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Russian and Ukrainian Christians at Odds

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A Russian Christian Perspective on the Ukrainian Crisis

“Sergey Osokin”

Historic Russian-Ukrainian Ties

A strong historical bond exists between Russians and Ukrainians. Someone in nearly every Russian family was born in Ukraine, worked or studied in Ukraine, or has friends or colleagues there. Mixed Russian-Ukrainian marriages are common both in Russia and in Ukraine. The relationship stemming from centuries of common history, common Slavic roots, similar languages, and shared literary heritage does not have any analogy in North American experience. So, no wonder that most Americans do not seem to understand the very root of the conflict in Ukraine today, and no wonder it is so difficult and painful to discuss.

Sharply Contrasting Interpretations of Ukraine, Past and Present

Up until recently, I lived with a naive assumption that Russians and Ukrainians are, if not one nation, then at least brotherly nations that will always get on with each other thanks to common historical, cultural, and ethnic ties. The first rude awakening happened quite unexpectedly, when our Ukrainian friends implored us to stop by Kiev on our way through Ukraine so they could show us the city. Most of what I heard and learned during that tour (from well-meaning friends, mind you) was that Russians were responsible for the destruction of historical buildings on Kreschatik Street during World War II, that Russians blew up Kiev’s Dormition Cathedral,¹ that *holodomor* [the early 1930s famine] was Stalin’s intentional genocide of Ukrainians,² that the destruction of the Dneproges Dam by Soviet troops was at a cost of thousands and thousands of Ukrainian casualties,³ and so on. What was especially interesting is how my friends kept referring to *Russian troops* instead of *Soviet troops*, as if the Soviet army of World War II was exclusively made up of ethnic Russians. Nothing could be further from the truth. Although many of these “facts” have been exposed as falsifications, it became evident to me that a whole generation of Ukrainian youth has been raised to believe them. Another part of that upbringing has been tolerance, if not sympathy, for such odious characters as radical Ukrainian nationalists Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich, who are presently seen by many young Ukrainians as heroes who were fighting for Ukraine’s independence. Now, in reaction

(continued on page 2)

A Ukrainian Christian Response to “A Russian Christian Perspective” on Ukraine

Sergiy Tymchenko

Charges of Russian Chauvinism and Imperialism

According to its title, Sergey Osokin’s article does not attempt to present a general Christian perspective on the Ukrainian crisis, but rather a Russian Christian perspective which, as he later states, is also his own subjective opinion. Osokin - not the author’s real name - begins with a soft, friendly voice explaining that Ukraine and Russia are “almost one nation,” being tied together historically, culturally, and ethnically. He is certain that Ukrainians could never have come to view Russia as an aggressor by themselves without the help of some of Russia’s enemies. Closer to the middle of his article, Osokin, full of resentment against Russia’s detractors, speaks without reservation that Ukraine’s political protest was the work of United States’ special services and did not have anything in common with the free expression of the Ukrainian people. For Osokin Ukraine is no longer a nation to which he is emotionally and culturally attached. Instead, Ukraine is now simply a place where geopolitical interests of Russia and the U.S. collide. At this point he speaks with a chauvinist and imperialist voice, defending Russia’s intervention by assuming the Kremlin’s right to control the politics of a neighboring state: “It would be strange if Russian leaders had passively watched the alarming political changes in Ukraine.”

Osokin’s Russian political partiality and chauvinism meshes seamlessly with the Russian story line regarding the Ukraine crisis. The simple plot identifies the United States and Ukraine as the villains, while Russians (including Russian separatists in Ukraine) are the victims and heroes. Osokin gives his readers a stereotypical version of this plot, noting that this view dominates in Russian society, and that it also is his “subjective” and personal “understanding of the situation.” Most of the details of this narrative have been exposed as distortions of truth in a number of texts. For the sake of space, I will not discuss here the whole narrative, but instead challenge key details of it with documentation pointing to helpful articles available

(continued on page 5)

COVERING THE FORMER SOVIET UNION AND CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Russian Christian Perspective on the Ukraine Crisis (continued from page 1)

to Russian criticism, many Ukrainians jokingly refer to themselves as *Banderists*, which cannot excite anything but indignation in Russians, Poles, and Jews who know and remember how many of their own were killed by these “fighters for independence.”⁷⁴

A 2009 study of history texts in the newly independent, post-Soviet republics indicates such changes in interpretation of events and personalities resulted from intentional alterations of history schoolbooks in Ukraine, alterations infused with a nationalistic perspective of history “using the image of Russia and Russians as the sworn enemy.”⁷⁵ Therefore, the notion of Russia as an aggressor, so often mentioned by authors writing in the summer issue of the *East-West Church and Ministry Report*,⁶ was placed in the minds of Ukrainians well before the conflict of 2014.

Russian Seizure of Crimea

For the sake of objectivity, one has to admit that the actions of Russia during the Ukraine crisis have only added fuel to the flames, thus somewhat justifying the negative image of Russia in the eyes of Ukrainians. The Russian seizure of Crimea has been seen as an insult by many Ukrainians, making Russia responsible for whatever problems Ukraine might face—political, economic, and social. Some Ukrainians go so far as to claim that even the coup that resulted from Maidan protests was guided by “the hand of the Kremlin.”⁷⁷ It would seem laughable if it were not so sad. From my dialogues with young Ukrainians on social media it seems that they have been given some kind of *carte blanche* for hatred and insults, not only toward Russian political and spiritual leaders who allegedly support what is claimed to be Russian policy in Ukraine,⁸ but towards all Russians.

Being a citizen of Russia and a Christian, I cannot totally abstain from weighing in on the actions of my country and the actions of Christian leaders during the Ukrainian crisis. However, what I now express is my own subjective opinion, limited by my understanding of the situation. However, any evaluation of the present crisis should take into account the historical and current political situation in Ukraine, otherwise it will yield an unbalanced judgment.

Charges of American Complicity in Maidan

I strongly agree with the view that dominates in Russian society that what Ukraine underwent in 2014 was nothing short of a *coup d'état*. Although people demonstrating on Maidan Square were protesting against arbitrary rule, corruption, and injustice, their actions led to an unconstitutional seizure of power. Besides, there are many reasons to believe that U.S. special services were involved.⁹ This was true of Maidan protests in 2004 that helped strongly anti-Russian and pro-American Viktor Yushenko come to power.¹⁰ A similar scenario seems to have been the case in the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovich in early 2014.¹¹ In relation to Maidan demonstrations, many Russians consider a number of circumstances suspicious. First, U.S. Assistant

Secretary of State Victoria Nuland openly admitted strong and sizeable financial support for Ukrainian NGOs for some obscure “build[ing of] democratic skills and institutions.”¹² Second, CIA Director John Brennan paid a working visit to the new government in Kiev.¹³ Third, many Russians have questions about the presence of some kind of “third force” of snipers shooting at both protestors and police during the Maidan confrontation.¹⁴ Oliver Stone, a famous movie director and a researcher into U.S. foreign policy,¹⁵ noted that this strategy is similar to scenarios of coups staged by the CIA in Venezuela, Iran, Chile, and other countries.¹⁶ All in all, many Russians think it makes a lot of sense that Maidan protests and the following seizure of power were orchestrated by outside political forces seeking to replace pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich.¹⁷ This is not surprising nor far-fetched, for Ukraine has long been in the sphere of U.S. geopolitical interests, a fact noted by former U.S. National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski.¹⁸

Justifications for Russia's Actions in Crimea

Russia's actions in Crimea and its possible involvement in military action in Donbas (eastern Ukraine) are understandable, taking the following into consideration:

1. the ongoing expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe, supported and lobbied for in Ukraine by ex-president Viktor Yushenko, ex-prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and present Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk,¹⁹
2. the ongoing, perennial gas disputes between Russia and Ukraine in which Russia's Sevastopol Naval Base was used as a hostage,²⁰ and
3. the altered, anti-Russian political course in Ukraine.

It would be strange if Russian leaders had passively watched the alarming political changes in Ukraine facing the imminent prospect of losing its main base for the Russian Black Sea fleet, and having NATO forces stationed just a few dozen miles from Russian borders.

Additional Criticism of Maidan

Unfortunately, we have to admit that the five billion dollars invested by the U.S. in the development of democratic institutions in Ukraine did not help to build a democratic and civil society there. On the contrary, this funding resulted in a dramatic imbalance of political powers, economic chaos, and civil war.²¹ Naturally, the degree of Ukrainian civic action and organization that came out to Maidan is impressive. Ukrainian activists believe that they managed to break the corrupted system of Yanukovich and to elect a government that may truly reverse the life of the country.²² However, if we look at the incompetence of the present government in managing the national economy,²³ as well as domestic policy,²⁴ we cannot but question whether or

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not Ukrainians followed the right path in electing its present government. Basically, one set of oligarchs has replaced another set of oligarchs. The question is: did the present leaders use the good will of the people to come to power?

Russia's Actions in Ukraine: Questionable or Justifiable?

I am not sure that Russian actions during the Ukrainian crisis are commendable from an ethical or legal point of view. The shift in Crimean jurisdiction, although enthusiastically approved by local residents, was not in accordance with existing international agreements.²⁵ And if we see the beginning of the military conflict in Donbas, not as 'anti-Maidan' (that is as an expression of eastern Ukraine's disagreement with an unconstitutional seizure of power in Kiev),²⁶ but as an action directly inspired and supported by Russia (as Ukrainian media argues), then it needs to be condemned. Russia's actions are understandable as a reaction of a large state to infringements upon its geopolitical interests and as a threat to the existing system that ensures security of the Eurasian region. Yet, on the other hand, intrusion into the affairs of a foreign country cannot be justified either from the point of view of international law, or from the point of view of morality.

Media Bias

Now, the word *if* in the paragraph above is very characteristic of the position of Russians who try to be objective in discussing the Ukrainian crisis. However, it is evident that both Russian and Ukrainian media are biased in their portrayal of the present situation in Ukraine, with an "information war" being waged in both countries.²⁷ Thus, truth about the situation in Ukraine can only be obtained by dismissing fake and misleading information, by searching hard for independent reports and investigations, and by listening to first-hand witnesses. Nevertheless, Ukrainian believers keep pressing their Russian fellow believers to condemn Russian actions. From the point of view of Ukrainian media, it is not civil war in Donbas, but rather anti-terrorist forces fighting "separatists" supported by the Russian army. In contrast, most Russians believe civil war is the case in Donbas, where local militiamen and Russian volunteers defend the Russian-speaking population of eastern Ukraine from genocide being carried out by the army of the unlawful Ukrainian government.

