

DYNAMICS AND GROWTH PROSPECTS OF THE PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS IN UKRAINE

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Abstract

The intensity and nature of changes in Protestant communities in Ukraine is analyzed on the basis of broad empirical material (statistics, sociological surveys). The confessional specificity of the spread of Protestant communities in the Ukrainian territories is revealed, as well as their dynamics, geographical conditionality, and more. Changes in institutional, socio-political, cultural, and educational spheres of life of Protestant churches in modern Ukraine are recorded. Social legalization, the legal recognition of these movements as the churches and religious organizations equal to other traditional churches, as well as dynamism of Protestantism in evangelical and missionary sphere and public life, have contributed to the formation of a new type of confessional institutionalization and contributed to the outreach of Protestant communities to the public space. Protestant communities find it necessary to initiate moral responsibility of citizens before society, to encourage people to unite in various non-governmental organizations (charitable, medical, legal, educational, creative, etc.); they are focused on charitable goals. However, it is important to understand that the Protestant milieu in Ukraine is not homogeneous. It differs in character and has its own internal problems, among which is a confrontation between conservative Baptists, socially active Evangelical Christians and Pentecostals, and new Protestant movements, especially neo-charismatic. There are also a number of problems related to the occupation of the Crimea and the war in the East of Ukraine. Such problems are caused by the infringement of the rights of Protestant denominations by the occupation authorities. In general, the Protestant communities try to give priority to civil society, equality and impartiality of the structure of Ukrainian society and are in solidarity with

the principles of the Constitution of Ukraine. In situations of social upheaval, Protestant communities as part of inter-religious and inter-denominational associations demonstrate a willingness to take on the role of a mediator in fostering dialogue between the parties.

Keywords: Protestantism, denomination, association, society, theology, dynamics, social potential, activity.

Introduction

The Christian world recently celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation—the beginning of a massive spiritual revival that changed the course of history, giving it a new vector of economic, cultural, and spiritual development. This event highlighted a new impetus for scientific interest in the Reformation, as it relates not only to the history of the European civilization but also to its modernity. In particular, in order to recognize the significant contribution of Protestant churches and religious organizations to the development of the religious, cultural, and social sphere of Ukraine, and to show respect for their role in Ukrainian history a decree of the President of Ukraine #357/2016 “On the celebrating in Ukraine the 500th anniversary of the Reformation” was issued. A number of actions have been taken to implement this decree—scientific conferences, symposia, round tables, seminars, etc. A solemn academy dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation was held in Kyiv with the participation of state officials, members of the Parliament, and representatives of religious organizations. All these events have demonstrated understanding of the importance of the Reformation by the Ukrainian society “as one of the global socio-cultural factors in the development of the modern polyconfessional, multicultural world.”¹

History of the rise of Protestant movements in Ukraine and the specifics of their functioning have been researched by representatives of academic scholarly disciplines or sciences, such as Petro Yarotskyi, Vitalii Dokash, Viktoriia Lubashchenko, and Petro Kraliuk the authors of “History of Religions in Ukraine,” as well as the scholars of Protestantism—Olha Spys, and Yurii Reshetnikov; the representatives of Poltava Religious History School—Roman Sitarchuk, and Yurii Vilkhovyi; the theologians Mykhailo Cherenkov, Mykhailo Mokienko, Serhii Sannikov, Roman Solovii, and Volodymyr Franchuk; and others. The dynamics, prospects, quantitative and qualitative changes of the Protestant denominations in Ukraine, as

¹ І. В., Васильєва, “Релігійно-антропологічні виміри Реформації,” *Реформація і трансформація суспільства: досвід минулого і виклики сучасності: збірник матеріалів Міжнародної науково-практичної конференції*, (Львів, 8-9 грудня 2017), 46.

well as the activities of this socially active religious segment convincingly prove that the future of Ukraine will significantly depend on their religious beliefs and civic positions.

The purpose of the article is to determine the content, nature, and intensity of changes of Protestant communities in the Ukrainian religious area. This implies the task, to reveal the confessional specificity and dynamics of the spread of Protestantism in Ukraine and to identify and substantiate the social potential of Protestantism in Ukraine throughout the rise of a civil society.

