Transformation of Evangelicalism: The Ukrainian Case

by

Eugenijus Liutkevičius

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the development of Ukrainian evangelical movement after the dissolution of the USSR. Based on ethnographic fieldwork it examines the reasons for the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelical Christians, which occurred from the end of 1980s. The dissertation investigates the specificity of the context of post-Soviet evangelicalism in Ukraine: how a particular conservative tradition, which was valued and preserved during the Soviet regime and which secured the evangelicals' survival during that period, subsequently came under increasing pressure from a new, open style evangelicals.

In the dissertation I propose four main reasons for the transformation. Firstly, there is the absence of a national church in Ukraine. This means that there is no national religious authority to make alliances with the ruling elite and thereby relegate religious minorities to outsider status. As a consequence, Ukrainian evangelicals are more empowered and more active, visible and audible in society than their colleagues in other former Soviet countries. Secondly, I argue that the particular Ukrainian political context has made it necessary for the previously apolitical evangelicals to take an active political stand. A third factor, which has stimulated rapid changes in Ukrainian evangelical movement, is the fact that many newly converted believers are joining the evangelical communities. This is mainly due to the engagement of evangelical Christians in different kinds of evangelisation projects, among the most visible and effective of them - charitable and social services. The new converts do not focus on adopting local evangelical traditions but are more concerned with their role in society at large. The fourth theme explored in the dissertation is that both individual believers and evangelical institutions in Ukraine became increasingly involved in the movement of global mission after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This engagement highly contributed to the changes in Ukrainian evangelical

movement. All four main reasons mentioned above are explored, and analysed in the dissertation.

Additionally, I proposed a theoretical contribution by examining evangelicals' perceptions of the surrounding world, which helps to highlight the close relation between the interpretation of biblical texts and the perception of the surrounding reality of those who are practicing evangelical Christians. I show how social transformation among Ukrainian evangelicals is connected with religious transformation. Thus, the evangelicals are seen to choose new interpretations of the Bible because the old 'Soviet-era' ones no longer work for them.

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Content

1. Introduction

The main theme of the thesis is transformation. So, this study explores the experience of people living in a changing society. While change is a feature of all societies, in Ukrainian society change has been extremely rapid, a tempestuous, and unceasing process of moving towards something as yet uncertain, leaving behind the communist past. For many years Ukrainians were living in a stage of "no longer – not yet" when the socialist system no longer existed; yet, a functioning capitalist state was also not in place (Benda-Beckmann 2000 [1994]; Yurchak 2005).

In Ukraine, as elsewhere in the former USSR, religious groups have been active participants in dramatic social and political changes playing an important role in construction or reconstruction of ethnic/national identity (Batalden 1993; Kaneff 2018). In the process of dramatic changes religious groups have themselves been transformed. My study is about one of these religious minorities – Ukrainian evangelical Christians.[1] More specifically, my fieldwork was conducted among Baptists in Lviv. Whereas elsewhere in the former Soviet Union we have witnessed how religious minorities only are existing in the shadow of powerful national churches and have experienced a significantly smaller growth, in Ukraine communities like the Baptists, the Charismatics, the Pentecostals, Jehovah Witnesses, and the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) have grown and flourished. The particular focus in my study is on Baptists because Baptist communities provide the most straightforward Soviet/post-Soviet comparison as they were the most numerous among Soviet evangelicals. In addition, as mentioned above, the Ukrainian evangelical communities have undergone a particular and rapid change starting to actively engage both socially and politically in society just as they keep an active dialogue with non-believers.

[1] I use the terms evangelicalism, evangelical movement, evangelical communities, evangelical Christians, and evangelicals in the thesis. The term evangelicalism I use in the broadest sense – as a whole phenomenon that includes global church of evangelical Christianity and its theology. I use the term evangelical movement when I refer to the dynamic contemporary and usually more local, let us say Ukrainian, or American evangelical communities and evangelicals. The terms evangelicals, evangelical Christians, and evangelical communities sometimes refer in my dissertation to the smaller groups of evangelicals. However, as a rule they are used interchangeably with each other and with the term evangelical movement.

Again, unlike other countries of the former Soviet Union that experienced a short upheaval of religious interest in the 90's that then again faded away, the religious minorities in Ukraine have kept growing and developing until the present day. After the dissolution of the USSR, Ukrainian evangelicals started to be engaged in secular society, to make an impact and change it, which in turn changed them as a group. While my main focus in research was on Ukrainian Baptists, I will in this study also embed them in the wider context of changing post-Soviet evangelicals in a changing society and also that of the changing nature of Christianity globally.

The aim of my thesis, which is grounded on ethnographic research undertaken among Baptists in Lviv, is to explore the circumstances and reasons for the rapid changes in Ukrainian evangelical movement. These changes, starting in the 1980s, occurred differently in Ukraine, compared to other post-Soviet countries in that there is no national dominant church in Ukraine. Therefore, the country has many flourishing religious denominations. Moreover, the legal and socio-political condition in Ukraine is much friendlier to religious minorities than in many other parts of the former Soviet Union, such as Lithuania, Russia, Belarus', or Moldova (Lyubashchenko 2010: 268). Consequently, the evangelical movement in Ukraine is undergoing a dynamic transformation, developing a new way of practising their religion without facing the obstacles that exist in the neighbouring countries.

In the dissertation I emphasize the most prominent features of Ukrainian Baptists transformed from the tradition[2] inherited from the Soviet past. From living in closed communities with their rigid rules, the transformation involved starting an open dialogue and relationship with people and institutions of the world, including taking and publicly declaring a political position. I identify several reasons that led to the actuation of this process. I also explore how this transformation affects evangelicals' sense of surrounding reality, causes changes in their hermeneutical practices, and activates the believers' feeling for God, the

[2] Tradition – in this study the term refers to the particular style of practicing religion, established by evangelicals in the 1960s in order to deal with and survive the hostile environment created by the communist Soviet state. In short, this style can be characterised as a separation between the religious group and the surrounding society.

way of operating in the world and their calling to act in the world 'according to God's will'.

Defining the Research Problem

This study is not the first to conduct ethnographic research on Ukrainian evangelical Christians. Several studies on this topic were done by one of, if not the strongest anthropological voices in the field of religion in Ukraine, Catherine Wanner, who identified the exceptional place of Ukrainian evangelicals among the post-Soviet states (Wanner 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009). Her studies inspired me to conduct research in Ukraine instead of continuing exploring evangelicals in my homeland Lithuania, as I had done in my master thesis.

Wanner in her monograph 'Communities of the Converted' (2007) identified and explored a number of factors that created a particular condition favourable to the inner evangelical dynamism in Ukraine (Wanner 2007).

In her ethnography Wanner claimed the historical basis for the exceptional place of religious diversity and complexity of Ukraine: "Ukraine has a pronounced history of institutionalized multi-confessionalism and religious pluralism dating back at least to 1596 and the creation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church" (Wanner 2007: 13). Thus, according to Wanner, religious diversity and pluralism in Ukraine started at least in the end of XVI century when Orthodox Ukraine was set on the border between Catholic and Orthodox influences. In the Soviet period Ukraine stood out as a region of particularly deep religious traditions as "two-thirds of the Orthodox churches were located in Ukraine, even though the population of Ukraine is one-third that of Russia" (Wanner 2007: 132). Moreover, Ukraine was home of more than half of Soviet Baptists "making Soviet Ukrainians the largest Baptist community in Europe, and one of the largest in the world" (Wanner 2007: 1). After the fall of the USSR the development of religion in Ukraine became even more distinct from its neighbouring countries. Together

with the inherited Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate[3] there was a renaissance of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church[4] and Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church[5] in the country. Moreover, Orthodoxy in Ukraine experienced a schism after the country gained independence. A new breakaway Orthodox Church from the Moscow Patriachate appeared in the form of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kiev Patriarchate.[6] The failure in efforts to unite the three Ukrainian Orthodox churches became an insurmountable obstacle in the way of establishing a national Orthodox Church and "indirectly contributed to making Ukraine a model of religious pluralism among formerly socialist societies" (Wanner 2004: 736). Acting and developing in the legal climate of religious pluralism evangelical minorities in Ukraine felt more empowered than evangelical Christians in neighbouring countries (Lyubashchenko 2010).

As for the factors leading to the transformational dynamism of Ukrainian evangelicals, Wanner pointed to the missionary activity the country experienced: "Beginning in the late 1980s, western missionaries began to travel to the Soviet Union in significant numbers. Evangelists of their national culture as well as of the Gospel, these missionaries, intentionally or not, embodied the political values and morality of their home cultures" (Wanner 2004: 742). Thus, according to Wanner, the presence of open style western evangelicals challenged the Soviet evangelical tradition and served as an appealing example stimulating changes in local evangelical movement (Wanner 2004; 2007). Wanner claimed a particular

[3] UOC-MP – Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate. The church is the largest of three major Orthodox churches in Ukraine.
[4] UAOC – Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. It is one of the three major Orthodox Churches in Ukraine established in 1921 as an indigenous Ukrainian Church free of Russian influence. The church regained its recognition in Ukraine in 1991, however it is not officially recognized by other Orthodox Churches due to pressure from the Russian Orthodox Church. The UAOC consists of over 3 million members. However, see note 6.
[5] UGCC – Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. In some sources it is also called *The Ukrainian Eastern Rite Catholic Church* or *The Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church*. It is a Byzantine Rite Catholic Church in full communion with the Holy See. The church predominates in western Ukraine and is the largest religious minority in the country consisting of 5 million members. After WWII the church was liquidated and officially transferred to the Russian Orthodox Church, though it in reality went underground. The church re-emerged and was officially allowed to function in December 1989.
[6] UOC-KP – Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchate. It is one of the three major Orthodox Churches in Ukraine formed in 1992 as a result of schism for independence from the Moscow patriarchate. On 11 October 2018 the Patriarchate of Constantinople moved towards granting autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. On 15 December 2018 the hierarchs of the UOC-KP and UAOC decided to merge together and form the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

role for Soviet migrants living in the US: "Approximately five hundred thousand Soviet evangelicals have immigrated to the United States, some as refugees, others through family reunification" (Wanner 2007: 97-98). Many of those evangelical Christians became actors of a transnational global evangelical network and were "actively involved in missionizing in the former Soviet Union and are committed to providing charitable assistance to Ukraine" (Wanner 2007: 100).

To summarize, the factors which may have led to the empowerment of evangelicalism in Ukraine are: historically inherited religious pluralism, high religiosity of the population, the traditional strength of the country's evangelical minority, the absence of one official state Church - which facilitates competition between different denominations and religious minorities, the tolerant political and legal environment and intensive activity of western, mostly American missionaries.

However, while Wanner (2004; 2007) focused on the many advantages Ukraine offered to believers, my study highlights the diverse challenges that the evangelical Christians were faced with in the aftermath of the Soviet Union. While we may explain certain developments by focusing on the particular fruitful conditions in Ukraine, I argue that one might equally look at how the number of evangelical Christians grew in spite of the many challenges and difficulties they were faced with – and maybe even partly because of them, as they helped consolidate local evangelicals and hardened their skills of adaptability. Thereby the negative challenges facing Ukraine as a society encouraged the strengthening of the evangelicals. Thus, while building on Wanner's findings (ibid), my aim is to research not only the opportunities but also limitations that evangelicals have faced in recent times. It is true that the expanded religious freedom at the end of the USSR culminated in gaining independence for Ukraine and brought about a religious renaissance. Evangelical Christians left their closed existence and could function freely. I argue that this process brought its limitations along at the same time because, as mentioned above, approximately five hundred thousand Soviet evangelicals left the country in a very short period of time. Moreover, since then the emigration of evangelicals has continued. During the period of my fieldwork

it was particularly active. This time it was caused by the bad economic situation and the war in the eastern part of the country.

Another difference between this study and Wanner's needs mentioning. Wanner rightly observes that the absence of a national church created a particularly fruitful environment for a large range of smaller religious groups. I will emphasize that this is not only an advantage. We must take also into consideration that this has created fierce competition between the different denominations in the religious 'market'. This appears to have been a particular challenge for Ukrainian evangelicals, Baptists especially, among whom I conducted my research. The Baptists in Lviv for example have noticeably started to lose territory to the Charismatics (Lyubashchenko 2010) and around the time of my fieldwork to Jehovah's Witnesses whose active presence was so very visible in Lviv. Thus, persecution and restrictions by the Soviet state were bad for individual Baptist believers but maintained, consolidated, and strengthened the Baptist communities. What further is of importance is, that in a way freedom and competition have weakened the communal ties, although this presumably is much better for individual believers. This is also a central difference between what I have labelled the tradition and the new style; whereas the former has community and strict regulations as a priority, much like the Soviet institutions, the latter is much more based on individual efforts and variety, which is in line with the system that developed following the Soviet dissolution.

A further difference concerns the impact of missionaries. Wanner (2007:5-7) wrote about a plethora of missionary groups, mostly from the US, travelling to Ukraine on plane after plane and making an impact on locals by transmitting their particular values and ethics.[7] However, this study puts in question how enduring the impact of the missionaries travelling to Ukraine was, as many of them came for short-term visits and left the country after a short period of time. At the time of my fieldwork, more than a decade after Wanner's research, it

[7] Missionary – I use here a broad definition, which means a person or a group, who has been prepared and sent or went to evangelise, establish churches and minister whether in her/his own country or abroad.

seemed as if most of them had retired to the US and there were not many memories left about them among local believers.

Wanner, who conducted her fieldwork more than decade before this study, witnessed and portrayed (2004) the clashes between two culturally distinct evangelical traditions in Ukraine - between the very conservative Ukrainian Baptists, the keepers of tradition, and the relaxed, 'free style' American missionaries coming to the communities and offering their help. Looking at the changing identity of evangelical Christians in Ukraine, Wanner (2004; 2007) asserts that the local evangelical communities who faced suppression during the Soviet period fostered an ethic of separation from the world. The flow of global western missionaries to the Soviet Union, which began in the late 1980s, created a division between them and local communities. The reason for the encounters between western missionaries and local believers was not only the differences in positioning towards the 'world', but also "cultural practices enshrouding religious worship and congregational life" (Wanner 2004: 743). Although there was full compliance to a common doctrine for both sides, intentionally or not, western missionaries transmitted the cultural values and ethic of their homes and places and made an impact on Ukrainian communities and believers (Wanner 2004; 2007). The question remains to which extend the missionaries were able to transform the evangelical communities in the long run, and whether they really were a central contributing factor to the main changes. Was political and/or social activism not a more significant factor of division between Ukrainians, than the division between local believers and American missionaries? Thus, one of the goals of my research was to explore the impact of such missions on the transformational dynamism of Ukrainian evangelical movement. In contrast to Wanner's study, I do not emphasize and take western mission as a main opposition to the Soviet tradition, and I do not treat it as a crucial force for transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. I rather try to integrate foreign missionaries in the whole picture of changing circumstances, changing Ukrainian society, and changing Ukrainian evangelical communities.

Alongside western, mostly American missionaries, Wanner mentioned thousands of evangelical refugees, who left the former Soviet Union in accordance to the 1989 Lautenberg Amendment (2004: 748). Some of them, according to Wanner (2007: 4) periodically return to Ukraine for missionary work, effectively acting as mediators and experts of both cultures. Those globalized missionaries presented, represented, and transmitted to Ukraine the western style of worship, congregational life and the positioning toward the 'world' (Wanner 2004: 742). This may well be the case. However, during the year I was in Lviv I did not meet or even hear of a single case of a refugee returning to Ukraine to offer help. This does not mean that they did not have an impact earlier. However, I am still sceptical about the scale of foreign influence – foreign researchers may overestimate the influence of external actors, simply because their influence is more visible than the local social and political influences that my research seeks to demonstrate.

Moreover, I found some of Wanner's arguments did not reflect the situation I experienced it in 2016. She for example wrote: "The Soviet-era suppression of overt religious practice, far from stifling or eradicating religious beliefs, simply stifled discussion, which over time meant that knowledge was forgotten, with ignorance taking its place" (Wanner 2007: 193). She continues, saying that evangelicals have "a prominent instructional element to their services and congregational activities where the Bible and religious doctrine is explained" (ibid), which implies them having an advantage over Orthodox and Catholics. My counter-arguments are that though the Soviet atheistic regime was far from seeing the last believer[8], its politics were not without success. Religious knowledge was lost not because discussions on that matter were stifled but because such discussions had no meaning for the majority of Soviet citizens, as they were non-believers. My previous study made in Kaunas, Lithuania, showed

[8] Here I recall a famous phrase attributed to Khrushchev, as he during a speech on TV in 1961 publicly declared that soon the Soviet Union's last priest would be shown on television: see for example https://iknigi.net/avtor-aleksey-chichkin/71691-anatomiya-kraha-sssr-kto-kogda-i-kak-razrushil-velikuyu-derzhavu-aleksey-chichkin/read/page-11.html), or http://prodrom.cerkov.ru/index.php/2013/11/16/xrushhevskij-udar-po-pravoslaviyu-1958-1964-g/ .

that starting from the mid 1980s, in most cases non-believers became religious seekers without a strong commitment to Christianity (Liutkevičius 2008). They often mixed different religious and spiritual teachings or simply choose to practice one of the multiple spiritual movements that offered more personal "instructional elements" to them than any of Christian denominations did. Although access to the "knowledge" was regained, the Christian doctrine was still not appealing to them and seen as out-dated and repressive.

I argue therefore that the factors of historical multi-confessionalism, religious pluralism, the high religiosity of Ukrainians, a traditionally strong evangelical minority in the country, the absence of one official state Church, and the high activity of western missionaries are not sufficient to explain the distinctiveness and dynamism of Ukrainian evangelical movement. What we have witnessed is a change from a closed and inward looking evangelical community that did not go beyond its own boundaries to affect or interact with the surrounding society, to an increasingly active movement highly engaged in society and social work, and in mission within and outside Ukraine. The rationale of the rapid changes and transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals remains unclear. Therefore, a deeper analysis of contemporary factors that contribute to the exceptional situation of Ukrainian evangelicals is needed and this is the rationale and focus of the current research. The nature of these changes will be explored and demonstrated in the study below.

Research Questions

The central question of the study is what factors contributed to the rapid transformation of post-Soviet Ukrainian evangelical movement? This question has led me to develop a range of research sub-questions which may be divided into two groups. The first group of questions is concerned with the contextual development in Ukraine. They are as follows:

- What is the Soviet evangelical tradition? The answer to the question will help us understand how and why the tradition of Soviet evangelicals was

formed. This in turn will help us understand why the tradition that had guaranteed the survival of the evangelical churches for decades was challenged in the post-Soviet period.