Should Christians Partake of Politics?

Christians find themselves in the most difficult position in this ideological debate because they belong to two worlds: one that says that violence can never be justified, and the other that says standing for justice is patriotic and comes at a very high cost. Although Ukrainian Christians debate the advisability of church involvement in politics, it appears that most Ukrainian believers have fallen into the temptation of mixing faith and politics. They claim that Christian values should translate into support for Ukraine's "national identity,"²⁸ which inevitably implies fighting for Ukraine's independence from Russia.²⁹

As for Russia, most Christian denominations try not to involve themselves in political matters.³⁰ Nevertheless, among lay believers, some speak radically and passionately against "the Banderian junta" while ever-pessimistic liberals criticize church leaders for their lack of resolution and their loyalty to the state. At least some Christians in Ukraine and Russia hold a third position that rejects black-and-white judgments. These believers strive to be in the world but not of the world (John 17: 15-16), are quick to listen, and are slow to speak and show wrath (James 1: 19). Believers holding this most difficult position are the ones who understand that all authority comes from God, not in the sense that any government should be unconditionally supported, but in the sense that, as the old wise proverb says, every nation has the very government it deserves.

Christian Charity toward Refugees

Both Russians and Ukrainians have a heritage of Christian values, and the most important of these is the ability to show compassion and unconditional forgiveness.³¹ Despite war, people have remained people. Both Russians and Ukrainians have demonstrated their readiness to help refugees who have suffered from military action. Many have opened their homes to relatives who fled from eastern Ukraine or have provided jobs to refugees. People continue to donate money, clothing, and medicine. For instance, with the help of Ukrainian volunteers such as Father Zakharia Krestyuk, a great deal of humanitarian aid has been collected for people in the Donbas region, and some stereotypes, for example, "people in eastern Ukraine are all separatists," have been challenged.³² Thanks to the actions of Elizaveta Glinka, better known as Doctor Liza, sick and wounded children from the eastern Ukraine war zone now receive treatment in the best clinics in Russia. She says that in Russia even the poor and the elderly are eager to donate what little they have to help those who have suffered in eastern Ukraine.³³

Overcoming Nationalism

I hope that the crisis and the military conflict in Ukraine will soon be over, and that someday Russia and Ukraine will once again be able to live in peace with each other. Unchecked nationalism erects barriers that only Christ can overcome (Ephesians 2: 13-15; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11). Thus, the main job for Russians and Ukrainians, especially those who are Christians, is to learn to see people beyond the labels of separatist "terrorists" or Ukrainian "fascists." We need to distance ourselves from propaganda, political differences, and ambitions and remember how valuable each person is in the eyes of God. Only then can Russians and Ukrainians see that, despite these trying times, what we have in common is greater than our differences and divisions. ♦

Notes:

¹ For a detailed account of the actual story, see E. Kabanets, "Pochemu byl razrushen Uspensky sobor Kiev-Pecherskoy lavry [Why Was the Dormition Cathedral of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves Destroyed?]," *Den*, 28 September 2012; <http://>

I am not sure that Russian actions during the Ukrainian crisis are commendable from an ethical or legal point of view, but Russia's actions are understandable as a reaction of a large state to infringements upon its geopolitical interests.

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(continued on page 4)

Russian Christian Perspective on the Ukraine Crisis (continued from page 3)

www.day.kiev.ua/ru/article/ukraina-incognita/pochemu-by-l-rzrushen-uspenskiy-sobor-kievo-pecherskoy-lavry.

² M. Berdnik, "Golod 33-go: plyaski na kostyakh, Yuschenko, Gitler, natsizm i genotsid [The Famine of '33: Dancing Upon the Bones, Yuschenko, Hitler, Nazism, and Genocide]," *RIA Novosti Ukraine*, 19 November 2014; <http://rian.com.ua/analytics/20141119/359726812.html>. See also Douglas Tottle, *Fraud, Famine, and Fascism: The Ukrainian Genocide Myth from Hitler to Harvard* (1987); <http://rationalrevolution.net/special/library/tottlefraud.pdf>.

³ The myth is exposed in "Vzryv Dneproges v 1941 godu. Razvenchanie mifa [Blowing Up of Dnyeproges in 1941. Exposing the Myth]," *Russky Mir Zaporozhya*, 14 November 2013; <http://rusmirzp.com/2013/11/14/category/history/40097>.

⁴ A. Voitsekhovskiy, Zh. Dygas, and G. Tkachenko, *Bez prava na reabilitatsiyu* [With No Right to Rehabilitation], 2 volumes. Kyiv: Kyiv Historical Society, 2006; <http://www.ukrstor.com/ukrstor/bezpraya-kniga1-x.html>.

⁵ A. Danilov and A. Filippov, *Osveshchenie obschey istorii Rossii i narodov postsovetskikh stran v shkol'nikh uchebnikakh istorii novykh nezavisimyykh gosudarstv* [Perspective on the Common History of Russia and the Peoples of Post-Soviet Countries in Schoolbooks on History in the New Independent States] (Moscow: 2009); http://www.nlyp.ru/reports/doclad_hist_02_light.pdf. One may assume that this study is biased, but I have personally witnessed this hostile attitude toward Russia not only in the case of friends from Kiev but among my younger relatives and acquaintances in Ukraine and students in Ukrainian secondary schools.

⁶ *East-West Ministry and Church Report* 22 (Summer 2014); <http://www.eastwestreport.org/pdfs/R22-3.pdf>.

⁷ R. Chaykovskiy, "Maydan inspiriroval ne Zapad, a Putin [Maydan Was Inspired Not by the West but by Putin]," *Ukrain'ska Pravda*, 26 March 2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/columns/2014/03/26/7020256/>. Some go as far as to connect the recent terrorist attack in France to Putin's politics. See S. Klimovskiy, "Putin obyavil voynu Evrosoyuzu [Putin Declared War on the EU]," *Hvilya.net*, 9 January 2015; <http://hvilya.net/analytics/geopolitics/putin-obyavil-voynu-evrosoyuzu.html>.

⁸ This is my personal conclusion from multiple discussions with people in social networks. You may watch the video and read the comments of Ukrainian viewers to draw your own conclusions: "Portnikov pro neobhidnist' rozmovi Patriarkha Kirila z 'diyavolom' [Portnikov on the Necessity of a Talk between Patriarch Kirill and 'the Devil']; 10 January 2015; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjBxXjKpSE#t=62>.

⁹ George Friedman, "Thoughts from Ukraine," *McAlvany Weekly Commentary*, 30 April 2014; <http://mcalvanyweeklycommentary.com/april-30-2014-dr-george-friedman-thoughts-from-ukraine/>.

¹⁰ I. Traynor, "US Campaign behind the Turmoil in Kiev," *The Guardian*, 26 November 2004; <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/nov/26/ukraine.usa>.

¹¹ M. Ames, "Pierre Omidyar Co-funded Ukraine Revolution Groups with US Government, Documents Show," *Pandodaily*, 28 February 2014; <http://pando.com/2014/02/28/pierre-omidyar-co-funded-ukraine-revolution-groups-with-us-government-documents-show/>. See also W. Enghdal, "Ukraine Protests Carefully Orchestrated: The Role of CANVAS, US-Financed 'Color Revolution Training Group,'" *Global Research Centre on Research on Globalization*, 16 March 2014; <http://www.globalresearch.ca/ukraine-protests-carefully-orchestrated-the-role-of-canvas-us-financed-color-revolution-training-group/5369906>; and N. Ahmed, "Ukraine Crisis is About Great

Power Oil, Gas Pipeline Rivalry," *The Guardian*, 6 March 2014; <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/earth-insight/2014/mar/06/ukraine-crisis-great-power-oil-gas-rivals-pipelines>.

¹² Victoria Nuland, "Remarks at the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation Conference," *U.S. Department of State: Diplomacy in Action*, 18 December 2013; <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2013/dec/218804.htm>.

¹³ D. Jackson, "White House: Brennan Was in Kiev This Weekend," *USA Today*, 14 April 2014; <http://www.usatoday.com/story/theoval/2014/04/14/obama-john-brennan-kiev-russia-ukraine-jay-carney/7705755/>.

¹⁴ See an interview with Alexander Skipsalsky, ex-chief of Ukrainian Intelligence Head-Office G. Korba, "Yesli by vlast' kontrolirovala situatsiyu, u nas ne bolo by stol'ko zhertv [If the Government Controlled the Situation, We Wouldn't Have So Many Casualties]," *Kommersant-Ukraine*, 21 February 2014; <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2413426>.

¹⁵ See Oliver Stone, *Untold History of the United States* 12 January 2015; <http://www.untoldhistory.com/#about>.

¹⁶ O. Stone Facebook post, 30 April 2014; 13 January 2015; <https://www.facebook.com/TheOliverStone/posts/90138764652202>.

¹⁷ Ukrainian officer, Vladimir Ruban, who participated in Maidan confrontations, also argues Maidan was managed by some outside forces. See A. Shariy, "Interview with Vladimir Ruban," Part 1 (from 17:58 forward), 29 December 2014; <http://sharij.net/9198>. A pastor in Bishkek, a firsthand witness to the so-called Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, believes President Obama openly admitted U.S. involvement in the Ukrainian coup: "US Sticks to Tried and True Policy of Supporting Coups," *Sputnik International*, 2 February 2015; <http://sputniknews.com/analysis/20150202/1017649839.html>.

¹⁸ "Ukraine, a new and important space on the Eurasian chessboard, is a geopolitical pivot because its very existence as an independent country helps to transform Russia. Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire." Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (Basic Books, 1997), 46.