The Main Presentation of Material

Without a detailed historical excursion of Protestantism in Ukraine we shall briefly outline it in the article. We shall focus more on the current state, features of dynamics and prospects of development of Protestant denominations in Ukraine.

First, let us note that Protestantism has been in the Ukrainian area for centuries, in various manifestations. In particular, the first wave included Lutheranism, Calvinism, and various Unitarian movements, etc. Then a kind of “noble fashion” appeared that started in the middle of the 16th and ended at the beginning of the 17th century. In the beginning of the 18th century, traces of Lutheranism and Calvinism were lost in these lands, but the influence of Protestant ideas on the national-cultural movement, book printing, education, language development, etc. is still quite noticeable. The influence of Protestantism is reflected in the spread of the practice of free interpretation of biblical texts, especially by lay people in the Ukrainian lands and biblical translations appeared in the spoken language.

Among the participants in the Reformation movement, there are figures quite well known, both in Ukraine and abroad. First, it was Stanisław Orzechowski and Yuri Nemyrych.² At some points, the idea of secular authority and patronage over the ecclesiastical sphere has been implemented in Ukraine. At the same time, historians of religion in Ukraine define that “The Reformation in Ukraine did not emerge into ‘open’ forms. Protestant communities (mostly Calvinist and Unitarian) in Ukrainian lands were, in fact, a marginal phenomenon. The fascination with Protestantism, the popularity of its ideas in the Orthodox milieu, observed at the end of the 16th century (after the conclusion of the Union of Brest), was gradually disappearing. This is due, in general, both to the decline of Protestantism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and to the intensification of conservative tendencies in the

² *Історія релігії в Україні: у 10-ти т. / Т.5. Протестантизм в Україні. Ранній протестантизм. Пізній протестантизм. Баптизм*, (Київ: Світ Знань, 2002), 8.

Orthodox Church in Ukraine, where in the 1630-1640s, changes were made under the leadership of Peter Mogilas, the Kyiv Orthodox Metropolitan.”³ However, the ideas postulated by the Protestants produced results and encouraged the internal reformation of Orthodoxy in Ukraine. “The internal reformation, though muted constantly, made itself known for a long time, up to the middle of the 19th century. One way or another, it found expression in the activities and creativity of representatives of religious and philosophical thought of the 18th century such as Theophan Prokopovich, Gregory Skovoroda, and others. The internal reformation of Ukrainian Orthodoxy has become one of the immunities that prevented emergence of its own opposing sects in Ukraine in the 16th-18th centuries... Only the final Russification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy during the 19th century led to the popularization of late Protestant movements in Ukraine.”⁴ It was not the Russian model of Protestantism, but the West European model.

The second wave of late Protestantism in the 19th to the beginning of the 20th centuries involved the lower strata of society, and despite a number of obstacles, remained in the Ukrainian territory. The stage of late Protestantism in Ukraine is associated with the appearance of Baptists, along with Mennonites, Evangelicals, Adventists, etc.⁵ Socio-political and spiritual-moral prerequisites for the spread of Baptism emerged in Ukraine. In general, the appeal to Baptism was “a protest against the spiritual oppression on the part of the official Orthodox Church and the existing social order, since the new faith with the preaching of universal brotherhood and equality, eschatological complacency was readily perceived by the masses.”⁶ Therefore, the claim of a “foreignness” of Protestantism in Ukraine brought from the West is not objective, although researchers of Protestantism do not rule out the influence of a foreign factor. However, they emphasize the originality of the process of Protestantism’s rise because factually ordinary people also search for God.

