

# **EVANGELICALISM AND THE RESURGENCE OF RELIGION IN UKRAINE**

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**TITLE VIII PROGRAM**

## **Project Information\***

<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	<b>Catherine Wanner</b>
<b>Council Contract Number:</b>	<b>819-19g</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>February 15, 2006</b>

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\* The work leading to this report was supported in part by contract or grant funds provided by the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, funds which were made available by the U.S. Department of State under Title VIII (The Soviet-East European Research and Training Act of 1983, as amended). The analysis and interpretations contained herein are those of the author.

## **Executive Summary**

Dramatically different policies regulating religious organizations have been adopted in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. Ukraine offers far more freedoms to non-traditional religious communities and foreign religious organizations than many other successor states. This, in turn, has generated greater religious diversity and higher levels of religious participation in Ukraine. In particular, there as been a notable increase in the number of Baptist and Pentecostal communities since 1991. These communities offer converts membership and active participation in a local congregation at the same time that they connect them to a global community of believers. By introducing new practices, knowledges, and moralities, these global communities remake identities, allegiances and political orientations. The attraction of these communities and the role they play in developing and strengthening of civil society in Ukraine is likely to continue.

## **Introduction**

Before the USSR collapsed in 1991, Soviet Ukraine was home to the second largest Baptist community in the world, after the United States. Another 350,000 Pentecostals, or half the total of officially registered Pentecostals in the Soviet Union, resided in Soviet Ukraine. Ukraine was also home to numerous underground communities of both denominations. With good reason, Ukraine was called the “Bible Belt” of the former Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> These communities provided a base from which evangelicalism could grow and spread once political conditions changed beginning with the Millennium commemoration in 1988. The largest evangelical church in all of Europe and Eurasia was founded in Kyiv a mere eleven years ago and now boasts 20,000 members and thirty-eight daughter congregations around the world.

I use the term evangelical to refer to the broad spectrum of Baptist, Evangelical Christian, Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic believers who call Ukraine home. Although there have always been Lutheran, Adventist, Mennonite and other Protestant denominations in Ukraine and in the USSR, Baptists and Pentecostals were and remain the most numerous. The spectrum of Soviet-era Baptist, Evangelical- Christian and Pentecostal communities in Soviet Ukraine can be described as fundamentalist to the extent that they espoused a literalistic reading of an inerrant Bible, a general suspicion of worldliness that resulted in strict codes of personal morality, and a belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. More recently, a phenomenal number of charismatic and neo-Pentecostal churches have been created in Ukraine. These churches offer a charismatic means of expressive, even ecstatic worship, to the observance of Pentecostal doctrine, which includes baptism in the Holy Spirit, faith healing, and prophecy.

These newer communities advocate a relaxation of fundamentalist prescriptions on individual behavior, yet remain committed to morally conservative social policies.

This essay examines why Ukraine exhibits a greater degree of religious pluralism than Russia and Belarus and why evangelicals in Ukraine have been the beneficiaries of the religious renaissance that took root after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The creation of an independent Ukrainian state that has embraced legal codes and legislative policies regarding religious pluralism that diverge from those operative in Russia has yielded a plethora of qualitatively different social institutions that sustain new cultural values and practices. I illustrate the social and cultural consequences of Ukraine's more permissive policies by suggesting that religious communities are at once a powerful force enhancing globalizing tendencies and yet communal membership, with its commitment to active participation in congregational life in a specific neighborhood church, also simultaneously intensifies connections to the local and immediate. I conclude that the divergent historical legacies of religiosity make religion a domain in which significant cultural, political and policy differences between Russian and Ukraine are emerging in the present.

### **Religious Pluralism**

Once dismissed by the “militantly godless” as “opium of the people,” religion is now posited as a fundamental and vital part of national culture in Ukraine. Recently, Viktor Yushchenko proclaimed in an address to the Ukrainian nation, “Physical strength, morality, faith and spirituality have always been major values of our ancestors. We are their worthy sons and daughters.”<sup>2</sup> The expression of such sentiments began with the Millennium commemorations in

1988 of the 1000-year anniversary of Christianity in Kyivan-Rus. These commemorations generated enormous popular interest in religion and prompted a sea change in Soviet religious policy.<sup>3</sup> In October 1990 one of the primary goals of Soviet ideology, to establish a scientific atheistic worldview, was abandoned when the Supreme Soviet adopted legislation that guaranteed freedom of conscience and a legal status for all religious communities.

Once claims to a nation's right to self-determination became a viable strategy for political and cultural elites to successfully challenge Soviet hegemony, the momentum for change in religious policy accelerated as national and religious resurgence occurred conterminously. With less fear of state retribution, some clergy and religious institutions utilized their moral authority to overtly lend support to nationalist movements as oppositional forces to Soviet rule.<sup>4</sup> This fusion of religion and nationality took on new relevance when it could be mobilized to force political change to move in a particular direction.