¹⁹ On the so-called "Letter of Three Leaders," see V. Socor, "Ukraine's Top Three Leaders Request Nato Membership Action Plan," *The Jamestown Foundation. Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5 (18 January 2008); [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=33304&no_cache=1#.VLRlaXuKUdU](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=33304&no_cache=1#.VLRlaXuKUdU).

²⁰ In 2010 Russia and Ukraine signed the so-called Kharkiv agreements that called for a 30 percent discount on gas for Ukraine in return for extending the stationing of the Russian fleet at Sevastopol. However, the political opposition in Ukraine, represented by Yatseniuk, was trying to see these agreements denounced. "Agreement on Black Sea Fleet May Be Denounced, Says Yatseniuk," *Kyiv Post*, 27 April 2010; <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/agreement-on-black-sea-fleet-may-be-denounced-says-65154.html>.

²¹ U.S. intrusion into the affairs of Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, led to similar outcomes. It is hard to deny that U.S. is deliberately and directly influencing the affairs of these countries. See video interview with General Wesley Clark, "We're Going To Take Out 7 Countries in 5 Years: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan & Iran," *Global Research Centre on Research on Globalization*, 2 March 2007; <http://www.globalresearch.ca/we-re-going-to-take-out-7-countries-in-5-years-iraq-syria-lebanon-libya-somalia-sudan-iran/5166>.

²² S. Timchenko, "Nyneshnie i vroyatnie posledstviya crizisa v Ukraine dlya ukrainskikh protestantov [The Present and

Potential Outcomes of the Ukrainian Crisis for Ukrainian Protestants;” *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 22 (Summer 2014), 38. See also M. Cherenkov, “Posle Maydana [After Maydan],” *Ibid.*, 41; <http://www.eastwestreport.org/pdfs/R22-3.pdf>.

²³ S. Tigipko, “Promyshlennie predpriyatiya nakhodyatsya v krizise iz-za nekompetentnoy politiki pravitel’stva [Industry Is in Crisis Due to Incompetent Policy of the Government],” *Comments.ua*, 3 October 2014; <http://comments.ua/politics/490093-sergey-tigipkopromishlennie-predpriyatiya.html>.

²⁴ See “ATO: Sabotazh ili nekompetentnost? [ATO: Sabotage or Incompetence?],” *Politica-UA*, 30 May 2014; <http://politica.ua.com/ato-sabotazh-ili-nekompetentnost/>.

²⁵ Budapest Memoranda on Security Assurances, 1994,” *The Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 December 2014; <http://www.cfr.org/nonproliferation-arms-control-disarmament/budapest-memorandums-security-assurances-1994/p32484>.

²⁶ See E. Sergatskova, “General Ruban o boevikah na vostokey Ukrainy: Tam lyudi, s kotorymi my stoyali na Maydane [General Ruban of the Separatists in Eastern Ukraine: There Are People Who Were Standing with Us on Maydan],” *Ukrains’ka Pravda*, 20 August 2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2014/08/20/7035274/>.

²⁷ See video blog of Ukrainian journalist and media expert Anatoly Shariy: <http://sharij.net/category/video>; and P. Gorokhov, “Feyk tebe v pomosch: ‘Ridus’ sostavil top feyk-meykerov nedeli [Fake Be Your Help: Ridus Drew a List of Top Fake-Makers of the Week],” *Ridus*, 20 May 2014; <http://www.ridus.ru/news/160475>; and “Fighting False Information on Ukrainian Events,” Ukrainian website StopFake: www.stopfake.org.

²⁸ S. Timchenko, “Present and Potential Outcomes,” 39.

²⁹ Y. Simonenko, “Otkrytoe pis’mo k brat’yam Rossii,

uchastvovavshim v poslednem syezde RSEKhB [Open Letter to the Brethren in Russia Who Participated in the Recent Congress of the Russian Union of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists],” *RISU Religious Information Service in Ukraine*, 4 May 2014; http://risu.org.ua/ru/index/monitoring/society_digest/56651.

³⁰ A. Desnitskiy, “Russkiy mir posle Slavyanska [Russian World After Slavyansk],” *Rossiya v globalnoy politike*, 21 May 2014; http://globalaffairs.ru/ukraine_crysis/Russkii-mir-posle-Slavyanska-16652; and “Rezolyutsiya XXXIV Syezda RS EKHB po situatsii v bratskoy Ukraine [Resolution of the 34th Congress of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists on the Situation in Brotherly Ukraine],” 15 January 2015; <http://baptist.org.ru/news/main/view/rezolutsiya-34-sezda=po=ukriane>. See also Sergey Ryakhovsky on the situation in Ukraine in *Protestant.ru*, 7 March 2014; <http://www.protestant.ru/news/politics/inrussia/article/429721>.

³¹ A. Shariy, “Interview with Vladimir Ruban,” Part 1 (17:00 forward), 29 December 2014; <http://sharij.net/9198>.

³² E. Mazur, “Svyaschennik-volonter: Yesli my khotim sokhranit’ Donbass, nuzhno polyubit’ ego zhiteley [Volunteer Priest: If We Want to Keep Donbass, We Should Love Its People],” *Glavkom*, 30 August 2014; <http://glavcom.ua/articles/22012.html>.

³³ “Doctor Lisa: Ochen’ mnogikh na Ukraine vojna izmenila [Doctor Liza: The War in Ukraine Has Changed Many People],” *RIA*, 9 October 2014; <http://ria.ru/religion/20141009/1027612045.html>. See also “Doctor Lisa vyvezla iz Donetska esche devyat’ tyazhelobol’nykh detey [Doctor Liza Has Brought Nine More Children in Grave Condition out of Donetsk],” *Vesti*, 30 October 2014; <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2085794>. For information on Doctor Liza’s foundation, Spravedlivaya Pomosch’ [Fair Help], see her official website: <http://doctorliza.ru>.

Ukrainian Christian Response to “A Russian Christian Perspective” on Ukraine

(continued from page 1)

on the Internet that give alternative perspectives.

A Summary of the Russian Narrative on the Ukraine Crisis

According to the Russian narrative, Kyiv’s Maidan demonstrations in late 2013 and early 2014 were the beginning of all the problems in Ukraine. These protests, in turn, brought about an unconstitutional seizure of power in Ukraine.¹ This *coup d’état* was orchestrated by the United States which has a geopolitical interest in Ukraine. All this was made possible with the help of certain Ukrainian oligarchs² and Ukrainian nationalist propaganda that infected Ukraine’s youth.³ The current crisis is the result of a chain of events that followed Maidan: the replacement of one set of oligarchs with another;⁴ the annexation of Crimea (illegal, but justifiable because there were “infringements upon... [Russia’s] geopolitical interests”),⁵ genocide being carried out by the Maidan “junta” and its Ukrainian army, and the unleashing of a civil war in Donbas (eastern Ukraine) in which local militiamen decided to defend the Russian-speaking population.⁶

Osokin’s Discomfort with Portions of the Russian Narrative

While Osokin repeats the essence of the Russian narrative, he still is not fully comfortable with it

and does not give it unreserved endorsement. For example, he does not directly support the Russian propaganda accusation that the Maidan junta and the Ukrainian army are guilty of genocide. Also, rather than directly declaring Ukraine a fascist state, he gives the impression that Ukrainian youth revere the memory of World War II Ukrainian nationalist Stepan Bandera. He, like the Nazi Germans, fought Red Army troops, thus implying that Ukrainian youth are pro-fascist. As a result, Osokin leads his readers to imagine Ukraine as a state that has tolerance and sympathy for fascism. This image, however, is incorrect. In fact, the opposite is true: “The right-wing presence in Ukraine’s post-Yanukovych government has been so slight as to be virtually invisible.”⁷ The government’s democratic structure, its vigorous multi-party system, free elections, a free press, and protection of human rights make Ukraine a place where Tatars, Jews, Russians, and many other minorities feel safe and at home in Ukraine.⁸ These democratic safeguards do not fit the image of an intolerant state with sympathies for fascism.

In contrast, in Russia a growing number of ultra-nationalist and xenophobic groups akin to fascism are among Putin’s most vocal supporters.⁹ Alexander Dugin’s ultra-nationalist Eurasia Party, Edward Limonov’s Other Russia Party, the Black Hundred,

Osokin leads his readers to imagine Ukraine as a state that has tolerance and sympathy for fascism.

(continued on page 6)

Ukrainian Christian Response to “A Russian Christian Perspective” on Ukraine

(continued from page 5)

and the neo-Nazi Russian National Unity Party are known for their close connections with separatist leaders in eastern Ukraine.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, separatists are often acting in accordance with fascist practice, abducting, torturing, and killing pro-Ukrainian activists and viewing captured Ukrainians as “filth,” much as Nazis had viewed Jews as “dirty.”¹¹

To his credit, Osokin also expresses some doubts regarding the morality and legality of Russia’s actions during the Ukrainian crisis. However, his reservations concerning the morality and legality of Russia’s invasion of Crimea and Russia’s “inspiration and support” of the military conflict in Donbas last for only a few lines, thus ensuring that the official Russian narrative is not called into question. Instead, very soon Osokin comes to the conclusion that “both Russian and Ukrainian media are biased in their portrayal of the present situation in Ukraine,” and that the information war prevents finding the truth. So what is his proposal for dealing with propaganda?

The Difficulty of Achieving Consistency

Osokin does concede the need for a determination of the truth “by dismissing fake and misleading information, by searching hard for independent reports and investigations, and by listening to first-hand witnesses.” By the end of his article, however, Osokin makes a sharp turn and argues that finding the truth in political matters is not at all important for Christians. Apparently, from his point of view, the moral task of choosing right and wrong may simply be dismissed after all of this. Why? Mostly because of this task’s complexity, but also because of his theological perspectives. Osokin believes that politics belong to worldly matters, while Christians are called to be “not of the world.” He calls for a “rejection of black-and-white judgments” and even attempts to find biblical support for denying the need for moral judgments. He thinks that Romans 13:1 (“All authority comes from God”) can be interpreted as “every nation has the very government it deserves.” Apparently, Osokin does not see the contradiction inherent in his two theses: 1) that God is concerned about justice in political issues, giving every nation the government it deserves, and 2) that Christians should not be concerned about justice in political issues since they are not of this world. As a result, Osokin does not see that Christians are justified in helping their nations understand the difference between right and wrong in political matters, so that they would “deserve” better governments.

