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## **CONFESSIONAL ORIGIN OF PROTESTANTISM IN THE RELIGIOUS SPACE OF UKRAINE**

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*The article analyzes the confessional existence of Protestant churches based on a comprehensive philosophical and religious study of cultural, theological, religious, structural-typological, worldview features of Protestantism in Ukraine. It is proved that the ontological and soteriological teaching of Protestantism was formed on the basis of deep ideological mutual influences of Western and Eastern Christianity. Having gone through a difficult path of transformations, the soteriology of Protestant communities is distinguished by the peculiarities of its doctrinal content, which influenced the spread of Protestant religious organizations in Ukraine. It is proved that the soteriological sources of the worldview system of Protestantism in Ukraine are the teachings of Lutheranism and Calvinism and the Ukrainian religious and philosophical heritage, which was expressed in the utopia of the social life of spiritual Christianity and the moral ideals of the evangelical movement. Protestant religious communities in Ukraine were established in the conditions of joint functioning with the Catholic and Orthodox churches, which contributed to the deepening of their intercultural interaction. The interaction of Protestantism with Orthodoxy led to the transformation of ideological foundations in various spheres of religious life, as well as its inclusion in the national cultural tradition. It is proved that the formation and development of Protestant religious organizations in Ukraine in the conditions of distance from religious centers and social bias led to a long-term process of its institutionalization. It was determined that the transformation of the creed, belonging to the established forms of religious practice and social life led to the formation of a socially active believer in the Protestant environment, who in social life is oriented towards evangelization and enlightenment. The territorial organization of the confessional space of Protestantism in Ukraine was determined, which made it possible to reveal the religious features of its formation: the influence of the geographical environment, the effect of historical factors on the formation of the territory, the peculiarities of the ethnic and social structure of the population, etc.*

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**Key words:** Protestantism, religious existence, soteriology, salvation, righteousness, social uncertainty, everyday life, social values, social risks, human trials.

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## КОНФЕСІЙНЕ БУТТЯ ПРОТЕСТАНТИЗМУ У РЕЛІГІЙНОМУ ПРОСТОРИ УКРАЇНИ

В. В. Лавренюк

У статті на основі комплексного філософсько-релігієзнавчого дослідження культурних, теологічних, релігійних, структурно-типологічних, світоглядних особливостей протестантизму в Україні аналізується конфесійне буття протестантських церков. Доведено, що онтологічне та сотеріологічне вчення протестантизму сформувалося на основі глибоких ідейних взаємовпливів західного і східного християнства. Пройшовши складний шлях трансформації сотеріологія протестантських громад відрізняється особливостями доктринального змісту, які вплинули на поширенні протестантських релігійних організацій в Україні. Доведено, що сотеріологічними джерелами світоглядної системи протестантизму в Україні є вчення лютеранства і кальвінізму й українська релігійно-філософська спадщина, яка виражалася в утопії суспільного життя духовного християнства й моральних ідеалах євангельського руху. Встановлено зв'язок протестантських релігійних громад в Україні в умовах спільного функціонування з католицькою і православною церквами, що сприяло поглибленню їх міжкультурної взаємодії. Взаємодія протестантизму з православ'ям обумовила трансформацію ідеологічних засад у різних сферах релігійного життя, а також його входження до національної культурної традиції. Доведено, що становлення і розвиток в Україні протестантських релігійних організацій в умовах віддаленості від конфесійних центрів та суспільної упередженості зумовили довготривалий процес його інституціалізації. Визначено, що трансформація віровчення, приналежність до встановлених форм культової практики та суспільного життя зумовили формування у протестантському середовищі соціально активного віруючого, який у суспільному житті орієнтований на євангелізацію та просвітництво. Визначено територіальну організацію конфесійного простору протестантизму в Україні, що дозволило виявити релігійні особливості його формування: вплив географічного середовища, дія історичних чинників на формування території, особливості етнічної та соціальної структури населення тощо.

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**Ключові слова:** протестантизм, конфесійне буття, сотеріологія, спасіння, праведність, соціальна невизначеність, повсякденність, соціальні цінності, соціальні ризики, випробування людини.