- Why has the transformation of evangelical Christians in Ukraine been different from that in neighbouring states? The answer to this question will help us understand the dynamism of the evangelical movement in the country.

The second group of questions is concerned with the inner life of the evangelical communities. Such rapid changes are never achieved without a challenge to existing beliefs, practices, biblical interpretations and implications, and therefore subject to constant internal negotiations and even conflicts. The evangelical communities are heterogenic and represent people with a variety of different interests and opinions. This leads me to pose the following questions:

- How are the ideas driving changes shaped, negotiated and practiced in the everyday lives of the believers?
- Why is a sense of solid tradition losing its importance among Ukrainian evangelicals? Why has it ceased to create and maintain meaning for the religious practitioners?
- What mechanisms can we identify that provide flexibility for such radical changes without jeopardizing the identity of the evangelical believers?

Outline of Research Methodology and Methods

This project is based on qualitative research. Ethnographic fieldwork was the main methodology of my research. The core method of my study was participant observation.

Ethnography is particularly suited for the research of complex social constructs when you need to gain people's trust to get information. It can be described as "any small-scale research that is carried out in everyday settings; uses several methods; evolves in design through the study; and focuses on the meaning of

individuals' rather than their qualification" (Savage 2000:1401). I was studying the transformation of the Ukrainian evangelical movement. I therefore focused on the processes that make Ukrainian evangelicals change their attitude and behaviour in social and political life of the country, and stimulate their participation in global religious processes. In order to research these changes, it is important to explore people' day-to-day lives and the meaning they attribute to their daily activities. Evangelicals' understanding of everyday life and of larger scale events is closely interrelated with their faith and understanding and interpretation of the Bible. However, in order to grasp these interpretations and attributions of meaning to smaller as well as larger happenings in their life, one must actively engage in their everyday life. Ethnography usually means spending months, if not years with people of your research topic while you interact with them in their own environments (Hylland Eriksen, 2001). When conducting research, the ethnographer works towards establishing relations and connections to the people in the field. Establishing closeness is thus a prerequisite for conducting fieldwork at all (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Based on the day-to-day participation in people's everyday lives, based on countless observations and conversations the researcher moves to a closer and closer understanding of their social life, ideas, attitudes and relationships with various nuances and depths (Spradley 1980). These are the characteristics I see as the most important in my study. This correlates with the ambition of the anthropology of Christianity that stresses the importance of the informants' voices and calls to pay more attention and be sensitive toward believers' own views, words and expressions. Yet, as stated by Powdermaker (1966) while immersion into the field functions as the heart of the ethnographic fieldwork, is it necessary to constantly balance this with distancing oneself from the field, as a too close involvement can result in one losing sight of the larger structures and mechanisms. Hereby "detachment" in order to see, analyse and work with cultural structures becomes as important as involvement, a reason why the researcher must strike a constant balance between the two (Powdermaker 1966, see also Sluka, Antonius and Robben 2013).

In present day fieldwork the balance between immersion and detachment has become importance for other reasons than taking an objective step back to secure data analysis. As argued by de Jong, Kamsteeg and Ybema (2013) much fieldwork is today moving closer to home, and away from the traditional study of a foreign "other." Thus, many societies in which anthropologists get involved entail rich elements of familiarity with one's own background, a feature that entails the risk of one taking things for granted. In this sense we have moved from "making the strange familiar" to "making the familiar strange" (Van Maanen 1995:20) as we lose rich elements of the research by not asking questions about issues that are familiar to us (de Jong, Kamsteeg and Ybema 2013).

Participant observation was the main method of my fieldwork. The method can be described as "establishing a place in some natural setting on a relatively long-term basis in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and social processes that occur in that setting" (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2007: 352). Therefore, in my opinion, the method fits the aims of ethnographic methodology the most, and for that reason is widely used by socio-cultural anthropologists. Observation and participation *in situ* supplied me with rich data, which helped me to learn 'in the process', from the 'insiders' viewpoint. Having in-depth access to the field side I hereby gained an exclusive opportunity to develop knowledge of how people make sense of, give meanings to, constitute reality and interact on that basis (Bernard 2006; Denzin 1978; Jørgensen 1989). The observational fieldwork was complemented by interviews and documentary research.

In my research striking the balance between immersion and detachment became central. This was both because I was balancing between involvement and analysis, as Powdermaker argued, and because of making the familiar "strange" as de Jong Kamsteeg and Ybema have emphasized, since Ukraine as a former Soviet country has many elements of recognition and points to familiarity with my own home country Lithuania. Yet, in my field a third reason emerged that made it crucial for me to detach. As my informants more or less explicitly saw my entrance into the field as an opportunity to work with my religiosity – I needed to emphasize my academic objectives, so as to avoid causing confusion for my

reasons for being there. While this was my goal, however, I cannot say that I succeeded completely as my informants were as eager to work with me, as I was to learn from them. Thus, on the one hand, aiming for closeness in order to get the voice and feelings of my informants through in my writings became as central, as at other times ensuring a certain distance. These complications however, were personal rather than academic, as their preoccupation with converting me did not hinder me in conducting successful fieldwork.

My data mostly consists of my field notes – notes where I carefully wrote down events, observations, conversations and quotes from informants down. However, I needed to pay attention to when it was acceptable to make notes. In some situations, making rich field notes was easy, such as when some of my informants likewise were making their own notes, for example during a bible meeting when a biblical text was interpreted. Therefore, when I at the same time jotted my own ethnographic notes down I blended in perfectly with the surroundings. However, it was not possible in all situations to make detailed notes. If we were busy with practical matters, I did not always have my hands free to take notes, or, in some situations it would have been considered impolite to make lengthy notes, for example in the midst of a conversation. In these situations, I thus relied on various ethnographic tricks when being in the field. Mental notes were one of these (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995), when I concentrated on remembering particular important clues and key words that would help me trigger my memory in the evening. Another ethnographic trick was making scratch notes (Sanjek 1990). Different from rich notes, where you have time to catch the events in all their details, scratch notes are limited to the most important things and clues, and may be taken in a hurry, for example written while in the toilet, or when otherwise finding a few moments alone. Here I jotted down the most important events, comments and observations I made. After a day of fieldwork, I turned my mental notes and scratch notes into full notes. However, sometimes writing down a full day of events took up to eight hours and I would consequently have to continue the work first thing the next morning. Jotting down field notes became especially challenged when participating in camps and other trips where I literally did not have a moment of

privacy, neither during the days filled with activities, nor during the evenings, as I would be sharing the room/tent/cabin with other participants. On such occasions I had to rely heavily on mental notes and scratch notes and made them as elaborate as possible in order for me to be able to work with them when I came back home.

During my fieldwork I likewise completed twelve interviews with believers. They were informal interviews, some of which were lengthy conversations, and some were semi-structured or formal interviews. The former informal interviews were not necessarily planned in advance, but often evolved from conversations with informants. Nevertheless, these informal conversations turned out to provide me with rich data. In these cases, I again used notes in order to remember and structure the stories, where after I would write them down in their full length on the first given opportunity. My formal interviews, by contrast, were always well prepared in advance and I had the opportunity to use a recorder. The interview themes ranged from personal stories of conversion, to informative interviews about the story of the church, or I chose to focus on particular views about the current situation of Baptists in Ukraine, which I have found informative and (or) interesting. Therefore, interview was an additional method of my fieldwork.

I joined the communities of my research as a guest, which was sufficient for participation in almost all activities the communities organised. Certain restrictions however occurred. For example, I was not invited to participate in the meetings where members of the churches discussed their financial policy. The reason was that though in every worship meeting I participated I contributed with tithe, I was not a member of any of churches of my research. Except for this, I was able to gain the access and was invited to participate in the daily lives of my informants.

After having introduced myself to the community, after the initial mapping of the research, and after having revised and clarified topics and questions I asked chosen representatives to record an interview with them.

Informed consent was obtained orally. All formal interviews were recorded. I introduced myself to the members of the chosen communities and foreign missionaries as a researcher, an anthropologist. I have clarified that all the names of the participants and communities would be changed and that all would remain anonymous. I explained to the interviewees why I have chosen them for the interview, and what the purpose of the interview was. Before the interview started I assured my informants that they could stop the interview any time, change their minds, refuse to answer, or add new questions. Ethnographic fieldwork is based on voluntary and open daily communications therefore participants were informed in the beginning about their right to withdraw from the project at any time and any stage of it.

Informed consent and avoidance of harm was upheld by confidentiality on the part of the researcher. It was also held by making anonymous research materials, in which participants were assigned random pseudonyms and any sensitive information about them disguised so that they could not be identified by a third party. Guaranteeing anonymity was also extended to the field site itself so that the individual reader cannot easily identify it.

Written data was stored in a field notebook where the real names were changed and coded. The recorded audio data and my diary in Word format were stored and password protected on my computer. The data will not be disposed of, as it can be useful for future insights and comparative research. It is held in a safe place not available to others.

The Fieldwork Site

I arrived to Lviv in January 2016 to learn Ukrainian. I conducted my fieldwork research from the beginning of March 2016 until the end of February 2017. From January to the first week of March 2016 I rented a room at the dormitory at the Ukrainian Catholic University. I lived here while I went through an intensive individual language course in Ukrainian. Then I found a small studio apartment at Vitovskoho str. in Lviv where I lived until May 2016. From May until the end of my fieldwork I rented a studio apartment at Skelna str. which is closer to the centre of the city. I chose a bigger and more comfortable apartment as I had started to make friends with some informants, whom I wanted to invite to my home. Moreover, there were cases when the members of the communities gathered in my flat for the 'small' (Bible study) group meetings. Sometimes this was a result of an invitation from me and sometimes because some of them lacked a place for the weekly group meeting. I also made religious camping trips, and rented an abandoned guard cabin in the Carpathians. During my trip to the Baptist Missionary Forum I spent a night in a hostel in Kyiv.

During my fieldwork in Ukraine, the southeast part of the country was in a military conflict following the annexation of Crimea.[9] These circumstances made southeast Ukraine an inappropriate place for doing fieldwork. I decided then to situate my research in the western region of Ukraine, which according to the UCEPS analytical report was the centre of religious activity, "where only 19,7% of the population resides, but nearly 43% of all religious organisations are concentrated" (UCEPS analytical report 2000: 4).[9] I chose Lviv, a Western Ukrainian city as my research site, as it is known for a high degree of religiosity among its inhabitants. Indeed, for one who planned to study Christianity in a former Soviet territory, Lviv looked like an excellent place for conducting fieldwork. The high concentration of churches in the city was impressive. There is St. George's Cathedral, the principal church of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics (UGCC). There is The Religious Centre of Jehovah's Witnesses of Ukraine just

[9] The Crimean Peninsula was annexed by the Russian Federation in February–March 2014.
[9] UCEPS – Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies.

round the corner with the Major Seminary of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Lviv in Bryukhovychi (Ukr. Брюховичі), a town near Lviv. Besides the many old churches in the city, the citizens are busy building new ones.

Although most of the religious inhabitants of Lviv belong to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, there is a rich variety of different denominations, churches and communities, which coexist in the city. With a population of a bit more than seven hundred thousand Lviv has about fifteen Baptists communities and a Baptist seminary. For comparison, their evangelical acquaintances, Pentecostals have about twenty communities and a seminary in the city. Therefore, I found the city with its conditions of high religiosity and religious competition a relevant site for my research.

Baptists mostly represent evangelicals in my study. I chose to conduct the research in Baptists communities for two reasons. The first reason is due to my personal history in academia. I had already conducted research among Baptists in my hometown Kaunas, Lithuania, for my MA thesis (Liutkevičius 2010) and partly for my BA thesis (Liutkevičius 2008). This meant that I already was familiar with Baptist theology and their particular way of life. Therefore, choosing Baptist churches to be the communities of my research was an advantage, as I did not have to start from scratch. Another reason for choosing Baptist communities for my research on the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals was the fact that during the Soviet period Baptists made up the vast majority of Soviet evangelical Christians, and though they are gradually losing ground, they still remain a religious group with a leading position among all Protestant denominations in Ukraine.[10] Therefore, it was logical to think that the Baptist Church played a central role in developing the evangelical tradition during the Soviet period, and continues to play an important role in preserving it and resisting the new style evangelical movement in Ukraine.

[10] In 1994 40 per cent of Protestant communities of Ukraine were Baptist. In 2008 Baptist communities consisted of 35,9 per cent of Protestant communities in Ukraine (Lyubashchenko 2010: 274).

The residents of Lviv have a strong nationalist spirit and the Ukrainian language is preferred for public and private use instead of Russian. This meant that I thought it essential to learn Ukrainian before starting the fieldwork. During my research I used Ukrainian among Ukrainian speakers, Russian among Russian speakers, mostly IDP from Donbas and Crimea, and occasionally English when communicating with informant missionaries from the US.

Lviv serves as an exemplary case of the attempt to rebuild its identity as a Ukrainian city after independence. There were concerns among politicians and ordinary citizens alike about what long lasting Russification had done to the country and its inhabitants. It was believed that one of the ways to weaken the influence of Moscow and to demonstrate the new path the country was taking was through the country's language policy. The Ukrainian alphabet was consequently reverted to the way it used to be before it had been "modernized" during the Soviet period.[11] After 1991 the Ukrainian schools stopped teaching Russian. This decision was made despite the fact that a sizeable minority in Ukraine consisted of those whose mother tongue is Russian.[12] However, although attempts were made to return to Ukrainian, the mass media remained mainly Russian speaking and still does to this present day. Many local TV channels are filled with series and programs made in Russia, broadcast in the original language used and without any subtitles. Moreover, it is common to hear in the news, for example the interviewer asking a question in Ukrainian and the interviewee answering in Russian; a phenomenon called non-accommodating bilingualism (Bilaniuk 2006).

In more recent years these social and cultural tensions have found expression in a chain of recent violent events such as Maidan Revolution, the annexation of

[11] The policy of Russification origins from the time of Stalin. Stalin's decrees of 1933 were passed to bring the orthography steadily closer to Russian language and the use of the Ukrainian language was banned in the offices of the administration (Serbyn and Krawchenko 1986). Before Stalin's time, in the 1920s and the 1930s, ethnic minorities enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy with regard to national language planning policy (Terry 1998).
[12] According to data of All-Ukrainian population census for 2001, the percentage of people whose first language is Russian comprised 29.6% of the population.
http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/language/ (last seen 24 March 2019).

Crimea and the war in Donbas.[13] These events have been very traumatic for the Ukrainians and have fuelled divergent nationalistic politicisations among many citizens, leading to splits and divisions within and between families, churches and regions. In the light of these events, prior historical events and traumatic experiences have been invoked by people I met in Lviv, who started to link the recent events to the catastrophe of 1986 in Chernobyl and the Ukrainian famine known as Holodomor (Ukr. Голодомор), in 1932-1933.[14] In all these cases Russians were blamed. One way of dealing with trauma is again, through the politicization of language use. At the beginning of my fieldwork I observed situations where Russian was used in popular culture to associate it with destructive, inhuman, or inherently bad antagonists, while other protagonists used Ukrainian. An example of this can be seen in the animated film 'Zlydni' (poverty, misery, ukr. 'Злидні').[15] Another example I have experienced was at a concert towards the end of the Christmas period where there were short theatre plays in between the various songs. Here all the characters were speaking Ukrainian, with the exception of King Herod who was the only one spoke Russian.[16]

During my ethnographic fieldwork I managed to conduct research in three Baptist churches and a seminary located in the city of Lviv. The first church of my research was the largest Baptist community in Lviv, consisting of about 500 members. The church was located not far from the centre of the city. Many of the members of the church had kept their faith through the period of Soviet repression. The average age of the members of the community was close to 50. The church was rather conservative (expressed through a particular dress code, the decision not to allow electric musical instruments when playing music for God's praise, the use of old religious songs during worship, and the way of giving tithe in secret instead of openly).[17] Still, the church was open and friendly to all

[13] Independence Square, Ukr. Майдан Незалежності, in Kyiv (ukr. Київ). The movement progressed to the streets riots and revolution after the governmental forces attacked the protestors on 30 November 2013. Euromaidan ended on February 2014.
[14] See, for example the documentary 'The Russian woodpecker' of 2015.
[15] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JLa6_C_-qI
[16] The concert was in the club 'Дзига' 30 January 2016.
[17] I explore the characteristics of traditional evangelicals in Chapter 3.

visitors. I made friends with one of the pastors of the community and initially planned that church to be one of two main communities of my research. I continued visiting the church time after time until the end of my fieldwork (it was located close to the second apartment I rented). However, a month or two after my first visit to the church I started to focus on the seminary and two other, smaller Baptist communities where I could more easily make contacts with the members of the communities and be involved in different activities organized and run by the communities.

The next site of my research was the seminary, where I came to the library asking for some books. Here I was given permission to participate and observe different courses given to the students. I participated in classes of music; Baptist doctrine; Old Testament reading; women's leadership; individual and group therapy for men and women struggling with anger, depression, anxiety, and addictions. Local and American visiting teachers-missionaries led these courses. I was also given full permission to go to the seminary's library where I found a lot of old and rare evangelical editions in Ukrainian and in Russian, most of which were forbidden during the Soviet regime. I spent many hours, often alone in the library taking pictures of books and journals with my camera. I used lunch breaks to have conversations with the personnel, teachers, students, and missionaries visiting the seminary. My genuine interest and the many hours I spent there helped me to make wider contacts with local Baptists and guests.

The second community of my research was located in a densely populated, former industrial part of the city, crowded with houses built in the Soviet period. This community was small (about 30 members), young (average age about 30), established about three years before I visited it first time, mostly from converts of intense evangelisation in 2013 in the same ex-industrial area.