Another example of Osokin’s theological confusion concerns his juxtaposition of non-violence and justice. In his understanding, “Christians... belong to two worlds: one that says that violence can never be justified, and the other that says standing for justice is patriotic.” Does he mean here that those who belong to the Kingdom of God do not stand for justice, one of the most essential features of

this Kingdom? And to which world, from Osokin’s perspective, does Jesus belong, Jesus who violently drove out those who were buying and selling in the Jerusalem Temple?

Osokin is not only inconsistent theologically, he is also inconsistent logically and emotionally. For example, he stresses that the people of Ukraine are very special to him, but he also coldly insists upon Russia’s right to pursue its imperialistic, geopolitical interests, ignoring Ukraine’s right to pursue a course of its own choosing. Osokin also rejects the possibility that Russian special services were involved in actions against Maidan protesters.¹² He considers the idea of Russian interference “laughable,” yet with all seriousness he contends that “there are many reasons to believe that U.S. special services were involved” in Maidan.

One of Osokin’s problems is his choice of sources upon which to build his case. Thus, he cites the notoriously unreliable U.S. filmmaker Oliver Stone as a source to accuse the U.S. of improper meddling in Ukraine. In the West, however, Stone’s credibility as a political analyst is about the same as that of the mercurial and unpredictable Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in Russia: entertaining at times, but frightening if taken seriously.¹³

Russian vs. Ukrainian Versions of the World War II and the *Holodomor*

At the beginning of his article Osokin discusses several historical episodes which are particularly painful for Ukrainians. For example, in arguing that the Germans, not Soviet secret services, blew up Kyiv’s Dormition Cathedral in 1941 he quotes a Ukrainian newspaper article. His goal is to expose Ukrainian propaganda, yet he also implies that this disclosure will prove that Soviet forces were not responsible for the destruction of historic buildings on Kyiv’s Kreschatik Street during World War II. However, well-documented sources confirm the Soviet role in the city’s devastation.¹⁴ The fact that Osokin quotes a Ukrainian newspaper from 2012 demonstrates that Ukrainian media are free to speak their mind without reference to any party line as is the case in Russia. It is also telling that Osokin challenges the Ukrainian charge that Soviet troops destroyed the Dneproges Dam on the basis of “a relevant article” on a particularly tendentious and untrustworthy website.

Osokin is also satisfied with the sources he cites to deny the *Holodomor* (Stalin’s genocide of Ukrainians in the 1930s). The fact is that neither Myroslava Berdnik nor Douglas Tottle are recognized experts in international academic circles. In 2014, the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress described Berdnik, known for her support for the Ukrainian Communist Party,¹⁵ as “a pro-Russian propagandist.”¹⁶ Today the *Holodomor* is well documented¹⁷ and recognized as genocide by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.¹⁸ It is worth noting that Raphael Lemkin, the author of the word *genocide*, described the “destruction of the Ukrainian nation” as the “classic example of Soviet genocide” in

Osokin does not see the contradiction inherent in his two theses: 1) that God is concerned about justice in political issues, giving every nation the government it deserves, and 2) that Christians should not be concerned about justice in political issues since they are not of this world.

a speech given in New York City in 1953.¹⁹

Faith and Politics

Osokin, in addition, manages to muddle the issue of Christians in politics. He condemns believers who mix faith and politics, but in reality he himself does precisely that. Thus, Osokin tries to avoid making moral judgements by hiding behind an apolitical position “not of the world,” but simultaneously he supports Russian imperial ambitions. His justification for Moscow’s territorial moves in Crimea and eastern Ukraine is that Russia, in certain cases, has a natural, geopolitical right to annex territories previously part of the Soviet Union.

Is Osokin correct in claiming that many Ukrainian Christians mixed faith and politics because they supported Maidan’s protests and now view Russia as an aggressor state? No, if he means that the political judgements of Ukrainian Christians compromised their faith and trust in God. Yes, if he means their faith compelled them to seek the truth before making political judgements. And as for mixing faith and politics, Osokin and a host of other Russian believers do just that as they carefully mimic the Kremlin’s official line. Ukrainian Christians believe that to be “not of the world” means not to hold values that are accepted in the world. In application, it also means to bring God’s values to the world, including the sphere of politics. Ukrainian and Russian Christians share the belief that the values of Communism and atheism imbedded in the Soviet Union stood in opposition to God’s values. Protests on Maidan in 2004 and 2013-14 to a large degree were in fact protests against the values “of the world” inherited from the Communist past, such as corruption, authoritarianism, and an imperialistic and messianic ideology disseminating from the capital of Russia.

Ukrainian believers who stayed with protesters on Maidan (mostly carrying on ministries of prayer, counseling, and charity) are in a much better position to judge the nature of the protests than are Russian believers.²⁰ They were there witnessing people’s voluntary self-organization, and they observed that the part played by Ukrainian ultra-nationalist and non-Ukrainian leaders was rather modest. Participating as volunteer chaplains, praying with soldiers and for soldiers, organizing and operating relief efforts for refugees and for suffering people in the war zone, Ukrainian believers know that the unleashing of a civil war in Donbas was indeed organized and led by Russian military specialists and with Russian weapons.²¹ They also recognize that from the very beginning of the current crisis the Russian government did not tell the truth about its involvement in Ukraine. Thus, President Putin has recently admitted, contrary to his previous statements, that the plan to annex Crimea was ordered almost a month before the referendum of self-determination.²² Ukrainian Christians, living in a state of undeclared war for many months, also recognize that many of the shortcomings of their post-Maidan Ukrainian government that Russians criticize are in good measure because of Russian interference in

Ukraine.²³

The Difficulty of Russian and Ukrainian Christians Finding Common Ground

Osokin concludes his article with pleasant words of hope for peace and harmony between Russians and Ukrainians. He reminds us of the high value God places on each human life, and of Christ’s power to destroy “the dividing wall of hostility.” He writes: “We need to distance ourselves from propaganda, political differences, and ambitions” so that “despite these trying times,” we can see “what we have in common.” I could not agree more. However, it is very hard to see what we have in common when Osokin expresses his “understanding” that my native Ukraine is simply a subject of the political ambitions “of a large state” like Russia. Evidently, some work still has to be done so that we can clearly see what we have in common. For example, we still need to learn the difference between truth and propaganda, between imperialism and democracy, between a Christian perspective and a nationalistic Russian Christian perspective on matters that demand our moral judgment. ♦

Notes

¹ G.C., “Ukraine’s Government: Faltering, but Fully Legit,” *The Economist*, 25 April 2014; <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2014/04/ukraines-government>. On the historical background of the current crisis see Timothy Snyder, “The Battle in Ukraine Means Everything,” *New Republic*, 11 May 2014; <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/117692/fascism-returns-ukraine>. Maidan is the shortened name of Kyiv’s central square - Maidan Nezalezhnosti or Independence Square.

² Timothy Snyder, “Ukraine: The Haze of Propaganda,” *New York Books*, 1 March 2014; <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/mar/01/ukraine-haze-propaganda/>.

³ Alexander Motyl, “Is Ukraine Fascist?,” *The World Post*, 5 March 2015; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alexander-motyl/putin-calls-ukraine-fasci_b_6600292.html. See also helpful thoughts on Stepan Bandera by Russian historian Andrey Zubov in Paul Goble, “Stalin Was a Greater Fascist Than Bandera or Mussolini,” *The Interpreter*, 28 July 2014; <http://www.interpretermag.com/stalin-was-a-greater-fascist-than-bandera-or-mussolini-zubov-says/>.

⁴ Alexander J. Motyl, “Ukraine’s Election Exposes Putin’s Lies,” *World Affairs*, 28 May 2014; <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/alexander-j-motyl/ukraine%E2%80%99s-election-exposes-putins-lies>

⁵ For a helpful discussion of realist arguments in politics around the conflict in Ukraine see Alexander J. Motyl, “The Surrealism of Realism: Misreading the War in Ukraine,” *World Affairs*, January/February 2015; <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/surrealism-realism-misreading-war-ukraine>.

⁶ A brief outline of events is given, for example, in: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ukraine/politics-2014>. Interestingly, the violence in eastern Ukrainian to date has been limited to the regions controlled by pro-Russian separatists. See also Alexander Motyl, “Putin’s Russia as a State Sponsor of Terrorism,” *World Affairs*, 14 April 2014; <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/alexander-j-motyl/putin%E2%80%99s-russia-state-sponsor-terrorism>.

⁷ Alexander Motyl, “Is Ukraine Fascist?,” Motyl, “Ukraine’s

Osokin, condemns believers who mix faith and politics, but in reality he himself does precisely that.

(continued on page 8)

Ukrainian Christian Response to “A Russian Christian Perspective” on Ukraine

(continued from page 7)

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⁸ Goble, “Stalin Was a Greater Fascist.”

⁹ Ilan Berman, “Why Russia Is Growing More Xenophobic,” *The Atlantic*, 22 October 2013; <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/10/why-russia-is-growing-more-xenophobic/280766/>.

¹⁰ Halya Coynash, “G20 Putin Pack: Russia’s Fascist ‘Anti-Fascist’ Crusade,” *Human Rights in Ukraine*, 4 November 2014; <http://khp.org/en/index.php?id=1415930855>.

¹¹ Alexander J. Motyl, “Loose Cannons and Ukrainian Casualties,” *World Affairs*, 27 August 2014; <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/alexander-j-motyl/loose-cannons-and-ukrainian-casualties>; Christopher J. Miller, “More Abductions, Torture Seen in Separatist-held Eastern Ukraine,” *Kyiv Post*, 11 July 2014; <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/more-abductions-torture-seen-in-separatist-held-eastern-ukraine-355674.html>.

¹² Daniel Mattera, “Modus Operandi of Russian Security Service(s) in the Ukraine Conflict;” https://www.academia.edu/9606619/Modus_Operandi_of_Russian_Security_Services_in_the_Ukraine_Conflict.

¹³ Roger Aronoff, “Oliver Stone ‘History’ Rebutted at PCA Conference,” *Accuracy in Media*, 5 April 2013; <http://www.aim.org/on-target-blog/oliver-stone-history-rebutted-at-pca-conference/#>.