The distinctiveness of Ukraine's religious tradition was used to distinguish its culture and historical experience from Russia and to further justify the political separation of the two nations. Long repressed and outlawed in the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (Uniate) positioned themselves, much as the Ukrainian diaspora had, as an anti-Soviet cornerstone of Ukrainian national identity.<sup>5</sup> Of course, the Russian Orthodox Church also championed its fundamental role in broadly defining identity and shaping Great Russian civilization, an argument used to support the continued political and religious unification of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.<sup>6</sup>

With the fall of the USSR, the trajectories of Orthodoxy in Ukraine and Russia significantly diverged and this is the first of three key factors I will note to explain why the religious landscapes in Russia and Ukraine have developed differently since 1991. The

institutional structure of Orthodox churches mirrors the ideal of nation-state with each nation ideally constituting a single ethno-religious community. In Ukraine the political struggles after independence to create a single Ukrainian Orthodox Church to buttress the nascent state and unify the Ukrainian nation significantly compromised the role of clergy as moral leaders as they battled among themselves for property and power.<sup>7</sup> The sustained efforts of intellectuals, dissidents, politicians, and diaspora leaders failed to unite the three Orthodox churches in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate. This failure, combined with the Russian Orthodox Church's history of complicity with the Soviet state, tarnished the reputation of Orthodoxy in general and brought an end to the state-backed monopoly status of the Orthodox faith in Ukraine.

When a single church cannot dominate and influence political policy, as it can in Russia and Belarus, de facto there is a greater degree of religious freedom. This fact, combined with a nominal commitment to Orthodoxy among large sectors of the population, has made Ukraine one of the most active and competitive “religious marketplaces” in Eurasia. José Casanova claims that, “of all European societies, Ukraine is the one most likely to approximate the American model” which he characterizes as “a free, and highly pluralistic indeed almost boundless religious market.”<sup>8</sup> This flourishing of religious communities in Ukraine has tremendous implications for the development and strengthening of civil society in that they constitute networks of organizations that are not beholden to the state, but rather to their parishioners.

The different status of the Orthodox churches in Ukraine and Russia is compounded by a second factor, namely, that Ukraine is a country with particularly deep religious traditions and where religious participation in a variety of faiths has always been exceptionally high. During

the Soviet period, two-thirds of the Orthodox churches were located in Ukraine.<sup>9</sup> Even today the presence of Orthodox churches in Ukraine remains disproportionately high when compared to Russia. Although the population of Ukraine is one-third that of Russia, there are currently more Orthodox churches in Ukraine than there are in Russia. Should the Orthodox churches in Ukraine unite and come out from under canonical jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church, overnight the Ukrainian Orthodox Church would become the largest Orthodox church in the world.<sup>10</sup> There are also more Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish and communities falling under the rubric of “New Religious Movements” in Ukraine than in Russia. Only the number of Islamic and Buddhist communities in Russia exceeds those in Ukraine.<sup>11</sup>

Vasyl Markus has written, “Ukraine must be viewed as a modern secular state, in whose formation the religious factor historically played a significant role and where even now, in the postcommunist environment, religion cannot be underestimated.”<sup>12</sup> Religiosity and religious affiliation have traditionally served as markers among Ukrainians and between Ukrainians and others, providing a cultural underpinning that has allowed missionaries from many national backgrounds to help recreate robust religious-based communities after 1991. The secularism of the present is challenged by a broad popular recognition of the importance of religion in the past and by an embrace of cultural traditions rooted in religion. As an ever-widening spectrum of denominations openly competes for members, religious life in Ukraine resumes its vitality. Over 1,000 new religious communities currently register annually in Ukraine. The most significant growth is and will continue to be in the southeast of the country, which has three times fewer communities than the average for the country as a whole. The number of Protestant churches registered in this region already almost equals the number of Orthodox.<sup>13</sup>



The difference in the degree to which religious authorities are located abroad is the third factor that distinguishes the religious landscape in Ukraine from Russia. Ukrainian government and clerical leaders have to reckon with the fact that not only the non-traditional religions, such as Baptists, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc., have transnational connections, so do the so-called traditional ones. The Russian Orthodox Church in 2002 still controlled 9,423 of the 13,485 Orthodox congregations in Ukraine and the Vatican is the spiritual authority for the approximately five million Greek-Catholics in Ukraine who have 3,289 parishes.<sup>14</sup>

As Ukrainian and Russian government leaders make religious policy now, they have to reckon with the historical legacies outlined above by adapting to them. This explains in part the different positions the Russian and Ukrainian states have taken toward the issue of religious pluralism. Recent studies of freedom of conscience consistently rank Ukraine significantly above Russia and Belarus.<sup>15</sup> Since the fall of the Soviet Union, policies regulating local religious organizations, the flow of missionaries and the myriad forms of financial, material, and logistical support foreign religious organizations offer have evolved very differently in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Legally, Ukraine offers far more freedoms to non-traditional religious communities and foreign religious organizations and this, in turn, has generated greater religious diversity and higher levels of religious participation in Ukraine.