Having two different communities and the seminary I did not plan any more sites for my fieldwork until I met a group of IDP[18] refugees, or 'trans-migrators' (rus. Переселенцы, Pereselentsy) as they are called, from the largest Baptists' community in Lugansk oblast. These people had travelled a long way from a coalmining town[19] in the East of the country, bringing with them fresh memories, experiences, emotions and thoughts about the war in Donbas and were ready and eager to share these with me. Although this had not been a part of my original plan, I gradually became more and more involved in this group, participated in their meetings and had lengthy conversations with them. I assume that it happened partly we were similarly non-natives of the city of Lviv, and partly because the believers were Russian speakers. I felt more comfortable speaking Russian, as this is my second language after my mother tongue, whereas Ukrainian was my fifth language, which I was still in the process of mastering. During my fieldwork the small group of several IDP believers grew to a community and established a new Baptist church in Lviv. While growing, the community gathered for Bible study in two different places simultaneously. It split in two mostly because the members of the community were scattered widely in the large city.[20] Some of them lived in the suburban area, where the other Bible group was gathering simultaneously. Bible studies were organized in the middle of the week, on Thursday evenings after working hours. Therefore, there was a possibility to choose a closer location for the participation in the 'small group' meeting.[21] Another important reason for splitting was that the number of the participants in the Bible studies sometimes even exceeded the number of participating in Sunday worship meetings. It was partly because some

[18] IDP – Internally Displaced Person; a person who has been forced to move within her or his own country as a result of conflict or environmental disaster. In this context I use the term with reference to the evangelicals who have escaped the war in the eastern part of Ukraine.
[19] 28 of August 2016 the members of the community greeted each other with the miners' day after the Sunday church service. Some of the men in the church previously were miners, and some of the women worked in mines' services. The miners' day remained as one of the major holidays in many cities of the former Soviet Union where number of miners are very high. The celebration of the day is the last Sunday of August and includes concerts under the open sky and wide festivities.
[20] Lviv is the seventh largest city in Ukraine with a population of more than seven hundred thousand. Most of the IDPs participating in the group were from a city with a population fifty thousand.
[21] Rus. малая группа (malaya gruppa). This is what believers typically called the Bible study meetings.

IDP and local non-believers who usually joined Bible studies were not participating in Sunday services. The 'small group' meeting was designed as an informal and intimate gathering where the participants had a cup of tea or coffee with biscuits or a piece of cake together while reading and analysing the Bible. For all IDPs' it was also the time of sharing memories, news from Donbas and speculations about the future.

To split up in two groups for Bible studies is an ordinary practice for evangelical communities. The Bible studies can be held in different places simultaneously, or on different days. The community can split by gender for the Bible study meeting having a women's Bible study group and a men's Bible study group. It can also split by age. It was the case in the other community of my research. This small community had a Bible study group for the youth. in which I was invited to participate during my fieldwork.

As my field sites expanded in numbers, I soon realized that I could not participate in depth in all the places that my research had opened up for me. I had to give up at least one of them. Thus, I chose to participate less intensively in the first church. Although I still had regular contact with them, they were no longer among my key groups for participant observation. The reason for this choice was that I found myself working much more efficiently among the members of other two communities and at the seminary. This observation was again very telling about my field sites as such, as these communities practiced a more open and embracing style for newcomers, giving more attention and support to me, which quickly allowed me to intensify and make my fieldwork more efficient and 'thick'.

I participated in as many activities in the daily life of the churches and their members as I could. My fieldwork was carried out across various field sites and various groups of evangelicals that together helped me get a deeper insight into the variety of practices and worship in the community, but also taught me much about what united them. In addition, my friendships with different members of the church, ranging from young and old believers to pastors and "regular

believers", IDPs, former drug addicts and foreign missionaries, was a great support, as each individual contact had something to offer, particular knowledge, experiences and memories that helped me puzzle together the larger picture of the history, development, internal disputes and key areas for Baptists in Ukraine.

Researcher's Own Position

I was born in 1970 and spent my childhood in Kaunas, the second largest city in Lithuania. In 1940 the country had been annexed and incorporated into the Soviet Union. Believers in the country became the subjects of pressure. My parents, and especially my mother, were very religious Roman Catholics. Therefore, I was taken to the Catholic Church every Sunday. The antireligious propaganda promoted by the Soviet regime was quite aggressive. Thus, I grew up in a condition of double socialization and found myself in the front line between the gunfire of two contradicting ideologies. What I was taught about religion within my family, was completely rejected, ridiculed and discredited outside my home. During adolescence I started to hate both institutions – the state and the Church - and refused to go to Sunday worship. However, at the time I started my fieldwork I identified myself as a Christian believer, though not born again.

My request to conduct research made the members of the communities excited. Apart from being curious about a person from Lithuania who now was studying in the UK, their excitement was triggered because, in their eyes, God had brought me to their community. I had made it clear to everyone that I came to the community out of academic interest. My explanation that I was there because I was conducting research was of secondary importance to them. For evangelicals who were trying hard to reach new people and invite them to Sunday worship or Bible meetings, I was like a gift. I came by myself to the church and was interested and eager to know as much as possible. Therefore, my appearing from nowhere seemed to them as "a straight offer from God to work with me", that is to evangelise to me. That triggered their hospitality and I was given a lot of

attention, support, invitations, and willing participation in my research. Although in general I considered myself lucky during my fieldwork as I had easy access to the field and was met by many enthusiastic informants who have willingly let me into their communities, the fieldwork was, however, not without obstacles. I encountered problems and misunderstandings, some of which were quite uncomfortable. For example, after some time I became aware that not all the members of communities were equally patient with me. Some of them became eager to see progress in terms of my conversion, baptism or at least some signs of me changing my identity as a result of their efforts. Although I tried to be honest in every respect with my evangelical friends, some of them could hardly hide their disappointment, and even irritation and bitterness, about my 'stubbornness' and 'failure'. It affected the attitude of some members of the communities to me by the end of my fieldwork.

The most unpleasant event occurred in the second community of my research at very end of my fieldwork. It was connected to receiving communion Eucharist, which is the service commemorating the Last Supper, in which bread and wine are consecrated and consumed among the members of a community. In the very first visit in the worship I did not participate in Eucharist and did not have it in mind. I was not a member of the community and was not even a born again. From my previous visits to different Baptist communities I knew that these two conditions allow me only to observe the service and preclude me from taking part in it. However, after the worship the pastor of the community started a conversation with me and one of his question was why I did not participate in Eucharist. I gave him my reasons. The pastor, however, said that it is enough that I am a Christian believer and invited me to participate in Eucharist in the future, which I did during the rest of my fieldwork. The last day of my fieldwork I participated in worship and everything went as usual until Vlad, an active member of the community, ended his sermon by asking people who are not born again to refrain from participating in the Eucharist. The Eucharist started immediately after the sermon, so I had not much time to make a decision as to how to behave. The pastor who encouraged me to participate in the Eucharist less than a year earlier was sitting immediately behind me. At the moment I

made what I saw as a logical decision, to take part in the Eucharist. However soon, after I had time to analyse the situation as a whole, I no longer believed that I behaved correctly. Nobody said anything to me, though after the worship when everyone was greeting each other, Vlad gave me his hand without even looking at me.

This event was the culmination of an unavoidable confrontation of views between a non-born again researcher and born again members of evangelical communities. For these reasons my research took a different turn than most of the academic records I have read. The classical anthropological story unfolds as the researcher struggles to come into the community and is met with various difficulties in the beginning, until he or she participates in an event or meets a "gate keeper" that opens the field up for the researcher. My story is quite the opposite. Due to the evangelicals' interests in converting people I had an easy entrance into the field. Everyone was trying to take part in my research and help me. After several months of fieldwork my academic goals were the same, however, I did not show the expected religious progress. Then I started to notice some irritation from the most impatient members. It could be expressed by comment as 'oh, so you forgot that last night we had to turn the clocks an hour forward and therefore you were late to worship? You know, if you were a member of the community it would not happen, because we always send a reminder to each other. Just think about it." I could also be invited to a family for dinner where the father of the family, after witnessing his own story of conversion tried to push me to make the right decision.[22] My answer was "Sorry, but I have never experienced anything close to what you have just told me." Such a situation again led to frustrations and irritations.

As I have said, the most unpleasant event however happened with Vlad. Vlad was a nice person who helped me in many things, including getting me into the missionary forum in Kyiv. About a month before leaving home he said to me "look, if you want to be baptised, just say, we will do it." To which I said, "OK,

[22] Witnessing – is a term similar to testimony, though it does not deal so much with the personal experiences of the believers but is more focused on evangelisation in general.

thank you". A month later he decided to exclude me from Eucharist. My misreading of the situation made it much more awkward for both of us. Thus, my opposite experience made the fieldwork more difficult towards the end and not the other way around. My research experience is very illustrative of how different expectations can develop in the field, despite the fact that I had made my goal and my intentions clear from the very beginning. Close to the end, what from my perspective was seen as a successful fieldwork, for my informants was a failure to convert me.

I participated in as many activities of daily life of the churches and their members as I could. These included Sunday sermons, small (Bible study) group meetings, camps, picnics, a wedding, and baptism ceremonies. I visited church members at their homes, met them to dine together at cafés, or went with them for walks. I also hosted church members and Bible study groups at the flat where I lived in. I also had access to conduct research in the seminary, where I went to classes in order to listen to different courses. I spent time in the seminary's library where I copied a lot of rare evangelical literature (journals, books) in Russian and Ukrainian published in the period from the beginning of twentieth century to 1980s. In the seminary I met American missionaries working in Ukraine. I engaged with believers I met and with the personnel of the seminary. I have also visited several other Baptist and evangelical churches in Lviv. During my fieldwork I made a trip to the capital of the country Kyiv in order to participate in an international event – the Second Missionary forum, which was held from 26 to 27 August 2016 at the International Centre of Culture and Arts. About two thousand delegates from all over the world attended the event. Among them were Paul Msiza, the president of the Baptist World Alliance, Anthony Peck, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation and others.

I had put much effort into planning and preparing my fieldwork. I had previously carried out an intensive study of Baptists in Lithuania that gave me experience with carrying out research among believers. I had also read a great deal about Ukraine and about the religious situation in Ukraine, just as I had followed the news and updates from and about the country.

Furthermore, I had conducted an intensive language course for the duration of six weeks at the Catholic University in Lviv that had given me the basic skills in communicating and understanding. As Ukrainian is quite close to Russian, which I speak fluently, I was able to make speedy progress with the language. Although I felt well prepared for my study, certain adjustments had to be made in the field. Two issues in particular required a shift of emphasis in my fieldwork.

The first issue was the actual significance of missionaries. Influenced by Wanner's (2004, 2007) work, I had initially assumed that there would be a large number of American missionaries and that these, due to their vast numbers and persistent work, had much to do with the rapid development of the Baptist communities. However, upon entering the field I noticed that only a few missionaries were present and that my informants hardly mentioned them, unless I asked. This observation did not mean that I do not deal with the issue of western mission and mission in general in my dissertation, but I have moved away from the idea of missionaries having a primary impact on the changes, and thus devoted more time focusing on other issues internal to the Baptist communities.

Another change occurring in my fieldwork was, as I have mentioned previously, that a group of IDPs became some of my key informants. This had not been planned from the beginning and was merely a chance opportunity during fieldwork, which I made use of. It thus made me focus more on the political events in the country, as well as on the increasing role these political events had on Baptists, which has contributed significantly to the changing traditions and ways of practising religion. Furthermore, it alerted me to how evangelicals process traumatic experiences such as war and how this again influences the way they practice their religion.

Limitations of the Study

This study does not claim to examine all possible factors contributing to the rapid transformation of post-Soviet Ukrainian evangelicals. Rather it points to some central features that appear to have been crucial in facilitating the many changes for evangelical Christians. The factors that will be emphasized largely depend on my findings during the fieldwork. I will here mention the three main limitations in my study and the reasons why I could not elaborate more on these.

The first limitation is that while my dissertation deals with evangelical believers as a whole, I spend most of my time with the group that is characterised as new style evangelicals, while the voices of traditionalists are rarely heard. Therefore, it mainly represents new-style evangelicals' views on traditionalists. There are two reasons for this choice. First of all, the new style evangelicals, *per se* and as a part of them being new style, are much more open towards outsiders and foreigners in general. This made the entrance into their community easier as they through their outreaching evangelisation readily accepted outsiders. The traditionalists, on the other side, are not working in such an embracing manner, they are basically relying on well-known circles of community members, and it is more difficult to enter these circles and develop a closer relationship in order to achieve deep and elaborated data.

The second reason for this choice was that the main subject of the thesis is change in the evangelical communities. This change was forged by the new style evangelicals and thus, research-wise there is also a logical reason behind my choice to spend the main part of my time with this group of believers.

The second limitation of the research is that behind the broader definition of evangelical movement, my research mostly consists of material collected from the Baptist communities and Baptist believers. Baptists constituted the vast majority of evangelical Christians during the Soviet period.[23] Nowadays the

[23] The only legal representative institution of Soviet evangelicals, which was established by the Soviet government in 1944, was named "The Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists." The

situation is different. According to the data from the State Committee on Nationalities and Religions of Ukraine for 2009 only Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Seventh-Day Adventists taken together (4646 communities) significantly exceeded the number (2942) of Baptist communities (Lyubashchenko 2010).[24] The situation during the Soviet period relates to my reasons for choosing the Baptist community. Researching change made most sense in the religious groups that previously had had stable traditions. For this reason, it was easier to trace the specific changes, than when following a relatively new established evangelical groups such as Charismatics.

A second reason was that if I had included more evangelical groups into the research, I would not be able to go into such depths with the history of each group leaving me with superficial descriptions.

Finally, it also impacted my choice that I previously had experiences with the Baptists, as I wrote my master thesis on the Baptist community in Kaunas, Lithuania. Thus, I was already familiar with their doctrine, beliefs and practices.

The third limitation of the study is related to gender. The fact is that the vast majority of my informants were men. There are two reasons for this. The first is that for Baptists certain social roles and certain roles in church are gender-based. For example, there are no female pastors or deacons in the church. Those who make the central decisions and those who are the most outgoing in the community are men. As my dissertation is based on activity and change among the Baptists, it became natural to engage in the outreaching activities organized by the men.

The second reason is that my own gender set certain limitations for me. I was able to go on "men's camp," for example, whereas I would not have been able to go on any "women's camp" even if there had been such camps (speaking to the

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Union consisted mostly of Baptists, though Pentecostals, Mennonites and other evangelicals also were included.

[24] On the other hand, several generations of Baptists well represent the transformation from tradition to the new style of Ukrainian evangelicals, which was the aim of my research.

first point about the vast difference in activities based on gender). Whilst I was able to spend much of my time with the men from the community, inviting male friends to my home and visiting their families, I was cautious about how it would be perceived in the community, if I started to ask women to meet with me. Here I had to balance my ambition to include women into the study, with my general reputation in the community. If I had pressed too hard for meetings with women, it could have had the opposite effect and excluded me from the field site as such.

I still tried to get female voices into my dissertation and I therefore had lengthy discussions with women in situations where this was perceived as acceptable. I did so, for example, as the only male participant in classes on women's leadership in the Baptist seminary. Whilst these classes were interesting, the sole subjects discussed were how to balance prayer and Bible studies with the obligations of a woman in her household. These subjects did not speak to my central theme of transformation, and in the end, these notes did not find their way into my work.

Therefore, due to the reasons mentioned above, the thesis remains mainly centred on the men's voices, whereas women are left unrepresented. However, it is important to notice that it was women, who played active role in inviting and introducing me to relevant people in the field, and thereby actually facilitated my entrance into the communities and into the Baptist seminary I had chosen for the research.

Chapter Outline

In the following chapter I provide an overview of the debate on the recent sub-discipline of anthropology – the anthropology of Christianity. I demonstrate how the theories and findings of the sub-discipline helped to form my conceptual framework for the research and directly influenced my theoretical framework and the proposal to study groups of evangelical Christians. In the chapter I present the main critique and contributions of the sub-discipline of anthropology of Christianity itself. I continue the chapter with discussions started inside the sub-discipline of the anthropology of Christianity that made a significant impact on my research. These are on the theme of the importance of paying attention to the inner religious experiences of Christian believers while conducting research among them. The other is the theme of discontinuity, cultural rupture and disjunction. It is argued that Christians learn the perception of time based on those characteristics of rupture and discontinuity, while the broader society, including researchers; try to build an epistemological continuity. I argue that discontinuity for evangelicals is only a part of the larger and more complex cosmology they learn after conversion. In the chapter I also give attention to literature on the changes, and discontinuity the societies in Eastern Europe experienced in general after the dissolution of the USSR. I analyse and critique the existing ethnographies on religion after the end of the Soviet Union related to the Ukrainian evangelicals.

Chapter 3 presents and reflects on the evangelical movement and its main characteristics. The chapter continues with discussions of such characteristics of evangelicalism as the constant seeking of change. As an illustration of constantly changing evangelical communities I present the example of the high dynamism among evangelical Christians in the US, which does not make transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals less peculiar and therefore interesting. I also develop a historical perspective, which helps to explain what Soviet evangelical tradition is, how it was established, and how it was able to take and hold such a firm position in Soviet evangel movement. I continue the chapter with presenting examples from my fieldwork data in order to illustrate daily clashes between traditional

and new style evangelicals, and the view of a traditional Baptist on the transformation Ukrainian evangelical movement experienced.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the analysis of the particular perception of life, which evangelicals start to learn after their conversion. Using the fieldwork data I argue that evangelicals are pre-disposed for changes. Using examples from my fieldwork I show how evangelicals learn to see, compare and mix the events of their contemporary life with biblical ones. This epistemological ability to see and explain things in such a multiplex way I call the biblical perception of reality.

Chapter 5. In the first of three empirical chapters I start to present my findings answering the main question of the dissertation, namely, what is the vehicle of rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals? In the chapter I explore the involvement of evangelical Christians in political life and events. This activity, I argue, is completely opposed to Soviet evangelical tradition and accelerates the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. I argue that the recent dramatic events in the country in terms of Maidan and the war in Eastern Ukraine, has stimulated the previously apolitical believers to re-read their Biblical texts and find arguments for why they should get involved and raise their voice politically. In the chapter I concentrate on the interpretation of my interlocutors and further explore the theory of the biblical perception of reality. Furthermore, in the chapter I analyse and explain how transformation becomes possible at the individual level. I also explain how the same person can change from having a passive political stance to the active participation in revolution without losing her or his identity, and still grounding his or her new belief in the same old biblical lines as before.

