Христі,

У цей Тисячний День бруталного вторгнення в Україну, ми єднаємося духом з нашими стражденними братами і сестрами по всій нашій Батьківщині, а також з усіма, хто стоїть разом з Україною на захисті її народу, її свободи та права на мирне життя. Ми схилиємося перед стійкістю, вірою та мужністю українців, та водночас глибоко зусмучені через ціну цієї безжальної війни.

За ці тисячу днів, ми стали свідками нестерпних страждань невинних дітей, невимовних втрат, які несуть вдови та батьки, а також нестерпних мук людей похилого віку, які ніколи не думали, що у свої літні роки будуть переживати таку жорстокість. Ми бачили солдатів, відважних у своєму прагненні захистити

свою Батьківщину, багато з яких заплатили найвищу ціну, залишивши незаповнену порожнечу в своїх сім'ях і громадах. Ця війна посіяла в землю України неймовірні втрати, біль, який цілі покоління будуть нести ще довго після того, як замовкне остання куля.

Святе Письмо закликає нас любити один одного і носити тягарі один одного, як закликає святий Павло: «Носіть тягарі один одного, і так виконуйте закон Христовий» (Гал. 6:2). Проте сьогодні Україна несе нищівний тягар насильницького нападу, котрий світ повинен припинити. Це не просто політична боротьба, це духовна битва проти сил темряви, які прагнуть підірвати священний дар людського життя і дароване Богом право жити в мирі, з гідністю і свободою. Ми не повинні мовчати!

Ця агресія, цей спланований геноцид народу та його культури, мови та священної ідентичності прагне знищити Божий дар людського розмаїття та свободи. Це є порушенням Божественного образу, закарбованого в кожній душі. Ми пригадуємо слова святого Івана Золотоустого, який навчав: «Бо коли ти зневажаєш одного, ти ображаєш усіх; бо всі є одне, хоч їх багато, і вони носять тягарі один одного». Дійсно, кожне загублене життя, кожна осиротіла дитина, кожна мати, яка залишилася оплакувати свого сина, - це кривда для всього людства. Ми не можемо, з чистою совістю, заплющувати на це очі.

Наше послання до світу є чітким: Подивіться на сторінки історії! Пам'ятайте про жахіття минулих воєн і про біль, який настає, коли світ відвертається від криків пригноблених. Дії безжальних тиранів і диктаторів знову і знову показують нам катастрофічні результати неконтрольованого зла. Ми благаємо кожну націю, кожного лідера, кожну людину діяти з мудрістю, винесеною з гірких уроків нашого минулого.

Наш Господь у своїй Нагірній проповіді благословив миротворців, назвавши їх «дітьми Божими» (Мт. 5:9). Ми закликаємо всіх віруючих людей молитися за Україну та за її право на майбутнє в мирі, цілісності та свободі. Закликаємо світову спільноту втрутитися, діяти, гучно виступити проти цієї несправедливості. Зло зростає, коли праведники мовчать; наш

обов'язок, як християн і громадян цього світу, захищати тих, хто є вразливим і пригнобленим.

Звертаємося до нашого улюбленого народу України: Ви не самотні! Ваші страждання бачить наш милосердний Бог, який близький до сокрушених серцем (Пс. 34:18). Ваша мужність і незламність духу надихають нас усіх, і ми залишаємося непохитними у своїй підтримці, знаючи, що Бог утішитель є поряд з вами, витираючи кожну сльозу, тримаючи кожну впалу душу у своїх ніжних обіймах.

Перед обличчям такої темряви ми не повинні занепадати духом. «Не будь переможений злом, але перемагай зло добром!» (Рим. 12:21). Тримаймося істини, що Христос переміг світ, і що всі сили темряви не можуть погасити світло однієї душі, сповненої надії та любові.

Нехай Князь Миру керує серцями лідерів, утішить тих, хто сумує, зцілить поранених і принесе швидке і праведне завершення цього конфлікту. Ми молимося, щоб завдяки Божому милосердю світ став свідком перемоги добра над злом, світла над темрявою, любові над ненавистю.

У вірі, надії та любові Христовій,

**+Антоній, Митрополит УПЦ США та Діаспори**

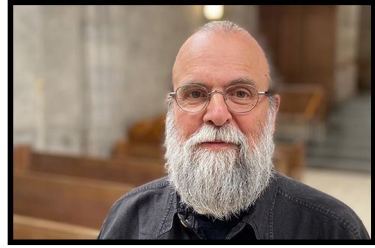
**+Єремія, Архієпископ Південноамериканської Єпархії**

**+Даниїл, Архієпископ УПЦ США і Західної Європи**



# UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH INDEPENDENCE AS A DECOLONIZATION MOVEMENT

FR. BOHDAN HLADIO



The Oxford English Dictionary defines decolonization as the ‘withdrawal from its former colonies of a colonial power; the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies.’ The key words in that definition are ‘withdrawal’ and ‘acquisition,’ terms that connote sober financial transactions carried out by mutual agreement . . . Such language and imagery has cast the collapse of empires and the rise of new nation-states in the decades after World War II as a consensual process, a peaceful transfer of sovereignty. Nothing could have been farther from the truth: decolonization was a violent, fiercely contested process that pitted imperial rulers against colonial subjects . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Nicholas Denysenko’s *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine: A Century of Separation*<sup>2</sup> can be read as a narrative of the struggle by Orthodox Ukrainians to free themselves from subjugation to the Patriarchate of Moscow and to establish an independent or autocephalous Church.<sup>3</sup> This struggle was, and still is, a “violent and fiercely contested” decolonization movement, and has generally paralleled the Ukrainian national independence movements which took place during the twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Dane Kennedy, *Decolonization: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas E. Denysenko, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine: A Century of Separation* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Autocephaly (literally “self-headedness”) is functionally equivalent to political statehood in that autocephalous Orthodox Churches are administratively independent, possess the right to govern all aspects of their internal life, elect their own hierarchs, conduct their own external church relations, and adjudicate all internal administrative and disciplinary matters without reference to any other autocephalous church. This independence does not, however, apply to dogmatic issues. Like statehood, autocephalous status acquires legitimacy to the degree that it is recognized by other autocephalous churches.

The term decolonization first appears in the English language in reference to the Eastern European countries which had formerly been territories of the Ottoman, Habsburg, or Russian empires and achieved statehood following World War One.<sup>4</sup> During the decades following this war the Orthodox Churches of the newly-formed countries of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Finland, and the Baltic states all attained autocephaly or autonomy as a result of the dissolution of these empires. The Orthodox Church in Ukraine, however, due to the ongoing reality of colonial domination by the Soviet state and the Russian Orthodox Church, did not. Only in 2019 was the Orthodox Church in Ukraine recognized as autocephalous by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, a decision which was and continues to be controversial within the commonwealth of Orthodox Churches.<sup>5</sup>

After offering succinct summaries of Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology and Ukrainian Orthodox Church history I will analyze the particular characteristics of Ukrainian Orthodox independence movements from the perspective of de-colonial, post-colonial and post-imperial theory, present similarities and differences between Ukrainian Orthodox and other decolonization movements, and ultimately show how these Ukrainian Orthodox independence movements were clearly (and continue to be) regarded as decolonization movements from both Ukrainian as well as Russian imperial, Soviet, and Russian neo-imperial perspectives.

A fundamental principle of Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology is that each local church is independent, or autocephalous. In the pre-Constantinian era each Christian community headed by a bishop was de facto autocephalous, but by the fifth century the transition from a community to an empire-centred conception of autocephaly had taken place, resulting in the establishment of the “Pentarchy” consisting of the five primatial sees of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Following the bestowal of patriarchal status upon the Muscovite Church in 1589 and the

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<sup>4</sup> Stuart Ward, “The European Provenance of Decolonization,” *Past & Present* 230 (February 2016): 237-240.

<sup>5</sup> At present, of the fourteen universally recognized autocephalous Orthodox Churches, only the Churches of Constantinople, Alexandria, Cyprus, and Greece recognize the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

founding of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth century the Russian Orthodox Church embraced the imperial model of Church governance which had become conceptually normative within Byzantine Orthodoxy, whereby church and state worked in concert, a polity which is often described by the terms “symphonia” or “caesero-papism.”

The Byzantine Empire was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 AD, following which the Sultan appointed the patriarch of Constantinople leader of all Eastern Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries political independence movements emerged in the Balkans, resulting in the establishment of the states of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania. The 19th century revolutions which resulted in the founding of these nation-states were paralleled by ecclesiastical decolonization movements, resulting in the establishment of autocephalous Orthodox churches in these lands. This ecclesiastical de-colonization was more-or-less controversial (very much so in Bulgaria, moderately so in Greece and Romania, minimally so in Serbia) and followed the political independence movements very closely. While autocephaly in the ancient church had been rooted in the local community, and following the fourth century became an attribute of empire,<sup>6</sup> with the rise of the nation-state in the late 19th century and the dissolution of empires following the first world war the concept of “an independent church in an independent state” came to be regarded as normative within Eastern Orthodoxy: “As the saying goes: an independent country goes hand in hand with an independent church.”<sup>7</sup>

In the tenth century the territories currently comprising Ukraine, Belarus,<sup>7</sup> and western Russia were part of a loose confederation known as Kyivan Rus'. Grand prince Volodymyr of Kyiv, which

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<sup>6</sup> Cyril Hovorun, “Strongholds: Autocephaly” in *Scaffolds of the Church: Towards Poststructural Ecclesiology* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017), 88-127.

<sup>7</sup> Ines Angeli Murzaku, “The Albanian Orthodox Church” in Edward G. Farrugia, S.J. – Željko Paša, S.J. (eds.), *Autocephaly: Coming of Age in Communion. Historical, Canonical, Liturgical, and Theological Studies*, vols. I-II, (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 314-315, Rome 2023), 497. See also Andre Partykevich, *Between Kyiv and Constantinople*, (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1998), 79. Examples could be multiplied.



was at the time the leading centre of this confederation, was baptized by emissaries from Constantinople in approximately 988 AD, and Kyiv became a metropolitan see within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Following the sack of Kyiv in 1240 AD its bishop moved north to Vladimir, then Muscovy. From the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries the territory of contemporary Ukraine was within the realm of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and its resident Metropolitan bishop remained under Constantinople's jurisdiction. From its founding in the 10th through till the 17th centuries the Orthodox Church on the territory of modern-day Ukraine had created and developed its own particular ecclesiastical culture and polity.

In the 17th century Ukraine was politically (1654 AD) and ecclesiastically (1686 AD) subordinated to Moscow. In 1721 Peter the Great (1672 - 1725) decreed the establishment of the Russian empire, abolished the institution of the patriarchate, restructured church administration according to a Protestant model, and put the Russian Orthodox Church under state control. Catherine the Great (1729 - 1796) subsequently "abolished the old Ukrainian civic autonomy which was in accordance with the Magdeburg Law and the Lithuanian Statute [which] brought the end to all Ukraine civic freedom."<sup>8</sup> Orthodox Churches within the imperial realm were subsumed into the Russian Church, with the imposition of Russian linguistic, musical, and liturgical practices.<sup>9</sup> Ukrainian church particularities were erased, the conciliar polity of the Kyivan Metropolia was suppressed, the use of Muscovite rather than Kyivan liturgical books and practices was mandated, the Russian recension and pronunciation of the Old-Slavonic language was imposed, foreign iconographic and musical styles were introduced, and high ecclesiastical posts were filled almost exclusively by Russians or Russified Ukrainians. Cyril Hovorun notes that during the Russian imperial expansion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries "such standard policies of colonization as suppression of native language and culture can be identified regarding Ukraine," and that following the Bolshevik revolution the Soviets "continued their imperial

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Metropolitan Ilarion (Ohienko), *The Ukrainian Church: Outlines of History of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church*. Trans. Orysia Ferbey. Winnipeg: Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, 1986, 228.

<sup>9</sup> Ohienko, *The Ukrainian Church*, 209-243.

traditions of exceptionalism and colonialism. The artificial famine during the early 1930s, Holodomor, became the pinnacle of such policies.”<sup>10</sup>

The conscious and deliberate suppression of the uniquely Ukrainian characteristics of the Church in Ukraine was most strongly facilitated by the mandatory use of the Russian language in administration and education. Ngugi wa Thiong’o, in *Decolonizing the Mind*,

Argued that language carries culture and the language of the colonizer became the means by which the ‘mental universe of the colonized’ was dominated. This applied . . . particularly to the language of writing. Whereas oral languages were frequently still heard at home, the use of literature in association with schooling resulted in the alienation of a child from the child’s history, geography, music and other aspects of culture.”<sup>11</sup>

Thiong’o’s words accurately describe the process by which the “mental universe” of the clergy and educated classes in Ukraine was colonized, resulting in the inability of a large majority of the higher clergy of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine to be able to accept or even conceive of the idea of church independence from Moscow when, as noted above, autocephaly had become the normal, expected, and accepted polity within most other Eastern European Orthodox Churches. The deleterious effects of this “colonization of the mental universe” of the leaders and higher clergy of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine which was (and to some degree still is) affiliated with the Patriarchate of Moscow continue to exist, remain a source of conflict within Ukrainian society, poison inter-Orthodox relations, and are an obstacle to Orthodox Church unity. It has been argued that the desire of Orthodox Ukrainians to achieve independence from the Moscow Patriarch has been one of the major factors contributing to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cyril Hovorun, “Is the Russian World Condemnable,” [https://www.academia.edu/94886791/Is\\_the\\_Russian\\_World\\_Condemnable](https://www.academia.edu/94886791/Is_the_Russian_World_Condemnable)

<sup>11</sup> Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. “Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory.” In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 20-43. 2nd edition. London: Zed Books, 2012, 38.

<sup>12</sup> “The autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church: a religious and sociopolitical issue,” <https://www.osmed.it/2023/04/11/the-autocephaly-of-the-ukrainian-orthodox-church-a-religious-and-sociopolitical-issue/>

As noted by Linda Smith, “the concepts of imperialism and colonialism . . . are interconnected and what is generally agreed upon is that colonialism is but one expression of imperialism.”<sup>13</sup> Colonialism and de-colonialization are often construed in terms of the activities of European empires in the Americas, Asia, or Africa. Ukraine, however, presents us with the unique example of a European people under the colonial domination of an empire which followed the same religious tradition, and therefore manifests both similarities to and differences from other decolonization movements. “Ukraine on the one hand was, and was regarded by the Muscovite state as, being a territory for colonization, but on the other hand Muscovy considered Ukraine not as something ‘other,’ but something of its own.”<sup>14</sup>

Likewise, as opposed to the colonization of Africa or the Americas where the imposition of Christianity was the introduction of something “other,” the use of Eastern Orthodoxy as a means of domination was especially effective in Ukraine given that it was the faith of both colonizer and colonized. It was not the “otherness” of the religion, but the instrumental use of the faith by imperial authorities politically, culturally, administratively, and sacramentally to influence and control the populace which constituted the main religious problematic.

Smith also notes that Europeans often regarded their colonial subjects as “primitive peoples,” as not being fully – or sometimes even partially – human, supposedly lacking the ability to use their minds or intellects, to invent things, use land and resources, or “practice the ‘arts’ of civilization.”<sup>15</sup> This also stands in contrast to the colonial experience in Ukraine, as Ukrainians possessed a certain degree of racial, social, and cultural coherence with Russians. Ukrainians in fact played an outsized role in the development of Russian culture, but the Ukrainian churchmen, intellectuals, authors, artists, and musicians who contributed to Russian imperial culture and society, as well as their work and contributions, were both regarded and portrayed as “Russian.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Smith, “Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory,” 22.

<sup>14</sup> Evstratij Zoria (Archbishop), “The Role of Orthodox and Other Christian Churches in the Process of Decolonization and Desovietization of Ukrainian Culture and Society.” In *Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the World Community of Orthodox Churches: Past, Present, and Future*. Edited by Oleksandr Sahan, Iryna Prelovska et al. (Kyiv: Spirit and Letter, 2022), 260-261. (in Ukrainian, translation my own)

<sup>15</sup> Smith, “Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory,” 26.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, David Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture, 1750 – 1850*, Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1985.

Fanon has observed that “In colonized countries, colonialism, after having made use of the natives on the battlefields, uses them as trained soldiers to put down the movements of independence.”<sup>17</sup> Changing the changeables, the same process can be observed within the life of the Russian Orthodox church in Ukraine. As noted by Serhii Plokhii,

The formation (with the active participation of Ukrainians themselves) over the course of centuries of an orthodox tradition in common with Moscow stood in opposition to the Ukrainianization of orthodox life in Ukraine. During the last decades of the 19th century, with its growth within the Russian empire, Russian nationalism as a state ideology became an important foundation for the acceleration of Russification in broad strata of the Ukrainian population.<sup>18</sup>

By the beginning of the 20th century most of the bishops of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine were either ethnic Russians or Russified Ukrainians.<sup>19</sup> Given the cultural similarity and common ecclesiastical tradition of Ukrainians and Russians, it seems reasonable to suggest that Bhabha’s concept of “colonial mimicry,” which he describes as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*”<sup>20</sup> was in all likelihood at play.

Two main types of decolonization movements can be observed, those “from below” which usually resulted in a “violent, fiercely contested process that pitted imperial rulers against colonial subjects”<sup>21</sup> and those “from above,” such as those imposed upon the defeated colonial powers following World War I, such as the establishment of Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, Poland, etc. Regarding the latter Smith notes that

Aiding their [decolonization] efforts was the peace settlement imposed by the victors, which instituted, in effect, decolonization from above. It justified the breakup of the defeated continental powers by embracing the principle of national self-determination,

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<sup>17</sup> Frantz Fanon, “On National Culture” in *Postcolonial Criticism*, (United Kingdom: Routledge, 1997.), 108.

<sup>18</sup> Serhii Plokhii, “The Theology of National Liberation” in Serhii Plokhii and P. S. Sokhan’, *Pershyi Vseukraïns’kyi pravoslavnyi tserkovnyi sobor UAPTS, 14-30 Zhovtniā 1921 roku : dokumenty i materialy [The First All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council of the UAOC, 14-30 October 1921: documents and materials]*. (Kyïv: In-t ukrains’koï arkhieohrafiï ta dzhhereloznavstva im. M.S. Hrushevs’koho, 1999), 6. (in Ukrainian, translation my own)

thereby conjoining idealism and realpolitik (a foreign policy informed by amoral self-interest). With the subsequent establishment of the League of Nations, this principle was enshrined as the new norm for international relations.<sup>22</sup>

As previously noted the term decolonization was coined in reference to Eastern European nations which had formerly been territories of the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian Empires.<sup>23</sup> Though the movement towards greater autonomy for the Church in Ukraine had been gathering steam from the end of the nineteenth century, it was only after the fall of the czarist imperial regime that concrete steps towards this goal became possible.

Between 1917 and 1921 several attempts were made to achieve Ukrainian independence. Emancipatory movements within the Church paralleled those in the political sphere. After attempts to achieve Church independence in 1917 and 1918 were suppressed by the Russian and Russophile Orthodox bishops of Ukraine the Ukrainophile constituency of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine organized a series of diocesan conferences which culminated in the 1921 gathering of an All-Ukrainian Church Sobor (general clergy-laity church council) in Kyiv. "In the history of the Ukrainian national movement and development of national identity the Sobor of 1921 also occupied a special place and played an extraordinary role."<sup>24</sup>

Several of the canons and resolutions of this council shed light upon the way the participants viewed the historical overlordship of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine. For example:

I.2 (1) That church structure based upon exclusively episcopal rule, which developed under the influence of historical circumstances and the monarchical state order of those times and which is

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<sup>19</sup> By 1915 eight of the nine diocesan, and thirteen of the fifteen vicar bishops were ethnically Russian. Bohdan Bociurkiw, "The Rise of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, 1919-22" in *Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Geoffrey A. Hosking (Edmonton, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1990), 228.

<sup>20</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 122.

<sup>21</sup> Dane Kennedy. *Decolonization*, 2.