### **Legislating Religion**

In 1997, in a vote of 358 to 6, Russia's Parliament passed a bill establishing two categories of religious institutions, traditional and non-traditional, in contradiction to the Russian Constitution that states that all religions are equal under the law.<sup>16</sup> Traditional religious communities, legally referred to as “religious organizations,” are defined as those with an

established presence in Russia of fifteen or more years and include Orthodoxy, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. This special status allows religious organizations to legally act as a corporate body, own property and commercial enterprises, run radio and television stations, distribute religious literature, conduct services in alternative locations (such as hospitals and prisons), and receive tax exemptions.

Some religious organizations, such as Catholic, Baptist, and splinter Russian Orthodox denominations, have been in Russia longer than fifteen years and yet they were denied this status and classified as “religious groups.” As a result, they are subject to cumbersome, annual registration procedures. This erratic and time-consuming bureaucratic exercise is a means of systematically disempowering targeted denominations.<sup>17</sup> Infringements on religious liberty are compounded in Russia by the fact that almost half of the regional authorities have passed legislation that is even more punishing toward denominations deemed non-traditional.

The legislation passed in Belarus in November 2002 is even more restrictive.<sup>18</sup> It obliges all religious organizations to reregister by 2004 and criminalizes unregistered religious activity. The religious literature of any group without the status of “religious association” is subject to censorship, the group is not be allowed to invite foreigners or have them lead religious organizations, and the group is prohibited from conducting any educational activities. In order to attain the status of “religious association,” a group must fulfill three requirements: it must have at least ten registered communities; each one must have at least twenty adult members; and one of these ten communities must have been registered as early as 1982. In 2002 there were 2,830 registered religious organizations in Belarus, of which 895 are evangelical Protestant.<sup>19</sup> All minority faiths, including Pentecostals, the second most numerous denomination in terms of

number of communities, denounced this bill as repressive.<sup>20</sup> Of course, electronic media, including the internet, allow religious organizations to penetrate places and establish a presence where they are not welcome. State institutions in Russia and Belarus that seek to limit evangelical proselytizing and the entrance of non-traditional religious groups are increasingly forced to monitor multiple spheres and are likely to see diminishing results for their efforts.

There is no equivalent legislation in Ukraine sharply restricting the activities of certain denominations. In 2002 there were no reports of nonnative religious organizations having difficulties obtaining visas for foreign religious workers or registering with state authorities.<sup>21</sup> Writing from a missionary perspective about the 1990s, Howard Biddulph asserts, “The Kuchma presidency has followed a fairly consistent policy of egalitarian treatment of the four traditional churches [the three Orthodox Churches and the Greek-rite Catholic Church] since 1995, seeking to reduce or resolve conflicts and to promote mutual tolerance. It has also taken a full toleration position toward the overwhelming majority of nontraditional faiths, including NRMs [New Religious Movements]. Officials of the State Committee for Religious Affairs, who administer religious policy and most of the judiciary, are the most visible supporters of that relatively full-toleration perspective.”<sup>22</sup>

I do not mean to suggest that there are not violations of freedom of conscience in Ukraine.<sup>23</sup> Yet, the difficulties of ensuring religious tolerance in Ukraine stem from two sources: interference of local authorities in the workings of local religious institutions and inconsistent implementation of national law that guarantees religious freedom. In Russia and Belarus the problem is the law itself because it allows the state to selectively restrict certain religious organizations by denying them registration and thereby rendering their activities illegal. This is a critical difference.

In the face of growing religious pluralism, the Ukrainian government and cultural leaders are concerned over the splintering of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine into three denominations. First, this impedes the recognition of a single Ukrainian Orthodox Church by the Constantinople-based universal Orthodox Patriarch.<sup>24</sup> Secondly, these ecclesiastical divisions hamper nation-building and slow the process of forging a sense of unity, which is much needed after a series of highly polarized and contested elections. And lastly, the nascent Ukrainian state is denied the possibility of a partnership with the church to generate legitimacy and loyalty amidst ongoing economic difficulties and charges of political corruption.

The Orthodox Churches have their own objections to the growing religious diversity and the numerous foreign religious organizations that have helped produce it. The Orthodox Churches consider Orthodoxy an attribute of Ukrainian nationality, that is to say, a Ukrainian is by definition Orthodox. A significant exception is made for Ukrainian Greek-rite Catholics, who for historic reasons belong to a different albeit related national denomination. An Orthodox identity is geographically defined and automatically inherited. In the eyes of Orthodox clergy, there is no need for missionizing because all Ukrainians have a religious identity, whether or not they choose to act on it.