The other movements of late Protestantism (Pentecostalism, Adventism, Jehovah’s Witnesses) appeared in Ukraine at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. As a powerful segment of the confessional area of Ukraine, late Protestantism along with Baptism, plays a prominent role in the contemporary religious and socio-political life of Ukraine. After going through a rather difficult way of formation and institutionalization—from

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁵ *Історія релігії в Україні: у 10-ти т./ Т. 6. Пізній протестантизм в Україні. (п’ятидесятники, адвентисти, Свідки Єгови, (Київ-Дрогобич: видавець Сурма, 2008).*

⁶ *Історія релігії в Україні: у 10-ти т. / Т.5. Протестантизм в Україні. Ранній протестантизм. Пізній протестантизм. Баптизм, (Київ: Світ Знань, 2002), 10.*

sectarian and semi-sectarian formations to churches and their organizational associations—late Protestants changed their attitude to society causing objective processes of society's change in attitude to them. O. Spys says: "The tendency for self-isolation of the late Protestants was gradually changed by the process of 'depressurization,' in which sectarian formations acquired church status."⁷ Now, activities of the Protestants are based on existing theoretical theology, the functioning of an effective system of clergy training, the pursuit of an active media and social evangelical policy, and increasing declaration of their presence in the public space.

In the modern era, which can be defined as "information," "media," "multicultural," and "plural," it is difficult to study the Protestant communities in the domestic context, especially the newest forms that emerged in the 20th century. According to R. Solovii's definition, "the transformation of spirituality into one of the market values and civilizational regionalization are specific to both the Christian West and the Christian East."⁸ Today, Charismatic churches remain the most dynamic in their spread and local-regional adaptation. There are two main types of such churches in the polyconfessional Ukrainian space:

1) Churches that independently form their theology basing on certain benefits, preferences, experiences of supernatural divine ideas, etc. One of the first churches registered in Ukraine was the "Grace and Love of Christ Church," which is the Ukrainian affiliate and coordinator of the National Prayer Network of the World Prayer Center, Colorado Springs (WPCCS). In fact, the establishment of charismatic communities in Ukraine has begun since 1992. The "Victory Church" (Kyiv), the World Harvest Church (Kyiv), the New Testament Church (Mykolaiv), and others were founded in this period. Some of them are members of various charismatic associations while maintaining their autonomy, and others remain outside such associations. In 1994, at the constituent congress of the pastors of the Charismatic Churches of Ukraine, the Association of Independent Charismatic Christian Churches of Ukraine (Full Gospel) (AICCCU(FG)) was established. It was officially registered by the State Committee for Religious Affairs on January 12, 1995.

2) Churches that belong to the "apostolic movement." The doctrines of such churches are based on the teachings of biblical schools, or works designed by people who are considered apostles. For example, Ulf Ekman's theology is at the heart of the religious activity of the

⁷ О.Спис, *Соціально-політичні і соціокультурні імплікації пізнього протестантизму в процесі трансформації українського суспільства*: дис. ... канд. філос. наук, (Київ: Інститут ім. Г.С. Сковороди, 2007), 186.

⁸ Р.П. Соловій, *Феномен виникаючої церкви у контексті теологічних та еkleзіологічних трансформацій у сучасному західному протестантизмі*. Автореферат дисертації на здобуття наукового ступеня д.філос.н., (Київ: НПУ ім. М.П. Драгоманова, 2017), 2.

“Word of Faith” movement; Alexey Ledyayev developed the school, which is in a basement of the “New Generation” Church.⁹

The theological doctrine of the “Full Gospel” is common and unifying for both types of churches. According to this doctrine, every believer repeats the life of the Son of God to a certain extent in his or her own life. When a pastor/leader of a charismatic church is placed above the theology which he has created, alternative patterns of pastor’s/leader’s behavior begin to emerge. Such patterns are related to their own perceptions of the goals and resources of their religious activity. This, in turn, causes a certain tension both in society and in interfaith and interchurch dimensions. Examples are the odious worship of Volodymyr Muntian (“Vidrodzhennia” Spiritual Center) or accusations of fraud by Sunday Adelaja,¹⁰ the head of the “Embassy of God” associations, etc.