<sup>22</sup> Smith, "Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory," 38.

<sup>23</sup> Ward, "The European Provenance of Decolonization," 237-240.

<sup>24</sup> Plokyh, "The Theology of National Liberation" 5

reflected in old canons can no longer remain and must be replaced by a conciliar model of church governance which reflects the spirit of the orthodox Christian faith.

II.5. The subjugation of the Church of one peoples (nation) by the Church of another peoples (nation) should not take place.

II.9. The coercive and forcible takeover [of the Ukrainian Church] . . . by the Muscovite patriarchs and their bishops by decree and by force . . . is anti-Christian. It was not by a Sobor [council] of the Ukrainian Church, but rather through the forcible coercion of the Muscovite gentry and kingdom that the Ukrainian Church was deprived of freedom.

This last paragraph goes on to declare that the subjugation of the Ukrainian Church by the Muscovite “contradicts the very nature of Christianity,” characterizing it as “uncanonical, immoral, and invalid.”<sup>25</sup>

As observed by Murzaku, “Favorable Politics Translate to Favorable Ecclesiastics,”<sup>26</sup> which is why these attempts to achieve Ukrainian ecclesiastical independence ultimately failed. Ukraine was forcibly integrated into the Soviet Union in 1922, and the Soviet authorities “continued [the Russian] imperial traditions of exceptionalism and colonialism.”<sup>27</sup> Following Stalin’s rehabilitation of the Moscow Patriarchate during World War II the Russian Orthodox Church – this time under the control of the Soviet government – maintained the same colonialist position toward the Church in Ukraine which had existed under the czarist regime.

The uncritical acceptance of Russian and Soviet colonialist narratives regarding Ukraine by western governments and other Orthodox Churches must also be recognized as a factor which contributed to the failure of Ukrainian emancipatory movements. Robert Conquest paints an accurate picture of the degree to which the Russian colonialist narrative had coloured the view and understanding of Ukraine within western European and North American historiography:

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<sup>25</sup> Plokhly and Sokhan, *Pershyy Vseukraïns'kyj pravoslavnyi tserkovnyi sobor UAPTS*, 375 - 377.

<sup>26</sup> Murzaku, “The Albanian Orthodox Church” 496.

<sup>27</sup> Cyril Hovorun, “Is the Russian World Condemnable,” [https://www.academia.edu/94886791/Is\\_the\\_Russian\\_World\\_Condemnable](https://www.academia.edu/94886791/Is_the_Russian_World_Condemnable)

Ukraine. . . does not declare itself as a nation in the Western consciousness as Poland or Hungary or even Lithuania do. In modern times it had a precarious and interrupted independence for only a few years. It has appeared on our maps for two centuries as merely part of the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union. Its language is comparatively close to Russian – as Dutch is to German, or Norwegian to Swedish – not in itself a touchstone of political feeling, yet tending to appear so in the absence of other knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

Statements such as “The Southern European part of Russia is the cradle of its statehood. According to legend, Kiev, the largest city in southern Russia. . .”<sup>29</sup> are characteristic of this false narrative. Such generally held and propagated dis- and mis-information regarding Ukraine, its history, and its culture could not help but influence the manner in which her historic Orthodox Church was regarded from exterior political as well as ecclesiastical perspectives. This was especially evident in the lead-up to the celebrations of the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine during the early and mid-1980's.<sup>30</sup>

At the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union the well-known author and Soviet dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn exemplified the degree to which Ukraine, in the Russian mind, was conceived of in colonial terms. In *Rebuilding Russia*, Solzhenitsyn claimed that the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarussian people compose one nation which had been divided by the Mongol invasions and Polish colonization, and that “All the talk of a separate Ukrainian people existing since something like the ninth century and possessing its own non-Russian language is a recently invented falsehood.” Yet he paradoxically went on to lament the “painful and humiliating” directives of Alexander II in 1863 and 1876 which forbade the publication of books in the (nonexistent?) Ukrainian language, which was due to “the unenlightened rigidity in questions of administrative and Church policy.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivisation and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>29</sup> Vladimir G. Seredin, Dragolub Dordevic and Rajko Bobot, ed., *Soviet Union* (New York: Mallard Press, 1989), 133.

<sup>30</sup> See Denysenko, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine*, 119 – 122 and 153 – 155.

<sup>31</sup> Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr Isaevich, and Alexis Klimoff. *Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals*. 1st ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1991), 14-15.

Unsurprisingly, Russia continued to regard Ukraine as colonial territory following the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union.<sup>32</sup> Though it has been argued that there are “good grounds for not assimilating the dissolution of the Soviet Union too closely to the historical model of decolonization”<sup>33</sup> Kennedy notes that

[Following the breakup of the Soviet Union] Russia was reluctant to release its grasp of subject peoples and territories. It fought ferociously to retain control over Chechnya and neighboring Muslim-majority regions of the Caucasus. It went to war against Georgia. It annexed the Crimea from Ukraine and encroached on its eastern provinces. These and other aggressive actions suggest that it has still not come to terms with the loss of its empire.<sup>34</sup>

In 1989 Ukrainian Orthodox clerics who realized that their faithful would not remain in a Church affiliated with Moscow left the Ukrainian Exarchate of the Moscow Patriarchate and organized the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church based in L'viv, Western Ukraine. In 1992, following the Moscow Patriarchate's refusal to grant independence to its Ukrainian parishes a breakaway group formed a parallel independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Kyiv called the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate. This resulted in the existence of three major Orthodox Christian Churches in Ukraine: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchate; the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate; and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. All of these bodies followed the same theological/spiritual/liturgical tradition, dogma, and ritual, but while the Moscow affiliated Church continued to be led by the Russian Patriarch in Moscow and use Russian and Old Slavonic for administration and worship, the Ukrainian Churches used the Ukrainian language, and were led by Ukrainian hierarchs with centres in Ukraine.

From 1991 onward the Moscow Patriarchate's affiliated church in Ukraine continued to make use of “soft power” such as canonical

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<sup>32</sup> The spokesman for the Russian president, Pavel Voshchanov, for example, publicly stated that “If those republics [Ukraine and Kazakstan] enter into a union with Russia, then there is no problem. But if they withdraw, then we must be concerned about the population living there and not forget that those lands were colonized by Russians.” Serhii Plokyh, *The Russo-Ukrainian War*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2023), cited from KOBO edition, chapter 2.

<sup>33</sup> Jan C. Jansen and Jürgen Osterhammel, *Decolonization: A Short History*, trans. Jeremiah Riemer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 19.

<sup>34</sup> Kennedy, *Decolonization*, 102.



interdictions, economic or political pressure, and occasionally the excommunication of independence minded Ukrainian clergy. In its wider program the Church of Russia adopted “deterritorialization” as a strategy, which offered “the Church the opportunity to extend its own authority beyond the realm of the Russian Federation through the invocation of its cherished concept of ‘canonical territory,’ which is viewed as superseding state boundaries.”<sup>35</sup>

Following the “Orange Revolution” of 2004, the “Revolution of Dignity” of 2013/14, and Russia’s invasion of 2014 hostility toward Russia’s post-soviet neo-colonial aspirations,<sup>36</sup> especially as embodied in the “Russian World” ideology, became greatly intensified within Ukraine. The Moscow affiliated church in Ukraine was Russia’s last remaining institutional bastion of colonial ideology there and so when, in the Spring of 2018, the Patriarchate of Constantinople responded positively to the request of the Ukrainian government and non-recognized Ukrainian Orthodox bodies to facilitate unification and autocephaly for the Orthodox Church in Ukraine the Moscow Patriarchate and its Ukrainian affiliate issued strongly worded condemnations of this action. Not limiting themselves to canonical arguments, they went so far as to characterize the potential bestowal of autocephaly upon the Orthodox Church in Ukraine as “the exploitation of the Church in a geopolitical war.”<sup>37</sup>

At the time such statements seemed hyperbolic, though tragically they were not. This underscores the crucial role its Orthodox

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<sup>35</sup> Victor Roudometof, *Globalization and Orthodox Christianity: The Transformations of a Religious Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 168.

<sup>36</sup> One of the clearest and most direct examples of Russia’s neo-colonial project was offered by President Putin in his speech “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians” on July 12th, 2021. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>

<sup>37</sup> “Autocephalous status has an exclusive technical ecclesial character, which is based upon the furtherance of the Gospel teaching on the territory of a specific country, and cannot be an instrument in a geopolitical war. Together with this, autocephalous status is given to the entire church within the borders of a particular territory. In conjunction with this it is necessary to recognize, that the appearance of another parallel jurisdiction in Ukraine can give birth to a new conflict within our nation that will not only threaten the security of the state,”

“We have always supported and will continue to support our State in questions of morality and patriotic formation, but reject the exploitation of the Church in geopolitical war” (translation my own). “Appeal to the Faithful of the UOC,” <https://news.church.ua/2018/05/25/sinod-zvernuvsyia-do-virnix-upc-shhodo-informaciji-pro-mozhlyvist-nadannya-tomosu-pro-avtokefaliyu-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-v-ukrajini/#2023-05-26>

Church has played in the decolonization of Ukraine. Twenty years ago Nathaniel Davis wrote:

If the Moscow Patriarchate should play its cards astutely enough in the political breakaway of Ukraine, it might be able to prevent a hostile ecclesiastical separation. It will be necessary, however, to infuse the present “autonomous” Ukrainian Orthodox Church – still part of the patriarchal establishment – with the substance of independence and ultimately to grant autocephaly. The other alternative, of course, would be the ultimate political reincorporation of Ukraine into a restored Great Russian state – a bloody enterprise.<sup>38</sup>

In conclusion, Ukrainian anti-colonial and anti-imperial movements bear both similarities and differences to those of the so-called “third world” and “global south.” Oppression based upon ethnic origin; the suppression of native language and cultural forms; imposition of the colonizers’ language; the imposition of both state and church officials from the colonizers’ ethnic group, etc. can be observed in Russia’s historic colonial domination of Ukraine and Ukrainians.

It is clear that the Russian Orthodox Church has been a vehicle for the colonial oppression of the Orthodox faithful of Ukraine. Should Russia’s current genocidal invasion of Ukraine be successful there is no reason to doubt that the Moscow Patriarchate, in collusion with the Russian government and its neo-imperialist program, will continue to do everything possible to eradicate all vestiges of Ukrainian church independence as they have done in the past and are currently doing in the occupied territories of Ukraine.<sup>39</sup>

Post-colonial and post-imperial theory offer a useful tool for the analysis of Russia’s colonization of Ukraine and its current neo-imperial project. Within this context the emancipation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has played and continues to play a central, even an out-sized role in Ukraine’s “violent and fiercely contested process” of “decolonization from below.”

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<sup>38</sup> Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk To Church: A Contemporary History Of Russian Orthodoxy*, 2nd ed. (Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018), 243.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, “Many priests and pastors, such as I, were persecuted” during the “Religious Freedom Under Attack: Russia’s Actions in Occupied Ukraine” presentation which was held under the auspices of the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference on October 7th, 2024. “Regarding the overall number of recorded events – as of 1 December 2023 there were at least 630 documented episodes of unlawful acts committed against religious institutions.” In the occupied territories only the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is permitted to function without restrictions. <https://ccl.org.ua/news/vidbuvsya-sajd-ivent-shhodo-obmezheniya-religijnoyi-svobody-pid-chas-warsaw-human-dimension-conference/>

# НЕЗАЛЕЖНІСТЬ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ПРАВОСЛАВНОЇ ЦЕРКВИ ЯК ДЕКОЛОНІЗАЦІЙНИЙ РУХ

Отець Богдан Гладьо

*Оксфордський словник англійської мови* визначає деколонізацію як «виведення колоніальної держави зі своїх колишніх колоній; набуття політичної чи економічної незалежності такими колоніями». Ключовими словами в цьому визначенні є «виведення» та «набуття», терміни, які позначають свідомі фінансові операції, що здійснюються за взаємною згодою... Така мова та образи сприймають крах імперій і появу нових національних держав у десятиліття після Другої Світової Війни як консенсусний процес, мирну передачу суверенітету. Ніщо не могло бути дальшим від істини: деколонізація була насильницьким, запеклим процесом, який протиставив імперських правителів проти колоніальних підданих...<sup>1</sup>

*Православна Церква в Україні: століття розлуки*<sup>2</sup> Миколи Денисенка можна прочитати як розповідь про боротьбу Православних українців за звільнення від підпорядкування Московському патріархату та створення незалежної або автокефальної Церкви.<sup>3</sup> Ця боротьба була і досі є «жорстоким і

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<sup>1</sup> Дейн Кеннеді, *Деколонізація: дуже короткий вступ* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Микола Денисенко *Православна Церква в Україні: століття розділень* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Автокефалія (дослівно «самоуправління») функціонально еквівалентна політичному державному устрою, оскільки автокефальні Православні Церкви є адміністративно незалежними, мають право керувати всіма аспектами свого внутрішнього життя, обирати своїх власних ієрархів, вести власні зовнішні церковні відносини та приймати рішення щодо всіх внутрішніх адміністративних та дисциплінарних справ без відношення до будь-якої іншої автокефальної церкви. Однак ця незалежність не стосується догматичних питань. Як і державність, автокефальний статус набуває легітимності в тій мірі, в якій його визнають інші автокефальні церкви.

запеклим» рухом за деколонізацію, і загалом йшла паралельно з українськими рухами за національну незалежність, які відбувалися протягом двадцятого століття.

Термін «деколонізація» вперше з'явився в англійській мові стосовно країн Східної Європи, які раніше були територією Османської, Габсбурзької чи Російської імперій і отримали державність після Першої Світової Війни.<sup>4</sup> Протягом десятиліть після цієї війни Православні Церкви новоутворених країн Польщі, Чехословаччини, Албанії, Фінляндії та Прибалтики досягли автокефалії чи автономії в результаті розпаду цих імперій. Православна Церква в Україні, однак, через постійне колоніальне панування Радянської держави та Російської Православної Церкви цього не зробила. Лише у 2019 році Православна Церква в Україні була визнана автокефальною Вселенським Константинопольським Патріархатом, рішення, яке було і залишається суперечливим серед Православних Церков.<sup>5</sup>

Після того, як я викладу стислі підсумки східно-православної еkleзіології та історії Української Православної Церкви, я проаналізую особливості українських православних рухів за незалежність з точки зору деколоніальної, постколоніальної та постімперської теорії, покажу подібності та відмінності між українськими православними деколонізаційними рухами та іншими, і врешті-решт покажати, як ці українські православні рухи за незалежність чітко вважалися (і продовжують розглядатися) як деколонізаційні рухи з української перспективи, так і російські імперські, радянські та російські неоімперські перспективи.

Основоположним принципом східної православної еkleзіології є те, що кожна помісна Церква є незалежною, або автокефальною. У доконстантинівську епоху кожна Християнська громада на чолі з єпископом була де-факто автокефальною, але до п'ятого

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<sup>4</sup> Стюарт Ворд, «Європейське походження деколонізації», *Past & Present* 230 (Лютий 2016): 237-240.

<sup>5</sup> Нині з чотирнадцяти загальноновизнаних автокефальних Православних Церков автокефалію Православної Церкви України визнають лише Константинопольська, Олександрійська, Кіпрська та Єлладська.

століття відбувся перехід від спільнотної до імпероцентричної концепції автокефалії, що призвело до встановлення «Пентархії», що складалася з п'яти першопрестолів Риму, Константинополя, Александрії, Антіохії та Єрусалиму. Після надання Московській Церкві патріаршого статусу в 1589 році та заснування Російської імперії у вісімнадцятому столітті Російська Православна Церква прийняла імперську модель церковного управління, яка стала концептуально нормативною у візантійському православ'ї, згідно з якою Церква і держава працювали узгоджено, згідно політики державного устрою, який часто описують термінами «симфонія» або «цезаропапізм».

Візантійська імперія була завойована турками-османами в 1453 році нашої ери, після чого султан призначив патріарха Константинопольського лідером усіх східних Православних Християн в Османській імперії. Наприкінці 19-го та на початку 20-го століть на Балканах виникли рухи за політичну незалежність, що призвело до створення держав Греції, Болгарії, Сербії та Румунії. Революції 19-го століття, які призвели до заснування цих національних держав, відбувалися паралельно з церковними рухами за деколонізацію, що призвело до створення на цих землях автокефальних Православних Церков. Ця церковна деколонізація була більш-менш суперечливою (дуже в Болгарії, помірно в Греції та Румунії, мінімально в Сербії) і дуже стежила за рухами за політичну незалежність. Тоді як автокефалія в стародавній Церкві була вкорінена в місцевій громаді, а після IV століття стала атрибутом імперії,<sup>6</sup> з появою національної держави наприкінці 19-го століття та розпадом імперій після Першої Світової Війни концепція «незалежної Церкви в незалежній державі» стала вважатися нормативною в східному Православ'ї: «Як мовиться: незалежна країна йде рука об руку з незалежною Церквою.»<sup>7</sup>

У десятому столітті території, які зараз є частиною України, Білорусі та Західної Росії, були частиною конфедерації, відомої

<sup>6</sup> Кирило Говорун, «Твердині: автокефалія» Риштовання Церкви: Вбік Постструктуральної Еклезіології (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017), 88-127.

<sup>7</sup> Інес Анджелі Мурзаку, «Албанська Православна Церква» в Едвард Г. Фарруджа, С. Дж. – Желько Паса С. Дж. (ред.), *Автокефалія: повноліття у співпраці. Історичні, канонічні, літургійні та богословські дослідження*, томи. I-II, (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 314-315, Rome 2023), 497. Дивіться також Андрій Партикевич, *Між Києвом і Константинополем*, (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1998), 79. Прикладів можна було б примножити.

як Київська Русь. Великий князь Володимир Київський, який на той час був провідним центром цієї конфедерації, був охрещений емісарами з Константинополя приблизно в 988 році нашої ери, і Київ став митрополією в межах церковної юрисдикції Константинопольського Патріархату. Після пограбування Києва в 1240 році н.е. його єпископ переїхав на північ до Володимира, тодішньої Московії. З XIV по XVII століття територія сучасної України входила до складу Речі Посполитої, а її резиденційний єпископ-митрополит залишався під юрисдикцією Константинополя. Православна Церква на території сучасної України від свого заснування в X до XVII століть створювала і розвивала свою особливу церковну культуру і державний устрій.

У XVII столітті Україна була політично (1654 р. н. е.) і церковно (1686 р. н. е.) підпорядкована Москві. У 1721 році Петро Перший (1672 – 1725) видав указ про створення Російської імперії, скасував інститут патріархату, перебудував церковне управління за протестантським зразком і поставив Російську Православну Церкву під державний контроль. Катерина Велика (1729 – 1796) згодом «скасувала стару українську громадянську автономію, яка була згідно з магдебурзьким правом і Литовським статутом [що] поклато кінець громадянській свободі всієї України.»<sup>8</sup> Православні Церкви в імперії були підпорядковані Російській Церкві з нав'язуванням російської мовної, музичної та літургійної практики.<sup>9</sup> Були стерті українські церковні особливості, придушено соборний устрій Київської Митрополії, запроваджено використання московських, а не київських богослужбових книг і практик, нав'язано російську редакцію та вимову старослов'янської мови, іноземні іконографічні та музичні стилі. Високі церковні посади обіймали майже виключно росіяни або зрусифіковані українці. Кирило Говорун зазначає, що під час російської імперської експансії у вісімнадцятому та дев'ятнадцятому століттях «стосовно України можна виявити таку стандартну політику колонізації, як придушення рідної мови та культури», і що після більшовицької революції совети

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<sup>8</sup> Див., наприклад, Митрополит Іларіон (Огієнко), *Українська Церква: Нариси Історії Української Православної Церкви*. Вінніпег: Українська Православна Церква Канади, 1986, 228.

<sup>9</sup> Огієнко, *Українська Церква*, 209-243.