Non-traditional religious groups, meaning neither Orthodox nor Greek Catholic, however, see Ukraine as a fertile ground for gaining new converts. In 1999 alone, over 2,600 foreign representatives from a wide spectrum of religious denominations visited Ukraine.<sup>25</sup> In 2001, 463 long-term evangelical missionaries were working in Ukraine. Nearly 350 of them were American.<sup>26</sup> The flourishing of these religious groups in Ukraine strains the ideal of

Ukrainians as a unified ethno-religious people by creating local communities with transnational ties that effectively bypass the significance of the nation-state as a source of identity and allegiance.

Soviet authorities clearly recognized the “ideological provocation” evangelicalism represented and the power of religion to transgress state boundaries, even formidable ones, such as those that the Soviet Union constructed, to forge bonds of allegiance among coreligionists of different national and social backgrounds and political systems.<sup>27</sup> Religiously motivated migratory practices to missionize and evangelize underlined the greater community to which evangelical believers were enjoined and sought to expand. At the same time, missionizing exposed comparatively small and isolated communities to practices and values embraced by other communities.<sup>28</sup>

### **Explaining the Appeal of Evangelicalism**

The perceived “democratic” workings of Protestant denominations at the local and international level, meaning making room for individual voices and lay participation in church activities, partially accounts for their success and distinguishes these evangelical communities from more traditional and hierarchical denominations, such as Orthodoxy and Catholicism. Many forms of evangelization are used to attract new members: communities issue personalized invitations to services; fire and brimstone street preachers expound the glories of God; large auditoriums are rented for religious revivals; and extensive missionizing occurs among the poor and destitute in prisons, orphanages, and hospitals. Mission funding and overall financial support from the U.S. have been critical to the rapid growth of “church planting” in Ukraine. Western missionaries began to travel to the Soviet Union in significant numbers beginning in the

late 1980s. These missionaries were evangelists of a culture as well as of the Gospel.

Intentionally or not, they embodied the political values and moralities of the cultures from where they came.

For evangelicals, anyone who has not been “saved” through repentance and conversion inspires proselytizing. Evangelicals actualize their faith by acting on the moral obligation to save the unsaved, to help church the unchurched. Conversion can be a swift means to redefine concepts of self and other through cultural appropriation of new values and practices. This new collective identity and group membership is marked by subsequent behavior modifications as public manifestations of inner spiritual change. By becoming an evangelical in post-Soviet Ukrainian society, one redefines fundamental cultural categories, such as familiar and foreign, space and time, power and agency, and gender and class. One rewrites autobiography into pre and post-conversion periods, giving in to the frequent temptations to see signs retrospectively of the impending conversion in one’s deep past and thereby affirming the righteousness of the Christian life one has adopted. I have argued elsewhere that evangelical faiths derive a good bit of their appeal from propagating a “complete break with the past” and a “new beginning as a different (and morally superior) person”.<sup>29</sup> Just as the Ukrainian nation was “born again” in 1991, conversion offers the believer an experience of erasure and renewal.

When an individual converts to evangelicalism and departs from hereditary and national understandings of an Orthodox identity, however he or she understands and practices them, conflicts almost always arise between the convert and kin and neighbors. Dispensing with common cultural practices, such as drinking, smoking and dancing, alienates the convert from his/her kin. When home is sanctified by icons and nationality is understood in religious terms, a convert to evangelicalism is willfully rejecting established patterns of lifestyle and identity.

Indeed, the exclusivity of evangelical cultural practices contributed, especially during the Soviet period, to widespread perceptions that evangelical communities are “sects,” in some way separate from and outside of mainstream religious life. This perception was further enhanced by the faith-as-lifestyle orientation of evangelical doctrine and the extensive commitments to communal life official members are obliged to make, such as attending several services a week, each of which lasts over two hours, participating in the numerous activities the church sponsors, and tithing ten percent of one’s income. The decision to become a practicing evangelical quickly becomes a fundamental attribute of identity, a primary influence on social relationships, and a significant factor structuring everyday life. For many converts, evangelicalism and the “born again” experience becomes the primary organizing principle assimilating, mediating, and subsuming other factors informing identity.

### **The Local-Global Nexus of Evangelicalism**

The popular perception of the dichotomous choice between a national or foreign faith is largely a false one. As Ranger writes of the widespread coexistence of various religious groups in Africa, “we should see mission churches as much less alien and independent churches as much less African.” (1987:31) The same could be said of religious life in Ukraine. The national Ukrainian churches have links to institutions and hierarchies located abroad, be it the Vatican or the Moscow Patriarchate, and themselves react by adapting to the religious pluralism surrounding them. Second, although the choice to convert to an evangelical faith in Ukraine today exerts appeal because it opens up access to new zones of contact, many of the imported doctrines and practices are rapidly adapted to local cultural mores and quickly take on a Ukrainian cast. In this way, all religious communities are forced to negotiate the local or national

contexts in which they wish to situate themselves as well as the links they offer individuals, communities and institutions beyond Ukrainian borders. Visiting preachers, missionaries, and dignitaries from abroad simultaneously underline the global dimensions of religion today and serve to locate Ukraine within it.