Chapter 6 is the second of three empirical chapters that continues presenting the concerns of Ukrainian evangelical Christians with the issues in society. This time I explore social service as a part of evangelicals' activity, which usually accompanies evangelisation.[25] In the chapter I focus mainly on the work of

[25] Evangelisation - the proclamation of Christ and His Gospel trying to persuade people to become Christians.

rehabilitation centres. I show that newly converted receivers of social help see no reason to learn and continue the Soviet evangelical tradition. These new members base their understanding and beliefs on what is found in the Bible, and neglect what they see as old incomprehensible traditions, such as choosing a specific way of clothing, or rules to use only a few selected music instruments during worship, do not have any value for them.[26] Thus, new members joining the evangelical movement come with new ideas and values that transform the communities from the inside. In addition, it appears that former drug addicts become some of the most eager believers, leading them to key positions within the church. This is in itself a vehicle for transformation, as they have not been brought up and raised as believers, members of evangelical communities. In this chapter like in the preceding one I keep the main focus on experiences and interpretations of my interlocutors using my theory of the biblical perception of reality.

In chapter 7, the last of three empirical chapters, I explore the complex phenomenon of mission and how different types of mission activities influenced changes in Ukrainian evangelical movement. The chapter engages into claims that the transformation of Ukrainian evangelical Christians was a result of many western missionaries coming to Ukraine and embedding their cultural values there. I will argue that while long-term missionaries indeed have been able to support, strengthen and develop the church, the majority of western mission that consisted of short-term missionaries have had a little direct impact on the changes of local evangelicals. Indeed, I will argue that short-term mission is more of a life-changing event for the missionary himself, than for the receiving country. I also argue that going to mission abroad together with the inner mission activities did more for the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals than receiving the mission from the west.

Chapter 8 concludes the whole dissertation. In the chapter I summarize the main findings, results, and contributions of the dissertation to the field.

[26] I explore the characteristics of Soviet evangelical Christians in the chapter 3.

2. Literature Review

Introduction

Recent anthropological studies of Christianity, on which my research builds on, have proposed two main ideas when researching religion. The first idea was the call to pay more attention to the personal religious experience of believers when studying Christian groups (Cannell 2005, 2006; Robbins 2003, 2006a). It was claimed that the inner theology of believers often is the basis of action not only in their private life but also serves for taking a social position and choosing public activities. The second contribution is the discussion about the conceptual tool of continuity, which has been regarded by some scholars working in the sub-discipline of Anthropology of Christianity as not sufficient when studying Christians with their focus on transcendental changes and rupture. This discussion made a twofold impact to my study. Firstly, I took the theme of discontinuity and adopted it for the broader society of Eastern Europe, which experienced an unexpected and total rupture after the end of the communist regime. I explore the theme in this chapter focusing on the ways of dealing with the rupture of citizens of the former communist bloc. Secondly, the discussion on discontinuity, as well as the call to pay attention to the personal religious engagement of believers helps me to focus on the particular perception of evangelicals I have noticed in the fieldwork. This leads me to propose a theory of the biblical perception of reality I present in chapter 4 and which I have applied further in the thesis. This will constitute the first part of the chapter.

In the last part of the chapter I present some of the hermeneutic theories adopted from linguistic anthropology for understanding the interrelation of evangelicals with the biblical texts that supply believers with meaning in their daily lives. I finish the chapter with an overview and discussion of the ethnographies and literature made in the region of the former Soviet Union on the themes related to my research: 1) politics; 2) mission; 3) engagement and establishment of rehabilitation centres.

Anthropology of Christianity

The sub discipline of the anthropology of Christianity was established in the early 2000s (Aielo 2014; Robbins 2014). From its establishment until now the new sub-discipline has dealt with the changing body of studies of Christianity as a whole by applying theories and approaches. One of the most significant insights developing from this discipline was to pay greater attention to the inner mechanisms that drive and direct communities and believers, rather than solely focusing on the external features (Haynes 2014: Robbins 2014). Ever since the sub-discipline of the anthropology of Christianity was established, a significant expansion of the literature has occurred (Bialecki 2017; Bielo 2009; Elisha 2011; Engelke 2007; Haynes 2017; Howell 2012; Luhrmann 2012a; Meyer 2015; Mosse 2012; Smilde 2007; Tomlinson 2009).

Scholars working in the sub-discipline of the anthropology of Christianity call researchers to pay more attention and focus on evangelicals' spiritual experience, which encompasses and affects believers' private and social life. Thus, one of the central arguments of my dissertation is that when studying religious groups, it is vital to focus on people's inner perceptions, reactions, Bible interpretations and religious experiences. Only viewing religion through the prism of features such as societal changes, economy and community would provide us with not only a superficial understanding of evangelicals, but also misleading, as the life of the Bible is real and vital for them personally, guiding believers in their everyday life, albeit in different ways and using the Bible to support different interests and perspectives.

The anthropologists engaged in this sub discipline proposed new theories and developed existing theories and approaches to study religious experience and the sociality of Christians (Bielo 2004, 2007; Cannell 2006; Robbins 2003, 2007). It was noted that a good start for fruitful work with changing Christianity is to trace the social life of discourses (Bialecki and Pinal 2011: 279). According to Bielo (2008), one way to move the anthropology of Christianity forward is to pay closer attention to the Bible: 'First, how Christians interact with the Bible –

hermeneutically and otherwise – needs to be a central analytical problem for the emerging project of the anthropology of Christianity' (2008: 4). However, rather than concentrating on the internal, rhetorical properties of the texts, anthropologists are encouraged to pay more attention to the dynamic of language through which the meaning of the texts is raised, negotiated, interpreted and proceeded (Bielo 2004). In other words, the Bible is important not as much in itself, as a closed text, but in terms of giving multiple daily individual and social instructions (Bielo 2007). Here we need to have in mind that at the core of evangelicals' identity is the belief that the Bible is inerrant. That inerrancy of the Bible is constantly in use by believers in their tireless efforts of studying the biblical texts and adapting those texts to contemporary daily events and situations.

However, while developing my dissertation on the anthropology of Christianity, I was also aware of the shortages of the sub-discipline. Howell (2003), for example noticed that literature is already overwhelmingly focused on Pentecostalism and the up-coming anthropology of Christianity was at risk of becoming the anthropology of Pentecostalism (Howell 2003). Anthropologists, studying in places where evangelical movement experience vibrant growth, prevailed in representing an ideational and cultural orientation (Comaroff 2010; Hann 2007; McDougall 2009). This led to a situation where cosmological concepts and values were assessed more than Christian social institutions, such as churches and denominations and their different political and economic situations through history (Hann 2007, 2014). It seems as an exchange of accusations that researchers moved from one extreme to the other: The scholars working in the sub-disciple of anthropology of Christianity blame social scientists for not paying attention to the personal spiritual experiences and inner theology when they study Christian believers. On the other side anthropology of Christianity is blamed for underestimating the importance of secular and religious institutions and historical interrelations between them in formation of a particular condition where believers are situated and act (Hann 2007). My goal for the study therefore was to find and keep the balance between personal religious experiences and my informants' perception of the world as well as the

historically established and recently developing relationship between state, institution and evangelicals that make an impact on the contemporary evangelical movement in Ukraine.

One more shortcoming of the sub-discipline is that in twenty years of development, the sub-discipline had not yet elaborated frameworks that could help to conceptualize varied and multi-faceted Christianity as an identifiable object (Haynes 2014). In other words, we can see that anthropologists working with Orthodox, or Catholics in Eastern Europe are hardly involved in the anthropology of Christianity. It seems that in some places like former Soviet states political and economic context is more important for the development of the church than Christianity *per se*. Maybe that explains why ethnographies under the discipline of anthropology of Christianity richly represent some geographical locations, such as South America, Africa, and Oceania, where evangelical Christianity is on the rise, and ignore others, such as Eastern Europe. Therefore, my contribution to the sub-discipline consists in attributing it to the region of Eastern Europe, where religious life faced dramatic changes starting from the last decades of the 20th century. Another poorly represented theme in the sub-discipline is the lack of studies on the phenomenon of contemporary mission.[27] Thus, another contribution I make to the anthropology of Christianity is analysing contemporary mission and its impact in the transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement.

[27] The beginning of the contemporary, or modern mission could be traced in Lausanne Congress, which was held in July 1974 to support evangelical mission among non-Christians and nominal Christians. There the main aims and strategies of the global missionary movement were set out (see https://www.lausanne.org). One of the characteristics of the contemporary mission is that mission usually acts both ways. That means that countries contributing to sending missionaries abroad at the same time receive missionaries coming to other countries. Independent Ukraine became a global player, so the country is also a sender and a receiver of missionaries.

Inner Theology

The rapidly changing nature of Christianity in the last decades of the 20th century has both inspired interest and given reason for concern among anthropologists. The interest was triggered by such characteristics as the fast spreading of evangelical denominations all around the world, especially in South America, Asia, Africa and Pacific. Social scientists were focusing on their adaptation to meet the spiritual needs of the locals; their engagement in social and political life and the importance and the focus of evangelicals on spiritual experience which encompasses and permeates both people's private and social life (Bielo 2012; Harding 2000; Jakobsen 2011; Luhrmann 2004; Robbins 2014). Some scholars have argued that there is a tendency to neglect the importance of religious experience inside the discipline of anthropology (Cannell 2005, 2006; Harding 1991; Robbins 2003, 2006a). These critics have argued that without taking the inner theology and perception of the world inside religious groups and communities carefully into consideration, existing scholarly terms and concepts are often inadequate for studying contemporary Christianity.

Anthropological studies on religion cover a broad variety of themes as well as many and diverse regions and places, amounting to a significant body of literature on the topic. Without a doubt, the study of modern Christianity has made a significant impact on the anthropology of religion (Hann 2007). However, in the early 2000s there was a call to establish "the anthropology of Christianity as a self-conscious, comparative project" (Robbins 2003: 191). Starting with Harding (1991) who claimed that Christianity and Christians were stigmatised within anthropology, it was argued that anthropologists did not take Christianity seriously (Robbins 2006a: 285) and thus resisted taking the religious experiences of others seriously as well (Cannell 2006: 3). Christianity "was an inauthentic accretion to the cultures, a colonial importation … that obscures the real object of ethnographic interest" (Whitehouse 2006: 295). In his contribution to the debate, Webb Keane (2006) argued that there is "a tendency to subordinate Christianity as a religion of transcendence to its institutional forms or its service to the this-worldly problems with which the secular scholar,

naturally, feels more at home" (Keane 2006: 309). It was found that the existing model of Christianity was too narrow and ascetic (Cannell 2005), that Christianity was simplified and seen as a homogenous, monolithic 'church' without distinguishing features (Barker 1992; Cannell 2006).

The question emerges: how and why did the relationship between anthropology and Christianity start to be seen as so problematic from the point of view of some researchers (Coleman 2010; Firth 2013; Hiebert 1978; Priest 2001)? In order to answer this question, it is worth to start from the works of anthropologists (Crapanzano 2000; Harding 1987; 2000) and sociologists (Ammerman 1987; Bartkowski 1996; Stromberg 1993) who began to use the inner theology, the rhetoric, and narratives of conversion of the various Christian groups as valuable data in their research. These works led to efforts to reflect and transpose the focus from research of the content of Christianity as an institution, to the study of Christianity as a form of life (Jørgensen 2011; Robbins 2007).

Robbins (2014) put the explanation forward of how and why there is a turn to a more reflective anthropology of Christianity. He suggested that the emergence of the anthropology of Christianity was provoked by the fast growth of Pentecostals and of charismatic Christianity around the world, which began in the 1980s (Robbins 2014: S161; see also Casanova 2001; Howell 2003; Martin 2002; Robbins 2004: Synan 1997). Together with the explosive growth of Pentecostals and charismatics, anthropologists started to analyse Christian religiosity while to an increasing extent focusing on the religious experiences, which pervade private and social life of those believers (Robbins 2014). Thus, the voices calling researchers to the inner theology of believers into consideration allow us to focus on evangelicals' perception of the world, which is heavily impacted by their beliefs and religious experiences.

With the aim to investigate the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals I incorporated the findings and suggestions of anthropologists working in the sub-discipline into the approach of my study. That means that when studying the communities of evangelical Christians I took into consideration both evangelical

groups as institutions that drive and direct believers, and individual evangelical Christians that are developing and changing in accordance to their personal religious activities, experiences, and emotions. Becoming an evangelical Christian is not just inheritance of a set of beliefs, practices, and behavioural habits; it involves developing a particular set of skills (Malley 2004). The latter I refer to as the biblical perception of reality, which is my theoretical contribution of this dissertation. This theoretical framing emphasises change regarding the believer's perspective on the surrounding world, which differs from views held before conversion. This transformation of one's perception occurs through a prolonged learning process in which other believers, usually members of the same community, also play an active role. Nevertheless, the biblical perception of reality is mostly acquired through personal religious activities. These activities, such as readings, contemplations, and interpretations of biblical texts I explore through my study. The other central example of the biblical perception of reality I provide through the research is the deep immersion of believers into the biblical events that they see as timeless repeating patterns. An event from the life of a believer can correspond to a given biblical text, which gives the recent event meaning and confirms the believer's sense of living and acting in accordance to the infinite principles of Christianity, and at the same time helps the believers to deal with different kind of issues and challenges in their everyday life. The advantage of taking this approach is that by engaging equally seriously in religious events and interpretations as the believers do themselves, we get a much deeper and multifaceted understanding of evangelicals' life. It remains a bit ironic that this approach, which is self-evident in anthropology when studying other subjects in the discipline, where a core feature is to understand the reality of the people studied, is so hard fought for when it comes to the discipline of Christianity.

Continuity

Keane, Robbins and Harris provide an answer to the dilemma mentioned above. Webb Keane (2006) argues that there is "a tendency to subordinate Christianity as a religion of transcendence to its institutional forms or its service to this-worldly problems with which the secular scholar, naturally, feels more at home" (Keane 2006: 309). Robbins (2003, 2007) and Harris (2006) give an example of the way in which this subordination works. They take the conceptual tool of continuity that, according to the authors, most anthropologists emphasize. Harris and Robbins argue that thinking in terms of continuity is problematic for researching discontinuity and change, especially where Christianity is concerned, because models of change for Christians are based on a different concept of time (Harris 2006: 72; Robbins 2003, 2007); the "truism is that people cannot but perceive the new in terms of their received cultural categories" (Robbins 2007: 10, see also Robbins 2003: 230). This truism is upheld by such conceptions as habitus, longue duree, localisation, indigenisation, and syncretism. Robbins also argues that thinking in terms of continuity does not fit to the experiences of conversion and eschatology in Christianity (Robbins 2003: 221; Robbins 2007: 10). Conversion can be taken as an example as it is a moment of disconnection; it is always an event, a rupture in a person's lifetime. Conversion divides life of believers and is celebrated as time before and time after (Robbins 2003, 2007). A further body of literature appeared following this concept of time within Christianity and the problem of discontinuity (Bialecki 2009; Chua 2012; Engelke 2004, 2009, 2010; Lampe 2010; Mosse 2012; Schieffelin 2014). According to Lampe (2010), "Christianity is grounded in rupture on several levels, such as transcendence and incarnation, death and resurrection, and repentance and forgiveness" (Lampe 2010: 79). Anthropologists studying Christianity need to reconsider their nearly exclusive commitment to culturally constructed continuity thinking where "the past is assessed, the present is experienced, and the future is viewed" (ibid).

According to Howell (2014) "arguably, the most significant theoretical contributions to anthropology from the anthropology of Christianity have come

in the conversation about rupture and continuity" (Howell 2014). The debates on continuity and discontinuity are again a part of the broader theme of believers' perception of the world impacted by their religious beliefs and experiences. This theoretical contribution made a significant impact on my study as well. The theme of discontinuity and transformation are closely related. Parallel to religious transformation I explore the discontinuity and transformation of post-Soviet societies. In the next section I reflect on the experience of social and political discontinuity of Eastern Europeans, and scholars' reaction to the social and political rupture after the fall of the Soviet regime in the region. This section on establishing the sub discipline of anthropology of Christianity can also serve as an exploration of a kind of discontinuity and transformation in academia. Thus, evangelicalism being based on the idea of rupture has an affinity with wider social and political changes.

In the Aftermath of the End of Socialism and Dealing with It

The situation that arose in the former socialist part of Europe after the dissolution of the Soviet Union has commonly been named 'post-socialism' and 'transition'. These concepts went along with the idea that the experience of the present linked the past with the future by the restoration of 'Europeanness' - the establishment of democracies, reorientations to market economies and the formation of internationally-minded 'new citizens' (Bafoil 2009, De Munck 2008, Grabbe 2005, Heintz 2006, Kaneff 2002, Schöpflin 2000.) In other words, the concepts represented the idea of a restored continuity, a kind of awakening from the momentary lapse of reason, which nations experienced during several decades under communism. These ideas of transformation were not only used and developed by political experts and economists in western Europe, but was likewise approved and nurtured by their counterparts in the east (Abrahams 1996). While nobody expected that the transition would be a straightforward and painless road to a new society, it was still believed that given the right conditions, stimuli and support, capitalism would be the inevitable outcome (Bridger and Pine 1998). While some anthropologists felt free to take and use these concepts

in their studies (for example Verdery 1991), they were also heavily criticised from the beginning (see Hann 1994, Humphrey 1998, 2002b).

The manifold experiences of socialism, cultural differences, various and unlike impacts on countries and local societies as well, and the different forms of reaction to them made the process of change unpredictable and different in each former socialist country (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 1994; Humphrey 2002a, 2002b; Pine 1993, 2002; Verdery 2003). Kideckel (2002) has additionally argued that the former socialist countries incorporated capitalism and liberalism extremely quickly, especially those who were applying for EU-membership. And the concept of capitalism in the applicant countries was interpreted in even more radical versions than in the existing EU-countries at the time. On the other hand, although the physical division of Europe through the "Iron Curtain" officially ceased to exist, the symbolical border remains; West and East are resistant categories which are still vividly used both by public and scholars alike (Vonderau 2008). Thus, the concept of transition fails to come to terms with these manifold and different developments that took largely different directions than originally foreseen. Thereby, the concept of transition failed to serve as a bridge for continuity in a period, which more than anything was marked by total rupture. Consequently, the concept of post-socialism was increasingly criticised, as the outcome of the changes neither was a continuation of socialism, nor a so-called transition to textbook capitalism, but something quite different (Hann 1994; Harboe Knudsen 2012, Morris and Polese 2014; Sampson 2002).