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**Formulation of the problem.** World global processes have significantly influenced the worldview and understanding of both society in general and an individual in particular. Sociocultural and spiritual transformations, economic and technological innovations had a significant impact on religious and confessional life. Worldview positions, spiritual and moral values of a modern person, his belonging to a certain community is important in determining the directions of world and individual achievements and in the formation of a new multidimensional geopolitical concept [1: 153]. The problem of individual and social choice of a person, his worldview and spiritual needs, religious interpretations became especially active at the beginning of the

21st century. Global and integration phenomena, the ethnic, cultural and confessional variety of Ukraine, as well as the growing importance of the personal factor in society, led to the need for multi-faceted studies of the phenomenon of confessional manifestations of Protestantism in the domestic space. Despite the efforts of dogmatic codification and structural formalization, new ideological-dogmatic and cultic-structural modifications are being formed in Protestantism [2: 41].

A number of scientists have researched questions from this issue, for example V. Lyubashchenko and P. Yarotskyi studied the history of Protestantism, its early and late period; besides them, it was done in various aspects by H. Merenkov, H. Khoruzhiy, O. Gisem, O. Skoryk and others; L. Shugaeva, A. Kolodny,

I. Gudzenko, M. Krylov and others – studied the phenomena of various sects of Orthodox and Protestant origin on the territory of Ukraine; the issue of Protestant orthodoxy and its transformation in the theology of churches was highlighted by L. Stasyuk, O. Sokolovskyi, Yu. Strelkova, V. Dokash and others.

**Research methods.** The research used a systemic-structural method, which made it possible to consider the nature, forms, and methods of the influence of historical and cultural features on Protestantism, in particular, a comparative method allowed to determine the common and distinctive features of Protestant religious organizations in different regions of the country; the historical analysis determined the study of the peculiarities of the formation of the Protestant space; cartographic determined the territorial features of the distribution of Protestant communities and the level of religious activity of the population; content analysis made it possible to analyze the official websites and documents of Protestant religious organizations.

**The purpose of the study** is to analyze the essential characteristics of the confessional existence of Protestant churches in the religious space of Ukraine.

**Discussion and results.** Note that after the collapse of the USSR, society experienced a spiritual crisis. On a personal level, a crisis of religious consciousness is in a state of great physical or moral stress, creating a spiritual vacuum that can be filled by religion [3: 611–613]. The Protestant Church was able to satisfy and solve most of the mental and spiritual needs of man through active social work, which is given a lot of attention. Many pastors and organizations had contact with other congregations and ministers from abroad, receiving humanitarian aid in the form of clothing, food and personal hygiene items. In the conditions of a deep crisis and an incredible shortage, it was a salvation for people. Under such conditions, the

quantitative composition of religious organizations steadily grew. Later, when the material condition of the population improved and people gradually moved away from all these upheavals, the growth of communities began to decrease [4: 761–762].

The historically determined autonomization of religion caused the specification of the scope of its functioning, influence on the content and form of national, social and cultural life. Dynamic development of Protestant religious organizations at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. in Ukraine is characterized by processes of institutionalization and a new level of interreligious and interconfessional relations. However, the secularization and eclecticism of religious consciousness against the background of globalization processes lead to the transformation of the modern religious paradigm. This is expressed, on the one hand, in the need for religion to acquire adaptability to crisis phenomena and in the need for special flexibility in conditions of instability and adequate perception of the external variability of socio-cultural and natural systems [5: 215–216]. On the other hand, renewed religion seeks to appeal to stable landmarks, ideals and the strengthening of the influence of fundamentalism as a result of belief in the necessity of certain traditional religious and cultural foundations [1: 153–154]. These efforts are aimed not only at preserving cultural and religious identity, but also at promoting survival in a world that is not structured by a single purpose, ambiguous, spiritually and socially non-linear [6: 296–298].

As of 1997, 3,591 Protestant religious communities were registered in Ukraine. The largest community in the Protestant environment is the All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christian Baptists, which includes 1,536 religious organizations. Other groups of Evangelical Christian-Baptists and Evangelical Christians include 102 communities. Today, Baptists are one of the largest Protestant denominations in

the world, numbering more than one hundred million believers. Baptists outnumber Calvinists, Lutherans, Anglicans, and Methodists by the number of believers, second only to Pentecostals in the Protestant world. A large religious group is represented by the Pentecostals, who form the All-Ukrainian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith. Its structure includes 802 communities, as well as 43 religious organizations, which are a constituent part of this union. The third largest Protestant group is the Seventh-day Adventist religious organization, which is represented by 526 congregations. Other Protestant communities do not have a numerical representation in Ukraine, despite the fact that they are located only in a certain territory. In particular, the Transcarpathian Reformed Church is localized in separate regions: 118 communities of the ZRC are located in the Transcarpathian region, and 6 communities of the Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church are concentrated mainly on the territory of western Ukraine [7: 309].