Ukraine now has some of the best seminaries in the former Soviet Union that train clergy bound for service throughout the former Soviet Union. Hundreds of Ukrainians now travel annually to Russia and elsewhere as evangelical missionaries. Just as American missionaries maintained a visible presence in Ukraine throughout the 1990s, nearly 500,000 Soviet evangelicals relocated to the U.S. and now call Sacramento, Portland, and Seattle home.<sup>30</sup> The presence of American missionaries in Ukraine has brought about changes in religious practice there just as the presence of Soviet evangelicals adds to the diversity of religious life and expands the dimensions of evangelical practice in the U.S. Many Soviet evangelicals return to Ukraine where they are some of the most active and successful missionaries thanks to Western training and local cultural knowledge.

When Ukrainians evangelize in Russia or when Ukrainian immigrants capitalize on their residence in the U.S. to return to their homeland to missionize, we must acknowledge that global Christianity provides a platform from which to challenge the dichotomy of colonizer-colonized and center -periphery when it comes to inciting and shaping cultural and political change. Indeed, the largest evangelical mega-church in Kyiv was founded by a 33-year-old Nigerian who came to Minsk to study in 1987. One year after his graduation in 1993, he moved to Kyiv to found the Word of Faith Bible church with seven members. As of 2005, 20,000 people routinely



attend the services of his church. In other words, global Christianity fosters local communities based on close, daily interaction *and* simultaneously provides a multiplex point of intersection of different cultural, political, and, of course, religious and moral traditions from around the world.

Even as I stress the very transnational nature of these communities, I do now wish to discount the continuing importance of individual states. As I have shown earlier, the policies of individual states, which are deeply rooted in historical experience, have structured the frequency and intensity of this evangelical encounter and by extension the dynamics of religious life in each respective society. Religious practice is grounded in a particular place, even as it transcends it. As a result of state policies, Ukraine has emerged as a key recipient *and* supplier of evangelical missionaries, adding qualitatively different social and religious institutions, each striving to become political players, to the cultural landscape of this traditionally Orthodox land.

### **The Future of Evangelicalism in Ukraine**

As identities and understandings of community and morality continue to evolve in the aftermath of socialism and the brutality of the so-called transition, I suspect evangelical communities will continue to command attention. The reasons for this are myriad. First, church institutions and doctrine are seen as timeless and yet relevant to contemporary life. Second, the strong emphasis on Scriptures and on their interpretation provides for an authentic, historical tradition and possibilities to infuse it with local cultural values and practices. Rather than suggesting that these forms of global Christianity represent another hegemonic ideology “converting” Ukrainians to its worldview, I wish to argue that a blending of cultural influences is occurring, altering notions of morality and religious practice in novel ways. Ukrainian believers selectively appropriate, and sometimes reject, the practices global Christian organizations offer

in spite of the clear power differentials that exist between international missionary organizations and local Ukrainian congregations. The process of local adaptation in Ukraine and elsewhere places these global models of religious institutional organization in a permanent state of evolution where the models are constantly transformed as they are applied.

As more people experience anomie in the face of a post-socialist life teeming with choices and challenges, but short on clear guidelines for behavior, beliefs, and a sense of purpose, the promise of a shared, meaningful life with a supportive group of like-minded people will continue to exert appeal. The “state religions” in the former Soviet Union are effective political players, influencing social, political, and religious policies on a number of levels. The same could be said of evangelical denominations in the U.S. and their umbrella organizations.<sup>31</sup> There is no reason to think that the withdrawal from “the world” and the atomization that the Soviet regime forced on Protestant communities will reemerge.<sup>32</sup> Nor is it reasonable to expect that religious groups meeting in scattered rented cinemas will be any less influential than more traditional, hierarchical religious organizations with leadership and doctrine emanating from a center. Serhii Plokhy points to the growing role of Protestant communities in Ukrainian politics. He suggests that the significant interest demonstrated by various political parties in the Protestant vote and the participation of Protestants in Ukrainian politics at the highest levels of government indicate a general tolerance for and growing power of Protestant churches in predominantly Orthodox Ukraine.<sup>33</sup> The identities and allegiances that these new communities are forging are likely to prosper and continue to exert appeal among the tens of millions of unchurched Ukrainians, as they have in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Evangelical religious communities challenge identity categories that symbiotically link religion-nation-state as an organic unity, as has been the historic norm in this part of the world. Rather, the dimensions of a religiously-based identity they advocate are simultaneously operative on highly local and global levels and ultimately serve to deterritorialize identity by recasting it as a morally empowering choice. Religiously motivated migratory practices to missionize and evangelize underline the greater transnational community to which evangelical believers are enjoined and seek to expand. At the same time, missionizing exposes comparatively small communities and their members to practices and values embraced by communities located elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> In this way, in spite of the nationalist revival throughout the region, the nation-state is not necessarily the primary or even logical unit of social and political analysis when studying change in the former USSR. The salience of residence in a fixed territory is eroding as an attribute of identity, and by extension the connection between cultures being rooted in a particular place is weakening too. Religious knowledge, as a form of cultural knowledge, is free-floating. Tied to doctrine, it is independent of a particular place or specific institution and as a result can be easily introduced into new contexts and new cultural environments. This basic dynamic holds whether one speaks of a religious organization from Littleton, Colorado establishing a base in Ukraine or a Ukrainian church establishing a base in Sacramento, California.