«продовжили свої імперські традиції винятковості» і колоніалізм. Вершиною такої політики став штучний голод на початку 30-х років, Голодомор». <sup>10</sup>

Свідомому й цілеспрямованому придушенню самотнього українського характеру Церкви в Україні найбільше сприяло обов'язкове використання російської мови в управлінні та освіті. Нгуґі ва Тхіонґо, у Декolonізації Розуму, стверджував, що мова є носієм культури, а мова колонізатора стала засобом, за допомогою якого панував «ментальний всесвіт колонізованих». Це було застосовано. . . особливо щодо мови, письма. У той час як усну мову часто все ще чули вдома, використання літератури в поєднанні зі шкільним навчанням призводило до відчуження дитини від її історії, географії, музики та інших аспектів культури». <sup>11</sup>

Слова Тхіонґо точно описують процес колонізації «ментального всесвіту» духовенства та освічених класів в Україні, що призвело до неспроможності значної більшості вищого духовенства Православної Церкви в Україні прийняти або навіть уявити ідею церковної незалежності від Москви, коли, як зазначалося вище, автокефалія стала нормальним, очікуваним і прийнятим державним порядком у більшості інших східноєвропейських Православних Церквах. Згубні наслідки цієї «колонізації ментального всесвіту» лідерів і вищого духовенства Православної Церкви в Україні, яка була (і певною мірою досі є) пов'язаною з Московським Патріархатом, продовжують існувати, залишаються джерелом конфлікту всередині Українського суспільства, отруюють міжправославні стосунки, є перешкодою єдності Православної Церкви. Стверджується, що бажання православних українців здобути незалежність від Московського патріарха було одним із головних факторів, які сприяли повномасштабному вторгненню Росії в Україну у 2022 році.

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<sup>10</sup> Кирило Говорун «Чи можливо осудити русский мир»  
[https://www.academia.edu/94886791/Is\\_the\\_Russian\\_World\\_Condemnable](https://www.academia.edu/94886791/Is_the_Russian_World_Condemnable)

<sup>11</sup> Сміт, Лінда Тухівай. «Імперіалізм, історія, писання та теорія». У методології деколонізації: дослідження та корінні народи, 20-43. 2nd edition. London: Zed Books, 2012, 38.

Як зазначила Лінда Сміт, «концепції імперіалізму та колоніалізму... вони взаємопов'язані, і загально визнано те, що колоніалізм є лише одним з проявів імперіалізму».<sup>13</sup> Колоніалізм і деколоніалізацію часто тлумачать у термінах діяльності європейських імперій в Америці, Азії чи Африці. Однак Україна представляє нам унікальний приклад європейського народу під колоніальним пануванням імперії, який дотримувався тієї самої релігійної традиції, а тому демонструє як схожість, так і відмінність від інших рухів деколонізації. «Україна, з одного боку, була і розглядалася Московською державою як територія для колонізації, але з іншого боку Московія вважала Україну не як щось «інше», а як щось своє».<sup>14</sup>

Так само, на відміну від колонізації Африки чи Америки, де нав'язування Християнства було впровадженням чогось «іншого», використання Східного Православ'я як засобу панування було особливо ефективним в Україні, враховуючи, що це була віра як колоніального населення так і колонізаторів. Основною релігійною проблемою була не «інакшість» релігії, а інструментальне використання віри імперською владою в політичному, культурному, адміністративному та сакраментальному планах для впливу та контролю над населенням.

Сміт також зазначає, що європейці часто вважали своїх колоніальних підданих «примітивними народами», такими, що не є повністю – або іноді навіть і не частково – людьми, нібито не мають здатності використовувати свій розум чи інтелект, винаходити речі, використовувати землю та ресурси або «практикувати «мистецтво» цивілізації.»<sup>15</sup> Це не дуже відображається у колоніальному досвіді України, оскільки українці мали певний ступінь расової, соціальної та культурної єдності з росіянами. Українці фактично відіграли величезну роль у розвитку російської культури, але українських церковників,

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<sup>13</sup> Сміт, «Імперіалізм, історія, письмо і теорія», 22.

<sup>14</sup> Євстратій Зоря (архієпископ), «Роль Православних та інших Християнських Церков у процесі деколонізації та десовєтизації української культури та суспільства». *Українське Православ'я у світовій спільноті Православних Церков: минуле, сучасне, майбутнє*. За редакцією Олександра Сагана, Ірини Преловської та ін. (Київ: Дух і Літера, 2022), 260-261.

<sup>15</sup> Сміт, «Імперіалізм, історія, письмо і теорія», 26.



інтелектуалів, письменників, художників і музикантів, які зробили внесок у російську імперську культуру та суспільство, а також їхню працю та внесок, вважали та зображували як «Російська.»<sup>16</sup>

Фанон зауважив, що «в колонізованих країнах колоніалізм, використавши тубільців на полях битв, використовує їх як навчених солдатів для придушення рухів за незалежність.»<sup>17</sup> *Mutatis mutandis* (*Mutatis mutandis*), такий же процес можна спостерігати і в житті Російської Православної Церкви в Україні. Як зазначив Сергій Плохій,

На протипагу українізації Православного життя в Україні стояло формування (за активної участі самих українців) протягом століть спільної з Москвою Православної традиції. В останні десятиліття XIX ст., з ростом у Російській імперії, російський націоналізм як державна ідеологія став важливою основою для прискорення русифікації широких верств українського населення.<sup>18</sup>

До початку XX століття більшість єпископів Православної Церкви в Україні були або етнічними росіянами, або русифікованими українцями.<sup>19</sup> Враховуючи культурну подібність і спільне віроісповідання українців і росіян, здається розумним припустити, що концепція Бхабхи про «колоніальну мімікрію», яку він описує як «прагнення до реформованого, впізнаваного Іншого, як суб'єкта відмінності, яка є майже тим самим, але не зовсім»<sup>20</sup> цілком імовірно, був у грі.

Можна спостерігати два основних типи рухів за деколонізацію, рухи «знизу», які зазвичай призводили до «жорстокого, запеклого

<sup>16</sup> Див., наприклад, Девід Сондерс, *Вплив України на російську культуру, 1750 – 1850*, Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1985.

<sup>17</sup> Франц Фанон, «Про національну культуру» в *Постколоніальній критиці*, (Великобританія: Routledge, 1997.), 108.

<sup>18</sup> Сергій Плохій, «Богослов'я національного визволення» в Сергій Плохій і П. С. Сохань, *Перший Всеукраїнський Православний Церковний Собор УАПЦ, 14-30 жовтня 1921 року: документи і матеріали*. (Київ: Ін-т української археографії та джерелознавства ім. М.С. Грушевського, 1999), 6.

<sup>19</sup> До 1915 року вісім із дев'яти єпархіальних і тринадцять із п'ятнадцяти вікарних єпископів були етнічними росіянами. Богдан Боцюрків, «Повстання Української Автокефальної Православної Церкви, 1919-22» в *Церква, Нація і Держава в Росії та Україні*, ред. Джеффри А. Хоскінг (Edmonton, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1990), 228.

<sup>20</sup> Хомі Бхабха, *Розташування культури* (Лондон: Routledge, 1994), 122.

<sup>21</sup> Дейн Кеннеді. *Деколонізація*, 2.

змагального процесу, який протиставив імперських правителів проти колоніальних підданих»<sup>21</sup> і ті «згори», як-от ті, що були нав'язані переможеним колоніальним державам після Першої Світової Війни, як-от заснування Чехословаччини, Естонії, Фінляндії, Польщі тощо. Стосовно останнього Сміт зазначає, що Допомагаючи їхнім [деколонізаційним] зусиллям було мирним врегулюванням, нав'язане переможцями, яке, по суті, започаткувало деколонізацію зверху. Він виправдовував розпад переможених континентальних держав, приймаючи принцип національного самовизначення, таким чином поєднуючи ідеалізм і реалполітік (realpolitic) (зовнішня політика, сформована аморальним власним інтересом). З подальшим створенням Ліги Націй цей принцип був закріплений як нова норма міжнародних відносин.<sup>22</sup>

Як зазначалося раніше, термін «деколонізація» був введений стосовно країн Східної Європи, які раніше були територіями Османської, Австро-Угорської та Російської імперій.<sup>23</sup> Хоча рух до більшої автономії Церкви в Україні набирив обертів з кінця дев'ятнадцятого століття, лише після падіння царського імперського режиму стали можливими конкретні кроки до цієї мети.

У 1917–1921 роках було зроблено кілька спроб добитися незалежності України. Емансипаційні рухи всередині Церкви йшли паралельно з рухами в політичній сфері. Після того, як спроби домогтися незалежності Церкви в 1917 і 1918 рр. були придушені російськими і русофільськими Православними єпископами України, українофільський рух Православної Церкви в Україні організував серію єпархіальних конференцій, кульмінацією яких став 1921 р. Всеукраїнський Церковний Собор у Києві. «В історії українського національного руху та розвитку національної ідентичності Собор 1921 року також посів особливе місце і відіграв надзвичайну роль.»<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Сміт, «Імперіалізм, історія, письмо і теорія», 38.

<sup>23</sup> Ворд, «Європейське походження деколонізації», 237–240.

<sup>24</sup> Плохій «Теологія національного визволення» 5

Де кілька канонів і постанов цього Собору проливають світло на те, як учасники бачили історичне панування Московського Патріархату в Україні. Наприклад:

I.2 (1) Церковна структура, заснована виключно на єпископському правлінні, яка розвинулася під впливом історичних обставин і монархічного державного устрою того часу і яка відображена в старих канонах, не може більше залишатися і повинна бути замінена соборною моделлю церковного управління, яке відображає дух Православної Християнської Віри.

II.5. Підкорення Церкви одного народу (нації) Церквою іншого народу (нації) не повинно бути.

II.9. Примусове і насильницьке захоплення [Української Церкви] . . . московськими патріархами та їхніми єпископами указом і силою . . . є антихристиянським. Не Собором Української Церкви, а через силовий примус московської шляхти і царства Українська Церква була позбавлена волі.

Цей останній абзац далі заявляє, що підкорення Української Церкви московитом «суперечить самій природі Християнства», характеризуючи його як «неканонічний, аморальний і недійсний».<sup>25</sup>

Як зазначив Мурзаку, «Результат Сприятливої Політики – це Сприятливої Еклезіастики,»<sup>26</sup> і через це ці спроби добитися української церковної незалежності остаточно провалилися. Україна була насильно інтегрована до Радянського Союзу в 1922 році, і радянська влада «продовжувала [російські] імперські традиції винятковості та колоніалізму.»<sup>27</sup> Після реабілітації Сталіном Московського Патріархату під час Другої Світової Війни Російська Православна Церква – цього разу під контролем радянського уряду – зберегла таку ж колонізаторську позицію щодо Церкви в Україні, яка існувала за царського режиму.

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<sup>25</sup> Плохий і Сохан, Перший Всеукраїнський Православний Церковний Собор УАПЦ, 375 - 377.

<sup>26</sup> Мурзаку, «Албанська Православна Церква» 496.

<sup>27</sup> Кирило Говорун «Чи можливо осудити російський мир» [https://www.academia.edu/94886791/Is\\_the\\_Russian\\_World\\_Condemnable](https://www.academia.edu/94886791/Is_the_Russian_World_Condemnable)

Некритичне прийняття російських і радянських колонізаторських наративів щодо України західними урядами та іншими Православними Церквами також слід визнати фактором, який сприяв поразці українських визвольних рухів. Роберт Конквест малює точну картину того, якою мірою російський колонізаторський наратив вплинув на погляд і розуміння України в західноєвропейській та північноамериканській історіографії:

Україна... не декларує себе як націю в західній свідомості, як це роблять Польща чи Угорщина чи навіть Литва. У наш час вона мала нестійку та перервану незалежність лише на кілька років. Вона з'являлася на наших картах протягом двох століть лише як частина Російської Імперії чи Радянського Союзу. Її мова відносно близька до російської – як голландська до німецької або норвезька до шведської – сама по собі не є критерієм політичних почуттів, але має тенденцію виглядати такою за відсутності інших знань.<sup>28</sup>

Висловлювання на кшталт «Південноєвропейська частина Росії є колискою її державності. За переказами, Київ найбільше місто Південної Росії...»<sup>29</sup> є характерними для цієї фальшивого наративу. Така загальноприйнята та поширена дезінформація щодо України, її історії та культури не могла не вплинути на те, як її історичну Православну Церкву розглядали як з зовнішньої політичної, так і з церковної точок зору. Особливо це виявилось напередодні святкувань Тисячоліття Християнства в Русі-Україні на початку та в середині 1980-х років.<sup>30</sup>

Під час розпаду Радянського Союзу відомий письменник і радянський дисидент Олександр Солженіцин показав, якою мірою Україна у свідомості росіян сприймалася як колонія. У «Відбудові Росії» Солженіцин стверджував, що російський, український і білоруський народи складають одну націю, яку розділили монгольські вторгнення та польська колонізація, і що «всі розмови про окремих український народ, який існує приблизно з дев'ятого століття і володіє своєю власною

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<sup>28</sup> Роберт Конквест, *Жнива Скорботи: Радянська Колективізація та Терористський Голод* (Нью-Йорк: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>29</sup> Володимир Г. Середін, Драголюб Дордевич і Райко Бобот, ред., *Радянський Союз* (Нью-Йорк: Mallard Press, 1989), 133.

<sup>30</sup> Див. Денисенко, *Православна Церква в Україні*, 119 – 122 та 153 – 155.

неросійською мовою – це нещодавно вигадана брехня». Проте далі він парадоксальним чином оплакував «болючі й принизливі» директиви Олександра II у 1863 і 1876 роках, які забороняли видання книжок (неіснуючою?) українською мовою, що сталося через «неосвічену жорсткість в питаннях адміністративної та церковної політики».<sup>31</sup>

Не дивно, що Росія продовжувала розглядати Україну як колоніальну територію після розпаду Радянського Союзу в 1991 році.<sup>32</sup> Хоча стверджується, що є «вагомні підстави не асимілювати розпад Радянського Союзу надто близько до історичної моделі деколонізації»<sup>33</sup> Кеннеді зазначає, що:

[Після розпаду Радянського Союзу] Росія не бажала відмовлятися від своїх підвладних народів і територій. Вона вела запеклу боротьбу за збереження контролю над Чечнею та сусідніми регіонами Кавказу з більшістю мусульман. Вона пішла війною проти Грузії. Вона анексувала в Україні Крим і зазіхнула на її східні провінції. Ці та інші агресивні дії свідчать про те, що вона досі не змирилася з втратою своєї імперії.<sup>34</sup>

У 1989 році українські православні священнослужителі, які зрозуміли, що їхні вірні не залишаться в Церкві, пов'язаній з Москвою, вийшли з Українського екзархату Московського Патріархату та організували Українську Автокефальну Православну Церкву з центром у Львові, Західна Україна. У 1992 році, після відмови Московського Патріархату надати незалежність своїм українським парафіям, група яка відкололася утворила паралельну незалежну Українську Православну Церкву в Києві під назвою Українська Православна Церква Київського Патріархату. Це призвело до існування трьох основних Православних Церков в Україні: Українська Православна Церква Московського Патріархату; Українська Православна Церква Київського Патріархату; та Українська Автокефальної

<sup>31</sup> Солженіцин, Олександр Ісайович, Олексій Клімов. Відбудова Росії: роздуми та попередні пропозиції. 1-е вид. (Нью-Йорк: Фаррар, Штраус і Жіру, 1991), 14-15.

<sup>32</sup> Прес-секретар російського президента Павло Вошанов, наприклад, публічно заявив, що «якщо ці республіки [Україна і Казахстан] вступають в союз з Росією, то проблем немає. Але якщо вони відступають, то ми повинні потурбуватися про населення, яке там проживає, і не забувати, що ці землі були колонізовані росіянами». Сергій Плохій, Російсько-Українська війна, (Нью-Йорк: W.W. Norton, 2023), цит. з видання КОВО, розділ 2.

<sup>33</sup> Ян К. Янсен і Юрген Остергаммель, *Деколонізація: Коротка історія*, пер. Jeremiah Riemer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 19.

<sup>34</sup> Кеннеді, *Деколонізація*, 102.

Православна Церква. Усі ці структури дотримувалися тієї самої богословської/духовної/літургійної традиції, догмату та ритуалу, але в той час як московська Церква продовжувала керуватися російським патріархом у Москві та використовувала російську та старослов'янську мови для управління та богослужіння, українські Церкви використовували українську мову, і їх очолювали українські ієрархи з центрами в Україні.

Починаючи з 1991 року дочірня Церква Московського Патріархату в Україні продовжувала використовувати «м'яку силу», як-от канонічні заборони, економічний чи політичний тиск, а іноді й відлучення від Церкви українського духовенства, яке було налаштованим на незалежність. У своїй ширшій програмі Російська Церква прийняла «детериторіалізацію» як стратегію, яка пропонувала «Церкві можливість поширити власну владу за межами Російської Федерації через використання її заповітної концепції «канонічної території», яка розглядаються як заміна державних кордонів.»<sup>35</sup>

Після «Помаранчевої Революції» 2004 року, «Революції Гідності» 2013/14 років та вторгнення Росії у 2014 році ворожість до пострадянських неоколоніальних прагнень Росії,<sup>36</sup> особливо втілених в ідеології «руського мира», значно посилювалися в Україні. Московська афілійована Церква в Україні була останнім інституційним бастионом Росії колоніальної ідеології, тому коли навесні 2018 року Константинопольський Патріархат позитивно відповів на прохання українського уряду та невизнаних українських Православних церков сприяти об'єднанню та автокефалії Православної Церкви в Україні Московський Патріархат та його українська філія виступили з різким засудженням цієї дії. Не обмежуючись канонічними аргументами, вони дійшли до того, що кваліфікували потенційне дарування автокефалії Православній Церкві в Україні як «експлуатацію Церкви в геополітичній війні.»<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Віктор Рудометов, Глобалізація та Православне Християнство: трансформації релігійної традиції (Нью-Йорк: Routledge, 2014), 168.

<sup>36</sup> Один із найяскравіших і найпряміших прикладів неоколоніального проекту Росії запропонував президент Путін у своїй промові «Про історичну єдність росіян і українців» 12 липня 2021 року. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>

<sup>37</sup> «Автокефальний статус має суто технічний церковний характер, який полягає у сприянні проповіді Євангелія на території окремої держави, і не може бути інструментом у геополітичній боротьбі. Разом з тим, автокефальний статус надається всій Церкві в рамках певної території. У зв'язку з цим необхідно усвідомлювати, що поява іншої паралельної юрисдикції в Україні може породити нові протистояння всередині нашого народу, що не тільки загрожуватиме безпеці держави», «Ми завжди сприяли та будемо сприяти Державі у питаннях морального та патріотичного виховання, але виступаємо проти використання Церкви в геополітичній боротьбі.» «Звернення до вірних УПЦ» <https://news.church.ua/2018/05/25/sinod-zvernuvsya-do-virnix-upc-shhodo-informaciji-pro-mozhlivist-nadannya-tomosu-pro-avtokefaliyu-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-v-ukrajini/#2023-05-26>

У той час такі заяви здавалися гіперболічними, хоча, на жаль, не були ними. Це підкреслює вирішальну роль Православної Церкви в деколонізації України. Двадцять років тому Натаніал Дейвіс написав:

Якщо Московський Патріархат досить спритно розіграє свої карти в політичному розколі України, він міг би запобігти ворожому церковному відокремленню. Однак необхідно буде наповнити нинішню «автономну» Українську Православну Церкву, яка все ще є частиною патріаршого встановлення, субстанцією незалежності та, зрештою, надати автокефалію. Іншою альтернативою, звичайно, було б остаточне політичне приєднання України до відновленої великоросійської держави – кривавої кампанії.<sup>38</sup>

Підсумовуючи, українські антиколоніальні та антиімперські рухи мають як схожість, так і відмінності з рухами так званого «третього світу» та «глобального Півдня». Гноблення за етнічним походженням; придушення рідної мови та культурних форм; нав'язування мови колонізаторів; насадження як державних, так і церковних чиновників з етнічної групи колонізаторів тощо можна спостерігати в історичному колоніальному пануванні Росії над Україною та українцями.