¹⁴ David Stahel, *Kiev 1941: Hitler’s Battle for Supremacy in the East* (Cambridge: 2012), 257-59. A number of photos and descriptions of relevant documents are found also at <http://borisfen70.livejournal.com/27225.html>.

¹⁵ For example, <http://www.qwas.ru/ukraine/kpu/V-Kieve-sostojalas-prezentacija-knigi-laureata-premii-imeni-Ja-Galana-Miroslavy-Berdnik-Peshki-v-chuzhoi-igre/>.

¹⁶ See <http://geography-en.eajc.org/page32/news44081.html>.

¹⁷ See, for example: Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 225-52; Ray Gamache, *Gareth Jones: Eyewitness to the Holodomor* (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2013).

¹⁸ See <http://www.holodomoreducation.org/UserFiles/File/press-release10-2008.pdf>.

¹⁹ See http://www.uccla.ca/SOVIET_GENOCIDE_IN_THE_UKRAINE.pdf.

²⁰ Aleksey Gordeev, *Tserkov’ na Maidanye* (Kiev: Knygonosha, 2015). On the historical background of the current crisis see Timothy Snyder, “The Battle in Ukraine Means Everything,” *New Republic*, 11 May 2014; <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/117692/fascism-returns-ukraine>.

²¹ A brief outline of events is given, for example, in: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ukraine/politics-2014.html>. Interestingly, the violence in eastern Ukrainian to date has been limited to the regions controlled by pro-Russian separatists.

²² “Putin Reveals Secrets of Russia’s Crimea Takeover Plot,” *BBC New Europe*, 9 March 2015; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31796226>.

²³ Alexander Motyl, “Putin’s Russia as a State Sponsor of Terrorism,” *World Affairs*, 14 April 2014; <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/alexander-j-motyl/putin%E2%80%99s-russia-state-sponsor-terrorism>.

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THE WAY: Adapting the Alpha Course for Orthodox Catechism

Danut Manastireanu

In May 2009, Professor of Theology Bradley Nassif from North Park University, Chicago, visited Romania for the launch of the Romanian translation of James Stamoolis, ed., *Three Views on Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), which took place at the University of Cluj. (Romanian edition: *Ortodoxie si evanghelism. Trei perspective* [Iasi: Adoramus, 2009].) The second edition, in preparation, will include an Orthodox introduction by Dr. Stelian Tofana and an evangelical introduction by Dr. Danut Manastireanu.) During the 2009 visit, Dr. Nassif described for me an Orthodox project that might benefit from any potential support I could provide through the budget I was managing as part of my World Vision responsibilities for the Middle East & Eastern Europe Region. The project, formally initiated in June 2004 at the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies (IOCS), in Cambridge, England, under the leadership of Professor David Frost, later principal of the college, was called *THE WAY*, taking its name from the earliest term by which followers of Christ referred to themselves. Its purpose is “to teach basic Orthodox Christianity as a journey of life, centered on Christ, in terms that communicate to a secular and largely pagan world.”

THE WAY is basically the Alpha Course, an adult catechism program created by an Anglican charismatic church, adapted to provide a specifically Orthodox perspective.

As Dr. Frost explains:

The need for this educational outreach program was established by consultation with the various Orthodox jurisdictions of the United Kingdom, whose bishops are concerned that the youth of their churches are drifting away because of ignorance, the challenge of western secularism, alienation from the cultures of the ethnic churches, and a desire for worship and instruction in the language of their adopted country.

THE WAY is basically an adult catechism, addressed initially to people 18 to 40 years old, though in practice it proved to appeal to anyone from 18 to 80. It uses the acclaimed methodology and structure used by the Alpha Course (an adult catechism program created by an Anglican charismatic church, Holy Trinity, Brompton Road, London), adapted to provide a specifically Orthodox perspective. Each meeting in the 12-session series ends with a much-appreciated innovation, a closing question-and-answer time. Dr. Frost has subsequently defined the relation between Alpha and *THE WAY* as a question of function: “Alpha breaks up the ground; *THE WAY* builds a church on it.”

I offer here a succinct presentation of the approach, from a document outlining the history of *THE WAY*:

Each session begins with a communal lunch, where the human contacts generated by eating together build up the gathering as a Christian fellowship. The meal is followed by a video or a live presentation of 45-55 minutes by one member of the team on a major aspect of the faith. Participants then divide into small groups, each with a leader trained to facilitate free discussion. No question is treated as foolish or improper and no

position thought unworthy of consideration. No group is larger than 10 persons. The aim is to build up friendships so that Christianity is caught, in C.S. Lewis' phrase, "by good infection." ♦

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The Keston Archive: From Oxford to Baylor

Wallace L. Daniel

Periods of war and revolution are notorious for destroying key components of a nation's memory. Equally destructive are government attacks on ways of thinking and believing that seek to obliterate the past and create new patterns of being. In the Soviet Union, for most of the twentieth century, Russian Orthodoxy and other forms of religious belief suffered one of the greatest assaults on religion in history. As a result, a great deal of Russia's national story has been lost from view, feared gone forever, or remains still to be reconstructed. Such losses particularly apply to individuals and groups whose views did not conform to the government's desired paradigm. Their voices are essential parts of the mosaic of life in the former Soviet Union.

Fortunately, an archive of religion exists that contains documents and other materials concerning significant aspects of Russia's national story, other regions of the former Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe. The Keston Center, located at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, holds such a collection, the product of more than a half-century of diligent work. "You must know that there is nothing higher, or stronger, or sounder, or more useful in life than some good memory, especially some memory from childhood, from the parental home," says Alyosha near the end of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*.¹ The memories stored in the Keston Archive are often not the most pleasant aspects of the past, but collectively they comprise a nearly unparalleled record of struggle, courage, and commitment to certain values in extremely difficult circumstances. They fill in important gaps in Russia's national story that otherwise might well remain unknown. It is the purpose of this article to revisit the Keston Archive, its current status, holdings, and opportunities for research.

Specifically, how might the archive contribute to scholars interested in religious liberty, politics, and religion, the ongoing debate over the role of religion in public discourse, and the relationship of religion to power? What resources found in the Keston Archive might enrich the discussion of all four of these related subjects, offering a more complete picture of a dynamic that continues to provoke controversy in present times?

Origins and Content

The collection had an inauspicious but forward-looking beginning. Its story is well known, but several aspects deserve brief recapitulation. In 1958-59, Michael Bourdeaux, a young graduate

student at Oxford University, was a participant in the international exchange program between Great Britain and the Soviet Union. In the winter of 1959, he became aware of the atrocities perpetrated by Nikita Khrushchev's campaign against religious believers. He made the decision to become a "voice of the persecuted" by documenting their stories and collecting materials relating to the assault on them and freedom of conscience. Purchasing on the street the first copy of a new journal, *Science and Religion* [*Nauka i religii*], Bourdeaux could not have foreseen that the journal would spearhead the ideological crusade against religion. The materials he collected that year turned out to be first-hand accounts of an anti-religious campaign only then getting underway. In time the growing collection would evolve into a major repository of primary sources on religion and church-state issues in Communist countries.

As an institution, Keston's origins date to 1969 and the creation of the Center for the Study of Religion and Communism. In 1974 the Center moved from Chislehurst, Kent, to a vacant elementary school building in the village of Keston, south of London, and changed its name to "Keston College." In founding the college, Bourdeaux was joined by three prominent English friends—diplomat and writer Sir John Lawrence, Soviet historian Leonard Schapiro, and political scientist and international affairs specialist Peter Reddaway. Like Michael Bourdeaux, each of them had a passionate interest in Russia and the Soviet Union. Each of them also had a strong commitment to religious liberty, freedom of speech, and freedom of conscience.

The defense of these fundamental freedoms and the courage to be the "voice of those who do not have a voice" have served as major themes of Keston from its inception. Such a theme runs throughout Keston's history and activities—the publication of a major international journal, *Religion in Communist Lands*, edited by Xenia Dennen, the award of the Templeton Prize to Michael Bourdeaux in 1984, and the move to the city of Oxford and the change of name to "Keston Institute" in 1991, which it has retained. In 2007, the archive was transferred to the J. M. Dawson Center at Baylor University in the United States and became a central part of the newly established Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society.

The administrative and financial reasons underlying the archive's transfer are recounted in Davorin Peterlin's recent article on the impressive publishing activity of Keston Institute.² Suffice it to

(continued on page 10)

Keston Archive From Oxford to Baylor (continued from page 9)

The Keston Archive continues to be a significant resource for filling in gaps in the historical memory and the ongoing struggle for religious liberty.

say here that the J. M. Dawson Center and its *Journal of Church and State* have a long history of support for religious liberty and the goals articulated by Michael Bourdeaux and his associates. Administered within the framework of the Baylor University Libraries, the archive is in capable hands. Peterlin's worry, expressed near the end of his article, that the transfer of the archive to the United States would make it less accessible to European scholars is a legitimate concern. The archive's current leadership is sensitive to that problem and has taken steps to alleviate it, as will be discussed more specifically below. Most importantly, the Keston Archive continues to be a significant resource for filling in gaps in the historical memory and the ongoing struggle for religious liberty.

A general description of materials housed in the archive is available on the Keston Center's website at <http://baylor.edu/kestoncenter>. These materials fall into three main categories: a) *samizdat*, or self-publishing, which includes more than 4,000 memoirs, pamphlets, letters, symposia, and petitions to the government, which collectively reveal a multifaceted conversation among different denominations about religion and society during the Soviet era; b) the press file, arranged by subject and country, containing more than 100 newspapers and journals, published in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; and c) the photo file, comprising several thousand photographs of churches and their activities, and, in addition, fifty original Soviet posters, widely used in anti-religion campaigns from the 1920s through the early 1980s. Keston also acquired nearly 500 documents on church and state from KGB, state, and regional archives.

Within the three large categories are materials on diverse topics relating to religion and politics. The full scope of these topics goes beyond the limits of this article, but several examples will suggest the possibilities. The collection includes many journals published in the last three years of the Soviet Union, revealing religious and social aspirations and projections for the future of Russian society at the end of the Soviet state.