Against the background of national religious multi-denominationalism and the pluralism of denominations of Protestant affiliation, occupying insignificant positions in terms of the number of organizations on the religious map of Ukraine, they declare a slight increase in the number of their organizations since the independence of Ukraine, which causes a gradual increase in the potential of Lutherans and reformers in the direction of implementing social programs. In particular, in 1998, a certain growth was noticeable in almost all Protestant religious communities. Their total number was 3,990 religious organizations. Baptist communities are gaining rapid development; their number has increased by more than 100 per year.

By 1999, the number of Protestant organizations had increased to 4,311. Again, the same trend is maintained in all communities. However, during this

period, various religious groups began to appear, which do not belong to certain unions, but act as autonomous small communities. Among them are Pentecostals, whose congregations have increased from 46 to 214 over the past year, and charismatics from 67 to 128, respectively [8].

As of 2000, the trend of growth of Protestant communities is maintained, within the limits of growth to 400 communities. Their total number was 4,789 communities. The number of Baptist communities increased by almost 194, and Pentecostal communities by 133. Charismatic communities are beginning to develop rapidly, which also increased their presence on the religious map to 132 communities. It is worth noting that communities that did not belong to any unions and denominations began to decrease from 218 to 166 communities. Nevertheless, most religious organizations begin to identify their affiliation with a specific group, but many small communities begin to disintegrate, contrary to various reasons [8].

The beginning of the 2000s was marked by a sharp growth of communities in the environment of Protestantism. The tendency to increase not only persists, but also multiplies. In 2001, the number of religious communities of the Protestant type was already 5,349, which is 560 more than last year. The three largest religious organizations of Protestants show a rapid trend of their development. The number of Baptist religious associations increased by 229, and the number of Pentecostal communities increased by 149. It is interesting to note that the Church of the Full Gospel (Union of Charismatics) lost 9 congregations for the first time in all the years of its operation on the territory of Ukraine. This is mostly related to the very specificity of charismatic communities and their organizational independence from each other [8].

At the beginning of 2002, the number of Protestant communities increased by 510 and their total number reached the mark of 5,859 organizations. The main

trends in Protestantism persist, but the Baptist groups that were not part of the union reduced their presence by 13 communities. Probably, among Baptists, this will always be the case because of their regulation of communities and churches. Instead, in the Pentecostal movement, the number of communities increased by 162, which do not belong to the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians. A similar tendency persists among charismatics.

In the period from 2003 to 2004, the situation is identical compared to previous years. The number of religious communities increased to 6,294 and 6,748, respectively. However, some changes took place in 2005, which were connected with the emergence of new communities and associations. The All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christian-Baptists remains unchanged with the number of communities at 2,394. Religious organizations of the former Council of Churches of Evangelical Christian-Baptists, represented by 9 communities, have now been formed. It is obvious that certain internal changes took place in the Baptist community. Other Baptists include 207 congregations, which has significantly decreased compared to last year. The statistics were supplemented by the presence of religious organizations of evangelical Christians, the number of which reached 209 communities [8].

It should be noted that the tendency towards a rapid increase of Protestant communities at the beginning of the 21st century is disappearing. If in 2005 the number of Protestant religious organizations was 7,081, then in 2006 – 7,376, in 2007 – 7,507, and in 2008 – 7,701 communities [8]. In our opinion, this dynamic was caused by the phenomenon of "awakening", which became dominant in the spiritual life of society. This process began after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when non-traditional religious organizations were given the opportunity to conduct proselytism on the territory of declared independent states [9: 238–240]. This

gave an incredible impetus to the development of Protestantism in Ukraine. A number of objective circumstances contributed to this process. First of all, Protestant religious organizations were perceived as something new, unusual and interesting. If earlier in the minds of believers Christianity was associated through the prism of being an Orthodox or Catholic church, then Protestantism was mostly related to the level of a sect. In today's conditions, Protestant communities have become open to all without excluding people, which marked a new milestone in its development [10: 391].

Despite the large, in fact, number of Protestant organizations, their quantitative composition is quite small. In general, Protestant communities are quite small with attendance, and this is even in cities, not to mention villages or other settlements of one or another region. If the number reaches 1,000, it is already considered a "big church", while one parish of the OCU (then UOC) can have 3-4 times more parishioners. For example, 52% of religious communities in Kyiv in 2008 are Protestant, but Protestants make up only 1.5% of the city's religious population [8].