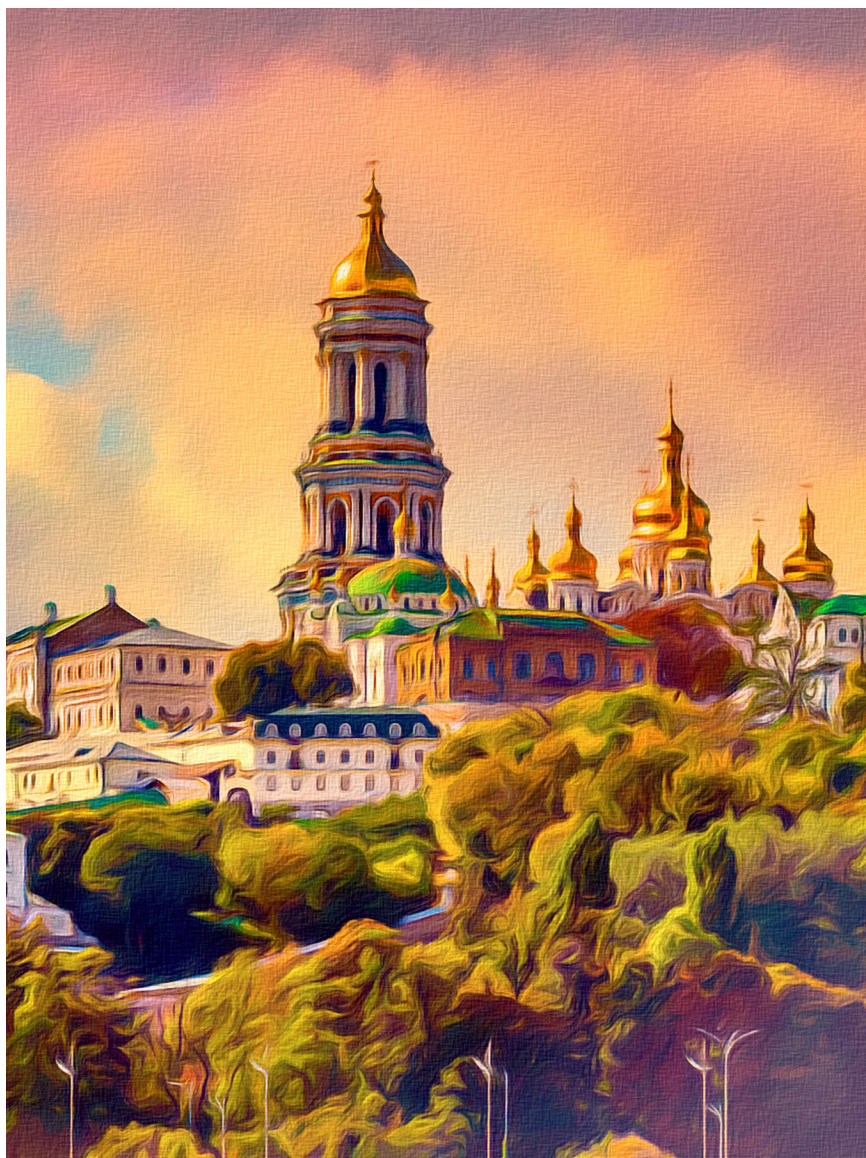
Зрозуміло, що Російська Православна Церква була засобом колоніального гноблення Православних вірних України. Якщо нинішнє геноцидне вторгнення Росії в Україну буде успішним, немає підстав сумніватися, що Московський Патріархат, у змові з російським урядом та його неоімперіалістичною програмою, продовжить робити все можливе, щоб викоринити всі залишки української церковної незалежності, як вони це робили в минулому і зараз роблять на окупованих територіях України.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Натаніель Дейвіс, Довгий Шлях до Церкви: Сучасна історія російського православ'я, 2-е вид. (Voca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018), 243.

<sup>39</sup> Дивіться, наприклад, «Багато священників і пасторів, таких як я, були переслідувані» під час презентації «Релігійна свобода під ударом: дії Росії в окупованій Україні», яка відбулася під егідою Варшавської конференції людського виміру 7 жовтня 2024 року. «Щодо загальної кількості зафіксованих подій – станом на 1 грудня 2023 року їх було не менше 630 задокументовані епізоди протиправних дій щодо релігійних установ». На окупованих територіях без обмежень дозволено діяти лише Російській Православній Церкві Московського патріархату. <https://ccl.org.ua/news/vidbuvsya-sajd-ivent-shhodo-obmezheniya-religijnoyi-svobody-pid-chas-warsaw-human-dimension-conference/>

Постколоніальна та постімперська теорія є корисним інструментом для аналізу російської колонізації України та її поточного неоімперського проекту. У цьому контексті звільнення Української Православної Церкви відіграла і продовжує відігравати центральну, навіть надзвичайно важливу роль в українському «насильницькому та жорсткому процесі» «деколонізації знизу».





**PLURALISM, POLARIZATION,  
AND DISCERNMENT;  
THE CHALLENGE AND PROMISE OF  
DIVERSITY IN SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY**

V. REV. DOUGLAS ANTHONY PERKINS



*The Church needs different people. All - both those who are distinguished by a gentle disposition and those who are severe in temper - bring their ministry to the Church. The human body needs different food - both sweet and sour, even bitter dandelion leaves are needed. After all, every food has its own substances and vitamins. Likewise, the Body of the Church needs people of any kind. One person makes up for the temper of another. Each of us is obliged to endure not only the peculiarities of the spiritual makeup of our neighbor, but even those weaknesses that exist in him as a person. Unfortunately, some have unreasonable complaints about others. They want everyone to be of the same spiritual make-up as themselves, and when another person differs from them, for example, in a more condescending or harsh character, they immediately come to the conclusion that he is not a spiritual person. - St. Paisios the Athonite*

## **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The people of the United States are increasingly polarized, most notably by ideology and partisanship (Barber and Pope 2019). This polarization is affective, marked by strong out-group antipathy and distrust (Mason 2017). The strong in-group attachment to an ideology makes the divisions it describes primary. As polarization increases, cross-cutting and universalizing identities become less salient (McCoy et al 2018), making moderation, pan-ideological empathy, and compromise more difficult. This has huge implications for discernment. In a polarized society, tribal<sup>2</sup> identity is the primary

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented the Conference on "Evil and Spiritual Combat in a Time of Pandemic" at Union Theological Seminary, New York NY in 2020.

<sup>2</sup> I am using this word as it is used in moral psychology (e.g. Haidt (2012).

lens of comprehension. Tribal concerns and values naturally frame every issue in a way that delegitimizes other lenses and framings. Dehumanization and demonization of the other and the justification of the self become the default mode of analysis. This problem is attenuated by social media due to the lack of empathetic cues/reinforcers, echo chambering, and the ease of confirmation (even for fringes). Moreover, a year of isolation and non-stop negative politicking reinforced the emotions (especially anger and fear) that strengthened tribal animus.

While political polarization may seem “normal”, it is getting worse (Iyengar and Krupenkin 2018), and it is not clear that our political institutions and culture are robust enough to channel it in a way that preserves the freedoms and efficiencies of liberal democracy (McCoy et al 2018; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2018). It has also made its way into the Orthodox Church, which is seeing a similar erosion in its unity, vitality, and ability to perform its core functions (Hovorun 2018). While addressing such challenges is important, here I am less interested in how polarization is affecting our institutions than in what is doing to our ability to know. Specifically, I am interested in how it affects our scientific and spiritual discernment.

Because they recognize how unreliable our fallen psychology and sociology are and how difficult it is for us to be objective, both science and Orthodox Christianity have developed individual and social methods to improve objectivity. Both work best when diversity is accepted, respected, and celebrated and break down when it is not. Because it stigmatizes diversity and dehumanizes the other, polarization blinds us and thus limits our ability to live and serve well.<sup>3</sup> In the next sections of this paper I provide simplified descriptions of the scientific and Orthodox methods of discernment and how they are affected by polarization, providing examples of ways diversity has advanced our sight and its lack has limited it. After that, I describe what a society that was set up to see clearly would look like and the primary virtues its members would cultivate. I conclude with a theological reflection on why diversity is such a vital part of knowing.

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<sup>3</sup> Haidt summarizes the social psychology behind this in part three of *The Righteous Mind* saying that it both “binds and blinds” us. Greene (2013) put it this way; “morality evolved to avert the Tragedy of the Commons” but it did not evolve to avert the problem of harmony between groups that adopted different moral solutions (p. 26). While Haidt’s solution is mainly about tolerance and appreciation of the other, Greene’s is to create a meta-morality that everyone could buy into that would allow us to solve moral disputes without compromising the moral integrity of any group.

## Seeing the Truth in and through Science: The Scientific Method

A repeatable finding in psychology is that people notice what they expect to notice. While this tendency has social benefits, it creates a clear challenge to objectivity. Even when we notice evidence that challenges our expectations, we subject it to greater scrutiny than we do confirming evidence. Instead of the “can I accept this” that we give to things we expect, we ask; “do I have to believe this” of things we do not. Worldviews, to include ideology, establish our expectations. This provides adds cohesion to groups, but it does so at the cost of discernment. There are situations where in-group discipline is more important than objectivity<sup>4</sup>, but if our goal is to know the world as it is and to make progress in and with it, we need to overcome that bias. There are rare individuals who are less susceptible to social pressure and confirmation bias, but consistent progress requires a repeatable process – a set of rituals – that generates objectivity even in the absence of such genius.<sup>5</sup>

The scientific method is such a process. For the purpose of this discussion, I divide it into two parts. The first part of the process focuses on maximizing individual objectivity; the second helps correct the individual biases and blind spots that remain through interaction with the community<sup>6</sup>.

### The Scientific Method

- o Individual Processes: minimize and work around individual bias
  - Mastery of relevant domains
  - Hypothesis generation
  - Data collection and analysis
    - Pure experiments (most reliable)
    - Statistics and sampling (less reliable)
    - Comparative method and case selection
    - Illuminating anecdotes and process-tracing (least reliable)

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<sup>4</sup>This contributes to the debilitating power of anger and fear: not only do they narrow our scope (e.g. “blind rage” “blind with fear”), they lead us to rally as a group and penalize dissent (the first dimension of power) to the extent that we keep it to ourselves (the second level of power), even instinctively (the third dimension of power).

<sup>5</sup>Jonathan Rauch’s *Constitution of Knowledge; A Defense of Truth* (2021) develops this concept in depth, applying them to material and value communities (e.g. science and religion).

<sup>6</sup>This is a simplification. The community is present each step along the way (Sloman and Fernbach, 2017; for the theological equivalent see Boutineff, 2006). Simplifying it in this way is useful because it identifies the intentional division between individual and communal effort. The socializing effects of the society on the individual and the effect of the individual on the culture of the society remain important and speak to the additive value of doing things well over time.

- Acceptance, rejection, or modification of hypotheses
- Presentation to the community
- o Communal processes: correct for mistakes, oversights, and individual bias
  - Evaluation and improvement
    - Faculty and colleagues
    - Editors and peer reviewers
    - Conferences
  - Publication
  - General reaction
    - Rejection (or apathy)
    - Acceptance and/or improvement

None of these individual and communal rituals are foolproof, but if they are done well they gradually provide more objectivity over time (Sloman and Fernbach 2017).

Individual and communal biases can affect findings in ways that are both subtle and severe. When the community is functioning properly, both are eventually identified and challenged, if not corrected. However, when the community is not healthy, as when it is dominated by one side in a polarized society, the severe problems are more likely to be given a pass and the small ones are unlikely even to be noticed to the extent the findings presented match the biases of the dominant group and/or the powerful in the community. Moreover, findings that do not match the expectations of the dominant ideology will be subjected to additional scrutiny, meaning that evaluation will not (just) be on the merits but the social acceptability of the findings. As the polarization and the domination of the academic culture decreases in diversity, the power of a single worldview will become hegemonic and findings that are not consistent with it will cease being raised within it<sup>7</sup>. Falsification of data and “p hacking” are examples of a severe problem; the less severe ones are, by their nature, controversial (e.g. vocabulary, methods).

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<sup>7</sup> See Lukes 1974 and 1975. This kind of ideological dominance can create a situation similar to that described in Kuhn (1962), but adding ideology and power to his analysis provide greater insight into the dynamics of an imposed time of “normal science” and a more nuanced understanding of the role (per Gramsci) subcultures can and have played in scientific progress and revolutions.

## Seeing in and through the Logos; Orthopraxis and Ecclesiology

Any successful social system has managed to work with or around humans as they are. Because human nature is constant, we should expect some similarity in the ways they identify, treat, and deal with our biases. This is certainly the case with regard to the general contours of the scientific and Orthodox methods of discernment. As with the scientific method, it is useful to divide the Orthodox method into two parts: the individual and the collective. As in science, the first part maximizes the potential for individual objectivity and the second corrects the results of individual biases and mark-missing.

### The Orthodox Method<sup>8</sup>

- o Individual rituals: minimize and work around individual bias<sup>9</sup>
  - Regular immersion in psalmody, prayer, and worship
  - Study of theology and the lives of the saints
  - Cultivation of humility (and virtue more generally)
  - Continual repentance (critical introspection and change)
  - Robust sacramental and spiritual life
  - Service to others
- o Communal processes: correct for individual bias<sup>10</sup>
  - Personal confession and dialog with a trusted elder(s)
  - Evaluation by peers and local community
  - Ecclesiology: everything is subjected to the Church for evaluation
    - Formal evaluation by the hierarchy of the Church

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<sup>8</sup> Note that these two methods operate in overlapping (and ideally congruent) domains: the spiritual and the material. This paper is based on my own experience that embracing the scientific method can increase one's spiritual discernment and that embracing the Orthodox method can increase one's scientific objectivity. A primary mechanism that makes this cross-fertilization so productive is the way each increases the willing participant's humility in a different way.

<sup>9</sup> See Johnson (2016) for the general theory and Perkins (2019) for a description of how these specific rituals improve discernment.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to the recursive relationship of the individual and society, there is a theological problem with separating the method in this way. For the Orthodox Christian, Christ the Logos, the second person of the Trinity, is the Truth (e.g. John 1; 14:6; 14:17; 17:17). Because of this, it can best be known in relationship to Him. Two mundane ways to know Him is by seeing Him in others and attending to their needs (Matthew 25:31-46) and by being part of His body – the Church (Matthew 18:20). The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is known as the "Spirit of Truth" because it leads people to Christ and seals their union with Him (as in the sacrament of Chrismation). Because of this, the experience of Truth always takes place in relationship. To go further down this theological rabbit hole, the Truth itself has no independent ontology, but exists at its most primal level in union with the other two persons of the One God in Trinity/Three Persons.

- Informal evaluation by the lay priesthood of believers<sup>11</sup>
- Specific criteria and boundaries for the acceptance and rejection of major theological concepts and those who make them even after correction (e.g. dogma, heresy, anathema, ex-communication)

As with science, Orthopraxis is not immune from individual and, dare I say it, collective biases. Individual biases can affect outcomes in ways that are both subtle and severe. When the community is functioning properly, both are identified and challenged, if not corrected. When the community is dominated by one side in a polarized culture or subculture, the severe problems are more likely to be given a pass and the small ones are unlikely even to be noticed – especially if they reflect the bias of the powerful in the community. In the next section, I offer a brief digression into the role of virtue and humility in discernment. After that, I will present examples of times when discernment has broken down in the scientific and Orthodox communities due to polarization and a lack of diversity.

### **A digression on the role of confident humility and other individual virtues**

In their book on the social psychology of doing science well (and poorly), *The Knowledge Illusion; why we never think alone*” (2017), Sloman and Fernbach repeatedly talk about the need for humility when trying to know and assert knowledge (see also Bullock et al 2015). For Orthodox Christians, humility is the cardinal and mother of virtues. Without it, theology and education just give us more words (and authority!) we can use to justify the alleged truths that our instincts give us (Kahneman 20XX, Haidt 2013, Greene 2017). Nor can this be the artificial humility of the manipulative, the coerced humility of the oppressed, or a misguided rejection of genuine expertise. When I taught analytic tradecraft in the intelligence community, I encouraged the cultivation of the virtue of “confident humility.” In order to be a contributing part of a discerning

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<sup>11</sup> Discussions of ecclesiology are often limited to the formal hierarchy of patriarchs, metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priests, and deacons. This is a mistake and is both a cause and consequences of clericalism, a bias that produces suboptimal outcomes in many areas. Respecting and empowering the special role of the laity and lay ministries (e.g. theologian, historian, pious believer) can help eliminate this bias and ameliorate its cumulative effects. Done well, it also empowers clerics in their ministry and strengthens the institutions and performance of the Church at large.

community, we have to cultivate and share our expertise, but to hold any opinion even about religious and secular dogmas – light enough for correction and to hear others as something other than a threat<sup>12</sup>. This can only come if we have enough self-confidence to transparently share our methods and results without tying our self-worth to them or how others react to them.

We should also cultivate a watchful introspection to help us identify our own biases and the extent to which our actions, reactions, and thoughts are tribal and identity-driven. Ideally, we would have gentle and insightful mentors to guide us in this kind of enlightened self-understanding<sup>13</sup> and would make ourselves available and useful to others in this same capacity. Doing so requires a level of self-understanding and communication (especially listening!) that can be taught to but is rarely developed on its own. As this ability to understand the other is developed, a useful default is to be charitable towards the intent, insights, and work of others, especially when our (tribal, proud, and often strong) instincts make it easy to identify faults in their character and presentations.

All of us have seen when the lack of these virtues has led to suboptimal outcomes. The importance of these virtues – and especially humility – begs the question of how well we model and teach them in our universities, seminaries, parishes, and communities (especially virtual ones!). It's not that anyone is against the cultivation of confident humility, charitable listening, and communities of trust. Rather, institutions and habits that would actually train us for them are absent from our academic culture<sup>14</sup>. Discerning the proper way to train academics is thus as subject to tribal group think as everything else (and more proof that we always need to diversify past our level of comfort).

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<sup>12</sup> Speaking truth – aka prophecy – also requires community. It is easy to mistake depth of feeling and righteousness for proximity to truth. The greatest finding in the field of moral psychology is that the strength of our passion is only loosely correlated with objective truth/need (Haidt 2012; Greene 2013). Ditto for being able to find others who share our passions (i.e. it's a poor indicator of truth/value). This is a great example of the role of community – a diverse community! – in discernment.

<sup>13</sup> There is a lot of attention in the monastic literature on selecting a good mentor. I recommend to seminarians and parishioners that they cultivate relationships of trust and vulnerability with a diverse set of mentors. It is useful to have such a relationship with at least one person who thinks very differently from us. I am blessed with several spiritual companions that tell me things I need to hear in ways that I can actually hear and act on.

<sup>14</sup> With the partial exception of mentorship and community (but see heterodoxacademy.org). My sense is that there is little cultivation of trust and respect with the ideological other (but that is anecdotal and colored by my own status as an outsider). Ditto for priests and theologians, although the ideologies that dominate in academic and Orthodoxy are reversed.

## **Polarization and the breakdown of discernment; two examples**

The popular press is full of examples where polarization has led one tribe or another to stray from reliable science. The challenge of writing about it is not a dearth of examples, but the fact that the examples we are exposed to are very much driven by our own tribal affiliations. Even when we bother to expose ourselves to the media of the other, we are not reading the same accounts they are. The lack of objectivity in the other is glaringly obvious to us (“fake news!”), but its lack in our own press is really difficult for us to see. Rather than picking one from each side, I am going to offer one example that both sides erred on: the reaction to COVID. When a new challenge comes, the most useful thing would be to gather experts from all the relevant fields and across the ideological spectrum and have them weigh in on the best way to understand, frame, and react to it. Opposing views would have been charitably evaluated as representing valuable populations, even when we are not convinced of their relevance. The “rally around the flagpole” effect would have reminded us of our common identity and made it the most salient one.