I have tried to illustrate some of the factors that regionally shaped the historical legacies of atheist ideology, how these factors influenced the religious resurgence in Ukraine and Russia differently, and how this has combined to prompt the adoption of different state policies concerning religious organizations. As a result of these policies, different fields of religious

practice have emerged in Ukraine and Russia creating cultural differences between Ukrainian and Russian societies after the shared historical experience of socialism and its accompanying atheist ideology.

Much has been written about the role of the West in introducing democracy, capitalism, and market economies in Eurasia. These ideologies and their associated practices are part of a cultural bundle. Another element, which has received far less attention, is the arrival of global Christianity and the creation of tight local and broadly transnational evangelical communities. Along with other aspects of Western culture and ideology that are indigenously adapted to local cultural values and practices, evangelical communities weave the supernatural into the social and political fabric of everyday life in Ukraine. These localized and transnational communities challenge traditional ties that link a particular religion to a certain ethnic group, social hierarchy, territory, or state. In return, they provide new social capital that links individuals to communities in another form by creating new cultural values and practices that simultaneously separate nations that have historically been politically united, such as Russia and Ukraine, and reattach these groups to a far greater social space inhabited by a global community of believers.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> William Fletcher, "The Soviet Bible Belt: World War II's Impact on Religion" in Susan Linz, ed. *The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union*. (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld, 1985) p. 91

<sup>2</sup> Presidential Address to the Ukrainian Nation, given by Viktor Yushchenko, Kyiv, Ukraine, November 12, 2005, cited in *Action Report Ukraine*, No. 601, "Yuschenko: Current State of Ukraine's Medical Sector one of the Most Disturbing Problems" November 16, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> See especially Michael Bourdeaux "Glasnost and the Gospel: The Emergence of Religious Pluralism" in Michael Bourdeaux, ed., *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia: Vol. 3 The International Politics of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY, 1995) for a discussion of the impact of the Millennium celebrations on the growth of religious participation. For Ukrainians, the fact that the anniversary was initially commemorated in Moscow, with only subsequent "regional" commemorations in Kyiv, underlined the colonial nature of the relationship of Ukrainians, their language, culture, and church, to Russians and simultaneously advanced religious and nationalist resurgence. See Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (University Park, PA, 1998), esp. pp. 140-69.

<sup>4</sup> Much has been written about the role of religion in enhancing claims to national distinctiveness and about how nationalist movements helped to bring an end to 74 years of Soviet rule. A review of this enormous literature is beyond the scope of this article. It is key to note, however, that Protestants and other religious groups that are transnational and "non-traditional," rarely lent active support to nationalist political agendas.

<sup>5</sup> See Frank E. Sysyn, "The Third Rebirth of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Religious Situation in Ukraine, 1989-91" in Stephen K. Batalden, ed., *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine and Georgia*. (Dekalb, 1993) and Bohdan Bociurkiw, "The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the Contemporary USSR," *Nationalities Papers*, 20, no. 1(Spring 1992): 17-30.

Other studies note the importance of religious participation for creating and maintaining a Ukrainian diaspora that is politically influential on issues relating to Ukraine. See Myron B. Kuropas' study of immigrant communities in the U.S., *The Ukrainian Americans: Roots and Aspirations, 1884-1954*, (Toronto, 1991) and Lubomyr Luciuk, *Searching for Place: Ukrainian Displaced Persons, Canada, and the Migration of Memory*, (Toronto, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Vera Tolz, "Conflicting 'Homeland Myths' and Nation-State Building in Postcommunist Russia", *Slavic Review* 57, no. 2(Summer 1998):267-94, esp. p. 279.