From 2009 to 2013, the number of all Protestant communities increased by only 487 communities (from 7,859 to 8,346) [8]. It is obvious that this was not the best period of functioning and development for the religious organization. The reason for this state of affairs was the disinterest of the authorities in dealing with matters of a religious nature and a prejudiced attitude towards the activities of non-traditional communities. In today's realities, the process of globalization has fundamentally changed the attitude of society towards the activities of religious organizations of various kinds. In the conditions of secularization, information revolution, gadgetization, and the spread of many new styles and trends, the younger generation joins Christian religious communities in general and

Protestant ones in particular [11: 111–113].

Analyzing the situation in Ukraine, it was difficult to predict the circumstances under which a certain unified spiritual system would be formed. For a long time, Ukrainian society failed to form a single system of values for all. Christian denominations in this context, instead of uniting society on a spiritual basis, on the contrary divided Ukrainians [12: 85–88]. The basis for peaceful dialogue and spiritual unity between Christian churches could have been a religious component, but the realization manifested itself on the Maidan in 2013–2014.

Analyzing in detail the role of the Church in a difficult period for Ukraine, L. Filipovych proposed two vectors of unfolding events: civilizational and existential-axiological. It was in the Revolution of Dignity that the theological aspect was expressed in the affirmation of man as the image and likeness of God: "In this existential and axiological dimension, man turns out to be a conscious subject, capable of making his choice and bearing responsibility for it at the level of personal conscience" [13: 91]. A person in difficult conditions had to make a choice and act in accordance with the commandments and norms that defined him as belonging to Christ. Thus, in 2013–2014, man joined not only the civilizational and political, but also the theological and existential plane. In the Maidan events, religion and the church fulfilled their ontological purpose both before man and before God.

At the beginning of 2014, all Protestant communities already numbered a symbolic 8,888. In difficult times for society, the church continues to play its important role: shelter, spiritual healing, certain social work and help. For example, the Ukrainian Center of the United Church of Evangelical Christians, which by 2013 had 31 congregations, already had 148 in 2014. The activities of all Protestant churches were dynamic in both the religious and social spheres of society. Communities of Pentecostals and

Charismatics were particularly active. This is evidenced by statistical data, according to which only in 2014 the number of Pentecostal communities increased by 325 (from 2,681 to 3,006 communities). This is practically more than half of all newly formed communities in the last year. Religious organizations of the charismatic type increased by 75 (from 1347 to 1422) [8].

As of 2019, the number of Protestant communities was 9,046 [8]. Both objective and subjective reasons correspond to these statistics. In our opinion, the main reason for the decrease in the dynamics of the spread of religious organizations in Ukraine was due to the fact that the church is not fully able to satisfy the spiritual needs of society. Among Protestants, considerable attention is paid to this aspect and every effort is made to meet the demands of the changing nature of today. Consolidation around the problems of the religious and secular spheres prompts promising shifts in the formation of interfaith tolerance, which involves mutual respect and mutual understanding between different Christian denominations [14: 57–58].

An important factor is the gradual change in attitude towards Protestantism in Ukraine. Thus, if in 2000 only 13.5 % of respondents had a positive attitude towards Protestantism (44.5 % were indifferent and 14.3 % had a negative attitude), in 2019 we can see a significant increase (22.8 %) in a positive attitude towards Protestantism. At the same time, the negative attitude decreased to 11.6%. The share of those who have heard nothing about this religious movement has also decreased significantly (from 8.1 % in 2000 to 1.8 % in 2019). The most positive attitude towards Protestantism is recorded in the West (27.1%) and the Center (26.7%) of Ukraine; the least Positive is the attitude in the South and East. The fact is that Protestantism is relatively less widespread in Western Ukraine, but still meets with a more positive attitude related to the specifics of this region, where religiosity is generally

much higher than in other regions [15: 50].

Of we summarize all the above-mentioned statistical indicators; we can draw the following conclusions regarding the territorial organization of Protestantism in Ukraine. As of 2021, the total number of Protestant organizations in our country is 10,734. Which is, of course, a rather high indicator, since historically Ukraine is considered an Orthodox country. However, if you look at the percentage data, you can see the following: Protestant organizations account for 34,6 % of all religious organizations in the country. For example, only Scandinavian countries, Germany and Great Britain have such indicators (or more) in Europe.

Comparing these indicators with 2001, when the total number of Protestant communities was 6,899, it can be said that Protestantism in general is spreading and gaining more and more influence. If we take each area separately, with the exception of one, the tendency to increase these organizations is positive and continues. It is even increasing, because in 2001 the percentage of Protestant organizations in Ukraine was approximately 27%. This proves that Ukraine is a good place for the spread of religious ideas, including Protestantism.