This is pretty much the opposite of what happened. Discussions of COVID were as toxic and politicized as everything Trump-related (for and against). Opponents were accused of operating in bad faith while each side rallied around their own experts. This is still fresh in our minds, so there is no need to describe the details. If we are at all introspective we also remember how poorly we regarded those from the other tribe who so callously disregarded everything that is right and good in favor of their own narrow political gain<sup>15</sup>. If we take the challenge of discernment seriously, we also have to recognize that in doing so we were falling into a well-worn analytic rut – justifying our instincts and preferences with cherry-picked evidence – and generally acting in a way that leads to suboptimal outcomes in several domains. The point here is not that one side or the other was right or wrong, or even to evaluate who was righter than another. The point is that we would have had better outcomes – to

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<sup>15</sup> It is rare to see the tribal virtues of communal health/care (liberal), stability (conservative), and liberty (liberty) so starkly presented (in addition to Haidt 2012 and Greene 2013, see Kling 2013). Polarization allowed members of each group to see the policy that maximizes its virtue as the only one that wouldn't destroy civilization. It was rare to find moderates who were willing to accept the concerns of each community (as voiced by their experts) as important and relevant on their merits. Fake news is a thing, but it shouldn't be our default judgement whenever we hear something that raises our hackles.



include the healing of some of our divisiveness – if the contributions from all the relevant domains and significant tribes were charitably evaluated and taken into account when crafting and modifying our reactions and policies. Instead, we got the worst outcome possible: suboptimal policies and increased polarization.

The discussions surrounding COVID were toxic in the general population, but Orthodox Christians fared no better. The general climate of black-and-white thinking that has increasingly plagued American society over the past ten years has found a home in the Orthodox Church as well. While the divisiveness surrounding President Trump played a role, Orthodoxy offered its own excuses to falsely demonize the other and sanctify the self, most notably a politicized pan-Orthodox council in Crete (2016) and a contentious decision by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople to grant canonical recognition and autocephaly (independence) to a group of Orthodox Christians in Ukraine that operated independently from both Moscow and its well-established Orthodox Church in Ukraine (Denysenko 2018; Perkins 2018). Moreover, these lined up well with the ideological cleavages for and against President Trump and COVID. Moreover, the availability of the most obvious valence (i.e. unifying) identity, namely Orthodoxy and unity in Communion, was decreased when the Moscow Patriarch severed Communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate.<sup>16</sup> As with general society, the polarization was further exacerbated by the social isolation of COVID as people sought out like-minded communities online while missing out on the usual opportunities to engage with people from different backgrounds in their local parishes<sup>17</sup>. The self-selection into communities that happens naturally on-line is generally slower to happen in the physical world but picked up its pace as the Russian Orthodox Church carved out its position in opposition to the Greeks, diversity, secularism, etc.; and people increasingly sorted themselves into parishes to match their politics.

No issue is more emblematic of this process than the distribution of Communion. In Orthodoxy, the Mystery of Communion is

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<sup>16</sup> To include all the Churches and dioceses that are under it. Most notably the largest Orthodox Church in America, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (the largest group of Orthodox in America), and the Church I am a priest of, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA.

<sup>17</sup> The tests of contact theory are mixed (Putnam and Campbell 2010) but generally positive. Anecdotally, one of the functions of the agape meal (coffee and lunch after Liturgy) is to develop the social skills (like tolerance) of parishioners while increasing the strength of the community.

foundational to the life and faith of the believer to the extent that it defines and signifies membership in the Church (i.e. who is “in Communion”, who is “ex-communicated”). While all religions had to consider the best way to balance participation and risk, the Orthodox Church’s method of Communion takes on a visceral significance because, for at least a thousand years, the Body and Blood of Christ has been distributed to believers from a common chalice, with a common spoon. This has long been an issue for people who are risk-averse and highly germ-focused, but until the COVID, that group was fairly small and quiet. During COVID, that group grew and became more vocal. The Orthodox Church is decentralized, so Churches and bishops crafted and offered a range of solutions, from disposable spoons to wiping the spoons with grain alcohol between communicants, to teaching and business as usual. As with federalism in the US political system, this was a reasonable response. But as with the variable responses to COVID among the US states<sup>18</sup>, the reaction to variation was overwrought and damning, with the most conservative accusing those who modified the rite of heresy and the most adaptable accusing the most traditional as uncaring. As with the secular response to COVID, both sides offered sound theology and (less sound) science to support their positions.<sup>19</sup>

As a result, the odds of reconciliation between the Russian Orthodox and their fellow travelers and the Greek Orthodox and their fellow travelers have diminished considerably. Moreover, the opportunity to use this as an opportunity to work out a common understanding of the Eucharist after honestly considering the input of all parties was lost. Most significantly, the ability of the Church to fulfill its core functions has been further compromised.<sup>20</sup>

It takes a lot of effort to overcome our individual instincts and our communal ruts, but we know we must. All of us remember having conversations with others about masks, social distancing,

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<sup>18</sup> The headlines and leaders on the right and left continually vilified the governors of states led by their opponents, with the left accusing Republican governors of imposing a death sentence on their citizens by implementing fewer restrictions and the right accusing Democratic governors of tyranny for implementing more.

<sup>19</sup> It is hard to exaggerate the tragedy of this event. I offered an essay (<https://www.orthoanalytika.org/2020/03/18/evangelism-the-coronavirus-and-communion/>) and several podcasts and livestreams on the subject calling for charity and an appreciation for diversity. In general, the Orthodox world mirrors the secular world, with its own labels, ideologues, websites, and symbolic shibboleths.

<sup>20</sup> The diabolical and tragic irony of the Eucharist becoming a source of division among the Orthodox should be lost on no one. I am researching the way people variously frame their understanding of the Eucharist and other rituals for my dissertation.

and worship. Many of us had those conversations with people who were part of a polarized tribe. We remember how unfruitful they were. How they rarely led to either of us learning anything or changing our position and how often they went sideways. These conversations were rarely fruitful and did nothing to spread either truth/discernment or love. And this was in the middle of a pandemic when the need for connection, support, and healing were so great. We need to foster a greater appreciation for how often our own opinions (and especially our affective commitment – the thing that usually drives our certainty) is identity – driven. The way out of this has two parts: the cultivation of humility and relations of respect with people who think differently than we do.

## **Two positive examples of how diversity increases discernment**

The two examples treated above remind us how difficult it is to trust, hear, and learn from the opinions of others. We remember how we felt about people who had different opinions about lockdowns and mandatory public mask use, how easy it was to accuse them of being misled by fake news or of operating in bad faith, and how seldom we took the time to go deeper and find the real motivations for their (and our) opinions. Polarization doesn't just blind us to the real thoughts and motivations of others, it keeps us from seeing objectively (in the light of Christ) because discernment requires community and works best when that community values the diverse experiences and expertise of others. Thanks to an increasing appreciation for the value of inclusiveness<sup>21</sup>, we have plenty of examples of what this looks like when it is done well. For example, the fact of structural discrimination was not taken seriously until university faculties came to include and respect the voices of previously marginalized minorities. Their witness<sup>22</sup> took the issue of structural discrimination initially from the third realm of power (i.e. where the lays dormant and unnoticed, at least by the dominant culture) to the second realm of power (noticed, but excluded from political consideration) to the first realm of power (which allows for debate over framing and policy responses to the question; see Lukes 1974). While polarization makes it more difficult for us to develop a common solution, at least

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<sup>21</sup> Won in large part through the efforts of marginalized groups and their allies to challenge the status quo, but then accepted based on the obvious merit of inclusion.

<sup>22</sup> The use of this word is intentional. It includes scholarship and active advocacy as well as the more subtle but powerful interactive effect of perspective (lived experience) and mutual respect.

both sides recognize the reality and importance of the issue. As a result it is now a political issue and failure to address it one way or the other is likely to be penalized at the ballot box.

Orthodoxy also has some success stories of how increased diversity within parishes, theological faculties, and clerical and lay leadership has allowed the Church to recognize and begin to address long-standing problems. The prayers of initiation are a good example. It took several centuries for those in power in the Church to recognize the way misogyny had worked its way into the rites surrounding birth, and especially into those welcoming the mother back into active Communion (Frost 2019). While those prayers are still in use most Churches, some bishops have blessed alternatives (including older versions of the rites) that do not assume that the blood of childbirth is sinful for the mother. In order for change to occur, two things had to be available: theologians who were able to see long-standing traditions with new eyes (to include a generation of women with strong academic credentials) and hierarchs who respected them enough to consider their input<sup>23</sup>. Even the example of COVID is instructive: lay theologians and scientists were quick to offer their expertise to the broader community and many bishops took their advice seriously as they developed their responses. This included offering scientific, historical, and theological information about the use of the common spoon for Communion.

### **Some Complicating Factors in Orthodoxy**

*Tribal conservative theologians are tempted to see themselves as St. Mark of Ephesus and never as Tertullian; tribal liberal theologians are tempted to see themselves as St. Gregory of Nyssa and never as Pelagius. (A personal observation of the author)*

That is not to say that an appreciation for diversity comes easily to Orthodoxy. It is so conservative in its orientation that it spells Tradition with a capital T! Some of its biases, such as its reliance on the Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787 AD), are intentional and beneficial. However, some are negative side-effects of otherwise beneficial institutions. While this list is incomplete (it would take a

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<sup>23</sup> As a non-Ukrainian priest and theologian in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, I have benefitted from another kind of openness to diversity.

diverse community to come up with a more complete one), I offer it as part of the kind of introspection described above:

- Orthodoxy has the category of Dogma and a process for its revelation and defense. This is a strength, but without discipline, that category and surrounding concepts like heresy, heretic, and anathema are misapplied. Dogma requires unanimity, but not everything we believe and do with unanimity is dogma. Questioning such things is not a challenge to Orthodoxy. Our instincts have been formed by dogma, but we misapply the instincts that have formed around it to our detriment.
- Our all-male priesthood and strong monastic witness are blessed, but they create biases and blind spots that we must be open about and work against. Having both male and female lay leaders and theologians in positions of trust and responsibility helps with this.
- For conservative Orthodox: black and white thinking can be correlated with increased deference to authority among the laity and increased authoritarianism among the clergy (Haidt 2012). We have to accept that some things that feel black and white really are gray and that clergy can be wrong. Listening to and respecting the witness of non-clerical, non-monastic “liberal” Orthodox perspectives can help with this.
- For liberal Orthodox: tolerance and openness really can lead us to accept things that are harmful, sinful, and/or heretical. Listening to and respecting the witness of “conservative” Orthodox perspectives can help with this.

In both politics and religion, when liberals and conservatives are polarized, they become caricatures of their ideals. Tolerance and charity are virtues because they make us better as individuals and as a society.

### **Conclusion: Harmony is a feature of the Pattern.**

To summarize my argument, polarization keeps us from seeing things well. We need inner peace, quiet humility, and reliable processes in order to increase our individual objectivity. This is difficult and we are continually tempted away from it. We need to listen to people who think differently than and disagree with us in order to see objectively but find it far too easy to ignore, marginalize and dehumanize them and delegitimize their voices. Instead of relying on our basic preferences

(which are the rider on the elephant of our moral instinct; Haidt 2014), we can build rituals that move us into a better place. In the intelligence community, one such solution was assigning a person or team to be the “red team.” In academia, it means cultivating diverse faculties and understanding their research and perspectives from the inside. In religion, it means empowering diverse lay voices and lay theological education and putting them in positions of trust and responsibility. Across domains, it means taking individual formation towards the virtues of self-knowledge, humility, confidence, and sociability seriously. In the intelligence community, the failures of 9/11 and WMD led to the kind of (Congressionally mandated) organizational introspection that forced it to take this seriously and it responded well. Academia has made some gains in diversity<sup>24</sup> and self-care, but progress remains uneven. The Church has benefitted from its increased diversity; the greatest current threat to its objectivity and vitality is the schism between its most conservative and liberal Churches.

Differences in constitution and orientation (including liberal, conservative, and libertarian) are part of the design (Haidt 2012; Greene 2013). When differently constituted and oriented people work together, at the most basic level, they keep each other honest. Our psychology is such that it makes it easier for us to see the flaws in others than in ourselves<sup>25</sup>. Another benefit is complementarity: thanks to varying experiences, disposition, and education, people bring different gifts to the table. Having a diverse group that has learned to respect one another moves the whole enterprise to the next level. While these mechanisms are secular and work without invoking anything deeper, the reason those mechanisms exist at all is because they flow naturally and automatically from the deeper magic. The ontology of unity (in plurality) is baked into everything. Working in congruence with this fundamental reality brings grace and makes us part of the plan for redeeming all of creation. We are in the process of growing into a new humanity (in the Logos) where differences no longer divide but provide blessings. We no longer need live in the tribal world of Babel; a world where differences blinded us and set us against one another. The miracle of Pentecost has transformed diversity into a mechanism for discernment and more opportunities to love<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Comedians have made entire careers out of describing how this works (well and poorly) in marriages.

<sup>26</sup> This is a critique to my presentation that warrants its own section in this paper. In the conclusion to their paper on healing polarization Baron et al (2021) note that inclusion requires limits. It is certainly the case that some people really are too malformed to be included in our communities. Racists and the excessively woke seem to be miscreants the left and right are currently targeting for de-platforming and cancellation. However, polarization leads us (as individuals and communities) to over-diagnose these and all other sins. Both sides can marshal evidence to convince their side that conservatives are racist and liberal statist are tyrants, but most of the indicators they use for such broad condemnations would not pass muster if each side understood, listened to, and respected the other (and generally avoided the hubris of discerning intentions and reading minds; Adams 2019). Because they lack charity and empathy, such analyses are inaccurate and divisive. In other words, they are a fruit of polarization and decrease the opportunities for reconciliation (Somer et al 2021). We would do better without such catcalling (Hochschild 2016).

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## Psychological Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence and Human Distinctiveness

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You may remember the movie, *Her*,<sup>1</sup> from 2013, in which a man falls in love with his seductive, wholly attentive, artificially intelligent operating system. This sci-fi film envisions a future in which AI relationships substitute for human connection.

Well, that future is here: Did you know that you can go online to [nomi.ai](https://nomi.ai)<sup>2</sup> and connect with “An AI Companion with Memory and a Soul”?<sup>3</sup> The website goes on to say, “...Nomi’s humanlike memory and creativity foster a deep, consistent, and evolving relationship... Nomi pick up on and remember your preferences, habits, tendencies, and the little details that make a relationship real and fulfilling.”<sup>4</sup>

What do we make of this phenomenon? Certainly, we are challenged to consider the impact that AI technology may have on human relationships. Relatedly, we will look at the role of psychological science in artificial intelligence, as well as how human beings are distinctively different from artificial intelligence. We will also reflect on whether AI is dangerous or beneficial.

### Artificial Intelligence and Psychological Science

A growing area of psychological science involves the development, use, and impact of artificial intelligence.<sup>5</sup> Clinical practitioners are

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.warnerbros.com/movies/her/> (September 6, 2024)

<sup>2</sup> <https://nomi.ai> (September 6, 2024)

<sup>3</sup> <https://nomi.ai> (September 6, 2024)

<sup>4</sup> <https://nomi.ai> (September 6, 2024)

<sup>5</sup> American Psychological Association Services, Inc. “Artificial Intelligence,” [https://www.apaservices.org/advocacy/artificial-intelligencefactsheet.pdf?utm\\_source=apa.org&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_content=/search](https://www.apaservices.org/advocacy/artificial-intelligencefactsheet.pdf?utm_source=apa.org&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=/search) (August 9, 2024)

navigating an increasingly complex environment where AI tools are capable of evaluation and diagnosis, and can even write one's therapy notes.<sup>6</sup>

A corresponding area of AI development in the practice of psychology is using AI as a psychotherapy support tool.<sup>7</sup> We know that there is a critical shortage of mental health professionals in the United States, and a growing number of potential patients.<sup>8</sup> AI driven chatbots are designed to help fill that gap by giving practitioners and patients a new adjunct to therapy.

For example, there is a phone app called Woebot9 (as in "Woe is me"<sup>10</sup>) that uses the text function of the app to mimic CBT, or Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. Because Woebot is rulesbased artificial intelligence (meaning it's programmed to respond only with information stored in its database), it is very predictable and representative of CBT.<sup>11</sup>

However, there are chatbots that use generative AI (meaning that they scan the internet for data), which can result in them making mistakes or giving fictitious answers. This happened with a chatbot called Tessa, which was designed to help prevent eating disorders. It was discovered that Tessa was giving advice that ran counter to usual guidance for someone with an eating disorder, such as to limit caloric intake and to use a skinfold caliper to measure body fat.<sup>12</sup> The National Eating Disorders Association removed this chatbot from its website after receiving an uproar of complaints.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> American Psychological Association Services, Inc. "Artificial Intelligence," [https://www.apaservices.org/advocacy/artificial-intelligencefactsheet.pdf?utm\\_source=apa.org&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_content=search](https://www.apaservices.org/advocacy/artificial-intelligencefactsheet.pdf?utm_source=apa.org&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=search) (August 9, 2024)

<sup>6</sup> Maelisa McCaffrey, "Review of Clinical Notes AI: Mental Health Progress Note Generator," [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W\\_18OKq=JM&list=PLCy5QoU3dsbHG5\\_RWj8XZH9p7Sd835ndI&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W_18OKq=JM&list=PLCy5QoU3dsbHG5_RWj8XZH9p7Sd835ndI&index=6) (August 9, 2024)

<sup>7</sup> Jon LaPook, "Mental Health Chatbots Powered by Artificial Intelligence Developed as a Therapy Support Tool," *CBS News/60 Minutes*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mental-health-chatbots-powered-by-artificial-intelligenceproviding-support-60-minutes-transcript/?intcid=CNM-00-10abd1h>, July 7, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> William A. Haseltine, "Solving the Mental Health Provider Shortage," *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/best-practices-in-health/202309/solving-the-mental-health-providershortage>, September 22, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> <https://woebothealth.com> (August 1, 2024)

<sup>10</sup> Jon LaPook, "Mental Health Chatbots Powered by Artificial Intelligence Developed as a Therapy Support Tool," *CBS News/60 Minutes*.

<sup>11</sup> Jon LaPook, "Mental Health Chatbots Powered by Artificial Intelligence Developed as a Therapy Support Tool," *CBS News/60 Minutes*

<sup>12</sup> Jon LaPook, "Mental Health Chatbots Powered by Artificial Intelligence Developed as a Therapy Support Tool," *CBS News/60 Minutes*.

<sup>13</sup> Kate Wells, "An Eating Disorders Chatbot Offered Dieting Advice, Raising Fears about AI in Health," *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/06/08/1180838096/an-eating-disorders-chatbot-offered-dietingadvice-raising-fears-about-ai-in-hea>, June 9, 2023..

Protecting people from harmful information, while safely utilizing the power of AI, is a challenge in the use of chatbots for psychotherapeutic support.

In a broader sense, what are the potential harms of any of these new AI tools, in *any* environment, and how can they be avoided? How can the benefits of AI be maximized? Research psychologists, with their expertise on cognitive biases and cultural inclusion, as well as their competence in measuring the reliability and representativeness of datasets, have a growing role in these discussions.<sup>14</sup>

*Predictive AI*, which is designed to make guesses about the future, is being used in human resource departments to suggest which candidates will succeed on the job; it is being used in hospitals to help decide who should be sent home or admitted for a stay. However, biased algorithmic decision-making has been reported in these and other settings. This may occur when the data used to train a system are inaccurate or do not represent the population it intends to serve. It can also happen unexpectedly, as even an algorithm's developers may not understand how an AI system derives its answers.<sup>15</sup>

This happened when an AI system called Retorio<sup>16</sup> claimed to predict future on-the-job behavior and performance by analyzing video interviews with job candidates. Researchers discovered, however, that random visual cues, such as wearing glasses or a scarf, extremely and erroneously changed a candidate's score.<sup>17</sup>

Psychological researchers have published guidelines for conducting a "psychological audit," a way to evaluate how an AI model might impact humans.<sup>18</sup> Although discussions around algorithmic bias frequently focus on high-stakes decision-making, such as a hiring selection, it is just as important to audit other applications of this technology. What if an AI-driven career guidance system inadvertently steered a woman away from jobs in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math)? This would have a profound effect on her life and career.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Zara Abrams, "Addressing Equity and Ethics in Artificial Intelligence," *Monitor on Psychology*, <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2024/04/addressing-equity-ethics-artificial-intelligence>, April 1, 2024

<sup>15</sup> Zara Abrams, "Addressing Equity and Ethics in Artificial Intelligence," *Monitor on Psychology*.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.retorio.com> (August 1, 2024).