The archive has multiple files of primary materials on individuals—Gleb Yakunin, Aleksandr Men', and Nikolai Eshliman—and their struggles for religious and human rights. Among the archival holdings are numerous petitions from Baptist, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, and other faiths, requesting and giving their justification for religious freedom.³

Roughly 40 percent of the archive's holdings relate to Russia and the former Soviet Union, 15 percent to Romania, 15 percent to Poland, and 15 percent to the Czech Republic, with 15 percent distributed among other countries. These holdings include a broad spectrum of different religious groups and individuals: Russian Orthodox (35 percent), Roman Catholic (15 percent), Baptists (20 percent), Jews (10 percent), Pentecostals (17 percent), and Seventh-day Adventists (3 percent).⁴ The materials in the archive are supported by a library of over 10,000 volumes, including a large collection of publications relating to the Soviet government's campaign against religious

beliefs.

Accessibility

Given the transfer of the archive to the United States, the organizational status of these primary materials might be a concern. Since January 2013, the Keston Archive has been consolidated and housed in Baylor University's Carroll Library.⁵ Scholars coming to work in the archive should know that they will have full access to the materials. The categorized press archive, *samizdat* documents, and KGB files are readily available. The photo collection is fully processed and catalogued, as are more than 200 of the more than 300 periodical titles. The archival staff has worked diligently to organize the richly diverse and complex materials in the archive. Presently, nearly 70 percent of the archival holdings and 80 percent of the book collection have been catalogued. (By August 2015, the entire book collection will be catalogued.)

Accessibility of the archive to European and other scholars continues to be a main objective of Keston Institute in England, as well as to the leadership of the Keston Center. The institute maintains a close relationship to the center at Baylor; both institutions share in policy decisions; both are represented at meetings; and both support the archive's mission. Keston Institute also sponsors a scholarship program for scholars, which has been very active in enabling scholars internationally to spend an extensive period working in the archive. Alexander Ogorodnikov from Moscow and Alina Urs from Romania are the most recent recipients of this support.

Competitive scholarships cover all costs, including travel, and support up to four weeks of research at Baylor University. Coverage, qualifications, and the process of application are described in detail on Keston Institute's website at <http://www.keston.org.uk/scholarships.php>. (See the appendix for a list of scholarship recipients and their research topics.)

Among the pleasures of doing research at Keston is the opportunity to work with its chief archivist, Larisa Seago. Born and raised in Samara, Russia, Ms. Seago (née Smirnova) has a technical education, which she received at Samara State Aerospace University during President Gorbachev's period of *perestroika*. She came to the United States in 1999, held a position in the international studies division of Baylor University, enrolled in the graduate program in museum studies, and began to work in the Keston Archive soon after its arrival. Under the expert tutelage of Kathy Hillman, Keston's present director, and Dr. Patty Orr, Dean of University Libraries, Larisa Seago has become a skilled archivist. She has the heart of a servitor, who extends great effort to make the archive accessible to visiting scholars.

The process of digitizing the archive is essential to extending its reach beyond the physical boundaries of the university. Digitization has become a principal goal of Ms. Seago and the center's director. Accessibility of the archive requires that its materials are preserved, and fragile, crumbling documents must be photographed and transferred to acid-free paper. The staff has made it a priority to digitize items in

fragile condition, such as Aida Skripnikova's trial transcript, Russian Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Baptist *samizdat* periodicals, and Soviet posters. Digitized materials become accessible immediately after the completion of the metadata.⁶

The Keston Digital Archive contains 2,268 items, including 240 *samizdat* publications, 1,579 images, and 71 Soviet posters. The rich collection of Soviet Baptist *samizdat* periodicals has been fully digitized. Archive users may also request the staff to digitize specific documents. (In the next five years, the goal is to complete the entire process.)

Rediscovering Stories, Imagining the Future

Among the treasures of the Keston Archive are its unique *samizdat* holdings. They are prime sources for researching what some have called the "religious renaissance" during the last 30 years of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. *Samizdat* provided a "communications network," an alternative universe to the channels operated by the state, and a forerunner of the internet culture of today.⁷ Full texts, notes written on thin paper, reports of discussions about social and religious issues, and petitions to the government, these materials cover a wide variety of issues. They were copied by hand or by typewriter and distributed among friends and colleagues. The Keston Archive contains 4,000 of these documents. They are invaluable for reconstructing the social, political, and religious life that existed outside official government channels since the early 1960s.

The *samizdat* collection is too large and diverse to offer more than a sampling of its coverage. Examples include a 1973 letter to Andrei Sakharov from 35 Soviet Jews, expressing their unity with him in the struggle for human rights; a 1972 letter from a member of the Moscow intelligentsia on current philosophical and religious trends; a 1972 handwritten letter to the United Nations on religious persecution from an anonymous individual; a first-hand account of the KGB's interrogation, in 1980, of a Pentecostal minister; Russian translations of C. S. Lewis's books, all indispensable sources for viewing how Russian readers interpreted his works.⁸

Bibliographies of religious *samizdat* received by Keston College were published in the first issue of the new journal *Religion in Communist Lands (RCL)* in 1973 (pp. 34-40), and continued in each subsequent issue through the summer of 1978. Beginning with the fall issue of 1978 (vol. 6, no. 3: 203-16), the bibliographical section published only selections from *samizdat* materials. In the spring issue of 1982 (vol. 10, no. 1: 69-80), *RCL* changed the heading of this section to "Sources," a practice the journal continued through the fall issue of 1986 (vol. 14, no. 3: 296-308). Collectively, these publications offer a valuable overview of *samizdat* resources held in the archive.

This review of the Keston collection offers only an introduction to the sources it holds and to the intellectual treasures that await scholars who explore its holdings. Those who have ventured there have discovered in Keston's holdings parts of the past they did not know existed, stories of religious persecution and individual survival, often at great personal cost,

evidence of an ongoing struggle for religious liberty that survives into the present. One finds here not only accounts of state policies, but also accounts of nonconformity with those policies, of human aspirations, and of alternative ways of thinking about the state and the church. Recent visitors to the Keston Archive testify to the collection's importance to their research.

Alexander Ogorodnikov is one of those individuals, whose work in the Keston Archive yielded unexpected results. A longtime Russian religious dissident, founder of the Christian Seminar in Leningrad in the 1970s, and Gulag survivor, Ogorodnikov spent a month at the Keston Center in the fall of 2014. He discovered materials that he had long feared had been forever lost:

The archive for me is fundamentally important—it is linked with my life. I had a somewhat distant conception of the archive. But when I worked in it, I was simply bowled over by the unexpected abundance of documents, first-hand accounts, and the immense amount of *samizdat*, letters, Soviet press clippings, articles from the Western press which reflected the development of religious revival and spiritual resistance, of undercover human rights and religious activity.⁹

In filling in the blanks in his own story, Ogorodnikov underscores "the unique importance of the archive for me, and, I would suggest, for other participants in the religious and human rights movement, and for today's researchers into the subject."¹⁰ Such materials—documents and articles—he maintains, exist "**only in the Keston Archive**" (Ogorodnikov's emphasis).¹¹

Other recent scholars attest to the archive's significance to their work. Julie deGraffenried, author of *Sacrificing Children: Childhood for the Soviet State in the Great Patriotic War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), writes:

The Keston Archive is a gem amongst archival resources on the former Soviet Union located in the United States. I truly believe its contents will help historians write the story of late Soviet religious life, religious dissidence, and religious persecution, an era that is just now coming into its own in the field of Soviet/Russian history. This story is an essential component for understanding past and present Soviet/Russian society, culture, politics, and identity. My own work has been enriched by the visual culture holdings of the Keston Archive; its collection of late Soviet anti-religious posters, I believe, is rivaled only by that of the State Museum of the History of Religion in St. Petersburg."

Research in such primary source materials offers not only important details in the investigation of particular events, but also re-shapes the parameters of what is thought to be true. Alina Urs described her experience in late 2014 as follows:

The Romanian section of the Keston Archive is a phenomenal collection of mysteries and clues. It provides the researcher with a unique

Among the treasures of the Keston Archive are its unique *samizdat* holdings. They are prime sources for researching what some have called the "religious renaissance" during the last 30 years of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

(continued on page 12)

The Keston Archive deserves wider recognition as a unique resource for scholars interested in the relationship between religion, politics, and society.

Keston Archive From Oxford to Baylor

combination of historical sources that cannot be accessed anywhere else. There are letters, appeals, press articles, all offering insight into the fight for religious freedom under a totalitarian regime.

Urs reported that her work in Keston led her to the police archive in Bucharest to discover personal and political relationships among political informers who turned into religious dissidents.

The archive owes a large debt of gratitude to earlier Keston staff members who worked diligently to preserve and enhance the collection, and to individuals in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe whose courageous efforts to keep their stories alive mark every facet of this rich collection of primary source materials.

The Keston Archive deserves wider recognition as a unique resource for scholars interested in the relationship between religion, politics, and society in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Equally important, the archive contains the stories of large numbers of individuals and groups engaged in an ongoing struggle for religious liberty and human rights. They are contributors to a continuing debate, connecting the past to the future and human aspirations to political and social possibilities. Michael Bourdeaux has spoken eloquently about the heroism and self-sacrifice of these courageous individuals and groups whose voices comprise central parts of a fascinating, multi-dimensional history, which, in this post-Cold War period, is in need of re-examination. The Keston Archive offers a rich source for that project to begin. ♦

Notes:

¹ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (New York: Random House, Vintage Classics, 1991), 774.

² Davorin Peterlin, "An Analysis of the Publishing Activity of Keston Institute in the Context of Its Last Three Years of Operation in Oxford (2003-2006)," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 30 (February 2010); <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol30/iss1/1>.

³ These petitions support Geraldine Fagan's thesis that religious freedom has a long tradition in Russia, in her informative, well-researched book, *Believing in Russia—Religious Policy after Communism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁴ The percentages in parentheses are rough estimates, since the holdings continue to be catalogued and classified.

⁵ The Keston Archive is located on the third floor of Carroll Library; the Michael Bourdeaux Research Center (CL316) contains the periodicals, books, research files, KGB documents, the photo archive, Soviet, Romanian, and Polish *samizdat*, artifacts, and posters.