In general, Ukrainian society remains quite tolerant of different religions. In particular, the vast majority (75%, as in 2018) of citizens considers that “any religion that proclaims the ideals of good, love, mercy and does not threaten the existence of another person is entitled to exist” (47%) or “all religions have the right to exist as different ways to God” (28%).¹¹ Probably, the level of positive attitude towards Protestantism (from 14% to 23%), Evangelical and Charismatic churches (from 3% to 16%, respectively) has increased due to raising public awareness. However, in the latter case, the number of those who are negative about these churches has also increased (from 9% to 17%, respectively).¹²

In contemporary Ukraine, Protestantism in a variety of denominations includes 10,613 organizations, which is only 28.9% of the entire religious network (the total number of religious organizations in Ukraine is 36,739)¹³ A small number of denominational organizations are represented by the early Protestantism. First, Lutherans with 88 organizations (83 as of January 1, 2018), which include the German Evangelical Lutheran Church (29), the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (34), other Lutheran religious organizations (25); Reformed churches with 133 organizations (129 as of January 1, 2018), which include Zakarpattia Reformed Church (118),

⁹ В. Титаренко, А. Тищенко, *Авраамічні релігії і Реформація: формування протестантського символу віри й ідеології нової суспільної реформації (європейський й український контекст ідентичності)*, (Галич, 2017), 366-375.

¹⁰ В.В.Титаренко, *Від пророцтва релігії до прогнозування в релігієзнавстві: історія, теорія, перспективи*, (Київ: «Центр Європи», 2017), 271.

¹¹ *Держава і церква в Україні-2019: підсумки року і перспективи розвитку відносин (інформаційні матеріали)*, (Київ, 2019), 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 7.

¹³ *Дані Департаменту у справах релігій та національностей Міністерства культури України (Наказ Міністерства культури України від 29.03.2019 р. Форма 1. Звіт про мережу церков і релігійних організацій в Україні станом на 01.01.2019 р.*

the Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church (4), and other reformed religious organizations (11).

Early Protestantism includes more organizations, namely 66 Presbyterian, 9 Mennonites, 10 Methodists, 26 Nazarene, 2 religious organizations of the Church of England and 7 communities of Sabbatarianist Christians. There are also 111 “separate Protestant communities,” according to statistics.

Late Protestantism, primarily Evangelicalism, is more common in Ukraine. There are 3,018 Baptist organizations (2,816 as of January 1, 2018). Most of them are members of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (2,658), religious organizations of the International Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (45), Brotherhood of Independent Churches and Missions of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (45), and other Baptist religious organizations (292).

There are 410 Evangelical Christians organizations (371 as of January 1, 2018), which include the Association of Missionary Churches of Evangelical Christians of Ukraine (23), Association of Bible Missionary Churches of Ukraine (2), Cathedral of Independent Evangelical Churches of Ukraine (7), and other religious organizations of Evangelical Christians (378).

Organizations of the Evangelical Christians-Pentecostals are developing quite intensively. Now, there are 2,897 organizations (2,693 as of January 1, 2018) including the Ukrainian Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (1,736); religious organizations of the Union of the Church of God of Ukraine (89); religious organizations of the Center of Church of God of the Evangelical Faith Christians in Ukraine (in prophecy) (144); “Open Bible” Cathedral (Center) of the Churches of Christians of the Evangelical Faith of Ukraine (10); Union of Free Churches of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (130); and other religious organizations of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (788).

It is worth noting that the Evangelical Protestant community in Ukraine is one of the most numerous movements according to its structural characteristic, but is not delineated by a clear confessional framework. Baptists, Evangelical Christians, and Christians of Evangelical Faith, as well as various transitional forms and groups, constitute Evangelical Protestantism as a certain super-denominational movement that explains the large number of religious organizations designated as “other” (1,166).

Adventists and Jehovah’s Witnesses represent eschatological or chiliastic Protestantism. Ukrainian Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist includes 1,088 organizations (1,041 as of January 1, 2018), The Seventh-day Adventist Church of the

Reformation Movement in Ukraine (42), and other religious organizations of Adventists (5). Jehovah's Witnesses Association, which is illegal in Russia, operates legally in Ukraine and includes 942 officially registered organizations (913 as of January 1, 2018).