This conflict between the evident rupture manifested by the disappearance of the 'Second World', and the attempts to neglect the impact of the rupture intrigued me. Despite the fact that discontinuity was so massive both in social, political and economic spheres, a radical break for millions and millions of citizens, it was still dealt with in terms of a continuation, by scholars and as well as by ordinary people. Indeed, it was far from only scholars that were faced with this dilemma. It was not only marked by attempts to create the wanted transition to a capitalist future, it was also used to heal the wounds of the past. In this sense many politicians and people from the intelligentsia sought respite in an idealised *pre-*

Soviet past, while largely neglecting the impact of the regime which had been in-between. Giordiano and Kostova (2002), in their work on Soviet memory conceptualise such manoeuvres as *actualised history.* Hereby they point to, that the past is used to serve present goals. Thus, the most suitable parts of the past are highlighted in the narrative of the nation (or in people's own narratives), in order to secure the story they presently want to tell, while other parts of the past are neglected. We can look at two examples of this strategy. One is described by the anthropologist Ida Harboe Knudsen who, in her monograph (2012) on the implementation of EU law in rural Lithuania, shows how a long term member of the Communist Party was able to overcome his own problematic past by projecting his new image as a protector of old Lithuanian traditions, for example by the use of horses (not tractors) and pre-Soviet symbols in a constant glorification of the traditional Lithuanian peasant (Harboe Knudsen 2012). In another example the anthropologist Agata Ładykowska who made her research on Orthodox in Russia (2011) illustrates how teachers who actively had been engaged in the atheist education during the Soviet period, now with equal energy were dedicated to the religious education of young people after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The explanation for this discrepancy the anthropologist had constantly heard was "Russia has always been Orthodox" and "The Moral Code of the Builder of Communism is nothing else but a disguised Ten Commandments" (Ładykowska 2011:30).

Thus, the situation that arose in the former socialist region of Europe at the end of the Soviet Union in general was an example of disjuncture for the local citizens, which led to a dilemma of discontinuity. In the face of the enormous changes in politics and economy as well as rapid changes in social life there were strong attempts to restore the impression of continuity, also by using general concepts of 'transition' and 'post-socialism'. The examples above show how individuals adopted to the changes by renegotiating their own past in order to keep and secure their class, status, and job positions. However, not everyone succeeded in this adaptation. As has been argued by Klumbyte (2011), with the example of Lithuania, many people soon realised that they had little in common with the Europe that they sought to emulate. Many of them dealt with this by turning on

Russian TV in the comfort of their own home, as it gave them a sense of belonging to a past they knew and understood better than their diffuse present and future (Klumbyte 2011, see also De Munck 2008).

In the beginning of this section I briefly presented the broader context of total rupture of 1980s – 1990s in which Ukrainian evangelicals was embedded, just as I described the strategies of dealing with the dilemma of discontinuity. Religious and secular conversions and re-conversions from one ideology to another have in many instance pragmatic, utilitarian goals. Continuity for individuals in these cases serves as a strategy that helps them to keep their identity coherent. Religion does not necessarily play a part when we speak about secular conversion. The analytical focus of my thesis, however, is the reaction and perception of changes among a particular religious group in a particular region. How did the Ukrainian evangelical Christians react to the total rupture of late 1980s – early 1990s? Are they different now and if so, what stimulated them to change?

Working on my fieldwork data I found a kind of equilibrium between rupture and continuity in the evangelicals' perception of time. While it is crucial to take the concept of discontinuity into account in our analyses of Christianity, it is not contradicting likewise to stress the role that continuity plays in the lives of Ukrainian evangelicals. Evangelical Christians give a lot of importance to the claim that their communities are an authentic continuation of the early Christian Church. These believers find all the changes they have experienced recently as a continuation and repetition of events once captured in the Bible. Although the events, personal histories and rules in the contemporary world are somehow reshaped, for evangelicals they are still findable and recognizable in the scriptures. As a whole, they see their lives embedded in events that once happened in the past, written in the Bible, which serves as an infinite source of instruction and template for Christian believers of all times and all places. Redressed by geographical and technological differences, once written in the scriptures, biblical events were and are constantly and literally repeated in a circle of continuities. For the evangelical Christians here and now is often filtered

and reinterpreted through a biblical event that happened then and there. It becomes a kind of repetition, or a remake of the same song, which still sounds a bit differently from the original version. I have observed these ways the evangelicals interpret and understand their situation in relation to the Bible numerous times.

Based on these observations I develop a theoretical frame that I coin the "biblical perception of reality". I present this framing in Chapter 4 and use it in my dissertation to explain how personal believers' changing worldview provokes a predisposition towards rupture and discontinuity that mentally and spiritually fits the macroscale into the small and individual level of change and vice versa. Thus, my approach helps to better understand and grasp the formation of a socio-religious cosmology of evangelical believers, their perception of time and the ways they deal with personal and wider scale challenges and ruptures.

Ethnographies and Theories

In this section I introduce some hermeneutic theories proposed by the scholars working in sub-discipline of Anthropology of Christianity. These are important as a tool for understanding how evangelicals interact with the Bible extracting the meaning from the biblical texts. In this section I also provide an overview and discuss ethnographies on religion done in the region of the former Soviet Union focusing on the themes related to my study, such as 1) religion and politics/nationalism; 2) mission; 3) the engagement of religious groups in serving in the rehabilitation centres.

The anthropologist Douglas Rogers (2005) directed attention to the fact that to study religion in the socialist period was "at best difficult and at worst impossible" (Rogers 2005: 5). Even after the end of Soviet-style socialism "religion had been a relatively marginal topic of interest among anthropologists working in the region" (ibid). However, within the last decade there has been an increasing amount of anthropological literature on religion in the region of the former Soviet Union. These studies illuminate religious developments in the

public sphere (Hann 2006), show the negotiation of religious identity in daily life (Louw 2007), highlight the dynamics of conversion (Pelkmans 2009), analyse interrelations between religion and society (Steinberg and Wanner 2008), or look into the evangelical renaissance after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Wanner 2007). My study thematically stays closest to the last of mentioned topics and of the researchers. I already wrote in the chapter 1 about Wanner's influence of choosing the topics of mission, transformation of evangelicals, and the country of Ukraine, which is the topic for my own research. Earlier in this chapter I introduced findings and suggestions of scholars working in the sub discipline of anthropology of Christianity I embodied in my research. Particularly these scholars engaged in this discipline are exploring how believers' inner theology, that is their personal religious activities, experiences, and emotions, interacts with the believers' stance and decision-making process in broader society. I study evangelicals' worldview through the lens of interpretational techniques of biblical texts. As far as I am aware, there is no ethnography produced on that topic in the region of Eastern Europe.

And this is an obvious thematic gap in the region. My study contributes in starting to fill it as the exploration of prevailing hermeneutics, and techniques of interpretation of biblical texts employed by Christian groups can tell us about the formation of ideas inside that group and how theological speculations are realised and operated in practice by its members. Bielo calls on us to pay closer attention to the way believers interact with the Bible (2008). It is important studying born-again Christians to find out how they "grapple with the semiotics of their faith through their approaches to reading" (Engelke 2009: 155). The focus on Christians' interaction with the Bible is "valuable because it allows us to analyse how, and to what extent, religious texts are made meaningful and authoritative within particular Christian traditions and communities of practice" (Engelke 2009: 152). Studying evangelicals' relation with the Bible is a study of how the implications of the biblical texts "are organised in the minds of evangelicals", how the Bible for them relates "to other texts, talk, and behaviour" (Malley 2004: 37).

Bielo (2007) proposes two theories, of recontextualization and of hermeneutic circles adopted from linguistic anthropology, which can be used as analytical tools in order to understand how meaning is extracted from the text and discussed by a group of believers. The theory of recontextualization (see also Bauman and Briggs 1990) refers to extracting the segment from the original text and inserting it in a new contextual setting. Led by meta-commentary, the text becomes meaningful in a new discursive situation. Recontextualization can help obfuscate the responsibility of the speaker and to accumulate temporary authority of the initial text (Bauman 2004; Kuipers 1990). The interaction in this case is between the way a speaker (a leader) inserts interpretations through recontextualization of the texts and the interpretive environment of the rest in the group (Bielo 2007: 8). This interaction shows Bible study as a case of a hermeneutic circle (Bielo 2007). The theory of the hermeneutic circle suggests that readers are moving away from a given text as they initially bring their assumptions to the text (the nature of the text, the source of construction of the text), which create conditions of understanding the text in a particular way (ibid.). These assumptions can help to understand how the reader is interpreting the text (Bartkowski 1996). In the case of the biblical text, explicit elements of the textual ideology are seen through the interpretive concerns of the group, and implicitly through the insertion of interpretations via recontextualization. Thus, "the ideological assumption about the Bible as a text impacts the interpretive discourse […] which in turn reasserts elements of the textual ideology." (Bielo 2007: 8).

On the similar topic of evangelicals' rhetorical skills Susan Harding (2000) argues that for evangelicals the mastery of God's word makes Him alive for believers. Harding told an excellent story of how she was driving to the motel where she lived after having had an intense interview with Reverend Cantrell in the Baptist church. She was very close to cause an accident and was almost crushed by another car in the intersection. She wrote, "I slammed on the brakes, sat stunned for a split second, and asked myself "What is God trying to tell me?" It was my voice, but not my language." (Harding 1987: 169; 2000: 33). Although the anthropologist was not a believer, Harding asked the question, which is a

starting point for an evangelical who is ready to enter the biblical perception of reality. “The membrane between disbelief and belief is much thinner than we think,” the anthropologist concluded (Harding 1987: 178; 2000: 58). I can add here that the biblical perception of reality begins when a person starts to hear through the membrane the answers to the questions like the one asked by the Harding on her way to the motel.

Harding, who was doing her research among the conservative evangelicals in the U.S., emphasized their rhetorical skills. She claimed concluding her research: ‘speaking is believing’ (Harding 1987:179; 2000:33, 60). Harding argued that it is Bible-based language; the speech that persuades individuals transfigures them and their reality in a way that the supernatural becomes real, perceptible and undeniable (Harding 1987; 2000). According to her, language alone causes experiences that lead to conversion. However, as my fieldwork showed even without rhetorical skills, being “babies in belief”, “babies in Christ” evangelicals are able to speak, evangelise, and convert others. I argue that it is not Bible-based language, as Harding argues, but living in a Bible-based reality makes God real, alive and perceptible. From the excerpts above we see that a believer needs to have a will to succeed in this matter and like my study showed a believer has to put much effort into acquiring and mastering the Bible.

Similarly, the anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann (2004) criticized Harding’s claim that the belief in transfiguring reality comes only through speech. Luhrmann suggested (2004) that intimate and personal spiritual experience could be learned not only by linguistic and cognitive knowledge but also through bodily and emotional techniques, which help to identify the experience of God’s presence. She describes three kinds of learning that take place: 1) cognitive/linguistic, that consists of lexicon, which is learning the important phrases; the syntactic, which is “an underlying logic that knits together different phrases” (Luhrmann 2004: 521); and specific conversion narrative “to depict their [congregants’] own entry into committed evangelical Christianity” (Luhrmann 2004: 522). 2) metakinetic, which refers to mind-body states of subjectively experienced, though well known and identified within the group

God's personal presence that could be called "dissociative". The attention during this experience is focused and manipulated to produce shifts in conscious awareness, or (and) sensory hallucinatory, when people see or hear things which are not audible or visible for others. 3) 'a relational practice', which means to learn how to speak to God through prayer and how to receive God's answer through the Bible (Luhrmann 2004). I suggest that in both cases of the importance of rhetorical skills in the findings of Harding and learning of religious experiences in the theory proposed by Luhrmann, the significance of the religious group is underestimated. Luhrmann mentioned the community's role in recognition of personal religious experiences by other members. I claim though that different members of communities and the whole community are usually involved in the processes of teaching a newly convert or a guest how to become a Christian or learning rhetorical skills based on scripture. Moreover, I argue that it is not enough for a single-handed believer to have a will for entering the other kind of reality. As a rule, there are others who become important, significant on the way of learning the ways of reading, interpreting the biblical texts, and extracting the meanings from it.

Biblical perception of reality is my theoretical contribution. I suggest the theory as a fruitful tool in studying and understanding the formation and transformation of evangelical identity as I show in the thesis how believers learn to interpret the world and events according to the biblical texts. The investigation of the biblical perception of reality should be understood as one of the questions addressed by the thesis. This contribution is best linked to my main focus, which is rupture and transformation. I argue that the ability of the community to transform so quickly is partly explained by their biblical perception of reality, which predisposes their readiness for rupture and disjunction. In the way of studying the Bible a believer learns of plenty of ruptures and rebirths that have their own meaning. Some of those events repeat themselves in the believer's life carrying the same biblical meaning to him. By learning the biblical perception of reality, the believer learns to recognize the events and their meaning that come from and repeat the biblical ones. It is reasonable to assume that the biblical perception of reality is more pronounced

among the new style evangelicals compared with the traditional evangelicals. As I will show in the next chapter, the traditional evangelicals became attached to a range of practices and views that were not examined but mostly repeated. By contrast, the new style evangelicals are struggling to explain things happening around them and to adapt to these changes. They therefore have more need for more active engagement with biblical texts to find ways of doing this. If the traditional evangelicals are defined by their beliefs and their practices, the new style evangelicals, according to findings in my fieldwork seem more defined by their trying to understanding and accommodate rapid changes and events around them, for which they need more active Biblical study and support.

The theory of recontextualization I presented earlier will be useful in the chapter 5 and I will refer to it in analysing the rapid changes in belief and preferences of the pastor of the Irpin church. However, for the analysis of believers' inner theology I mostly propose and use the theory of "biblical perception of reality, which I explore in chapter 4.

As the amount of anthropological literature on religion in the region of the former Soviet Union increased with time there were efforts to systemize what was done. Rogers (2005) identified four broad themes of interest to anthropologists of religion working in the region.[28] Although the themes are so broad, they should not be seen as exhaustive. Moreover, it should be noted that the named themes normally are intertwined with each other in the same study. Analyses of missions and conversion, for example are usually linked very closely with economic transformation (Caldwell 2005; Vallikivi 2009) and ethnic/national identity (Lankauskas 2008, 2009; Vate 2009; Wanner 2004). My study also thematically merges themes of religious transformation, national identity, and analyses of missions, conversion and selfhood.

[28] The four themes are: "continued studies of religion and ethnic/national identity; considerations of religion and economic transformation; analyses of missions, conversion and selfhood; and emergent efforts to write ethnographies of atheism, secularism and desecularisation" (Rogers 2005: 9).

More recently another attempt for systematisation of four broad themes, or thematic complexes was presented by a group of anthropologists, who like Rogers conducted their fieldwork in Russia. The researchers worked on the project entitled "Religion and Morality in European Russia", which took place in 2006-2009.[29] The group 'was exploring the social dynamics of post-Soviet Russian Orthodoxy' (Benovska-Sabkova, Köllner, Komáromi et al. 2010: 16). The group suggested the systematised thematic approach, which almost overlapped the previous list, presented by Rogers. It consisted of researches on suffering and illness; atheism, conversion and education; money, business and material goods; power and nationalism. What is more interesting and closer in line with my study, is that in their memorandum scholars underlined that "Russian Orthodoxy's emphasis on continuity is remarkable in comparison with the Protestant converts analysed by Robbins (2007), who readily acknowledge ruptures in their moral world" (Benovska-Sabkova, Köllner, Komáromi et al. 2010: 17). Thus, we see the rupture or discontinuity to be intrinsic to evangelicalism. It is shown to be played out in two related ruptures in the social/political context – first the rupture with the Soviet/Communist system in the late 80s and then the rupture with the 'Russian world' from 2014 onwards. We could argue here that Ukrainian Evangelicals may have a particular affinity with the rupture with Russia, as the continuity, that was shown above to be feature of Orthodoxy, is more alien to evangelicalism due to the centrality of rupture to its core beliefs.

I have already discussed in the section above the strategies for saving the feeling of continuity and of a whole, unbroken identity in the period of total rupture. Recently atheistic Russia now having 75-85 million people who profess Orthodoxy their religion – 82% of ethnic Russians (Benovska-Sabkova, Köllner, Komáromi et al. 2010: 17) – could serve as an excellent field for exploring the interaction between social and personal rupture and the attempts to restore the sense of continuity.

[29] The researchers working on the project were Milena Benovska-Sabkova, Tobias Köllner, Tünde Komáromi, Agata Ładykowska, Detelina Tocheva, and Jarrett Zigon.

Here I would also like to take issue with Rogers claim about the interest of anthropologists working in the region of the former Soviet Union in analysing of mission. On the contrary, I claim that there are very few studies done on mission. For example, the anthropologist Mathijs Pelkmans in his edited volume likewise noticed the lack of attention paid to missionary activities in the former Soviet Union. He argues that researchers "have been remarkably silent" on themes of missionary activity and the occurrence of conversion (Pelkmans 2009:1). According to Pelkmans, his edited volume "rectifies this obvious gap" (ibid). Unfortunately, in reality most of the chapters in the volume do not touch the theme of missionary activity at all and the chapters in the book are united only through the theme of conversion. One of the chapters in the volume that does discuss missionary activities, however, is a chapter written on Ukraine, and again, written by Catherine Wanner. That suggests that most of the research done on religion is this country and on mission in the region is the work of one person. It is, however, remarkable, that Vate in her chapter in the volume noticed a Ukrainian Pentecostal missionary working among Chukchi; and Vallikivi in his chapter presents a Ukrainian origin Baptist missionary among Nenets reindeer shepherds. This indirect data shows how actively the Evangelical missionaries from Ukraine are working in Siberia, and points to the interesting phenomenon of the people who formerly were receiving missionaries, and now are actively producing them (see chapter 7).

Likewise, Catherine Wanner has done several studies related to missionaries (2004, 2007, 2009); one of them is an excellent study on encounters between local Ukrainian Baptists and their new acquaintances, American missionaries (Wanner 2004). Here Wanner shows the different and often opposing manners in which American missionaries and local Baptists understand and enact their relations with the church. Thus, although several research projects have been conducted with a focus on the relationship between Ukrainian evangelical Christians and their Western counterparts (Naumescu 2006; Richardson 2006; Wanner 2003; 2004; 2006; 2007), in-depth research focusing on the themes of the internal dynamics of the local communities and the way these are influenced by foreign missionaries is still needed. While I myself cannot claim to fill the

obvious gap that there currently exists with regard to missionary activities, I contribute by making some detailed descriptions of the different forms of mission, the value and meaning given to mission by the missionaries themselves as well as the impact of mission as experienced by my informants in Ukraine (see chapter 7).