⁶ Larisa Seago, "Making Voices Heard: Digitizing Soviet Religious *Samizdat* and Making It Available Online," paper presented at 46th annual convention of the Association of Slavic,

(continued from page 11)

East European, and Eurasian Studies, San Antonio, TX, 23, November, 2014. Because of copyright regulations, access to the digital archive is restricted. But researchers worldwide may apply for temporary guest access, which can be granted easily. Information on obtaining guest access is found at <http://www.baylor.edu/kestoncenter/index.php?id=859649>.

⁷ Michael Meerson-Aksenov, "The Problem of the Church in *Samizdat*" in *The Political, Social and Religious Thought of Russian 'Samizdat': An Anthology*, ed. by Michael Meerson-Aksenov and Boris Shragin (Belmont, MA: Nordland, 1977), 505-10; Ann Komaromi, "Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon," *Poetics Today* 29 (Winter 2008): 629-67.

⁸ The last example is drawn from Seago, "Making Voices Heard." The *samizdat* collection contains invaluable political documents relating to the emergence of the human rights movement in the 1960s, nationalistic publications, which also began in the 1960s, and religious *samizdat* periodicals, which are especially prominent in the collection. The latter include Russian Orthodox, Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal publications, many of which are unique and cannot be found elsewhere. Russian Orthodox periodicals include issues of *Mnogaia Leta* (Many Years), *Moskovskii Sbornik* (Moscow Collection), *Nadezhda* (Hope), *Obshchina* (Community), *Veche* (Public Assembly), and *Iybor*. Among the holdings are the journal *Przyv* (Call), issued by Sandr Riga, a leader of the ecumenical movement, and Aleksandr Ogorodnikov's *Biulletin' Khristianskoi Obshchestvennosti* (Bulletin of the Christian Community) and *Express-khronika* (Express Chronicle). Seago, "Making Voices Heard."

⁹ "Letter to the Chairman from Alexander Ogorodnikov," *Keston Newsletter*, 2014, no. 20 (2014): 36.

¹⁰ "Letter to the Chariman."

¹¹ "Letter to the Chairman." In the late 1970 and early 1980s, police confiscated and destroyed Ogorodnikov's Christian Seminar documents and the underground philosophical journals he issued. He had long despaired of ever seeing them again. Other documents and photographs from this period in the possession of many individuals had also been destroyed. Fearing searches and arrest by the KGB, they had been burned. Ogorodnikov recounted his surprise—and joy—at finding copies in the Keston Archive.

Regrettably, Koenraad De Wolf did not consult holdings in the Keston Archive in researching his otherwise excellent book, *Dissident for Life: Alexander Ogorodnikov and the Struggle for Religious Freedom in Russia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013). If he had done so, he would have found a nearly complete set of the *Bulletin of the Christian Community* and other primary materials, which Ogorodnikov published after his release from prison and feared lost.

Wallace L. Daniel is University Distinguished Professor of History, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, and author of *The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia* (2006).

Keston-Funded Scholars (2009-2014)*			
Name	Affiliation/Position	Research Topic	Dates of Visit
Dr. Stella Rock	Sussex University, UK, PhD; Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society, Baylor University, senior research fellow	suppression of religious pilgrimage in the Soviet Union and its revival in post-Soviet Russia	October 2009
Rita Rimkiene	Recliffe College, Gloucester University, UK; MA candidate	Lithuanian Catholic Church	March 2010
Dr. Zoe Knox	University of Leicester, UK; PhD, professor of modern Russian history	Jehovah's Witnesses in the Soviet Union	September - October 2010
Sister Tatiana Spektor	Lesna Russian True Orthodox Monastery, Provemont, France; nun; PhD in Slavic studies	history of the Catacomb Church of Russia	October - December 2010
Milutin Janjic	Berkeley Theological Union, Berkeley, California; PhD candidate	analysis of theoretical and practical aspects of missiology under different contexts; Russian Orthodox Church in Russian society during the 20th century; Soviet religious dissidents	June - August 2011
Anastasia Kostrioukova	University of Toronto, Canada; student assistant to Dr. Ann Komaromi	catalog of Keston Soviet Baptist samizdat for a Religious Samizdat Database Project	August 2011
Dr. Roman Lunkin	Institute of Religion and Law, Director; Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia, senior scientist; member of the Keston Encyclopedia team	history of Keston Institute	November 2011
Dr. Maria Petrova (Desnitsky)	St. Petersburg State University, Russia, Oriental Department; lecturer	Eastern religions and spiritual groups in Russia under Soviet rule	January - February 2012
Konrad Siekierski	Institute of Archeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Science of Armenia; Institute of Eastern Studies, Adam Mickiewicz, University, Poland; PhD candidate	Armenian Church under Soviet regime	February 2013
Ryan Boogt	University of Kentucky; PhD candidate	religious communities in Romania and the Soviet Union, 1945-1991	May 2013 March 2014
Dr. Joshua Searle	Spurgeon's College, London, UK	theological education in the former Soviet Union	June - July 2013
Alina Mariana Urs	Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and Memory of Romanian Exile, Romania	Romanian Orthodox Church	November - December 2013; October - December 2014
Aleksandr Ogorodnikov	Russian Orthodox dissident	his samizdat and materials related to his dissident activities	March - April 2014
Dr. Mykhailo Cherenkov	Donetsk Christian University	research on Soviet Baptist movement	April - May 2014
April French	Brandeis University, MA; PhD candidate	evangelical women in Siberia	July - August 2014

*In addition to Keston-funded scholars, other individuals conducted research in the Keston Archive between 2007 and 2014 on religious persecution in the Soviet Union, Father Alexander Men, the Russian Catacomb-Church, the history of Keston Institute, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Soviet anti-religious tactics, the 1990 Russian law on religion, Russian Orthodox Church underground activity (1920s-1964), archival sources for Soviet-era religion outside Russia, the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia, western Ukraine, and Hungary, and the *Cambridge Short History of 20th Century Russia*.

Book Review

Searle, Joshua T. and Mykhailo N. Cherenkov. *A Future and a Hope: Mission, Theological Education, and the Transformation of Post-Soviet Society*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2014. Reviewed by Ray Prigodich.

The authors of *A Future and a Hope* argue that the evangelical movement in the former Soviet Union (FSU) needs to broaden its concept of mission, focusing not only on the salvation of individuals from personal sin, but also on the wholesale transformation of society. To that end they believe theology and theological education should play a catalytic role in bringing about this change in orientation.

The book is an East-West collaborative effort. Joshua Searle served for a time as dean for global relations at Donetsk Christian University, Ukraine, and is now tutor in theology and public thought at Spurgeon's College, London. Mykhailo Cherenkov was born in Saratov, Russia, to a Russian father and a Ukrainian mother. He served for one year as rector of Donetsk Christian University and is now vice president of the Kyiv-based Association for Spiritual Renewal.

Although the authors desire to influence the evangelical movement throughout the FSU, they write from a distinctively Ukrainian perspective, expressing strong disapproval of what they call the extreme nationalism of Russian Protestants vis-à-vis Ukraine and accusing Russian news outlets controlled by the state of engaging in a "systemic campaign of falsification and fabrication" with regard to recent events in Ukraine. One entire chapter is dedicated to "The Church after Maidan."

The authors lament the stagnation of church growth in Ukraine, citing what they call reliable data indicating that the percentage of Protestants in the Ukrainian population has declined from two percent in 2000 to just eight-tenths of one percent in 2013.

There is much in this book that will likely not sit well with many leaders of the evangelical movement in the FSU. Indeed, the writers concede in their preface that at times their analysis may come across to some readers as "unduly critical and pessimistic" (p. xiv).

Rarely, the authors assert, do post-Soviet evangelicals demonstrate solidarity with society, and they chide Slavic evangelical scholars for failing to develop a genuinely contextual missiology that would equip the churches of the FSU to engage with social issues. The focus of mission, they insist, must shift from the church to the kingdom, since they believe that authentic mission "is concerned with the wholesale transfiguration of the kingdoms of this world into the 'Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ'" (p. 11).

The authors argue that "the individualist modes of evangelization that were exported to Ukraine by Western missionaries in the years following the implosion of the Soviet Union" are "unsuited to the communitarian context of post-Soviet society" (p. 14), and that "the focus of evangelicals must move away from an exclusively introspective concern about 'personal salvation' and a 'personal relationship with Jesus Christ'" (p. 13). Indeed, they go so far as to agree with Baptist theologian James McLendon's assertion that "[the] focus on making converts constitutes a demonic perversion of the true task of mission" (p. 107), and they assert that

"fundamentalism and dogmatism are possibly the most dangerous heresies that have ever threatened the Church" (p. 93). Statements of this sort are likely to receive strong pushback from mainstream post-Soviet evangelicals who adhere to a more traditional evangelical perspective.

Searle and Cherenkov also write that "we can no longer posit clear distinctions between the holy space of the Church and the secular world outside" (p. 102). Religious and theological processes, they say, must be seen as "inextricably connected with socio-political processes," and they add that "the church should seek to exercise proper discernment concerning which social trends are consistent with the vision of the Kingdom of God" (p. 3). Indeed, they resonate with Walter Rauschenbusch, one of the founders of the social gospel movement that came into vogue a century ago, in his affirmation that "the essential purpose of Christianity is to transform human society into the Kingdom of God by regenerating all human relations and reconstituting them with the will of God" (p. 6). Again, many evangelical leaders will likely bristle at the suggestion that the transformation of society, rather than the conversion of individual sinners, is *the* essential purpose of Christianity. They are likely as well to take exception to the suggestion that the Kingdom of God might appear on earth in all its fullness prior to the second coming of Christ.

The authors also call for evangelicals to assume a more conciliatory stance toward Eastern Orthodoxy. The specific mission of evangelicals concerning the Orthodox, they say, should be "to convert the nominally Orthodox into the evangelical Orthodox, and not into Baptists or Pentecostals" (p. 21). "For believers from evangelical churches," they add, "the Orthodox are, first and foremost, brothers and sisters of the one Universal Church, though it be divided" (p. 126).