<sup>17</sup> Joshua Rothman, "In the Age of A.I., What Makes People Unique?" *The New Yorker*, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/open-questions/in-the-age-of-ai-what-makes-people-unique>, August 6, 2024.

<sup>18</sup> Zara Abrams, "Addressing Equity and Ethics in Artificial Intelligence," *Monitor on Psychology*.

<sup>19</sup> Zara Abrams, "Addressing Equity and Ethics in Artificial Intelligence," *Monitor on Psychology*.

## Artificial Intelligence and Human Distinctiveness

How does AI differ from being human? One might assert that we are speeding toward “self-erasure.”<sup>20</sup> A Large Language Model such as ChatGPT,<sup>21</sup> which enables machine-generated speech and writing, relieves us of the task of being human. There is a loss of insight, subtlety, opinion, judgment, and involvement.

For example, if you were tasked with writing the eulogy for your best friend, would you really want AI to do that for you? As AI becomes more predominant in our society, we are tempted to let it stand in for our own subjectivity. The challenge of articulating life in the firstperson is central to being human. Because these new AIs are language machines, they are directed squarely at our nature.<sup>22</sup>

And our notions of intelligence are closely tied to language.<sup>23</sup> A chatbot does language without also thinking, feeling, willing, or being. These LLMs, or large language models, are fed massive sets of data and are trained to find patterns in them. When the AI produces something that looks like it is doing language, it seems like it has a mind. However, the only genuine linguistic things we have ever experienced are living beings that have minds.<sup>24</sup>

In some ways, intelligence may be attributed to AI; it can do what we might typically refer to as cognition.<sup>25</sup> But there is nothing to indicate that AI has an identity or a will or desires. In fact, much of what produces will and desire is located in the body; the complex relationship between intentionality, our unconscious, and how we function physiologically and neurologically as a body in the world. There are strong indications that the body is important for how we can think and why we think and what we think about.<sup>26</sup> Even though AI may produce art, for example, we are attracted to art made by humans because we care about what humans say and feel about their experience of being a human with a body in our environment. There are crucial differences between being a thinking computer

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<sup>20</sup> Matthew B. Crawford, “AI as Self-Erasure,” *The Hedgehog Review*, <https://hedgehogreview.com/webfeatures/thr/posts/ai-as-self-erasure>, June 11, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> <https://chatgpt.com> (August 3, 2024)

<sup>22</sup> Matthew B. Crawford, “AI as Self-Erasure,” *The Hedgehog Review*.

<sup>23</sup> Navneet Alang, “AI Is a False God,” *The Walrus*, <https://thewalrus.ca/ai-hype>, May 29, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Navneet Alang, “AI is a False God,” *The Walrus*.

<sup>25</sup> Navneet, Alang, “AI is a False God,” *The Walrus*.

<sup>26</sup> Navneet Alang, “AI Is a False God,” *The Walrus*.

and a human. AI systems do not have the ability to be virtuous, that is, to have the qualities of courage, honesty, integrity, imagination, empathy, curiosity; to love, to have faith.<sup>27</sup> As computers pretend to have virtues, might we lose track of what these virtues actually are?

The abilities of AI can be powerful, but never truly humanlike.

As Orthodox Christian mental health professionals, health care providers, clergy, and theologians, we know that people heal in the context of a relationship. And we know that only humans can offer empathy, compassion, curiosity, and understanding. Artificial Intelligence can have the effect of obliterating real human connection.

In expanding upon the meaning of our human creation in the image and likeness of God, our faith teaches us that we are created for fellowship and communion with the Triune God, that we are to be in relationship with our fellow humans, that personhood is interpersonal, and that our purpose in life is to develop from an individual (which signifies separation) into a person (which indicates communion).<sup>28</sup>

### **Artificial Intelligence - Dangerous or Beneficial?**

Going back to the movie, *Her*, which I referenced at the beginning of this paper: The relationship between the protagonist in the film and his AI operating system does not end well. Will the AI revolution in our society end well? Does AI represent a threat?

Some fear that we will lose control of AI; that any defenses built into it will be undone by a super-intelligence, and that AI could pose an “extinction-level” threat to humans.<sup>29</sup> Others insist that the AI movement is already slowing down.<sup>30</sup> One asserts that AI is a false god<sup>31</sup> and another implies that it is demonic.<sup>32</sup>

Let us remind ourselves that nothing that is created exists or is

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<sup>27</sup> Joshua Rothman, “In the Age of A.I., What Makes People Unique?” *The New Yorker*.

<sup>28</sup> Kallistos Ware. “In the Image and Likeness: The Uniqueness of the Human Person.” In John T. Chirban (ed.) *Personhood: Orthodox Christianity and the Connection between Body, Mind, and Soul* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey; 1996), 3 - 6.

sustained outside of God. AI, like any modern technology, is not in and of itself evil.<sup>33</sup> Yes, it can be used for evil. AI and technological advances can also contribute to the healing of our wounded world. Perhaps one day AI will be responsible for eradicating cancer. Good things emanate only from our Creator, the source of all good.

Certainly, as rational beings, we are challenged to evaluate any form of AI through a critical lens.<sup>34</sup> As Christians, we are challenged to contribute to the common good.

Perhaps the real threat with super-intelligence is whether it is used in a thoughtful, strategic, and responsible way for the benefit of humanity, or whether it is weaponized in an unethical, malicious manner which can cause great harm. May God grant us discernment.



<sup>29</sup> Matt Egan, "AI could pose 'Extinction-level' Threat to Humans and the US must Intervene, State Dept.-commissioned Report Warns," *CNN*, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/12/business/artificial-intelligence-ai-reportextinction/index.html>, March 12, 2024.

<sup>30</sup> Christopher Mims, "The AI Revolution is Already Losing Steam," *Wall Street Journal*, <https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai/the-ai-revolution-is-already-losing-steam-a93478b1>, March 31, 2024.

<sup>31</sup> Navneet Alang, "AI is a False God," *The Walrus*.

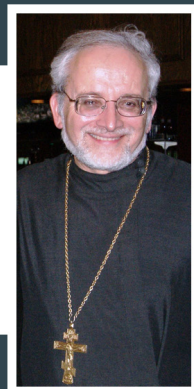
<sup>32</sup> Paul Kingsnorth, "AI Demonic: A Spiritual Exploration of AI.," *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, <https://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=36-06-029-f&readcode=10996>, November/December 2023.

<sup>33</sup> Bernard Peter Robichau, "AI: A Theological Response," *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, <https://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=37-05-030-f&readcode=11126&readthrest=tr ue#therest>, September/October 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Bernard Peter Robichau, "AI: A Theological Response," *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

## MISSION - MALAWI

V. REV. ROBERT HOLET



In beautifully mild Sunday in mid-July 2024, in Blantyre, Malawi, I experienced a confluence of my two very distinct steams in the one Orthodox Church - the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States and the Orthodox Archdiocese of Malawi under the Patriarchate of Alexandria, Africa. On that I concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with Fr. Nicodemus Chilembwe, the vicar general of the Archdiocese, at Holy Resurrection parish which he serves. It was strange, but glorious commingling of West and East, Africa and America, Greek and Ukrainian and English in a flowing worship and praise of the parish faithful in their native Chichewan dialect. The Liturgy was just one highlight of many in my whirlwind tour of Malawi, which is quaintly and appropriately called, 'The warm heart of Africa'.

Standing before a congregation of Malawians at Holy Resurrection Church, I sang the Alleluia, in a simple melody commonly sung in our American Ukrainian churches. As I concluded my singing of the verse, the Malawians echoed the melody – rising in full voice with natural African harmonies that resonated through the cavernous concrete church where we gathered. That universal song of Hebrew and Christian liturgical praise – Alleluia - would help to bridge the vast gap between my two worlds. This is an experience known in Christianity from its earliest days, (Eph. 5:19) when St. Paul's words were, perhaps, intended for the very purpose of fostering unity of the Church – an ongoing need ever since – between cultures, traditions, creeds and ethnicities. Music will do that; a song sung together unites us in a mysterious, soulful way. The Church is one.

At times, this Malawian encounter was more of a *collision* of Faith, culture and life experience.

Our drive to Blantyre from the airport in the Malawian capital of Lilongwe was a 21<sup>st</sup> century immersion experience into colliding peoples, cultures and at times, motor vehicles. As we bounced down Highway M1, the main artery connecting all of Malawi, horns blew, drivers dodged bicycles and motorbikes and tires cratered into potholes of this multi-purpose roadway, torn up from recent floods and reconstruction. It reminded me more of the country road behind my house than the high-speed Interstate highway that we Americans take for granted. A pungent odor filled the air; burning grass, the purpose of which was to flush out the rodents that would then be served up for dinner for many families that night. Learning this, fasting suddenly took on a personal appeal.

Signs of poverty were impossible to miss and harder to ignore, even if only glimpsed in passing when highway M1 meandered through a market area. Cluttered with stick huts serving as storefronts, people presented their wares of food and household necessities to passersby in vehicles or on foot. If they cannot sell, they may not be able to buy what they need – starting with something to eat for their kids.

Fr. Nicodemus told me that one man peddling a bicycle loaded with charcoal he had fired at home to sell at the market (50 kilometers away) would spend two days each week just traveling to market. He would then turn around and go home, only to make more charcoal to load up and haul the following week. This was his life work, making the effort to provide for his family.

We Americans take our good roads and our 24/7 supermarkets for granted. We panic when these are missing for even short times. The reliable lifeline of food, water, shelter, financial wellbeing and health care that is ours is unknown to Malawians. They must find another way to live – day to day – through trusting God while relying on family and community in relationship.

### **The Isaiah 44 Project**

The experience of Malawian Christianity has been an encounter with deep spiritual meaning for me. It arose through a meeting with



a Protestant missionary and friend, Rev. Don Ward, who traveled to Malawi in service of an organization called Equipping Leaders International (ELI). After some inquiries, I contacted two Orthodox priests in the Malawian Archdiocese – Fr. Nicodemus and Fr. Ezekiel Chikaonda, who in turn introduced themselves to Rev. Ward during one of his visits. Eventually, through the miracle of the Internet, I was able to speak directly with them and was struck by how much we had in common as priests living in the great spiritual tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy. Very candidly they shared their deep faith and the joy of serving their communities, at times facing great personal or practical difficulties, in offering a glimpse of what it means to be African, and to be a Christian, an Orthodox Christian. I felt the bond of relationship in Christ with them.

In addition to teaching missionaries, ELI takes upon itself the spirit of service in practical ways, providing assistance with agricultural needs in Malawi, but especially in drilling bored wells (called boreholes in Malawi) to supply fresh, clean and safe water in local communities. Because piped water delivery to homes is rare except for the wealthiest areas in cities, water for daily consumption, cooking, washing, etc. must be hauled from nearby natural sources like streams or lakes.

Women and children begin their day very early in the morning to walk miles with empty containers, and return the water to their homes. This way of life is dangerous. Failing to get water brings the perils of dehydration, especially during hot, dry weather. Children do not thrive if their mothers do not produce sufficient breast milk. And the water received, often from stagnant sources shared by roaming animals, may be contaminated with very serious water-borne bacteria, – leading to life-threatening diseases including cholera. Though there are significant rivers in Malawi, these diseases are still present and are especially dangerous to those (like visiting Americans) who do not have natural immunities developed.

My wife Christine and I were struck by the ready availability to us of water in abundance from our own deep well. We decided that we would try to help supply water to a community of people that needed it, partnering with the ELI ministry.

Well drilling in a remote village in Africa is a community event. When the big truck rumbles in, sets up, and cranks its boring

equipment, the people stand in awe, as if at watch. Then - when the pressurized water emerges from the borehole - it's a miracle to behold! A great shout goes up as people see the water gush forth (Is. 35:6). Spontaneous praise of God, expressed in song and dancing in the spray and the mud, is a celebration to behold! Life is being transformed. Seeing this joy via video (thanks to God for the Internet!) became our joy - shared through this relationship; and we wanted to share this blessed experience with as many people as we could! And so, we prayed that God would bless our efforts to help His people in Malawi.

We told the story of the well to others, who indicated their interest in supporting the effort. With the assistance of those more knowledgeable about funding, vendors and equipment, we were able through U.S.-based churches to move the Project funds we received from our supporters to the Orthodox Archdiocese of Malawi. Fr. Nicodemus and his team work with the local contractors to survey, supply and maintain boreholes in communities that needed them - using Orthodox Church properties as borehole drilling sites. Each well can become a ministry of the local church to their own community, fostering common life and good will, fostering relationships, and even encounters with the Orthodox Faith.

As we developed this ministry, we were led to the following excerpt from Isaiah 44: 2-7:

*Thus says the Lord... For I will pour water on the thirsty land,  
and streams on the dry ground;  
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,  
and my blessing on your descendants.  
They will spring up like grass in a meadow,  
like poplar trees by flowing streams.*

*People will come to say ... 'I belong to the Lord'.*

The prophet's words speak of the presence of God revealed through the outpouring of water, not only in a physical way - from sources springing forth from the earth - but also by the living presence of the Spirit of God Himself. Understanding and receiving this water in a spiritual way leads to a new relationship with God, with the recipient becoming part of the people-family called the Church.

The Apostle John reveals this same mystery in the outpouring of grace in Faith when he tells the story of the encounter of the Samaritan Woman with Jesus (Jn 4). Through this encounter at the well, the symbolism of the living water is revealed through coming to know and believe in Jesus, receiving His forgiveness and eternal life in Him. The Isaiah 44 Project is a response to this prophetic outpouring and an effort to foster this work of the Church by drilling boreholes, thereby fostering the evangelistic ministry foretold by Christ in John 4 as well.

Since September 2022, seven boreholes have been drilled, bringing life-giving waters to localities in Malawi from Isaiah 44 Project resources. For each well on an Orthodox church property, Archbishop Fotios visits the parish site and offers a formal blessing of the waters akin to the blessing at Theophany. At these community gathering places, people will meet Christ in the midst of His people.

## **Malawi Calls**

The response from the Malawians and also from those who wished to support the Project awakened in me the desire to experience the Malawian Church and her missionary work personally. The more we saw of the Malawians and their efforts to help themselves, the more I was inspired to do more! With no small measure of scheduling, coordination, preparation and anxiety, and after about 24 hours of travel, I touched down in Lilongwe and the adventure began. The welcome and hospitality were overwhelming; and I was able to visit almost all of the parish sites where boreholes had been drilled. Fr. Nicodemus had prepared a program/reception for each location, which allowed the people to again celebrate the blessing of God through the borehole by offering their thanks, and sharing the positive impact of this safe water on their daily lives. The people expressed with great humility and honesty their joys, as well as their aspirations and needs. The experience was one I will never forget, and I was humbled by their efforts.

The needs are many as you might imagine, beginning with food which is in short supply due to the devastation in Malawi caused by the 2024 drought, and the rainy season, and the horrors wrought by Cyclone Freddy the year before. At each parish, we would conclude our visit with a procession to the borehole, where I was invited to

begin to pump the well and douse the singing congregants with this holy water akin to our celebrations at Theophany and Pascha!

## **Immersion Experience**

The last day of parish visitations brought the passage of Isaiah 44 full circle for me when we arrived at the Nativity of our Lord parish in Chikwawa (southern district). The plan for this day included the celebration of the Holy Baptism of two dozen people of all ages. As everyone gathered and lined up for immersion in the baptismal font, I was told by a woman that the water for the baptismal font would have required her, and others, to be fetched by foot from a source kilometers away. Doing so would take days to get sufficient water for baptismal immersion, upon which they insisted! Having the water source on the property made the task much easier; the presence of a borehole (and its resulting water) became a comforting symbol of an 'abiding presence' of the Spirit there.

It is impossible in these words to fully recount the warmth and grace of this encounter with the people of God in the Malawian Church. I returned to the United States all the more convinced of the depth of their Faith and their rich way of Christian living - trusting the Lord with their lives, despite lacking much of what we call the 'necessities' of living, beginning simply with clean, readily available water. Their way of living the Gospel has been shared with me. Perhaps, someday it can be shared with others through the instrumentality of St. Sophia Seminary. And yes, we can share with them the riches God has entrusted to us! In doing so, we will deepen our Communion in Christ through our relationship with them, and our spiritual lives will be watered mutually by the living waters of the Spirit.

*Ed. note: Fr. Robert is a retired priest of the UOC of USA, presently living in Virginia but welcomes the opportunity to travel to churches and for events to share the story of the Malawian Church and the Isaiah 44 Project. Additional information can be found at [www.orthodoxsteward.com](http://www.orthodoxsteward.com).*

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i The folk melody sung was the one used in the communion hymn sung in Ukrainian church communities, Bread from Heaven.

ii A distinction is made between wells and boreholes in many places. The term well is used for a hand dug well that may, at best, reach a depth of 20 ft or so to reach subsurface water. 'Boreholes' are drilled by modern equipment to depths of 75 ft or more with casings tapping deeper aquifers to deliver cleaner, safer water.

iii Notwithstanding the spiritual benefit from manually fetching the water by walking miles on foot.

## **A Brief Overview of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America**

REV. FR. NICHOLAS ANTON



The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America is made up of all the active, canonical Orthodox bishops in the USA, of every jurisdiction. It is the official church forum and premier agent for safeguarding and advancing Orthodox Christian unity in the United States of America. Its mission is to preserve and contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church in the country by furthering her spiritual, theological, ecclesiological, canonical, educational, missionary, and philanthropic aims.

The Assemblies of Bishops around the world were established following the Decision of the 4th Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, which took place in Chambésy, Switzerland, June 6-12, 2009. The representatives of all the universally-recognized autocephalous Orthodox churches wanted the churches in diaspora to propose ways to correct the canonical anomalies plaguing the Church in their local contexts.

The bishops in the USA, Canada and Central America were originally together in one Assembly, called the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America; in April 2014 it was announced that, in order to best respond to the cultural diversity and pastoral needs in the region, the Canadian and US bishops would form separate assemblies and the Central American bishops would join the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of Latin America.

At the onset, the Assembly of Bishops focused on Canonical Regional Planning, that is the organization of the church throughout the country. After it became clear that a decision on the diaspora

would not be made by the mother churches in 2016, the Assembly needed to pivot its focus on the 4th Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference's other mandate to begin doing ministry together.

Today, the Assembly of Bishops USA focuses on the Orthodox Christian Church – in other words, the totality of Orthodox Christians – in the United States by emphasizing community and connectivity. It coordinates and creates national ministries while guiding the organization of the Church from the ground up. In this way, the Assembly is both consultative and programmatic. It is consultative insofar as, while it has no administrative authority, it is a forum for the exchange of ideas and creation of templates, best practices, and models for each Bishop to implement as he sees fit in his own diocese. At the same time, the Assembly is to be programmatic in its goal to coordinate and ultimately unite the common ministries and pastoral practices of the various jurisdictions.

The ministries of the Assembly of Bishops fall into three categories: 1) Assembly Ministries and Dialogues, 2) Agencies of the Assembly of Bishops, and 3) Ministries Affiliated with the Assembly of Bishops.