<sup>7</sup>For a discussion of this process, see Serhii Plokyh, "Kyiv vs. Moscow: The Autocephalous Movement in Independent Ukraine" *The Harriman Review* 9, nos.1-2(Spring 1996): 32-37, Andrii Krawchuk, "Religious Life in Ukraine: Continuity and Change" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 33, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 59-68 and Geraldine Fagan and Aleksandr Shchipkov, "Rome is Not our Father, but Neither is Moscow our Mother: Will There be a Local Ukrainian Orthodox Church?" *Religion, State & Society*. 29, no.3( September 2001): 197-205

<sup>8</sup> Jose Casanova, "Between Nation and Civil Society: Ethnolinguistic and Religious Pluralism in Independent Ukraine" in Robert W. Hefner, ed., *Democratic Civility: The History and Cross-Cultural Possibility of a Modern Political Ideal*. (New Brunswick, 1998) pp. 203-28, 215.

<sup>9</sup> In 1958, 54% of all registered religious communities were located in Soviet Ukraine and 43% of them were closed down during this campaign. Nathaniel Davis, "The Number of Orthodox Churches Before and After the Khrushchev Antireligious Drive" *Slavic Review* 50, no. 3(Fall 1991):612-20. Also see John Anderson, *Religion, State and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States*, (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> Taras Kuzio, "The Struggle to Establish the World's Largest Orthodox Church," *RFE/RL*, 5 September 2000. See also Krindatch, "Religion in Postsoviet Ukraine", 40.

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<sup>11</sup> For a complete breakdown of the number of registered communities as well as a listing of infractions against their rights, see the U.S. Department of State's "International Religious Freedom Report 2002" at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13988pf.htm> for Ukraine and <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13958.htm> for Russia.

<sup>12</sup> Vasyl Markus, "Politics and Religion in Ukraine: In Search of a New Pluralistic Dimension," in Michael Bourdeaux, ed., *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia: Vol. 3 The International Politics of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY, 1995) p. 163.

<sup>13</sup> Nicholas Mitrokin, "Aspects of the Religious Situation in Ukraine" *Religion, State & Society*, 29, no. 3(September 2001): 173-96

<sup>14</sup> See U.S. Department of State's "International Religious Freedom Report 2002: Ukraine" at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13988pf.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> The Baltics are the only successor states to the Soviet Union ranked more favorably than Ukraine. Besides the *International Religious Freedom Report 2002*, see Peter Roudik, "Ukraine" in *Religious Liberty: The Legal Framework in Selected OSCE Countries*. (Washington, D.C., 2000) pp. 149-58. This study was conducted by the Library of Congress Law Library. Other studies examining the same issues include Kevin Boyle and Juliet Sheen, eds., *Freedom of Religion and Belief: A World Report*. (London, 1997).

For an indepth comparison of the politics of religion in Ukraine and Russia, see Serhii Plokhly, "State Politics and Religious Pluralism in Russia and Ukraine: A Comparative Perspective" in P.G. Danchin and E.A. Cole, (eds.), *Protecting the Human Rights of Religious Minorities in Eastern Europe*. (New York, 2002), Myroslaw Tataryn, "Russia and Ukraine: Two Models of Religious Liberty and Two Models for Orthodoxy" *Religion, State & Society*, 29, no. 3(September 2001):155-72, and Vasyl Markus, "Politics and Religion in Ukraine: In Search of a New Pluralistic Dimension" in M. Bourdeaux, (ed.), *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia: Vol. 3 The International Politics of Eurasia*. (Armonk, NY, 1995)

<sup>16</sup> Russian Federal Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" No. 125-82 (9/26/1997). For an assessment of this law and its relation to the Russian Constitution, see the Winter 1998 issue of the *Emory International Law Review*, 12 (1), which is entirely dedicated to analyzing the legal ramifications of this law for various religious denominations. See especially Jeremy T. Gunn, "Caesar's Sword: The 1997 Law of the Russian Federation on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" pp. 98-99. The aim of the law was to restrict "totalitarian sects" and "dangerous religious cults." In practice, however, the law discriminates against less established religious groups, especially Protestant and parachristian denominations, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, by making it difficult for them to establish institutional bases.

<sup>17</sup> See David Little, "Religious Minorities and Religious Freedom" in P.G. Danchin and E.A. Cole, (eds.), *Protecting the Human Rights of Religious Minorities in Eastern Europe*. (New York, 2002) for a discussion of the use of registration procedures and other administrative mechanisms to discriminate or repress minority religious groups.

<sup>18</sup> See Felix Corley, "Belarus: Europe's Most Repressive Religion Law Adopted," *Keston News Service*, 2 October 2002. For more on this law, see reports from Forum 18, an organization that monitors violations of religious freedom in formerly socialist countries according to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at <http://www.forum18.org>. See especially "Belarus: Religion Law Stunts Church Growth" at [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=162](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=162) and an article that details the state's new provisions for the criminalization of religious education of youth at "Belarus: Authorities Check up on Sunday School Pupils" at [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=161](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=161).

<sup>19</sup> Felix Corley, "Belarus: Europe's Most Repressive Religion Law Goes for Final Signature," *Keston News Service*, 2 October 2002.