The largest number of religious organizations of Baptists are represented in Ukraine in 2021 – 3,055. True, religious organizations of Christians of the evangelical faith are not far behind them – 3,052. The third largest number of Protestant communities – religious organizations of the charismatic type – 1,597. Adventists are not far behind them – 1084 religious organizations. Next come Jehovah's Witnesses, who number 928, although they are more related to other religious organizations of Protestant origin, of which there are 1,377 in total (except religious organizations of Jehovah's Witnesses: Mormons – 34, Sabbath Day Christians – 7, Methodists – 10, Molokans – 4, Nazarenes – 26,

Mennonites – 10, Presbyterians – 63, Church of England – 2, Salvation Army – 11, Church of Christ – 119, the New Apostolic Church – 53 and separate religious organizations of Protestant origin – 110). Evangelical Christians count 388 religious organizations. Reformers and Lutherans are represented by 134 and 87 religious organizations, respectively.

If we take the regional dimension and divide, for example, Ukraine into 5 so-called areas (or regions), namely: eastern (Luhansk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Sumy and Dnipropetrovsk regions), southern (Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporizhia and part of Kirovohrad)), central (Khmelnysia, Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, Poltava and part of Kirovohrad), northern (Chernihiv, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Rivne and Volyn) and western (Chernivets, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv and Zakarpattia regions). The largest number of Protestant organizations is represented in the northern area – 2,829: this is mostly thanks to the Kyiv region and the capital, because, surprisingly, more are concentrated there than anywhere else. The eastern area is followed by 2,247 religious organizations. On the 3rd place is the Western – 2021 religious organizations. This is followed by the central and southern regions with indicators of 1,968 and 1,678 religious organizations, respectively (Kirovohrad region was divided in half between them in order to preserve the maximum equality of indicators; but even without this, the central region would still have a larger number of organizations with 4 regions – 1,839, against 1,807 organizations in the south together with the entire Kirovohrad region). That is, it can be seen that Protestant organizations are more evenly spread across the territory of Ukraine, with a not very large advantage of the north due to Kyiv as the capital.

Ukraine is a fairly large country in terms of territory, where many religions and various movements find their place. Protestantism, which found its reflection in every region of this country, is no

exception. At the present stage, this direction in Christianity has spread significantly and acquired its significant importance in the religious space of our state, taking an active part in cultural, social, economic and political life. Protestant communities are numerous, the number of which, of course, varies in different regions. This is caused both by various historical circumstances and even by political moments in the life of certain areas or regions. Therefore, it is worth analyzing the territorial organization of Protestantism in Ukraine at the present time and comparing it over the past 20 years: thus identifying trends and features.

We borrowed statistical data from the report on the network of religious organizations in Ukraine as of January 1, 2021, which was prepared by the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience [16]. It is worth noting that the Crimean Autonomous Republic was not included in the report, as this region is currently occupied by the Russian Federation and it is not possible to determine its religious variety objectively yet. Also, as regards the Donetsk and Luhansk regions: part of them is also occupied by the Russian Federation, and therefore the statistical data provided about these regions are incomplete and represent only the information that can be determined at this stage. Materials from the "Religious Information Service of Ukraine: RISU" were also used in the statistics of churches and religious organizations of Ukraine as of January 1, 2001 [8].

**Conclusions.** Therefore, modern branches of Protestantism are based on the principles of orthodoxy and present identical algorithms for the formation of

social adequacy and acquisition of life competence of their believers, which affects the processes of their socialization. We note that the process of institutionalization of Protestantism during the period of independence of Ukraine had its own peculiarities. Due to the atheistic position of the Ryadian Union in relation to religious organizations, the society's attitude towards Protestantism was biased. However, on the other hand, the religious vacuum and emotional wasteland allowed Protestant ideas to quickly find their supporters in various cities of Ukraine. Of course, there was a basis for this, because Protestantism did not arise here out of nowhere. But the rates of growth that took place in the environment of Protestant organizations during 2-3 decades were impressive. From a small and uninfluential "group", Protestant communities turned into a significant social "unit", increasing their number several times – almost to the first ten thousand. Baptists and Pentecostals, who have 3,000 active religious organizations each, are the most represented in Ukraine. This is natural, of course, because it is confirmed by historical reality. Just like, for example, the vast majority of Protestant organizations in the eastern regions of the country. Although the north of Ukraine is leading in this regard, thanks to the capital. However, it is worth giving credit that in general, Protestantism is scattered quite evenly throughout the territory of our country, which proves their activity and search for new methods of proselytizing, as well as consolidation and unity in their work and the challenges that Ukrainian society faced.

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