The Charismatic movement as a new kind of Christianity is dynamically progressing in the world and in Ukraine. In total, they include 1,571 organizations (1,496 as of January 1, 2018). The largest is the Association of Independent Charismatic Christian Churches of Ukraine (Full Gospel), led by Anatolii Havryliuk (352), the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church, led by Leonid Padun (148), religious organizations of the Church of the Living God (56), "New Generation" Spiritual Center of Christian Churches of Ukraine (77), "Vidrozhennia" Spiritual Center (138), other religious organizations of a charismatic type (820), which include significant communities of charismatic leaders such as Henry Madava ("Victory"), Sunday Adelaja ("Embassy of God"), Pylyp Lovocka, Sofia Zhukotanska, and others.

Neo-Protestant organizations are represented by the New Apostolic Church in Ukraine (53 communities); Religious organizations of the Church of Christ (123); Religious organizations of the Salvation Army (11); and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—Mormons (44).

In addition, there are some Molokan religious organizations that do not form a single church, but rather a religious movement with a common root, but with differences in religious views, teachings, worship, etc. (4).¹⁴

The shortcomings of the annual statistics on state-denominational relations in Ukraine, presented by the Department of Religions and Nationalities of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, should be pointed out, because in each category of Protestants, a position under the common name "other" remains undisclosed.

Geographically, Protestants are most concentrated in the Center and in the East of Ukraine (2.1% respectively), less so in the South and in the West (1.1%)¹⁵.

Protestant self-identification indicators show a stable tendency in society. Sociological surveys confirm such a line of self-identification: in the years 2000 (2.0%); 2010 (1.9%); 2014 (1.0%); 2016 (1.9%); 2018 (2.2%); 2019 (1.8%).¹⁶ However, it should be noted that since 2014, the abovementioned sociological surveys have been conducted without taking into account the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Держава і церква в Україні-2019: підсумки року і перспективи розвитку відносин (інформаційні матеріали)*, (Київ, 2019), 14.

¹⁶ Ibid.

annexed Crimea and the occupied territories of Luhansk and Donetsk regions. Therefore, one can speak about an increasing dynamic of development of the Protestant network in the territories controlled by Ukraine where Ukrainian legislation is in force.

In addition to changes in quantitative indicators, religious scholars undoubtedly record qualitative indicators. Protestant movements prove increasing participation of their members in social transformation processes and defining political and cultural discourse. Various communities appear, Ukrainian Association of Christian Entrepreneurs; Association of Christian Writers of Ukraine; “Novomedia” Association of Christian Journalists, Publishers, and Broadcasters; “Ukrainian Chaplaincy” Public Association; Association of Christians-Physicians; Association of Christian Camps and Clubs, etc. Protestant Churches joining to All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO), Ukrainian Interchurch Council, Ukrainian Bible Society, etc. proves sympathetic to the need for unity, and awareness of the need to improve different forms and methods of ministry.

Legitimization of freedom of speech in Ukraine led to the crystallization of Protestants’ socio-political views, especially during the defining periods of socio-political upheaval in Ukraine. This was particularly evident during the Revolution of Dignity. The AUCCRO, as the most powerful religious non-governmental organization, proclaimed its attitude regarding certain events through a series of appeals. In December 2013, the Appeal of the Leaders of Churches and Religious Organizations to their believers, and all people of goodwill (in view of socio-political situation in Ukraine) was made public. The Appeal called for the authorities, in particular to refrain from using force against peaceful assembly, as well as to citizens to seek ways of social and political consensus. In addition, the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations expressed its readiness to assume the role of a mediator in establishing a dialogue between the parties to the confrontation. Such a reaction was supported by society. Regarding the question, “How do you feel about such an Appeal?,” 60.7% respondents were positive, 1.3% negative, and 8.4% indifferent; 22.1% did not hear about it, and 7.5% responded “difficult to answer.”¹⁷ Detailed analysis of the reactions of individual leaders of religious organizations, as well as official statements on the events of the Maidan and the Revolution of Dignity, can be found in the book *Майдан і Церква* [Maidan and the Church]. The book was the result of experts’ monitoring the events of the winter 2013-2014 and their collective assessment of those events.¹⁸ Here, we just have to say that 8 out of 17 members of AUCCRO

¹⁷ *Україна-2014: суспільно-політичний конфлікт і Церква (інформаційні матеріали)*, (Київ, 2014), 28.