It is difficult to avoid the interconnection between religion and ethnic/national identity when one studies religion in contemporary Ukraine. We could also claim that the story of the former socialist region possibly could be built on ethnic relations and raising nationalisms. Moreover, the anthropologist Peter van der Veer in his comparative study on the development of nationalism in India and China (2015) claimed, "religious and political practice in the modern world is in important ways shaped and framed by nationalism" (van der Veer 2015: 7). Nationalism is a dominant form of cultural politics through which it creates conditions and transforms religious practices (van der Veer 2015: 19). According to the anthropologist "religious practice can be about health, protection, welfare, good luck, a host of things, but nationalism still frames its conditions of possibility" (van der Veer 2015: 10). Thus, even on a global scale nationalisms are not weakened by globalization and transnationalism but go hand in hand with them and affect political and religious life. Nationalism is a dominant form of cultural politics through which it creates conditions and transforms religious practices (van der Veer 2015: 19).

I have already mentioned the alliance made between Russian nationalism and Orthodoxy. Creating such alliances by making close links between the national church and national traditions was a quite common in the former Soviet republics (Lankauskas 2008, 2009; Plokhy 2002; Wanner 2007). I explore the theme in chapter 5. However, seen in this context Ukraine is an atypical case. While the country, like its neighbour Russia, is regionally diverse, Ukraine is also claimed to be an Orthodox country. However, in the efforts to build a national Church that was not dependent on Moscow, Ukrainian Orthodoxy historically experienced two schisms and nowadays consists of three different Orthodox Churches with big minorities of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the West, and Protestants.

The easiest way to generalize about the geographical, economical and cultural differences within Ukraine is by recourse to an imaginary dividing line between the two banks of the river Dnepr. The left bank of the river is a place of steppes, heavy industry and dominated by Russian speakers. The right bank is a place of fields and forests, agrarian cultivation and dominated by Ukrainian speakers. The process of rebuilding the Ukrainian nation after it gained its independency in 1991 did not eliminate the division. Neither did it make it a mutually accepted and peaceful coexistence. Rather, an ideological lacuna was created, widened and deepened until the country literally was torn apart. Two revolutions and the war were the events that shook the country, and events that affected all citizens to a lower or higher degree. It is needless to say that Ukrainian Evangelicals as well found themselves under pressure to choose which side they belonged to. Therefore, we need an insight into the spheres standing outside religion but influencing the life of churches, communities and believers. Many Ukrainians however, especially in the East and in the South of Ukraine have ambivalent, passive and mixed identities (Kuzio 2015).[30] Rather than having a strong feeling of belonging or having an ethnic Ukrainian national identity they identified themselves as Eastern Slavs sharing history and culture with Russians, seeing Russian rather than western orientation as the suitable foreign policy of the country (Shulman 2005). Until recently Ukraine had succeeded in peacefully managing tensions between competing nationalisms, inter-ethnic, and linguistic identities (Kuzio 2015). Anti-Russian disposition was mostly attributed to Western Ukraine. However, with the Euromaidan and the Russian intervention Ukrainian patriotism has grown in other parts of the country, and at the same time heightened Ukrainian inter-regional and inter-state conflict (ibid).[31]

[30] Ambivalent and passive identities meant that Russian speaking Ukrainian citizens did not give importance or reflections on their ethnicity. The concept fitted to the stories of my informants from Donbas, who said they did not reflect their ethnicity before the war came to their town and they had to choose between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian identity.

[31] Euromaidan – Ukr. Євромайдан, Rus. Евромайдан was pro-European protest movement against the unexpected last minute decision of the president Viktor Yanukovych to suspend the signing of an association agreement between the EU and Ukraine. The protest started peacefully on 21 November 2013 in Independence Square, Ukr. Майдан Незалежності (Maidan Nezalezhnosti), in Kyiv (ukr. Київ). The movement progressed to streets riots and revolution after the governmental forces attacked the protestors on 30 November 2013. Euromaidan ended on February 2014.

In this dissertation I illustrate and explore some cases of previously politically ambivalent and politically passive evangelicals who after the Euromaidan and Russian intervention claimed their Ukrainian identity and engaged in political life of the country. My fieldwork took partly place with a group of IDPs, a group of Russian speaking evangelicals who fled their homes in Donbas after having chosen Ukrainian identities. On top of the destruction and the burned-down churches the war had also brought an inter-church conflict to their town. Those who saw themselves as Ukrainians had to flee, and those who saw their future more with the eastern neighbour either stayed or they returned back home after the shooting ended.

After the fall of the Soviet empire evangelicals became involved in different kind of social work and help. They link social services with evangelisation and use a large amount of resources on both. Another central part of my dissertation is the evangelicals' engagement into social service. My special focus is on rehabilitation centres. Some anthropologists have already noticed the theme of the church providing that kind of social services. Wanner (2007) wrote about drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres provided by the Kiev megachurch 'Embassy of God' (Wanner 2007). Two more ethnographies are the study of Baptist rehabilitation centre in Saint Petersburg made by Igor Mikeshin, who is interested in the process of conversion (Mikeshin 2015, 2016). Another ethnography (Zigon 2011) was carried out in the outskirts of Sankt Petersburg in a drug treatment and rehab facility sponsored by the Russian Orthodox Church. However, Zigon, is most interested in morality in the neoliberal state. Chapter 6 of my dissertation is on the evangelicals doing social services. The chapter mainly contains the voices of previous clients of rehab centres, as they impressed me the most during the fieldwork. I argue that new converts who joined evangelical churches are one of the most visible transformational agents of Ukrainian evangelical movement. My contribution is in exploring the ways those newly converted recent clients of rehab centres contributed to the transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement.

The theme of changing Ukrainian evangelicals is explored by Catherine Wanner who attributes the phenomenon with "the enormous traffic of evangelicals relocating and traveling after 1991", which "quickly ushered Soviet believers into a far wider transnational religious field that brought images, knowledge, and connections to people from other places (Wanner 2007:5). By relocating, I suppose Wanner means those hundreds of thousand refugees who left and emigrants still leaving the country. Those travelling are missionaries, plane after plane arriving to Ukraine from the West, mostly the US. That was my initial image when I arrived to Lviv for fieldwork. However, what I found on those religious travellers from Ukraine was rather bitterness expressed by local evangelicals. People had a hard time forgetting that the believers "in the first row" that is leaders of their churches, had left the country as refugees and by disappearing had left the local communities without any church leadership. The bitterness was mixed with concern that new emigrants, this time "rare row sitters," that is less active members, now were leaving to Europe, mostly to Poland for work. The concern was based on the assumption that "rare row sitters" that are leaving the country are losing their evangelical identity without having a church nearby. What I learned about missionaries is that despite the fact that there had been many of them, they had not left any particular impression in the communities, if they remembered them at all now two decades later. Thus, what I met was that all that large-scale global dislocations had in reality left either bad memories, or low impact to the transformation of evangelical communities inside Ukraine.

Conclusion

In this chapter I focused on the critique of and discussions on the research regarding Christianity. The critique was presented and discussions initiated by the scholars working in the sub-discipline of Anthropology of Christianity. The critique was directed to the tendency in Social Science to study Christian groups as institutions giving no or very minor attention to religious experience of believers, it is their inner theology, which often serves as meaning and a decision-making factor to an even greater extent than institutional directives.

In the chapter I paid attention to two themes raised by the anthropologists working in the sub-discipline, which were relevant for my study: the inner theology and discontinuity. The argument was that Christians' perception of time is based on the reflection and expectations of rupture, rather than on building the line of continuity as a characteristic part of commonsensical and academic way of thinking. This insight I took and developed it adapting to the broader context of the whole society. I showed in the chapter that the total rupture many millions experienced unexpectedly after the fall of the Soviet regime forced change on entire societies throughout the former Soviet Union. I showed in the chapter the many ways the post-Soviet citizens were dealing with the unexpected discontinuity they were thrown in to. These cases mostly showed the efforts to build logical ties that could serve as the appearance of continuities with pre-Soviet or/and Soviet past. In the case of Ukrainian evangelicals, they were confronted with the similar choice between either building continuity with the Soviet tradition, or cutting the ties with it.

In the last part of the chapter I presented some hermeneutic theories I will use further in the thesis and made an overview and discussed ethnographies on Christianity done in the region of the former Soviet Union. I especially focused on the themes relevant to my study, which were religion and politics/nationalism, Christian service of rehabilitation centres, and Christian mission.

3. Evangelicals

Introduction

In this chapter I will introduce the people from my research to the reader; along with descriptions of the places I conducted fieldwork. I start by proposing a definition of evangelicalism – the set of beliefs that are at the core of evangelical identity. This definition is important for this study, as I will refer to it throughout the thesis.

The aim of my research is to investigate the transformation of Ukrainian evangelical Christians that started after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In this chapter I explain the background of the many changes that came along in the period after the Soviet regime. Through the example of evangelical movement in the US I will demonstrate, that the tendency to change is an inherent rather than exclusive characteristic of evangelical identity. However, the cases of evangelical Christians in the US and Ukraine are not comparable. Ukrainian evangelicals as a part of the Soviet evangelical Christians were separated from their western counterparts during the cold war. During that period Soviet evangelicals developed their own tradition. In order to give an overview of the specific context of Ukrainian evangelicals, much space will be devoted to a historical overview of how the particular Soviet tradition evolved.

I will proceed with a discussion with Wanner on the Soviet evangelical tradition and the reasons for the development of its ethic and style. After presenting a harsh critique of the Soviet evangelical tradition given by western and local counterparts, I offer two sections to show how the clashes and conflicts between traditional and new style evangelicals in Ukraine emerge in their daily lives. Both sections are based on data from my fieldwork. I wish to give an impression of the matter of such conflicts, which is in the most cases are related to differences in dress code and behavioural ethic. In the last of the two sections I present a person, a Baptist who represents the tradition. The recent story of this believer

provides a vivid insight into real life and concerns of Evangelical Christians in contemporary Ukraine.

Evangelical Identity

Research on Ukrainian evangelical movement requires a working definition of what is meant by the term 'evangelical'. In order to get closer into the inner world of evangelical Christians it is important to find and learn the core characteristics of evangelical identity. Evangelical communities around the world have multiple varieties depending on the places and local histories of established communities. However, evangelicals have a clear set of beliefs and commitments by which it is convenient to define them (Amstutz 2014: 30).[32] One belief is that the Bible is inerrant. According to all evangelical Christians the Bible is God's revelation to humanity. In the Bible you will find all spiritual truth, as well as examples, and instructions that can guide you through life. Another firm belief is that the only way to receive salvation is through conversion, which in short is the personal acceptance of Jesus's atonement on the cross and a 'born again' experience.[33] Another belief is that sharing the Christian message through evangelisation is essential and should be taken as a strong commitment and as an expression of authentic faith (Bebbington 1989; McGrath 1997; Shah 2009). The whole elaboration of the thesis is based with awareness of these beliefs that compose the evangelical identity around the world. My main assumption during the research was that taking into account these core characteristics is a first and important step for a researcher to avoid misunderstandings in studying evangelical Christians.

[32] Here I chose definition of evangelicals based on their theology, as I found it the clearest. The other ways of definitions such as by denominational affiliation, and by self-identification are in my view more vague (for a discussion on the three types of definition see Stiller, Johnson, Stiller, Hutchinson 2015).

[33] Born again – a Christian believer who claims an experience of evangelical conversion. The phrase refers to spiritual rebirth and derives from the episode from the Gospel of John when Jesus is speaking with Jewish Pharisee Nicodemus: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3 King James Bible).

Transformation of Evangelicals

My thesis is about the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. The rising demand and demand for changes inside the evangelical movement is not something unique by itself. For example, the anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann (2004, 2012a, 2012b) who conducted her ethnographic research in the Horizon Christian Fellowship church in the US suggested that, unlike 30-40 years ago, contemporary evangelical Christianity in the U.S. is developing the experience of a remarkably intimate and personal God who for believers becomes a pal, a close friend (Luhrmann 2004, 2012a, 2012b).

Bielo presented (2012) another case of a shifting evangelical identity, the movement called 'emerging church', a growing segment in the body of American evangelicalism. Bielo gives examples of two cases of the 'emerging church' where members have made a shift in their way of organizing their communities, from the focus on human-divine to human-human relations, which for them is a precondition of the first. In elevating interpersonal relationships, they are seeking to achieve the desired sense of community, over "privately held beliefs for defining 'authentic faith'" (Bielo 2012: 258). The 'emerging church' movement started in 1995 and consisted of a harsh cultural critique on conservative evangelicals. Based on that critique emerging evangelicals radically changed the way and the attitude of (re)organizing their relations inside the community toward a more 'authentic' belief (Bielo 2012).

In the thesis I explore two opposing and conflicting branches of Ukrainian evangelical movement. I call them traditional and new style evangelicals. The latter are transforming the face of the evangelical movement in Ukraine. The development of such a deep division between evangelicals is not unique to Ukraine, however. For example, internal disagreements are particularly visible when viewing the differences between "Conservative" and "Progressive" evangelicals in an American context. There Progressive evangelicals, also known as Evangelical Left, appeared in the US post-WWII as a response to the civil

rights movement (Marsden 1991). Constituting the majority, the better-consolidated and more politically active conservative Evangelicals are right wing oriented (Marsden 1990). Both traditions have quite different approaches and ethics, which are represented by their media voices – "Sojourners" for Progressive Evangelicals and "Christianity Today" for conservatives. However, the division between so-called "traditional" and "new style" evangelicals in Ukraine has its own source and causes that differ from their colleagues in the US. Ukrainian evangelical movement does not comfortably fit the patterns of American Evangelical tradition. Firstly, the Ukrainian evangelical movement evolves from the Soviet evangelical tradition which formed in a closed society. It developed in a way that was subordinate to totalitarian government and its legal restrictions, and under its supervision. Therefore, the active involvement in politics, as in the case of "Conservative" evangelicals in the US, was simply impossible for the Soviet evangelicals. Moreover, the context and the circumstances in the new independent state of Ukraine helped to accelerate the growth of new-style evangelicals. Unlike in the US, there was an outgrowth of new-style, not conservative traditionalist evangelicals in Ukraine who challenged the ethic of non-involvement in secular governance. There is a point of comparison here to the evolution of Conservative evangelical societal involvement in the mid-1990s United States. There Conservative evangelical Christians started to participate actively outside their communities by taking part in social life around the country. This included activities such as pursuing the creation-evolution controversy in public schools and in courts, as well as engaging in political life more genrally, resulting in politicians from right-wing Christian political factions forming a majority in American congress (Bielo 2012). In Ukraine traditional evangelicals who could be seen as potentially sharing ideas with their conservative brothers from the US, are on the contrary, members of communities who continue the ethic of separation from the world, a tradition developed during the decades of the Soviet regime. Ukrainian traditional evangelicals do not participate in any secular movement or action - political or social. They avoid commenting or criticizing particular politics, political parties or policy makers. Thus, the distinction is not between two different political orientations, but over whether a political orientation is

desirable at all. I will show that the differences between new style and traditional evangelicals sometimes provoke quite harsh encounters and clashes between Ukrainian evangelicals even of the same community.

The brief discussion above, of the dynamics among evangelicals in the U.S. and comparison with the recent development of Ukrainian evangelicals show that there is a high variety of possible directions for changes inside the global communities of born-again Christians. Depending on hermeneutic practices, needs, the expectations of the believers, and the plenitude of other, inner and outer factors, evangelical Christians can devote their lifetime to gaining an individual relationship with God, giving priority to 'authentic' communal human-human relations, or seeking to change society according to God's will. I argue in the dissertation that in all those cases evangelicals see the world, God and themselves in the biblical perception of reality. In short, this means that they see all contemporary events in their life through the lens of the Bible, where they seek for parallel stories that offers an analytical and interpretive base for explaining their current life event, disregarding the fact that the time frame and physical context has changed remarkably. I will explore and explain this in greater details in the next chapter. Ukrainian evangelicals, and Ukrainian Baptists particularly, were chosen for the research because of their rapid and peculiar transformation.

Soviet Evangelicals

In this section I start to develop the inquiry into the phenomenon of Soviet evangelicalism. Let us start from the point that Soviet authorities considered evangelisation to be religious propaganda and consequently prohibited it (Sawatsky 1981, 2005a; Walters 2005). I have already noticed in the beginning of this chapter that going to evangelise is one of three beliefs forming the core of evangelical identity. Consequently, those active evangelicals, who ignored the law and continued evangelisation, spent most of their lives in Soviet prison camps (Panych 2012). For that reason, the local evangelical communities retained the doctrines of their denominations but cultivated their own closed

and conservative style avoiding any vitality of evangelisation activities. This strategy helped them to survive seventy years of repressions. Another challenge for Ukrainian evangelical movement was the Lautenberg Amendment, passed by the American Congress.[34] At that time, in 1989 approximately 500 000 Soviet evangelicals left for the US as refugees or through family reunification (Lyubashchenko 2010; Wanner 2004, 2007). This was initially a big blow to the local communities as Ukrainian evangelical communities lost a large part of its church elite during this massive migration. However, in the long run this meant a renewal of the church elite that might have helped to transform the church. In less than two decades after the socialist breakdown, Ukraine had become the hub of evangelical church life, education and missions in Europe (Wanner 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009). Moreover, from being closed and inward looking, evangelicals in Ukraine are in the process of becoming more and more socially open and political active. The dynamic of changes in local evangelical communities lasts up to this present day.

However, before talking about changes, it is worth taking a closer look at the traditions of Ukrainian evangelicals. What do they consist of? Where did they come from? Why is tradition so important for some Baptists that they resist to accept any possibility of change?

Catherine Wanner has written: "Among established communities of evangelicals in Ukraine there is a spectrum of more traditional to progressive communities as indicated by the extent of restrictions on behavior" (Wanner 2004: 744). I also found this to be true. She specified later in the article that formality of sermons and "formality of dress is taken as an indicator of conviction and devotion" (Wanner 2004: 745). The formality of dress Wanner meant is "standard for women in Baptist and older Pentecostal communities to cover their heads, wear only long skirts, and to abstain from using makeup or wearing jewelry" (ibid). In another place she wrote: "Dress remains rather formal. Women wear skirts not trousers, and cover their heads. Men wear dress shirts buttoned all the way up.

[34] Lautenberg Amendment was enacted in the US November 21, 1989. It gave refugee status to people from historically persecuted groups without having to prove they were individually persecuted. Jews and evangelicals from the Soviet Union benefited from the law the most.