While not everyone will resonate fully with the theological stance espoused by Searle and Cherenkov, anyone interested in the evangelical movement in the FSU will benefit from this book. The authors are well-informed, and they highlight a number of important issues with which post-Soviet evangelicals must grapple. ♦

Ray Prigodich is the book review editor of the East-West Church & Ministry Report. He formerly chaired the Department of World Christianity at Denver Seminary and served as academic dean at Donetsk Christian University, Ukraine.

Many evangelical leaders will likely bristle at the suggestion that the transformation of society, rather than the conversion of individual sinners, is *the* essential purpose of Christianity.

Book Review

Batalden, Stephen K. *Russian Bible Wars: Modern Scriptural Translation and Cultural Authority*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Reviewed by Paul D. Steeves.

The Christian Bible was published in the Russian vernacular for the first time less than a century and a half ago (1876) and a full millennium after Christian civilization was established in the Russian geographical area. As the title of Batalden's fascinating book signifies, that appearance of a Russian language version of sacred literature was attended by intense controversy.

Batalden's excellent monograph focuses on the story of the creation of a Russian-language Bible in the years between 1816 and 1876. Within this period various forces—political, economic, academic, and, of course, ecclesiastical—played roles, many contentious, in the production of a Russian-language Bible.

Politically, the Russian translation of the Bible began with an imperial order for it to commence in 1816. The New Testament was completed by 1820, but an imperial order outlawed any further translation in 1826. Alexander II's decree of 1858 overruled that ban, resulting in the 1876 publication of the full Bible. This "synodal version" remains to the present the approved text for the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church and most Protestant denominations. Various forces converged to produce such contradictory policies.

Nicholas I's 1826 prohibition of the translation of the Bible into Russian did not cause it to stop, but merely led to its continuation underground with circulation of the text in manuscript, foreshadowing 20th-century Soviet-era *samizdat*. The prohibition against further translation work even led to intensified censorship and criminal prosecution of perpetrators, further manifestations of the dramatic "Bible wars."

Yet more substantive than the question of whether autocrats prescribed or proscribed the Russian translation of the Bible was the scholarly issue of which text or texts should be the basis for a Russian translation. The candidates included the pre-Christian Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew scriptures, the medieval Jewish Masoretic text, the west European Renaissance *textus receptus* of Erasmus, texts from 19th-century German so-called lower and higher criticism, and Church Slavonic editions, some of doubtful reliability. To explicate this battle, Batalden had to skillfully delve into detailed esoterica of philology.

As to the economic dimension of Russian "Bible wars," Batalden demonstrates that the translation and distribution of the Bible had to await an entirely new stage of the history of Russia. The Russian Bible Society introduced a new technology for printing

books, called stereotyping, and an extensive network for market-based distribution of literature. In sum, the Russian Bible Society outdid the Russian Orthodox Church's Holy Synod in pricing and marketing of the printed text. This was a battle that the established church fundamentally abhorred since it had no interest in mass distribution of sacred writ. In general, widespread Bible dissemination fostered many other ideas that challenged tradition.

Batalden also recounts how the gradual appearance of the Russian Bible engendered conflicts within the religious sphere. In the early years, during Alexander I's reign (1801-25), Orthodoxy faced challenges from Freemasonry and other forms of free-thinking. Later, during Alexander II's reign (1856-81), Orthodoxy faced the challenge of the beginnings of Protestantism among the empire's Slavic population. The Evangelical Christian and Baptist denominations that emerged were only the most prominent of "sectarian" trends that splintered the Orthodox uniformity of the autocracy and could be blamed directly upon the translation of the Bible into the vernacular and its mass distribution.

Batalden provides a lengthy "Afterword" dealing with 20th-century Russian translations of the Bible, mostly in the diaspora. This chapter is both too much and too little, because much more could be said on this matter. In this regard, Batalden's book is an introductory volume that deserves a sequel dealing especially with the post-Soviet period. Such a book would document ongoing conflict over questions Batalden raised in his volume: Who should prepare the Bible for use by Russian speakers? What language and linguistic style should be employed? And how and by whom should it be published and distributed?

Batalden's meticulous research is also reflected in his extensive "Bibliography of the Russian Bible, 1794-1991," 146 pages in length. Here we have a research handbook in its own right. Moreover, it conveys a somewhat different, and in its own right interesting, story from that of the substance of the monograph, namely, when, where, and in how many copies Christian scripture was produced in the Russian language.

This is a delightful book. One might question whether "wars" is the appropriate designation for non-violent conflict in a scholarly monograph. Batalden tells his story so effectively that the drama and suspense seem to justify the word choice. ♦

Paul D. Steeves, *Stetson University, Deland, Florida*

Obituary: Father Gleb Yakunin (1934-2014) *(continued from page 16)*

Yakunin's fearlessness was similarly childlike. During a wake for him at Moscow's Sakharov Center on 27 December, his wife for 53 years, Iraida, recalled his response to those asking why the family had not emigrated like so many others, given Yakunin's long imprisonment and life of suffering. "He said, 'You

tell them that Gleb wants everything to be all right in Russia, so he's staying here.'" ♦

Geraldine Fagan, *Washington, DC, is author of Believing in Russia – Religious Policy after Communism (London: Routledge, 2013).*

Obituary: Father Gleb Yakunin (1934-2014)

Geraldine Fagan

By the mid-1960s, it was common knowledge inside the Russian Orthodox Church that the Soviet state was out to destroy it, and that some of the church's own clergy were complicit in that destruction. But only two priests dared protest in public. One was Fr. Gleb Yakunin, who died in Moscow 25 December 2014, aged 80. In 1965 he and a fellow priest, Fr. Nikolai Eshliman, wrote an open letter to then Patriarch Aleksy I. It criticized church inaction during Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign of 1959-64, when thousands of Orthodox churches were closed and priests barred from leading their own parishes. "Why," the pair asked, "has the supreme Church authority turned into an obedient tool in the hands of atheist bureaucrats?"

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn regretted not acting similarly on reading the letter in early 1966. This was "a bold, pure, and honest voice in defense of the Church," he wrote, with Yakunin and Eshliman "affirming by their selfless example that the pure flame of the Christian faith has not been extinguished in our native land."

Expecting the consequences of their letter to the patriarch to be grave, the two priests had concluded it with John 18:23: "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Sure enough, in 1966 the pair was suspended from the priesthood until they repented for attempting "to disrupt benevolent relations between the Church and the State."

In 1975, the Soviet Union's endorsement of civil rights in the Helsinki Accords gave Fr. Gleb another opportunity to lobby for religious and other liberties. That December, he wrote to the World Council of Churches, an international ecumenical forum, urging its support for dissidents under arrest in the Soviet Union. In 1976 he went on to found the Christian

Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the U.S.S.R., which documented Soviet persecution of numerous religious communities.

Again, the consequences were all too predictable. Yakunin was arrested in 1979 and sentenced the following year for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." The first part of his sentence – five years' imprisonment – was mostly served in a labor camp in the Ural Mountains region. He had completed half of the second part – five years' internal exile in distant Yakutia – when a personal amnesty from Mikhail Gorbachev freed him in 1987, just as *perestroika* was gathering steam. Yakunin was restored to the priesthood and allocated a parish in the Moscow region.

But he had no intention of leaving public life. As a parliamentarian in the Supreme Soviet from 1990 to 1993, Yakunin fought to establish religious liberty in the new Russia, including as a drafter of a since-undermined law On Freedom of Conscience. On delving into the archives of the KGB department charged with controlling religious life, he also uncovered the code names of senior Russian Orthodox hierarchs, including then Patriarch Aleksy II. The archives were swiftly closed.

"For 30 years I have openly defended my Church," Fr. Gleb later explained, "and tried to speak impartially about her afflictions, believing that ulcers driven inwards lead only to death." Defying a new church policy barring clerics from running for political office, he was elected to Russia's State Duma in 1993. The Moscow Patriarchate responded by defrocking him. In 1997 it went on to excommunicate Yakunin for "anti-Church activities," but he had earlier transferred to the breakaway Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate). He never recognized either defrocking or excommunication as legitimate.

In 2000, Yakunin began a Movement for Orthodox Renewal, which developed into the small, independent Apostolic Orthodox Church. One of its first acts was to canonize reformist theologian Fr. Aleksandr Men, who had been instrumental in influencing the young Gleb away from an interest in Buddhism in the 1950s, leading to his ordination in 1962.

Right up until the brief illness prior to his death, Yakunin was unshakeable in the pursuit of his vision of justice. Yet the glee with which he greeted any unmasking of power was childlike, not vindictive. When he once bumped into his Soviet interrogator on a Moscow street, recalled fellow priest Fr. Yakov Krotov, the pair went to catch up over a beer.

Such eccentricity – especially Yakunin's transfer to the Kyiv Patriarchate, whose Filaret (Denisenko) he had identified in the KGB archives as agent "Antonov" – led some who might otherwise have condemned him to wonder whether this was in fact that quintessentially Russian quality: *yurodstvo*, or foolishness-for-Christ. Informally, he thus retained respect even within Moscow Patriarchate circles.

On delving into the archives of the KGB he uncovered the code names of senior Russian Orthodox hierarchs, including then Patriarch Aleksy II. The archives were swiftly closed.

The quarterly *East-West Church & Ministry Report* examines all aspects of church life and mission outreach in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe as a service to both church and academia. Letters to the editor are welcomed. Annual subscription rates are \$49.95 (individuals, U.S. and Canada); \$59.95 (individuals, international); \$53.95 (libraries, U.S. and Canada); \$63.95 (libraries, international); and \$22.95 (e-mail). Reprint and photocopy policy: 1) Quantity photocopies or reprints of up to three articles from a single issue may be distributed or reprinted at no charge. 2) Written permission is to be secured for each distribution or reprinting. 3) The following statement is to be carried on each photocopied article reproduced and each article reprinted: Reproduced (or Reprinted) with permission of the *EAST-WEST CHURCH & MINISTRY REPORT*. Currently indexed by American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies (ABSEES), OCLC Public Affairs Information Service (formerly PAIS), Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), Zeller Dietrich (formerly Zeller Verlag), and Christian Periodicals Index.



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