<sup>20</sup> A spokesman for the Pentecostal Union claimed that of their 494 registered communities, 250 have already had their registration obstructed. See Felix Corley, "Belarus: How Many Religious Communities Will be Driven Underground," *Keston News Service*, 2 October 2002.

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<sup>21</sup> See "International Religious Freedom Report 2002: Ukraine", 3.

<sup>22</sup> Howard Biddulph, "Interconfessional Intolerance in Ukraine" *East-West Church Ministry Report* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2002). Biddulph is a career missionary with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints who spent 1991-94 in Kyiv.

<sup>23</sup> Although there were no reports of violations of rights filed on behalf of evangelical organizations in 2002, leaders of these same organizations did nonetheless point to instances of individual believers encountering difficulties, sometimes job loss, as a result of their evangelical affiliation. "International Religious Freedom Report 2002: Ukraine", 5.

<sup>24</sup> The Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate is the only Orthodox Church in Ukraine that is canonically recognized.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Roudnik, "Ukraine" in *Religious Liberty: The Legal Framework in Selected OSCE Countries* (Washington, D.C: The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2001) , p. 157

<sup>26</sup> In contrast, in 2001 there were over 2,200 missionaries working in Russia, but only one-third of them, or 794, were American. In Belarus, 44, or approximately half, of the 82 missionaries were American. Thirteen were Belarussian. Patrick Johnson and Jason Mandryk with Robyn Johnson, *Operation World: 21st Century Edition*. (Waynesboro, GA, 2001), 645, 540, 100.

<sup>27</sup> Evangelical communities were hardly the only religious communities targeted for repression because of the links and connections they were capable of forging. Serhii Plokyh has rightfully, in my opinion, made the argument that the fierce repression of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic church and its eventual outlaw in 1946 was primarily motivated by Stalin's concerns that the Vatican might exert wield influence over post-World War II reconstruction in Eastern European countries with significant Catholic minorities. The accusations of Nazi collaboration, of assisting the underground nationalist movement, and of overall sympathy to the nationalist project were, of course, additional factors that did not earn the church favor in the Kremlin. See Serhii Plokyh, "In the Shadow of Yalta: International Politics and the Soviet Liquidation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church" in Frank Sysyn and Serhii Plokyh, eds., *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine*. (Edmonton, 2003) p. 59.

<sup>28</sup> The obligation to evangelize motivated Ukrainian evangelical immigrants who left the Russian Empire for the U.S. to return to their homeland to proselytize in the 1920s. These returning immigrants were some of the most successful preachers responsible for garnering new converts. Similarly, in the 1990s religiously persecuted Ukrainian refugees who settled in the US return to their homeland to play a critical role in missionary efforts to spread Pentecostalism and Baptism in Ukraine today.

<sup>29</sup> See Catherine Wanner, "Advocating New Moralities: Conversion to Evangelicalism in Ukraine" *Religion, State, and Society*. 31(3) (September 2003): 273-87 for an analysis of what conversion narratives reveal about attitudes toward the Soviet past. Conversion allows an individual to break with values and practices that are no longer considered appropriate as well as to reject the cultural values held by the greater society. In this way, conversion narratives can be read as another prescription for revolutionary change in post-Soviet society.

<sup>30</sup> There are many factors that make counting the number of Soviet Evangelicals in the U.S. difficult. Thanks to the Lautenberg Amendment, many arrived as refugees and refugees are not tracked according to religious affiliation. Once in the U.S., refugees invite extended family members through the Family Reunification Act, thereby bringing Evangelicals from the former Soviet Union into the U.S. through other channels. Finally, immigration to the U.S. is often a "theologizing experience," meaning that immigrants from many regions, the former Soviet Union included, often become religious and assume a religious affiliation once in the U.S. See esp. R. Stephen Warner and Judith Wittner, eds., *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998) and Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, eds. *Religion Across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks*. (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002)

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<sup>31</sup> See Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)

<sup>32</sup> Indeed, 41 percent of Ukrainians maintain that their president must be a religious person, as compared to 24 percent in Russia. Krindatch, "Religion in Postsoviet Ukraine," 37.

<sup>33</sup> Serhii Plokyh, "State Politics and Religious Pluralism in Russia and Ukraine: A Comparative Perspective" in P.G. Danchin and E. A. Cole, (eds.), *Protecting the Human Rights of Religious Minorities in Eastern Europe*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

<sup>34</sup> The obligation to evangelize motivated Ukrainian evangelical immigrants who left the Russian Empire for the U.S. to return to their homeland to proselytize in the 1920s. These returning immigrants were some of the most successful preachers responsible for garnering new converts. Similarly, in the 1990s religiously persecuted Ukrainian refugees who settled in the US return to their homeland to play a critical role in missionary efforts to spread Pentecostalism and Baptism in Ukraine today.