The music played during services includes only vocal ensembles, organ, and some orchestral instruments, certainly no electric instruments" (Wanner 2007: 177). During my research I found that the situation differed from Wanner's description, however. The formality of dress that Wanner mentioned was not an attribute to all Baptist communities, as it appears to be in her case, but only applies to the communities, I have referred to as "traditional." Women from the new style Baptist differed vastly from Wanner's description: they were not covering their heads; many of them were wearing short skirts or jeans, wearing jewellery was common and accepted, as well as the use of makeup. When it came to the specific style of the sermon, I did not notice any differences when comparing the traditional and new style Baptists. Differences, however, were visible in other parts of the sermon. For example, the differences in musical instruments and music styles used during services between traditional and new style Baptists became clear to me from the first visits of the communities. As mentioned earlier did the traditional Baptists restrict it to a few selected instruments, while new style Baptists had no such restrictions, which made musical performances vastly different. That Wanner's observations do not correspond to my ethnographic material is likely a proof of the rapid transformation among Baptists, which is the theme of this dissertation. Ten years after Wanner's article was published I started out doing research in a vastly different context, where many changes had occurred since Wanner conducted her research, as new style Baptists had overcome the traditional formalities and restrictions. Wanner was seeing the mere encounter and the split between progressive and traditional believers, without exploring the context of Ukraine in greater detail.

In another place Wanner wrote: "Soviet-era Baptist and Pentecostal communities espoused a literalistic reading of an inerrant Bible, a general suspicion of worldliness that resulted in strict codes of personal morality, and a belief of imminent return of Jesus Christ" (Wanner 2009: 163). These characteristics seem vague to me. My argument against is that the infallibility of the Bible and biblical literalism are at the core of evangelical identity in general, no matter where is its origin. I wrote evangelical identity in this chapter earlier.

It can thus not be seen as a particular Soviet characteristic. My second argument is explored in the dissertation and comes from the new style Ukrainian evangelicals who criticised traditionalists that sometimes tradition to them substitutes for the Bible. So, what is the value of tradition for those who preserve it? Wanner's informants relate tradition to spirituality; the stronger involvement into tradition indicate the higher spirituality (Wanner 2004). While my empirical findings support this statement, claiming that "tradition" for its adherents is important without elaborating why and how it came to be so, still leaves us with a superficial understanding of its core importance. How did it happen that this peculiar tradition was formed and became so important for Soviet evangelicals? After a long excursion into the history of Soviet evangelicalism Wanner presented in her book (2007), the question was not even raised. The explanation we get from Wanner is that "the inward-looking, highly conservative, ascetic religious practices that developed in part as a specific reaction to Soviet rule" (Wanner 2007: 99). Thus, while Wanner recognised the influence of the Soviet context she did not explore it in sufficient detail. In the next section I am going to fill the gap and explore that specific reaction to particular circumstances the Soviet evangelicals met.

I argue that the peculiarity of Soviet evangelicals, its so-called tradition, was formed since 1960 and ironically, partly as a result of the cooperation with the atheistic government's new laws and directives for evangelicals. At the same time the evangelicals themselves became more inward looking as a way to strengthen the communities facing a new Soviet tactic aimed at demolishing religious organizations of any kinds. However, developed over a period of three decades and having a strong theological and educational basis for spreading the teaching at the Moscow Bible Institute established in 1960 the tradition was confronted with "unnecessary freedom", that is the new social and political circumstances after the Soviet regime reached its end.

Building Tradition

Historically the identity of Soviet evangelicals had its roots in a number of religious movements that appeared during the Russian empire in the XIX century and influenced its ecclesiology.[35] Among them were the Molokans, Stundists, Mennonites, and Radstockists-Pashkovites (Pyzh 2012).[36] Responding to the increasing hostility from the Russian Orthodox state church and different ways of development among believers scattered along the vast territory of the Russian empire, evangelicals initiated The Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.[37] The established union and proclaimed confessions[38] provoked austere pressure from the state and Russian Orthodox Church. Many active believers experienced arrests and exile.

The Russian revolution of 1917 was a crucial moment for Ukrainian evangelicals. The fall of the empire stimulated nationalistic movements in its different regional areas. Ukraine was no exception. In 1921 The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was established. The services started to be held in Ukrainian. Ukrainian evangelicals, mostly Baptists at that time, also expressed the need to have a Ukrainian translation of the Bible, as there were only Russian translations

[35] Ecclesiology in Christian theology is the study of the church. The concern of the study is the insight to the biblical meaning of the Christian church as the whole universal body in general, as well as the particular local church.

[36] *Molokans* were a branch of Spiritual Christians movement established in the middle of XVIII century in Russia by the group of Orthodox believers who broke away from the state church. Molokans stressed the authority of the Bible, while other branches of Spiritual Christianity Dukhobors emphasized the direct leading of the Holy Spirit. Having much in common with the Baptists many Molokans became attracted to German Baptism and started to convert to Baptism. At the second half of XIX century many early Russian Baptist leaders were Molokans converts (Clay 2012). *Stundists* emerged about 1860 in southern Ukraine. It became a widely spread evangelical movement influenced by German settlers Baptists, Pietists and Mennonites. The majority of Stundists gradually joined the Baptists. Stundist is the derogatory nickname of Baptists that can be heard from non-believers in Ukraine to this day. *Mennonites* as the descendants of Anabaptists were established in Europe in the XVI century during the Protestant Reformation. Mennonites started settling colonies in south Ukraine since the late XVIII century. *Radstockists-Pashkovites* was a spiritual evangelical movement widespread among Russian aristocracy, which took place in the late nineteenth century. The Russian Colonel Pashkov and the English Lord Radstock initiated it in St Petersburg. Helping meet human needs and spreading the gospel were the basic characteristics of the movement. After being persecuted the movement disintegrated and declined resulting in some of the lower class followers started to ally themselves with Baptists and Stundists.

[37] Initially it was named the Union of Gospel and Baptist Christians.

[38] Confession of faith – is a formal statement presenting religious doctrine of the church.

(Домашовець 1967). I argue that this short period of reflection and building of national identity became a cornerstone for the following seven decades' discrepancy of styles, just as it deepened the conflict between Russian and Ukrainian evangelicals.

It is understandable that in periods of radical political reforms and social changes religious organizations are also challenged and forced to respond. Wanner (2007) when writing about the periods of growing evangelical communities in both Russian and Soviet empires, emphasizes the Revolution of 1905, the Revolution of 1917 and the collapse of the USSR in 1991 (Wanner 2007: 2). The mentioned periods after the two revolutions both lasted about ten years each. These periods served as short phases of freedom with no pressure for the evangelicals. There were, however, other stages of changing politics in the history of evangelicals of both empires that aimed to eliminate religion or at least take religious institutions under the close control of the state. These periods, as a rule lasted for decades. While Wanner has put much focus on the political junctures that broke with the Soviet influences, she has downplayed the effect of the long decades of Soviet rule.

Pyzh (2012) named the period starting from 1960 as the last and most important stage for developing and consolidating the peculiar identity of Soviet evangelicals, or tradition as we call it here (Pyzh 2012). It was a time where the state changed its strategy for fighting religion. For Soviet evangelicals the period began with the secret directive imposed by Soviet government. The directive was sent to the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, which was established by the Soviet government initiative in 1944 as the only legal representative institution of Soviet evangelicals - Baptists, Pentecostals who were forced to join the union, Mennonites and others. The leaders of the union, however, were Baptists as they formed the majority of the Soviet evangelicals. The directive, among other restrictions, prohibited evangelisation, forbade children from attending services and aimed to minimize the number of baptisms of the 18-30 years old. A further consequence of secret directives of 1960 was the extension of the probationary period before being baptized and becoming fully-fledged

members of a Baptist church. The Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists made decision (taking into account the recommendations and directives of the Soviet government) to extent the probationary period from one to three years (Sawatsky 1981). The decision slowed down the dynamic of Baptist movement and at the same time provided pastors of the communities with more power of making decisions about and impacting new converts. The new rule strengthened the communities by keeping temporary believers away and giving more time for teaching the tradition to the new converts. At the same time the new rule made communities more and more closed and inward oriented. I would here present some thoughts regarding the restrictions I just mentioned. It is obvious that the restrictions not only slowed down the ability to challenge the tradition inside the communities, they also created serious barriers for getting new converts outside the communities. My suggestion is that under these circumstances family relationship became more, if not the most important source of new members that join the evangelical churches in the period since 1960. It created the phenomenon of prominent dynasties, and helped to build even more intimate, family like relationship between believers inside the Soviet evangelical communities of that period.

Thus, after a conditionally peaceful period after WWII, when the believers had been released from prisons, the directive represented a new Soviet tactic aiming at the complete demolition of religious organizations of any kinds. The Union not having much of a choice, agreed to cooperate. The decision, however, led to a predictable internal split among Baptists, who formed the majority in the Union. The governmental encroachment attacked the very essence of the evangelical identity. The Baptist churches that refused to follow the directive separated themselves from the Union, went underground and experienced severe persecution, imprisonment, and other deprivations of their members. Those who complied with the new rules, on the other hand, started to gain benefits. Thereby it was not a simple repression of all evangelicals, but the development of a framework giving benefits to those prepared to work within it. In this manner the Soviet regime imposed a degree of complicity on the evangelicals, to the extent that they ended up contributing to their own repression. This might partly

explain the unsettling effect the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 had on the traditional evangelicals, as they had become used to work within the Soviet system, but were not well prepared to work without their special agreement with the authorities.

The most important of these benefits was the permission given in 1960 to Baptists to open their own school, the Moscow Bible Institute (Pyzh 2012). With the school started the most productive period of developing theology and training Baptist leaders for the churches that were members of the Union. During this separation both groups of Baptists reconsidered their ecclesiology and their relation to the state and each other. Gaining their own school opened the possibility of consolidating resources for working on theological questions and issues. Therefore, the period starting from 1960 became the most important for bringing out and framing the meaning of the Soviet Baptist tradition.

It is important to remember that during this period the Soviet evangelicals had no proper relationship with their western counterparts, as they were separated by the iron curtain. Not having the possibility to trace, reflect and analyse the tendencies of the worldwide Baptist movement, and participate in its global development, Soviet evangelicalism continued evolving its own, peculiar style. Pyzh (2012) conceptualized this style as a "confessing community"[40] and argued that it was this very model of a confessing community that distinguished Soviet Baptists from western Baptist branches. Emphasizing confession and community Pyzh explained the importance of the confession: "the external role of the confession is to distinguish the church from the ideology and values of the broader society. The internal function of the confession is to preserve the doctrinal purity of every member of the community against any heresy and to maintain the faith of the community." (Pyzh 2012: 7).

[40] The description of the concept of the confessing community given by the author is: 'a fellowship of believers who submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible, preserve the distinctiveness of their faith in contrast to the ideology and values of the culture, and maintain doctrinal purity among their members and express their beliefs through communal confession of faith.' (Pyzh 2012: 4-5).

Thus, like in tsarist Russia, the main reason for confession was establishing the Baptist identity. The confession drew the boundaries, making a kind of island for the evangelical church in the surrounding sea: the majority claiming having monopoly in society. The difference was that in the tsarist empire the majority claiming for religious monopoly consisted of the Orthodox state church. During the Soviet regime, the majority, claiming the ideological monopoly, was the State itself.

The other conceptual emphasis was on community. Pyzh wrote that after the end of the regime Soviet evangelicals "appeared to the world with theology and Christian practices that emphasized community over individuality" (Pyzh 2012: 1). We can start with the observation that because they constantly were facing threats from society, communities developed close inside relations with those they could trust and rely on in cases of deprivation and needs. We can also notice that in general the cultural surrounding in the state was promoting uniformity, commonality and conformism but not individualism or individual initiatives. However, if we come back to the events after the secret directives of 1960, we find a reason, which made a much more crucial impact for pushing theology and Christian practices toward the accentuation the community over the individual believer. I mentioned the cleavage in the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. The cleavage was the result of the Soviet secret directive and the acceptance of it by the leaders of the Union. During the next decade there were attempts from both sides to meet, negotiate, to reach a consensus and reunite. Unfortunately, it appeared that neither side could agree on the ecclesiological questions. The leaders of the Union stressed the supremacy of the strong and united church community; their opponents underlined their faithfulness to God without having to make deals about the main principles of the church (Sawatsky 1981). Those who refused to cooperate with the Soviets claimed that they could wait till their union with God in heaven, and until that would happen they were ready to suffer for their faith (ibid).

The disagreement between the divided Soviet Baptists evolved into two competing ecclesiological narratives. One was represented by the group of the

disobedient, those who stressed the importance of the personal decision to stand with faith with no compromises and oppose the state's dictate. Their resolve and individualistic approach, however, was constantly challenged by the state, which responded to the rebellious with inherent brutality. The Union that cooperated with the state, on the contrary, was able to develop their version of ecclesiology at the school and embrace the Baptist communities through those who were educated at the school and went to the communities to serve afterwards. That sustained work of three decades and its result that had its beginning in 1960 and lasted till the dissolution of the Soviet regime is what Pyzh called the model of confessing community, commonly referred to as 'tradition' elsewhere, including in my dissertation.

The historical overview above provides an understanding of the circumstances, under which tradition was formed and developed, and how it got its direction and support. Although Wanner gave (2007) an elaborate historical overview of the situation in the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, she underestimated the importance of the 'contract' made by Union and the Soviet government in building and strengthening the Soviet evangelical tradition. This is not the only limitation. Wanner (2007) explains the shift of Ukrainian evangelicals from the focus inward to an emphasis on outreach as an attempt to transmit the ethic of the church to the post-Soviet society, to break the border between the two. I argue that the manifestation of the communal relationship is just one of the effects of evangelisation rather than being the main objective. For the Ukrainian evangelicals, evangelising is no longer prohibited by law. Thus, they can go to the 'world' without fear in order to fulfil their commitment to evangelise. The offering of the communal ethic outside the church noticed by Wanner therefore is simply the demonstration of that ethic for potential converts.

The discussion above has stressed the degree to which the Soviet evangelical tradition was characterised by anti-individualism. Beside anti-individualism, Western evangelicals noted "the legalism of many former Soviet-bloc evangelicals, their cultural isolation from the mainstream of society, their authoritarian leadership style, their lack of financial accountability by Western

standards, and their frequent inability to absorb new converts" (Elliott and Corrado 1997: 340). In a critique of the tradition inherited from the Soviet period, a local evangelical Mikhailo Cherenkov (Ukr. Михайло Черенков) (2012) mentioned further characteristics such as: "traditionalism, anti-intellectualism, underdevelopment of personal principle, forbiddance on creativity" (Черенков 2012: 4).[39] According to Cherenkov, these features impede the revival of the Baptist church and keep it on a historical-traditional base instead of on fundamental biblical-Christian values. It makes its specific characteristic confessional rather than evangelical. The limitations created the tradition that proved its viability in extreme conditions under the Soviet regime, however, the very same tradition kept it from entering the large worldwide evangelical tradition after the end of the Soviet regime (Черенков 2012). After the end of the regime traditionalists met "unnecessary freedom" (Черенков 2012: 27); instead of adopting to the new circumstances, new challenges and new possibilities, traditionalists opposed them trying to remain closed and inward oriented, despite the fact that the surrounding society was opening up.

Tradition versus New Style

> "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.
> But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven" (1 Corinthians 11: 4-5. King James Bible).

In an earlier section I presented a historical overview of the development of the Soviet evangelical tradition. I also proposed an explanation for the reasons why the tradition became the strongest expression among evangelicals starting from 1960 and why it became the target of criticism by evangelicals, both Western and Ukrainian, after 1991. The transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals was a result of changed circumstances, leading to challenges to this tradition and its

[39] Mikhail Cherenkov (Ukr. Михайло Черенков) is a Ukrainian Baptist theologian, writer and one of the most active Baptist public figure in contemporary Ukraine.

apologists. In this section I start to use data from my fieldwork to illustrate the claim that new style represents not merely a change in style but a more fundamental transformation and that these two evangelical movements in contemporary Ukraine are different and even in opposition to each other in many respects.

The instructions given to the church of Corinthians by Paul in the excerpt in the beginning of the chapter serves as a direct command for the evangelicals who inherited Soviet tradition. Paul in the later lines of his letter to Corinthian church explained the reasons for the need for women to cover their heads; the first reason is because women have to be subordinated to men, and second reason is "because of the angels."[40] Without emphasizing the latter reason traditional evangelicals focused their attention on subordination. Every married woman had to wear a kerchief during the worship. The below description from my fieldwork, illustrates the importance of this in his communities where the tradition of wearing kerchief is strictly enforced:

After participating in the classes on international mission, a small group of students came to the lobby of the Baptist seminary. Two of them were chatting and I joined them as the theme of the conversation took my attention. A pastor of a Baptist community was talking with another student Dinara. I knew Dinara, as we had met several times at the Bible studies group in both of my research communities. By ethnicity she was a Crimean Tatar, she was living in Poland and coming to Lviv for the sessions of her studies at the seminary. I had not previously noticed the pastor she was talking with. He was telling her about the Mennonite Brethren he visited in Kazakhstan while he was there serving as a long-term missionary. Afterwards he continued with the story about what happened in the local community he was serving. The story started with a female

[40] The next lines of the letter are: "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.
For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.
For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man.
Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.
For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels" (1 Corinthians 11: 6-10. King James Bible).

member of the community, who forgot to bring her kerchief (kosynka rus. косынка) to cover her head during the Sunday worship. She had only been married for a month, thus it is understandable that she had not yet achieved the habit of wearing the kerchief. One of the pastors of the community found a solution to the problem by placing her in an empty and separate room. "You will be able to hear everything from here quite well," he said. Forty minutes after the worship began, our storyteller accidently came by the same room and was surprised to find her there. After he learned what had happened, the pastor asked the young woman to follow him. He took her to the main hall and placed her next to him were she remained till the end of the worship - without wearing kerchief. The next Wednesday during the church meeting his colleague confronted him harshly, as he had found his behaviour inappropriate. He finished the story saying "I would never pass a remark on the dress style to a member of the community". Dinara, his interlocutor said in turn, that once she came to Sunday worship in her church wearing trousers. No one in the church commented on her way of dressing but "the old ladies looked me up and down in a manner, that I decided never to go to the church wearing trousers again". The pastor shrugged and said that every church deal with the issue by itself and that church autonomy is inviolable; nobody from the outside can dictate. "As about me, in such situations I am always asking myself what is more important, the person or the tradition." Here I stepped into the conversation by asking why the other pastor from the story, did not ask the same question. "It does not matter to him. For him it should be so and that is it. He is a fifth generation Baptist and he just knows..." After a pause he continued, "by the way I myself am a Baptist of the fourth generation. Nesteruk is one of my relatives."[41] I asked again how it then is possible to explain such a radical difference between two pastors. He thought for a while and then answered. "I was changed by doing mission. I was serving five years in Kazakhstan, where converts came from the tradition of Islam. They did not know and did not understand anything [in the beginning]. They just looked at me and kept asking me, waiting for what I was going to tell them and explain to them. If I would say that they have to drink grape juice, they would do so. If I

[41] Vyacheslav Nesteruk was a former (2006-2014) leader of the Evangelical Baptist Union of Ukraine (Всеукраїнський союз церков євангельських християн-баптистів (ВСЦ ЕХБ) ukr.), the largest protestant union in the country.

would say they have to drink apple compote, they would do so.[42] The Baptist tradition did not mean anything to them. Neither was it helpful for me. All that I could rely on was my Bible, which was worn down of continuous reading, and a pair of hands-on books (tolkovykh knizhok, rus. толковых книжок). That was the basis I built my service on."