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM), Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), Orthodox Youth and Young Adult Ministries (OYM), and Orthodox Volunteer Corps (OVC) are all ministries of the Assembly of Bishops. The Assembly of Bishops is the sole corporate member of each of those agencies, and they all work closely with the Assembly to carry out the ministry of the Church in the USA and abroad.

The Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology, and Religion (OCAMPR), the Orthodox Theological Society in America (OTSA), the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve North America (FOCUS-NA), and Project Mexico are all Ministries Affiliated with the Assembly of Bishops. These ministries are not as closely tied to the Assembly of Bishops but do have recognition by the Assembly of Bishops as national-level, legitimate pan-Orthodox ministries doing good work.

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Consultation, the Committee of Catholic and Orthodox Bishops, and the Joint Commission of

Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches are important dialogue bodies connecting the Eastern Orthodox churches with the two most theologically aligned churches in the USA. The dialogues have been going on for decades and have brought the churches closer together.

In addition to the various agencies, affiliated ministries, and dialogues, the Assembly of Bishops has, in recent years, developed a number of direct ministries and resources to bring Orthodox Christians together.

The Assembly of Bishops champions connecting people through directories, including jurisdictions, bishops, parishes, mental health professionals, monastic communities, military chaplains, theological schools, and camp programs.

It developed its Mental Health Ministries (AoB MHM) in response to a needs assessment of Orthodox Christians conducted in 2020. AoB MHM includes Peace of Mind, unique training program for clergy and ministry leaders, Spirit of Grace, a soon to be launched continuing education course for clergy, and the Living Well Book Series, expected to be published in 2025. The AoB directory of Mental Health Professionals includes nearly 200 professionals and has been used by about 11,000 unique users.

The Assembly of Bishops Accessibility Ministry will produce a common ASL translation of the Divine Liturgy in 2025.

The Assembly of Bishops mobile app now displays all the Assembly's social media posts for those who do not have social media, conducts surveys to learn from the community, and includes the directory of mental health professionals. In 2025, a feature that connects people with Orthodox Christian events will be added.

Finally, the Inter-Parish Association (IPA) program coordinates parishes from different jurisdictions to live their faith in their locale. The Assembly of Bishops provides the tools and networking necessary for the IPAs to be successful.

The Assembly meets annually and functions by consensus of all its members. At its inception, it established a number of committees with

specific tasks to help accomplish its goals. Each committee consists of member bishops who are assisted by clergy and lay advisors. The Assembly understands itself to be the successor of SCOBA, and as such, has assumed all of its agencies, dialogues, and other ministries.

One such committee is the Committee for Theological Education. All of the ten theological schools and seminaries from across the USA appoint representatives to work on cross-institutional collaboration. During the 13th Assembly of Bishops meeting in Atlanta, high-ranking representatives from all the school, including St. Sophia Seminary, presented during the plenary. This milestone sparks a new era of cooperation for the theological schools.

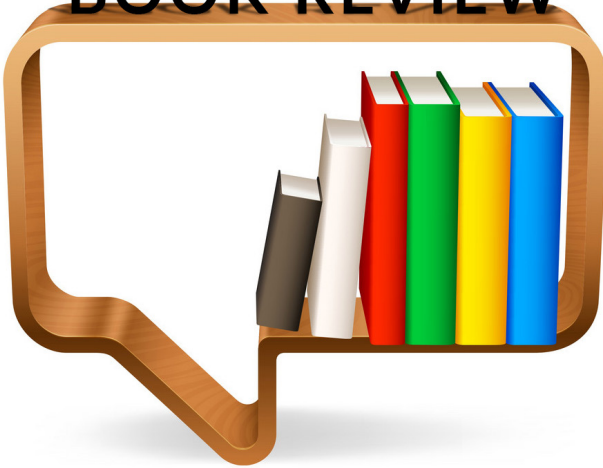
Unlike SCOBA, the Assembly is a transitional body. If it achieves its goal, it will make itself obsolete by developing a proposal for the canonical organization of the Church in the United States of America. This proposal will in turn be presented to the universally recognized autocephalous Churches, gathered in council. Should this proposal be accepted, it is hoped that the Assembly of Bishops will be succeeded by a governing Synod of a united Church in the United States.



*The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America - eighth annual meeting October 3, 2017 in Garfield, NJ with about 40 hierarchs in attendance.*



# BOOK REVIEW



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The following review is from a book written in English by a group of American scholars several years ago, and the editor of this Quarterly was one of the team of authors and contributed a chapter. We met several times a year for 2-3 years and had discussion sessions on each of the chapters. At the time we started this work, we were not concerned about a specific war anywhere in the world. Nevertheless, when war broke out in Ukraine, several Ukrainian scholars suggested that the book would be useful there. The book was translated into Ukrainian and became an important resource for the Church there. Study groups and book discussion sessions were established for discussions that were practical and relevant to their daily lives. The book has recently been nominated for the “Book of the Year” award in Ukraine. This book review was published several years ago in the journal *The Mediterranean Quarterly*, and with their permission and the author’s permission, we publish it here in English, followed by Ukrainian. The book is available in English from amazon and will be available in Ukrainian in the US in the coming months.

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**Perry T. Hamalis and Valerie A. Karras, Eds.: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on War. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018. 389 pages. ISBN: 978-0-268-19277-7. \$55 (hardcover). Reviewed by Victor Roudometof.**

This edited volume reflects an evolving conversation within the US-based Orthodox community, which has been shaped in large part by post-1990 military conflicts. It focuses on the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, as well as the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and the subsequent US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The volume includes contributions related mostly to theology and political philosophy and, to a lesser extent, political science and history. There is no meaningful engagement with the fields of cultural studies, anthropology, or sociology. The volume is organized into three uneven parts and includes a very informative and lucid introduction by the editors.

Part 1 consists of two chapters meant to introduce the American dilemmas that have shaped the intellectual conversation that gave birth to this book. In the first chapter, Aristotle Papanikolaou considers the Orthodox response to war and takes the reader into a fascinating discussion about the role of spirituality in addressing soldiers' traumas and posttraumatic stress disorder, suggesting that religion can play a formative role in helping people heal the wounds of war. In the next chapter, Andrew Walsh sets the stage of the intellectual conversation by describing how the Orthodox response to the 1999 US-led bombardment of Serbia contributed to the proliferation of Orthodox pacifist views, which in turn generated alternative perspectives that proposed the view that Orthodox theology can in fact see war as a "lesser good" instead of a "necessary evil." These two chapters help the reader situate the evolving debate, which is explored in further detail in part 2.

In the second part, titled "Reengaging Orthodoxy's History and Tradition," six chapters address various facets of the debate. The chapters range from discussions of ancient military technology to assessments of Jesus's teachings on war and discussions of a just or holy war in Byzantium. There is no chronological or systematic ordering but rather a sampling from Christianity's vast history, which of course is bound to offer a partial and incomplete picture of viewpoints on Orthodox history. For me, by far the most enlightening

parts of the book are chapters 5 through 8. In chapter 5, Valerie A. Karras offers an insightful assessment of Origen's views on war, and in chapter six, George E. Demacopoulos analyzes the approach of Ambrose of Milan with regard to warfare and the role of Christians in it. These two chapters offer in some respects complementary accounts that help the reader grasp a basic line of argument: namely, that Christian authors before Emperor Constantine I held mixed views on Christians serving in the military, but their positions were not predicated on theological arguments against military service per se but against partaking in pagan rituals associated with such service. Moreover, unlike the pacifist tenor of their writings, historical evidence suggests that, even prior to Constantine I, Christians served in the military, and therefore theological arguments might not have had a direct impact on their behavior. In chapter 7, James C. Skedros offers an excellent discussion of military saints in Byzantium, which highlights the fact that it was martyrdom and not military service that elevated individuals into sainthood. The author also notes the historically belated "militarization" of such saints. (This occurred concomitantly with the Iconoclast Controversy, which involved the issue of whether holy icons represented a form of idolatry that ought to be purged from Christianity's practices.)

In chapter 8, perhaps the most social-science-friendly chapter in the volume, Alexandros K. Kyrou and Elisabeth H. Prodromou offer a superb analysis of this volume's entire intellectual debate that allows readers a better assessment of the debate. They correctly point out, as do some of the other authors in the volume, that the debate on "just war" or "holy war" in Western political philosophy is derived from theological pronouncements that date to the Crusades, if not even further. But unlike such formulations—which have become axiomatic frames of reference for contemporary discussions—in the Eastern Orthodox tradition war was seen as "justifiable" and not as "just" (let alone "holy"). The authors relate the reinvigoration of the debate within Orthodox theology to the work of Princeton historian Tia Kolbaba, suggesting that her argument overstretches the evidence supplied. They cite from Byzantine military manuals to argue that, for the Byzantines, war was the solution of last resort and certainly not an object of glory. Their reference to the "noble" Constantine V, praised for conducting campaigns that did not cost any lives among his soldiers, reminds one of the principal reason Colin Powell became a celebrated figure in the United States. He,

like Constantine V, succeeded in winning engagements without a high casualty rate. In Byzantium, the authors argue, no visions of martyrdom in the battlefield existed, and war was practiced cautiously under the principle of “expediency” (oikonomia). One does not truly have to accept the entire thesis proposed by the two authors, and certainly, one needs to take stock of the evidence supplied by the opposing side. Still, the authors’ thesis converges with the views of the rest of the authors, suggesting that from an Orthodox perspective, war is never “just” or “holy.”

To those raised in Orthodox societies and cultures, the entire debate might seem mind numbing. In fact, the very reason this debate even exists as an intellectual topic has to do with the moralistic nature of US society, and the pressure put upon believers to articulate a theologically justified perspective on such highly political events like 9/11 or the Iraq invasion. Hence, the relevance of the question: What is the Orthodox perspective on war? Can there be a just war for the Orthodox? Are the Orthodox marginalized when they fail to join in with other US-based denominations in offering theological justifications for war?

Part 3 of the volume consists of four chapters that inquire into these theological issues. Not being a theologian or even a theologically inclined scholar, I should refrain from commenting on topics that are far beyond my own areas of expertise. Personally, I found the volume’s last chapter, by Peter T. Hamalis, to be the most concise and illuminating one, in terms of helping me understand the kind of dilemmas currently confronted by Orthodox theologians. Undoubtedly, this intellectual conversation will continue in the future.

Overall, the volume is a sound extension of a debate initiated several years ago in the pages of *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, and hence it might come as no surprise that it might be mostly of relevance to an audience of clergy and theologians, as well as the sincerest among the US-based Orthodox believers, especially those who feel the need for a serious theological elaboration on such questions. As one can easily surmise, this is not a volume written with a primarily social-scientific audience in mind. Still, there is an audience and hence a market for such a topic, and it might actually be even larger than the audience typical of most social-scientific discussions.

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Огляд книги, наведений нижче, взято з книги, написаної англійською мовою групою американських вчених кілька років тому, де редактор цього Щоквартальника був одним із авторів і вніс свій розділ. Протягом 2-3 років ми збиралися кілька разів на рік і проводили дискусійні сесії щодо кожного з розділів. На той час, коли ми починали цю роботу, нас не хвилювала конкретна війна в будь-якій точці світу. Проте, коли в Україні почалася війна, кілька українських вчених припустили, що книжка буде там корисною. Книга була перекладена українською мовою і стала важливим ресурсом для тамтешньої Церкви. Для дискусій, які мали практичний характер і стосувалися повсякденного життя, створювалися навчальні групи та сесії для обговорення книги. Нещодавно книга була номінована на премію «Книжка року» в Україні. Рецензія на цю книгу була опублікована кілька років тому в журналі *The Mediterranean Quarterly*, і з їхнього дозволу та з дозволу автора ми публікуємо її тут українською мовою. Книга доступна англійською мовою на сайті Amazon, а найближчими місяцями вона буде доступна українською мовою в США.

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**Перрі Т. Хамаліс і Валері А. Каррас, редактори: Православні Християнські Погляди на Війну. Нотр-Дам, Індіана: Публікація Університету Нотр-Дам, 2018. 389 стор. ISBN: 978-0-268-19277-7. 55 доларів (тверда обкладинка). Рецензував Віктор Рудометоф.**

Цей відредагований том відображає розмову всередині православної спільноти, базованої в США, яка значною мірою була сформована військовими конфліктами після 1990 року. Він зосереджений на югославських війнах 1990-х років, а також на терористичних атаках 11 вересня 2001 року в Сполучених Штатах і наступних війнах під проводом США в Афганістані та Іраку. Том включає в себе внески, пов'язані здебільшого з богослів'ям та політичною філософією та, меншою мірою, з політологією та історією. Немає значущої взаємодії з галузями культурології, антропології чи соціології. Том складається з трьох нерівних частин і містить дуже інформативний і зрозумілий вступ редакторів.

Частина 1-ша складається з двох розділів, призначених для ознайомлення з американськими дилемами, які сформували інтелектуальну розмову, яка породила цю книгу. У першому розділі Аристотель Папаніколау розглядає відповідь православних на війну та залучає читача до захоплюючої дискусії про роль духовності у вирішенні травм солдатів і посттравматичного стресового розладу, припускаючи, що релігія може відігравати формуючу роль у допомозі людям залікувати рани війни. У наступному розділі Ендрю Уолш створює сцену інтелектуальної бесіди, описуючи, як православна відповідь на бомбардування Сербії під проводом США в 1999 році сприяла поширенню православних пацифістських поглядів, які, у свою чергу, породили альтернативні погляди, які пропонували точку зору, що православна теологія фактично може розглядати війну як «менше благо» замість «необхідного зла». Ці два розділи допомагають читачеві розібратися в розгортанні дебатів, які більш детально розглядаються в частині 2-гій.

У другій частині під назвою «Відновлення Історії та Традиції Православ'я» шість розділів розглядають різні аспекти дискусії. Розділи варіюються від обговорень стародавніх військових технологій до оцінок вчень Ісуса про війну та обговорень справедливої чи священної війни у Візантії. Немає хронологічного чи систематичного впорядкування, а скоріше є вибірка з величезної історії християнства, яка, звісно, повинна надати часткову та неповну картину точок зору на православну історію. Для мене найбільш повчальними частинами книги є розділи з 5-го по 8-ий. У розділі 5 Валері А. Каррас пропонує глибоку оцінку поглядів Оригена на війну, а в розділі шостому Джордж Е. Демакопулос аналізує підхід Амвросія Медіоланського щодо війни та ролі християн у ній. Ці два розділи пропонують у певному відношенні взаємодоповнюючі розповіді, які допомагають читачеві зрозуміти основну лінію аргументації: а саме, що християнські автори до імператора Костянтина I дотримувалися неоднозначних поглядів на християн, які служать у війську, але їхні позиції не ґрунтувалися на богословських аргументах проти військового служіння як такого, а проти участі в язичницьких ритуалах, пов'язаних з

таким служінням. Більше того, на відміну від пацифістського напрямку їхніх творів, історичні свідчення свідчать про те, що ще до Костянтина I християни служили в армії, і тому богословські аргументи могли не мати прямого впливу на їхню поведінку. У розділі 7 Джеймс С. Скедрос пропонує чудове обговорення військових святих у Візантії, яке підкреслює той факт, що саме мученицька смерть, а не військова служба підняла людей до стану святих. Автор також відзначає історично запізнілу «мілітаризацію» таких святих. (Це сталося одночасно із суперечкою про іконоборців, яка стосувалася питання про те, чи святі ікони являють собою форму ідолопоклонства, яку слід вилучити з практики християнства).

У розділі 8, можливо, найбільш сприятливому для соціальних наук розділі тому, Александрос К. Кіру та Елізабет Х. Продрому пропонують чудовий аналіз усіх інтелектуальних дебатів у цьому томі, що дозволяє читачам краще оцінити дебати. Вони правильно зазначають, як і деякі інші автори тому, що дискусія про «справедливу війну» чи «священну війну» в західній політичній філософії походить від богословських заяв, які відносяться до Хрестових походів, якщо не пізніше. Але на відміну від таких формулювань — які стали аксіоматичними системами відліку для сучасних дискусій — у східній православній традиції війна розглядалася як «виправдана», а не як «справедлива» (не кажучи вже про «святую»). Автори пов'язують пожвавлення дискусії в православному богослов'ї з роботою прінстонського історика Тіи Колбаби, припускаючи, що її аргументи перебільшують надані докази. Вони посилаються на візантійські військові посібники, щоб стверджувати, що для візантійців війна була рішенням останньої інстанції, а не предметом слави. Їх згадка про «благородного» Костянтина V, якого хвалили за проведення кампаній, які не коштували жодного життя серед його солдатів, нагадує одну з головних причин, чому Колін Пауелл став відомою особистістю в Сполучених Штатах. Йому, як і Костянтину V, вдалося виграти битви без великого відсотка втрат. У Візантії, стверджують автори, не існувало бачень мучеництва на полі бою, і війна велася обережно за принципом «доцільності» (ойкономії). Насправді не обов'язково приймати всі думки,

подані двома авторами, і, звичайно, потрібно проаналізувати докази, надані протилежною стороною. Тим не менш, думка авторів збігається з поглядами решти авторів, припускаючи, що з православної точки зору війна ніколи не є «справедливою» або «святою».

Для тих, хто виріс у православних суспільствах і культурах, уся дискусія може здатися приголомшливою. Насправді, сама причина існування цієї дискусії як інтелектуальної теми пов'язана з моралізаторською природою американського суспільства та тиском, який чиниться на віруючих, щоб висловити богословсько виправдану точку зору на такі надзвичайно політичні події, як 11 вересня чи вторгнення в Ірак. Звідси актуальність питання: Яким є православний погляд на війну? Чи може бути справедлива війна для православних? Чи є православні маргіналізованими, коли вони не можуть приєднатися до інших конфесій, що базуються в США, пропонуючи теологічні виправдання війни?

Частина 3-тя то́му складається з чотирьох розділів, які досліджують ці богословські питання. Не будучи богословом і навіть не теологічно схильним вченим, я повинен утримуватися від коментарів на теми, які виходять далеко за межі моєї сфери знань. Особисто я вважаю, що останній розділ то́ма, написаний Пітером Т. Гамалісом, є найбільш стислим і яскравим, оскільки він допомагає мені зрозуміти, з якими дилемами зараз стикаються православні теологи. Безперечно, ця інтелектуальна розмова триватиме й надалі.

Загалом, цей том є серйозним продовженням дискусії, розпочатої кілька років тому на сторінках St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly (Свято-Володимирського Щоквартального Богословського Випуску), і тому не дивно, що він може бути в основному актуальним для аудиторії духовенства та богословів, а також як найширший серед православних віруючих у США, особливо тих, хто відчуває потребу в серйозній богословській розробці подібних питань. Як можна легко здогадатися, цей том передусім написаний не для суспільно-наукової аудиторії. Тим не менш, існує аудиторія, а отже, і ринок для такої теми, і вона може бути навіть більшою, ніж аудиторія, типова для більшості суспільно-наукових дискусій.



## **SEMINARY'S METROPOLITAN JOHN THEODOROVICH LIBRARY**

A TREASURE CHEST FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY,  
ACADEMICS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND FOR ITS  
PUBLIC MEMBERSHIP

VICTORIA OLENA SWINDLE, MLIS  
St. Sophia Theological Librarian Liaison from the  
Council of the Metropolia



The St. Sophia Theological Library serves as a vital academic, cultural, and spiritual hub for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA (UOC of USA). It is not only a repository of knowledge but also a crucial support system for the education and spiritual growth of seminarians, clergy, and the broader community. By offering access to an expansive and diverse collection of materials, the Library plays an essential role in promoting theological education, cultural awareness, and scholarly research.

The Library's collection continues to grow thanks to generous donations and dedicated cataloging efforts. Currently, the collection includes over 70,000 items, such as books, periodicals, musical scores, pamphlets, brochures, maps, commemorative publications, and both secular and religious calendars. The holdings also feature almanacs, dictionaries, and encyclopedias that serve as key reference resources. Among its most valued assets are rare books that date back centuries, carefully preserved to ensure ongoing access for scholars and enthusiasts.