¹⁸ *Майдан і Церква. Хроніка подій та експертна оцінка*, (Київ: Самміт-Книга, 2014), 656 .

are representatives of Protestant movements. Namely, they are All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists (AUUCECB), Zakarpattia Reformed Church (ZRC), the German Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Ukraine (GELCU), the Ukrainian Free Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith (UFCCEF), the Ukrainian Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (UCCEF), the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC), Ukrainian Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (UUCSDAC), and the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church (UCEC).¹⁹

Ukrainian Protestantism demonstrates a significant social potential for civil society development. This is due to both the theological principles and the dynamics of the objective socio-political situation, which requires considering Protestantism as an influential factor in socio-cultural and socio-political life in the context of Ukraine's pro-European choice. Protestants have always played a significant role in social ministry at various stages of operation. Along with rehabilitation, medical and charitable services, considerable attention is paid to the establishment and functioning of centers for social care, social protection, family type houses, creating family education programs, various charity events, etc. The need for pastoral care for servicemen (military chaplaincy) and for the penitentiary system is increasing today. Contemporary socio-religious demands prompt the search for new mechanisms of interaction between the state and religious organizations, establishing state policy in the sphere of religion and forming state-confessional relations.

Describing the dynamics and polyconfessionality of the Protestant milieu as a consequence of the democratization of Ukrainian society, the assertion of the rule of law in the realm of freedom of religious expression we should outline, at least in a general form, the points of tension that occur within the Protestant milieu. There were, from the beginning of its emergence in Ukraine, and still are, latent or overt conflicts between conservative Baptists, socially active Evangelical Christians, Pentecostals, and Charismatics, though doctrinally these denominations differ only slightly. The confessional identities can contain a conflicting factor affecting differences in the vision of the supernatural, relations with it, ceremonial practices, lifestyles and peculiarities of organizational manifestation of the believers' activities, etc. Absolute confessional identity most often becomes a factor of inter-confessional tension within the coordinates of "tradition-new," or "history-present." An example of an external conflict is the reaction to the religious activity of the "Vidrodzhennia" Spiritual Center of Volodymyr Muntian (Charismatic church) by the Ukrainian Interchurch Council (UIC)—a collegial body

¹⁹ *Всеукраїнська Рада Церков і релігійних організацій. Офіційне інтернет-представництво.*

headed by Andrii Tyshchenko, a bishop of another Charismatic church “New Generation” (for reference: the UIC may include church associations, Christian missions, and influential local churches).²⁰ In particular, the statement of the Ukrainian Interchurch Council criticized the activity of Volodymyr Muntian, a head of the “Vidrodzhennia” Spiritual Center for his odious worship (peculiar “folk magic” in its traditional and modern forms).²¹ Taking into account the statement of the Protestant researcher Mykhailo Cherenkov that “...Evangelical Churches... are relevant to the state of the surrounding society,”²² it seems problematic determining to what extent the “Muntianian” type of religious services will remain in demand in the future, “fueling” a conflict within the Charismatic churches and within the Protestant communities in general.

Within the coordinates of a clash of traditional with new and modern, we can also consider intra-confessional (intra-church) conflicts that, at the same time, go beyond confession involving entire Protestant communities and are generational conflicts. The essence of such a conflict is the fact that young people as a new, modern generation of believers often do not appreciate the orientation of the “old” believers based on outdated models of worship, traditionalism, lack of a development strategy, and socio-theological system, etc. We should admit the fact that conflicts implicitly existing within Protestant churches are difficult to verify and analyze from the outside. They remain more intra-church problems that do not become public. Consequently, we outline in this article a generalized problem section regarding conflicts within the Protestant milieu. If necessary, despite the abovementioned problems, the situation could be solved in accordance with the acting legislation and international legal norms in force in Ukraine.

Protestants of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions and Crimea

The religious situation and position of Protestants in the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions and in the annexed Crimea is much more complicated. The Protestant communities of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists and the Bible Church of Ukraine are least affected in the occupied territories. However, the Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith has been reduced by a third. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and

²⁰ Українська Міжцерковна рада. Офіційна сторінка.

²¹ В. В.Титаренко, *Від пророцтва у релігії до прогнозування в релігієзнавстві: історія, теорія, перспективи*, (Київ: “Центр Європи,” 2017), 271.

²² М. Черенков, *Європейська Реформація та український євангельський протестантизм*, (Київ, 2008), 492.

Church of Christ almost ceased operations while Charismatics are in a deep underground.²³ According to the religious scholar Ihor Kozlovskyi, a “prisoner of conscience” and a participant of events in the Donetsk region, religious organizations of different denominations in the occupied territories of the Donetsk region (we can say that the same is in Luhansk region) could be distinguished between three groups depending upon their attitude to the pro-Russian separatist forces and Russian occupants. They are either pro-Ukrainian, or pro-Russian, or those who are forced to collaborate. The latter position correlates with the Protestant communities of the Seventh-day Adventists, Evangelical Christians-Baptists, and the Bible Church of Ukraine.²⁴ It is important to realize and understand the fact that freedom of conscience, religion, thought, as well as other fundamental rights and freedoms accepted in the democratic world, are not in force in the occupied Ukrainian territories. Therefore, religious organizations have become hostages to the current situation, while remaining at high risk of persecution for religious beliefs. Such persecutions are closely interlaced with political persecution and have a strong pro-Orthodox implication of the Russian type. Religious persecution in the occupied territories of Ukraine was addressed in one of the reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In turn, Ukrainian religious scholars emphasize the need for constant professional monitoring, expert analysis, and comprehensive information to the general international community about the religious situation in the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

In the Crimea, the situation is also highly alarming. Defining the objective situation is complicated due to the lack of official information. In general, we have insider information for the conclusions. We know that no Protestant community has received a full registration in the Crimea, and that more than 30% of communities do not have their premises. Due to forced re-registration, most Protestants lost the opportunity to rent the premises because they had lost their legal status and the ability to act according to the existing Russian legislation in the Crimea. During the meeting of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, Epiphanius, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine mentioned in his speech about the facts of oppression of Orthodox, Protestant, and Muslim believers in the Crimea.²⁵ Thus, we can speak on the “ousting” of Protestantism from the Crimea where the situation can develop in three way--exodus of the Protestants to an underground, their disappearance, or forced adaptation to existing conditions.

²³ *Релігійна безпека/небезпека України*, (Київ, 2019), 262.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 263.

²⁵ Епіфаній закликав обговорити в Мінську утиск церкви в Криму, (2020).

Conclusions

The dynamics of Protestantism's development in Ukraine is determined by at least two factors: first, the logic of their own theological and intra-church processes and second, the influence of the objective and historical transformations of global and local dimensions.

The gradual development of educational institutions, the participation of Protestants in social activities contributes to their gradual recognition and formation of their own theological discourse. Outlining in general terms the specifics of the formation of Protestant theology in Ukrainian realities (we are aware of the diversity of theological visions, which cannot be considered within one article), we have to say that according to Mykhailo Cherenkov "the influence of Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Protestant) Christian traditions, whose creative neo-synthesis sets an actual theological and cultural task"²⁶ remains marked. The peculiarities of the social-theological position of Protestant movements in Ukraine are determined by historical conditions, influences of the existing Orthodox culture, reflection of their own history, etc.

Despite a small presence in Ukraine, Protestantism in its denominational diversity went through a difficult path of development from sectarian organizations to denominations and churches and their powerful associations. Researchers record changes in the institutional, socio-political, cultural, and educational spheres of life of Protestant churches of Ukraine. The dynamics, prospects, quantitative and qualitative changes of the Protestant denominations in Ukraine remain an actual religious issue because they affect the broad socially active religious segment, the civic and religious beliefs of which largely influence the future of Ukraine.

²⁶ М. Черенков *Європейська Реформація та український євангельський протестантизм*, (Київ, 2008), 467.

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