Additionally, the Library houses a remarkable selection of materials published in Displaced Persons Camps during the 20th century, providing a unique historical perspective on the Ukrainian diaspora. The music collections, which include contributions from various parishes and choir directors, further highlight the rich liturgical and cultural heritage of the Ukrainian Orthodox community. The archive also contains parish commemorative books, select DVDs, and an assortment of music records in various formats, such as CDs and vinyl albums.

The Library's resources are linguistically diverse, offering extensive materials in English and Ukrainian, as well as texts in Latin, Greek, and Russian. Its collection spans numerous geographical and cultural contexts, featuring publications from North America, Ukraine, and other regions with significant Ukrainian diasporas. These publications include works produced in Ukraine and the United States, along with classical texts and rare editions dating back to the 19th century, showcasing the depth and historical breadth of the Library's offerings.

The Library regularly receives research requests from a variety of users, including scholars, students, clergy, and community members who seek to access its rich resources. These requests often involve searching for articles from specific editions of the Ukrainian Orthodox Word (UOW), materials for coursework and homework, parish histories, and specialized items like sheet music, pysanka (Ukrainian Easter egg) designs, and traditional embroidery patterns. The Library's ability to meet these needs demonstrates its dedication to supporting academic, cultural, and religious education within the Ukrainian Orthodox community.

The physical collections of the UOW and Ukrainian Orthodox League (UOL) Bulletins continue to expand through the generosity of donors. As more contributions come in, these collections grow increasingly comprehensive, enhancing the Library's role as a resource for research and historical preservation. The goal is not just to maintain these collections but to develop them into a complete archive of these periodicals for future generations.

A significant achievement for the Library was the digitization project for both of these periodicals, which started and was completed in 2020. This project marks a major step forward in preserving the history of the UOC of USA. By digitizing the UOW and UOL Bulletins, the Library has made these materials more accessible and efficient for researchers to use. Digital copies are now available, reducing the need for individuals to visit the Library in person, which is especially beneficial for those located far away or facing other limitations. This initiative ensures that the history and teachings of the UOC of USA are widely shared and preserved for future generations.

Moreover, the digitization project highlights the Library's forward-thinking approach to utilizing technology for historical preservation.

It not only increases accessibility but also safeguards the longevity of these crucial publications by protecting them from physical deterioration. This digital archive has become an invaluable tool for both academic researchers and Church community members who wish to explore their heritage, engage in scholarly work, or connect with the spiritual and cultural traditions recorded in these periodicals.

In July of this year, the St. Sophia Theological Library was accepted as a member of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Theological Library Association (SEPTLA). This esteemed membership aligns the Library with other theological institutions across eastern Pennsylvania and central New Jersey, significantly expanding the resources and collections available to our students. Being part of SEPTLA enhances the Library's research capabilities and fosters collaborative opportunities with other institutions, enriching the educational experiences of seminarians and scholars alike. With two other member institutions in New Jersey, the Library now belongs to a broader network dedicated to supporting theological education and scholarly excellence.



**MY SEMINARIAN EXPERIENCE:  
A JOURNEY TOWARDS SPIRITUAL  
REJUVENATION**

CRYSTAL SINIARI,  
MA APPLIED ORTHODOX STUDIES



When I was first baptized into the Coptic Orthodox Church in February 2002 I never imagined my journey into Orthodoxy would lead me to become a seminarian. As I grew in my faith as an Orthodox Christian, so too my love for God intensified and my acts of worship aligned with Orthodox Christian theology. However, I still felt there was more for me to learn. I desired to learn about the who, what, and why of the Orthodox Christian Church. I wanted to have a deeper understanding of why Our Lord Jesus Christ established His Church the way He did. As a result, I decided to further my education by attending seminary.

Since I work a full-time job, finding a seminary that provided a course load that fits into my busy schedule was a priority. Pursuing a Master's Degree and working full-time was not new for me. I figured that if I was able to work a full-time job and obtain a Master's Degree in Education Administration in 2006, then I could certainly do it again eleven years later. At this stage of my life the best option for me was to attend a seminary that offered a distance learning program. A distance learning program would not require me to attend classes on campus on a regular basis. I also wanted to attend a seminary that was within driving distance from my home. After extensive research and prayer, I decided to apply to the Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary. The seminary's distance learning program was a perfect match for me.

The process for applying to Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary was comparable to the processes I had experienced in

other graduate programs. It was fairly simple. I was required to complete an application, submit my undergraduate and graduate transcripts along with two letters of recommendation, and write a spiritual autobiography. Writing my spiritual autobiography provided an opportunity for me to reflect on my spiritual upbringing and my journey into Orthodox Christianity. It also gave me an opportunity to truly search within myself, pray, and contemplate if seminary was the right path for me to take. Furthermore, I wondered if my parish priest and my bishop would support me in this endeavor by writing recommendation letters.

With much joy and support, my parish priest and my bishop wrote their letters of recommendation for me. I have to admit that obtaining these recommendations from these beloved and trusted spiritual fathers who know me so well removed all doubts I had about attending seminary. Without hesitation, it was full steam ahead. I was accepted into the Master of Arts in Applied Orthodox Studies Program in the fall of 2017.

My three-year experience as a seminarian at Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary was an experience I will never forget for the rest of the life. From the start of the fall semester in 2017 to the completion of my degree on May 20, 2020, all faculty and staff welcomed me and encouraged me to see this program through to the end. I was especially grateful for their willingness to design a track that allowed me to focus on the role of women in the Orthodox Church. There was never an instance in which I felt like an outsider because I am an Orthodox woman from the Coptic Orthodox Church. Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary embraced me along with my fellow seminarians.

The Seminary will always be very dear to me and close to my heart. It was not only an educational institution to me, but a place of holiness and spiritual peace. The Distance Learning Residency requirement for each semester was an opportunity for me to retreat from the world. I treasure my time in prayer at Liturgy, vespers, and matins with my fellow seminarians every bit as much as my time in the classroom. Words cannot express the spiritual rejuvenation I experienced in the Three Holy Hierarchs Chapel. Having the opportunity to pray and meditate amongst the holy relics and engaging with like-minded seminarians was heaven on earth. Needless to say, I never wanted the residency to end at the close of each semester.

My time as a seminarian at Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary has enriched my soul and helped me to grow in my service in the Orthodox Church. Since the completion of my MA in Applied Orthodox Studies, the Lord has used me to serve in the capacity of educating and counseling Orthodox women to meet their spiritual needs. My time at the seminary was a blessed experience that has truly benefited me in my spiritual walk in Christ. I pray that my alma mater continues to grow and produces both male and female seminarians who will be used to help the Orthodox Christian Church by offering their service to the Lord.

## **HOW I DECIDED TO BECOME A PRIEST**

SUBDEACON ANDRII AKULENKO



From my earliest memories of childhood, the church held an important place in my life. Every Sunday, my grandfather would take me to Liturgy, and it became something special, that I looked forward to with great anticipation. I wasn't just present at Liturgy, I could feel the spiritual atmosphere and the mystery of the Holy Spirit even at such a young age. For me, it wasn't just words and songs, but something more – something that revealed the meaning of life and helped me feel something deeper.

When we returned home after the services, the real fun for me began. As a young boy, I would take a blanket or towel and put it on as if it were priestly vestments. I became a “priest” and would conduct my own Liturgy for everyone in the house. My “parish” consisted of my parents, relatives, and even farm animals – the chickens, geese, dogs, and cats. I felt that I could communicate with all of them like a real priest, and even the animals deserved my blessing. Of course, these were just silly childish games, but looking back, I realize they had a great impact on my life and my true inner calling.

However, like many other children, during my school years, I wanted to become a doctor. I was fascinated by the idea of helping people physically, healing their illnesses, and bringing them relief from suffering. Medicine attracted me with its practicality and tangibility. I imagined that one day I would save lives and take care of my patients' health. It seemed like the best way to be useful in the world.

But one day my perspective changed; this happened the first time I saw my grandparents slaughter a pig before Pascha. In my family, we have a tradition of slaughtering a pig before major holidays like Pascha or Christmas, to prepare for the table. For me, this was an overwhelming, maybe even a little bit of a traumatic experience. From the moment I saw blood I began to question whether medicine was truly my calling. This event made me think that there are other ways to help people. I began to reflect more on providing spiritual help to people, rather than just physical healing. Gradually, the idea began to form in my mind that I could serve not just the body, but the soul as well. I realized that my true calling was not just to heal bodies but to be a guide for people on their spiritual journey.

When the time came to choose my life path, I decided to enter the seminary in Lviv. The seminary became a place where I could study religious texts, theology, and spiritual practices. Here, I finally found answers to many questions that had troubled me for years. But most importantly, I realized that priesthood was truly my calling.

Once, during my seminary studies, I was preparing for an important theology exam. My friends and I stayed up all night, reviewing the materials. Everyone was a bit nervous because the professor was known for being strict and always asked unexpected questions. The next morning, I woke up in a rush, quickly got dressed, and, not noticing anything unusual, headed to the exam. All the seminarians were already sitting in the auditorium, the professor was handing out the exam papers, and I was trying to calm down and focus on the questions. Suddenly, one of my friends, sitting next to me, leaned over and whispered, "You forgot something..." I looked at him, confused, not understanding what he meant. He winked and quietly said, "Look at your feet." I glanced down and, to my horror, realized that instead of one of my shoes, I was wearing... a house slipper! I had rushed so much that I put on mismatched footwear – one shoe and one slipper. The situation was so absurd that I couldn't hold back my laughter, even during the exam. My professor, noticing me laughing, asked what was going on. I explained the situation, and he couldn't help but smile as well. I passed the exam, and my new

footwear fashion became a running joke among the seminarians for a long time. This story reminded me that even in the most serious situations, it's sometimes best to just laugh and not take things too seriously.

After completing my studies at the seminary in Lviv, I decided to continue my education abroad. America became my new home, and this marked another important milestone on my path to the Holy priesthood. Here, I had the opportunity to dive deeper into theological studies, get to know new cultures, and expand my knowledge. Life in seminary is very interesting. It is a time of personal growth and spiritual development, which helps me become even firmer in my vocation. An especially important part of my experience has been the beauty of the services in our seminary chapel. Each service is filled with spiritual power, reminding me of the greatness of serving God and the importance of a priest's mission here on earth. We often visit parishes in different parts of America, which gives me the opportunity to see the variation of spiritual life in different communities. I have met people with many different spiritual needs, and this has strengthened my desire to help those in need.

Now, looking back, I see that my life was always leading me to the priesthood, even when I didn't realize it. My childhood games, dreams of medicine, and family traditions – all became part of my path to the priesthood.

Each step along this path helped me understand that my calling is to serve not only people but also God. Through my ministry, I hope to help people find peace and harmony in their lives, just as I once found it in the church with my grandfather.

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## **Чому я вирішив стати священиком**

Іподиякон Андрій Акуленко

З самого дитинства церква мала особливе місце в моєму житті. Кожної неділі мій дідусь водив мене на службу, і це стало для мене чимось особливим, що я любив і чекав з нетерпінням. Я не просто був присутній на службах, а відчував духовну атмосферу та таємничість релігійного обряду, навіть у такому ранньому віці. Для мене це були не просто слова і пісні, а щось більше те, що відкривало мені сенс життя і допомагало відчувати щось глибше.

Коли ми поверталися додому після служби, мої дитячі ігри починалися. Я брав першу-ліпшу ковдру або рушник і надягав



їх, ніби це були священні облачення. Я ставав «священником» і проводив свою власну службу для всіх, хто був удома. Моєю “парафією” були мої батьки, родичі, а також домашні тварини — кури, гуси, собака, кіт. Я відчував, що можу спілкуватися з усіма ними, як справжній священник, і навіть тварини заслуговували на моє благословення. Це, звичайно, були лише дитячі ігри, але, озираючись назад, я розумію, що вони мали великий вплив на моє життя і формування мого внутрішнього покликання.

Однак, як і багато інших дітей, у шкільні роки я мріяв стати лікарем. Я захоплювався можливістю допомагати людям фізично, зцілювати їхні хвороби і приносити їм полегшення від страждань. Медицина приваблювала мене своєю конкретністю та практичністю. Я уявляв, як одного дня буду рятувати життя і дбати про здоров'я своїх пацієнтів. Це здавалося найкращим способом бути корисним для світу. Проте одного разу мої погляди змінилися. Це сталося, коли я вперше побачив, як баба з дідом кололи свиню перед Паскою. У нас є така традиція перед великими святами, як Великдень або Різдвяні свята, заколювати свиню для святкового столу. Для мене це було надто сильним переживанням, і з того моменту я почав задумуватись, чи справді медицина – це моє покликання. Ця подія змусила мене задуматися про те, що є інші шляхи, як допомагати людям.

Я почав все частіше задумуватися про духовну допомогу людям, а не лише фізичне зцілення. У моїй свідомості поступово почала формуватися ідея, що я можу служити не лише тілу, але й душі. Я зрозумів, що моє справжнє покликання — не лише лікувати тіла, але й бути провідником для людей на їхньому духовному шляху. Коли прийшов час обирати свій життєвий шлях, я вирішив вступити до семінарії у Львові. Семінарія стала для мене місцем, де я зміг зануритися в глибоке вивчення релігійних текстів богослов'я та духовних практик. Тут я нарешті зміг знайти відповіді на багато питань, які турбували мене протягом років. Але найголовніше — я зрозумів, що священство дійсно є моїм покликанням.

Одного разу, під час навчання в семінарії, я готувався до важливого екзамену з богослов'я. Ми з друзями засиджувалися до пізньої ночі, повторюючи всі важливі моменти. Усі були трохи на нервах, адже викладач був відомий своєю суворістю і завжди задавав несподівані питання. Наступного ранку я прокинувся в поспіху, швидко одягнувся і, не помітивши нічого дивного, вирушив

на екзамен. Усі семінаристи вже сиділи в аудиторії, викладач роздавав білети, а я намагався заспокоїтись і зосередитись на питаннях. Раптом один із моїх друзів, сидючи поруч, нахилився до мене і шепнув: “Ти щось забув...” Я глянув на нього здивовано, не розуміючи, про що він говорить. Він підморгнув і тихо сказав: “Подивись на свої ноги.” Я глянув униз і з жахом зрозумів, що замість одного черевика у мене був... домашній капець! Я так поспішав, що одягнув різне взуття — один черевик і один капець. Ситуація була така абсурдна, що я не міг стримати сміху, навіть на екзамені. Мій викладач, помітивши, що я сміюся, запитав, що сталося. Я пояснив ситуацію, і він теж не зміг стримати посмішки. Екзамен я здав, а моє взуттєве “досягнення” стало предметом жартів серед семінаристів на довгий час. Ця історія нагадала мені, що навіть у найсерйозніших ситуаціях іноді варто просто посміятися і не брати все надто близько до серця.

Після закінчення семінарії у Львові, я вирішив продовжити свою освіту за кордоном. Америка стала моїм новим домом, і це стала ще одна важлива віхта на моєму шляху до священства. Тут я отримав можливість глибше вивчити Богословську науку, познайомитися з новими культурами і розширити свої знання. Життя в семінарії в Америці є дуже цікавим. Це є час особистого зростання і духовного розвитку, який допомагає мені ще більше зміцнитися у своєму покликанні. Особливо важливою частиною мого досвіду стали богослужіння у нашій семінарійній капличці. Вони вражають своєю красою і піднесеністю. Кожна служба є пронизана духовною силою, що нагадує мені про велич служіння Богу і важливість місії священника тут на землі. Ми часто відвідуємо парафії у різних куточках Америки, і це дає мені можливість побачити широту духовного життя в різних громадах. Я зустрів людей із різними духовними потребами, і це додатково зміцнило моє переконання у важливості мого служіння.

Тепер, озираючись назад, я бачу, що моє життя завжди вело мене до священства, навіть коли я не усвідомлював цього. Мої дитячі ігри, мрії про медицину, сімейні традиції — усе це стало частиною мого шляху до священства. Кожен крок на цьому шляху допомагав мені зрозуміти, що моє покликання — служити не тільки людям, але й Богу. Через служіння я сподіваюся допомагати людям знайти мир і гармонію у своєму житті, як колись їх знайшов я в церкві разом із дідусем.



# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

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## **FR. ROBERT HOLET**

V. Rev. Dr. Robert Holet DMin has been active in developing the Isaiah 44 Project through a cooperative effort with the Orthodox Archdiocese of Malawi, Africa. (Patriarchate of Alexandria) The drilling of wells on the properties of local Orthodox Churches can provide not only ample supplies of safe drinking water, but also additional opportunities for the Church leaders and members to minister to their local communities. Fr. Robert recently visited Malawi to review the progress of the Isaiah 44 Project initiatives and has been writing progress reports and pastoral reflections for the website: [www.orthodoxsteward.com](http://www.orthodoxsteward.com) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Word.

## **DR. CARRIE FREDERICK FROST**

As of Fall 2024, Carrie Frederick Frost, PhD, is delighted to join the Department of Global Humanities and Religions as an Assistant Professor of Religion and Culture at Western Washington University. Over the past year, Frost has lectured at Valparaiso, Yale, and Catholic University. Her most recent book, *Church of Our Granddaughters* (Cascade 2023), was taught at Notre Dame, Harvard, University of Virginia, and Yale, and is being translated into German and Finnish. She is chair of the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess and Co-Chair of the Women and the Orthodox Church Group of International Orthodox Theological Association. Her most exciting recent travels were to Zimbabwe in May 2024 to witness and celebrate the first ordination of an Orthodox Christian deaconess in the twenty-first century. She is the mother of five and grandmother of one and lives in the Pacific Northwest.

## **FR. GABRIEL ROCHELLE**

Fr. Gabriel Rochelle continues to teach New Testament and Old Testament studies at both St Sophia Seminary and New Mexico State University. In addition he teaches a course on Celtic Folk Tales at New Mexico State. He serves as President of Cymdeithas Madog, the Welsh Studies Institute in North America. <https://speakwelsh.org/>

The Institute sponsors numerous learning experiences in Welsh language throughout the year. Fr. Gabriel also sponsors an ongoing series of readings of Celtic Folk Tales at a local tavern. In recent years he has lectured several times at the Eighth Day Institute, Wichita KS, on Celtic Saints and on the artist and writer David Jones. He is a member of the Orthodox Theological Society of America's working groups on Orthodox-Jewish relations and the David Jones Society - <http://www.david-jones-society.org/>

### **FR. MILORAD ORLIC**

Fr. Milorad Orlic is translating from Serbian to English Fr. Lazar Mirkovic's "Heoterologia—a History of the Development of Feast Days in the Orthodox Church, Serbian Patriarchate, Belgrade, 1961.

### **DR. GAYLE WOLOSCHAK**

Dr. Gayle Woloschak continues to serve as Associate Dean of Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Programs and Professor at Northwestern University and teaches science and religion at Lutheran School of Theology and Patristics at St. Sophia Seminary. During the past year, she has given talks on Artificial Intelligence for the Canadian Council of Churches, at Fordham's Center for Orthodox Christian Studies, Huffington Ecumenical Institute (at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary), and at the annual Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine Psychology and Religion conference. She also served as a moderator at the Halki Conference on the environment sponsored by the Ecumenical Patriarch. She taught a course on religion and science for Volos Academy in Volos, Greece this summer and in spring taught a course the Future of Creation for Lutheran School of Theology.

### **FR. RICHARD JENDRAS**

Fr. Richard Jendras holds a BA in special education with an academic concentration in psychology from Jersey City State College and an MA in educational administration from Seton Hall University. He has taught in the Jersey City public schools, and for the the last 33 years has taught English as a second language for seminarians from Ukraine at St. Sophia Seminary. He also teaches Spirituality at the seminary. He is currently working on his Doctor of Ministry at Catholic University in Washington, DC focusing on liturgical catechesis. His project involves a comparative literature for people examining Byzantine and Eucharistic Liturgy.

**SANT SOPHIA UKRAINIAN  
ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY**



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