Two interlocutors, the pastor and Dinara in the excerpt shared their experiences of the conflicts with the members of their own communities. We see that different perspectives can create open encounters and conflicts even inside a church elite. This story speaks to how the Soviet evangelical tradition was a product of the Soviet regime, as we here see that the primacy of authority rather than principle becomes the driving force, just as it was in Soviet institutions. I explore in chapter 7 the importance of going on mission as a powerful impetus for the personal transformation of missionaries. Here we see that after serving in the mission in Kazakhstan the main ideological standpoint for the pastor became the assertion that a person is more important than a tradition.

After the encounter with the old generation Baptists over her rash choice to wear trousers during the worship in her own community, Dinara stepped back and decided not to experiment with clothing in the church anymore. A story of the community from Donbas shows a different way of handling the dress code.[43] This community experienced a rapid transformation toward a new style after a new young pastor was elected to lead it. Soon after he was elected, the pastor devalued the strict old style dress code as making no sense. During his sermons he encouraged the members of the community to feel free to applaud after musical performances in the church if they felt like doing so. However, the suggested changes seemed too radical and were experienced as "shock therapy" for some members of the church. Following what they perceived as too drastic changes, those believers organised themselves in a group. The purpose of the group was to watch their fellow members inside the church and remonstrate

[42] Some Baptist churches use wine during Eucharist. However, others refuse consuming alcohol on any occasions and use grape juice as a substitute for wine.
[43] The dispersed community, a part of which arrived to Lviv where established the new church during the time of my fieldwork there.

with those who, according to the view of the members of the group, had lost their sense of the limits of what is acceptable in the church and what is not. The whole group used to confront such members, usually the young ones, who for example, became so relaxed as to wear jewellery in the church.

Here is another example of encounter between the tradition and the new style evangelicals in which I was involved, or more precisely, I unexpectedly provoked by choosing to applaud. This is an extract from the author's notes made at the time the event occurred: It is the 27th of August 2016. The International Centre of Culture and Arts in Kyiv is hosting the Second Missionary forum. The main hall is filled with Baptists from all of Ukraine. There are about 2000 of them. I realised that it is very likely that I am the only not born-again here not counting, probably, some of the musicians on the scene. Between short speeches and prayers an orchestra of more than 20 musicians is playing on the stage and a choir of about 100 people is singing. Volunteers are going along the seat lines gathering money for support to the missionaries. The current head of the Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists Valeriy Antoniuk reminds everyone that there was a prison in the palace we are having the forum during the Soviet period.[44] A lot of blood, he says, was shed in the basement of the building in which we now are having our forum, our brothers' as well. He lists the emperors who are going to stand in front of Jesus at the end of the world: Nabuchodonosor, Caesar Augustus, Napoleon… The list ends with Hitler and Putin. After hour money gathered by volunteers was counted and it was announced that there was an unprecedented amount of money of more than 73 000 Ukrainian hryvnia, 50 euros, some dollars, Polish zloty, Romanian leu and some other currencies for missionaries in Ukraine. The emotional state in the hall is getting more and more intense. Paul Msiza, the president of the Baptist World Alliance prayed for Ukraine in Zulu, his native language. My neighbour on the left started to cry during the prayer. After every song, approximately half of the Baptists sitting in the hall are applauding. My neighbours on the left and right remain still, so I try to 'fill the gap' and applause after every song when not writing my field notes. I notice that my neighbour on the left feels uncomfortable

[44] It is the International Centre of Culture and Arts.

and a bit nervous every time I start to applause but it does not stop me of continuing doing so. Why should I? After all, several hundred Baptists are clapping around us. However, at one point my neighbour jumps out of his seat, turns on me and shouts: "Only to God we give praise!" He sits back before I am able to react and say something. He does not even look at me anymore. It does not seem that he wants to argue or discuss something with me. On the contrary, he looks quite happy and content as a man who just proved to be brave enough to stand for the right thing.

I started the excerpt in order to give an impression of the atmosphere of brotherhood created in the hall. Feelings of the common experience of going through sufferings united a crowd of believers during the Soviet regime, even in the same building they were celebrating. All of them together were able to gather the record sum of money for missionaries. The vision of the greatest historical villains having judgement at the end of the days was vividly drawn to them. However, together with elevated music, songs, prayers, and feelings there was a place for something what from the first sight might appear as a minor matter, namely, whether or not a person chooses to applaud. Nevertheless, it is just one out of many signs showing deep division among Ukrainian Baptists. It is the division between preserving the tradition and ignoring it. According to the tradition the noise made by clapping hands is not pleasant for God, mostly because by applauding the one stands on very slippery way of getting into the sin of praising the person who carries the talent rather than God who gifted the person with the talent. The division is not the matter of a brotherly discussion at the round table. It is rather a consistent tension, which can grow to an open encounter.

Nostalgia for the Tradition

In the last section I illustrated some examples of situations when differences in the dress code or behavioural codes provoked open encounters between the traditional and new style evangelicals in Ukraine. I also started to present voices of my informants – people from the fieldwork. Here I continue with presenting one more story told by an evangelical.

I already noted in the previous chapter as a limitation of my research that I spent a year of my field research mostly among those evangelicals who chose belonging to the new style. Many of them went through the transformation from tradition. Therefore, the voices given in the chapters draw not the most positive pictures of evangelicals who preserve tradition. However, in this section I present my rare encounter with a believer, longing for the traditional community he had lost. My intention in this section is to show the bright side of traditional community. The stress on anti-individualism of traditional evangelicals, however created close communal ties, which are going to loosen as a result of the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals.

Vladislav was an IDP from Donetsk district. He escaped from Donbas with his wife, five children and a handful of the most necessary items in a small Toyota Corolla during the war. Afterwards Vladislav settled with his family in a town in Western Ukraine. When we met and he heard that I am from Lithuania, he started asking me about the situation with the Russian minority in Lithuania. He was particularly interested in the ability of the Lithuanians to distance themselves from Russia and to go their own way in such a short period of time since independence, which for both Ukraine and Lithuania started approximately at the same time, twenty five years ago. My struggle to answer and explain the situation failed. It was obvious from the expression of Vladislav's face, which did not change while I was adding more reasons. Evidently, some information was new for him, but still, he did not see it as an explanation and repeated his question once again. How come that Lithuania was able to distance itself from the intrusion of Russia? As a last attempt, I tried to explain it as having political

reasons. I said that probably our security services work properly and our politicians are a bit more effective than in Ukraine. The question mark from Vladislav's face did not disappear, so at that point I just gave up and said that I did not know how it happened that Lithuanians were able to go their own way without looking back as Vladislav stated it. Then my interlocutor said that when a person from Donbas goes to Russia and sees that people there are living better economically, she or he immediately starts to long back to the times when a kilo of boiled sausage cost two roubles and twenty kopeks...'[45]

Vladislav continued with a story of the people and his community in Donbas. He said that there were several weekly group meetings in the church before the year 2000. As he explained, people just had nothing else to do. 'What are we going to do this evening? Oh, let us go to the church and listen to someone there.' However, since 2000 the economic situation in the country began to improve.[46] There were good opportunities for creating business, people started to spend more time at work. The members of the church spent less and less time on meetings and some of the meetings had simply been cancelled because only few people attended them. Some of the believers, however, woke up and came back to the church, though still commerce or job remained to be in the first place and the church remained secondary. Believers started to count the money they could earn in the time they spent in the church. At that time Vladislav also found a job. He was working as a salesman and earning good money. He soon became the richest in the church and bought a car. If there were only three members of community who had a car before, now everyone could buy one. The parking place at the church was filled with cars on Sundays. Here I asked Vladislav if the church somehow benefited from the prosperity of its members. Vladislav

[45] Boiled sausage is one of the attributes and symbols of Soviet nostalgia. For more about it see Klumbyte 2010.

[46] I found that the economic crisis of 1990s in Eastern Ukraine had traumatizing consequences. While Western Ukrainians admitted that it was a difficult period to survive, their memories did not sound so desperate. In the memories of IDPs from Donbas it sounded as 'a period when nobody had any money at all'; "…those guys stopped me and demanded money. What money? No one had any money in the 1990s. So I said I have no money and they let me go'; 'the previous pastor of our community decided to build the church. Many people said he is crazy because nobody had any money in the 1990s, and nothing was built at that time in the town. But people started to donate what they had for the building of the church. Their small savings, gold..." (the excerpts are taken from my field notes).

confirmed that this was the case. The church experienced a qualitative leap. The topics and themes of meetings became more specific and focused. Significantly raised revenues allowed the church to open itself to the public by starting working on social projects. However, the war scattered the members of the community. He spent many hours reflecting on what happened and why both to his country and to his church. Vladislav then decided that the war was a mode to return God as the most important constituent of people hearts. That became Vladislav's first explanation of the senseless war. However, he soon realized that he had been wrong. Most of the members of the church settled down in Kyiv, where the spirit of entrepreneurship again affected their temporary return to God. One settled in Kyiv, believers started their businesses there and history repeated itself.

What surprised me in Vladislav's speech is that for him nostalgic feelings towards relationship in traditional community did not relate directly with the Soviet past. He was not a rigid stubborn traditionalist longing for the period when his closed community was feeling safe and solid. On the contrary, his big concern about his fellow citizens was their engagement to and eagerness for material goods. Vladislav started the conversation concerned about his neighbour citizens living in Donbas. How did it become that so many of his fellow inhabitants started longing for the former master with such eagerness that they joined a war against their own country? For those people Russia appears to be an outlet for continuity with the Soviet past with its cheap goods.

Only then Vladislav came to the theme of an economic improvement of the region, which became a threat to communal brotherhood. Vladislav's personal longing, his nostalgia was about his church as it was before the millennium. Vladislav was a member of the traditional closed evangelical family-like community where believers gathered several times a week to spend time together. According to Vladislav, the economic prosperity of the members changed the community. He admitted that the church experienced a qualitative leap and became open towards society. However, at the same time it lost what Vladislav appreciated the most – the sense of its communality.

The abrupt and senseless war that led to the church he belonged being scattered was without a doubt a tragic event. However, at some point the event came with an answer. There are many examples in the Bible when God punished those who turn away from Him by bringing war, sending conquerors to take away freedom and independence scattering the whole nation, ruining the temple. Thus, the reason for the war for Vladislav in the beginning was clear – it is the sign from God to believers to turn back and give Him the first place. The obviousness that his interpretation resonated with other evangelicals was the group from the scattered community started having meetings in the old communal style in exile. However, it lasted only a short period of time, as believers again became involved in their earthly businesses.

Vladislav felt regret, sorrow and sadness about all the loss he had experienced since the new millennium started. Beginning with a loosening of bonds and closer relations with brothers and sisters inside the community, he ended as an IDP who lost his church, his home and job, with little possibility to go back to his hometown, at least in the short term perspective. However, Vladislav did not express anger, nor did he blame the members of the church who chose to leave the tradition and made the community change. This was typical -despite tensions, harsh discussions, disagreements, conflicts, and plenty of sarcastic stories among Baptists on the issue of how Baptists ought to behave or ought not behave, they do not tend to label each other based on one's position in the internal conflicts.[47] 'Tradition', and 'spirituality' were the only names I overheard during my fieldwork. For those who preserve the tradition it means first of all preserving spirituality.

[47] I found, however, that among the Baptist youth other evangelicals could be called by their nicknames. Charismatics, for example were 'khariki' (rus. 'харики'). The word closest by the meaning to vernacular expetive meaning face, rus. 'харя' ('kharia'). Pentecostals were 'poltynniki' (rus. 'полтинник'), the meaning of the word is fifty; it can be a coin or a banknote that value of 50 kopeks or rubles. It can also be used for description of someone' s age of 50 years, for example. Jehovah's Witnesses, who were very successful in Lviv, once were compared with Gnostics from the Biblical period.

Ukrainian Evangelicals

In the previous two sections I started to present the circumstances of contemporary Ukraine under which transformation of evangelical movement takes place. In the last of the two sections I showed the transformational changes through the lenses of a traditional believer. In this section my goal is to continue presenting the circumstances in which Ukrainian evangelical movement is operating and developing. This time I give a broader impersonalised picture, showing the particularity of place and the role that evangelicals play in Ukraine.

In the last decades of the 20th century, the region of Eastern Europe faced a prominent religious revival in the light of the collapsing atheistic communist regime. Nevertheless, despite visible activities and initial success seen through the fast growing numbers of converts and newly established churches in some former Soviet states, evangelicals today play a modest role in the religious renaissance of the region in general. The reason for that can be seen in the fact that ruling elites of communist countries starting from the late 1980s sensed the changes there were about to come and turned towards nationalist symbols (Harboe Knudsen 2012). At the same time, they were busy making alliances and close connections with national church clergies and religious organizations that were linked with national traditions (Lankauskas 2008, 2009; Plokhy 2002; Wanner 2007). That allowed them to legitimize their regimes and expand their power bases. On this basis national churches started to serve as symbols of ethno-national identity. In other words, the governments employed religion as an instrument to build national ideologies; in turn, the national churches benefited from the governments' support (ibid). Other churches were thereby left to do with secondary or even sectarian roles granted to them by the national policy makers.

However, part of the reason that different evangelical denominations continue to grow and thrive is that there is no national church in Ukraine. It means that there is no national religious authority to make alliances with the ruling elite and determine the outsider status for religious minorities. As a consequence, Ukrainian evangelicals have more space for interacting and are more active,

visible and audible in the society than their colleagues in other former Soviet countries. Since the end of the nineteenth century Ukraine has been known as the 'Bible belt' first in the Russian Empire and later in the Soviet Union (Fletcher 1985; Plokhy 2002; Wanner 2007). There is thus a strong religious tradition in Ukraine that has not ceased through decades of religious repression in the country. Ukraine with its large number of evangelical churches, deep historical roots of Protestantism, and the significant role of evangelicals in the Ukrainian social climate and in politics is an exceptional case in Eastern Europe (Plokhy 2002; Wanner 2004, 2009). During the Soviet era there were 1.5 million officially registered Baptists in Ukraine (Wanner 2007:1). This is a high number even without counting the numerous unregistered and underground communities, and made them the largest Baptists' community in Europe (Elliott and Richardson 1992; Wanner 2007).

The Political Background of Evangelicals

On the eve of the missionary forum the Baptist leaders met Ukrainian State President Petro Poroshenko.[48] Poroshenko, in his speech, thanked the Protestant organizations for their support of Ukraine. In response, the President of the Baptist World Alliance Paul Msiza thanked the President of Ukraine for his support. During the meeting President Poroshenko signed a decree 'On the celebration in Ukraine of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation', which allows the use of public buildings to individual celebrations of the Reformation. The mutual reverence and attention that the president gave to the leaders of the religious minority reflects the religious situation in Ukraine, where having no national church the political elite is making efforts to build alliances with different religious denominations.

Positioned at the crossroad between East and West, the attempts to establish a "common" Ukrainian identity has highlighted a considerable variety of different, often contrasting cultural and particularly religious influences and ethnic

[48] The Second Missionary forum was an international event held from 26 to 27 August 2016 at the International Centre of Culture and Arts, Kyiv.

diversity within the country, which makes it difficult to govern Ukraine on an ethnic-national basis (Beyer 1999). Consequently, it is difficult to justify the traditional idea that a particular culture and religion are united and anchored in a specific place. Furthermore, in Ukraine there is no symbiotic interconnection between a particular church, nation and state, as there are not only one but several Orthodox churches (The Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchate, The Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church) as well as a Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. All of them trace religious links with national identity (Borovik 1999; Fagan and Shchipkov 2001; Krawchuk 1996; Wanner 2007). This situation creates a fertile environment for religious competition in Ukraine where evangelicals struggle to keep their own niche. A sustained effort to unite the three Orthodox churches and create an official state church as in the neighbouring Russia and Belarus, failed, as all Ukrainian Orthodox churches are linked with and supported by different bodies (Wanner 2007). Accordingly, each church has a different political vision based on the links each one offers, UOCKP – to Ukraine, UOCMP – to Russia, UAOC – to Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora (Wanner 2004, 2007, 2009). As Ukraine gained its independence, all of them, including the west-oriented UGCC and various Protestant denominations became involved in political conflict (Borovik 1999; Plokhy 2002).

Despite the fact that Baptists have existed in Ukraine for more than a hundred years, they are still considered a 'foreign religion' (Elliott 2005). It is partly because the ideas of Protestantism moved to Eastern Europe from the West. It is also partly because of their inward and closed lifestyle of evangelicals,[49] and it is again partly because of the multiple links of the local evangelical churches with

[49] The inwardness and closed manner of evangelicals helped to create and spread the misleading atheistic propaganda about evangelicals by the Soviet government officials. Evangelicals were incapable of defending themselves by giving official public statements, for example. Society also helped the process by spreading rumours, such as, for example, that 'Baptists during their worship sacrifice new-borns', or 'When the sun goes down Baptists switch off the light and practice orgies in their churches'.

their western acquaintances and support they receive from them, especially those from the US.[50]

Conclusion

In the chapter I presented background information related to my research. I started from the definition of evangelicalism, which revealed the characteristics crucial for evangelicals' identity. It helps to understand the phenomenon of evangelical movement, both global and in its Ukrainian iteration.

As I showed with the case of evangelicals in the US, the phenomenon of rapid development and changes is typical rather than unusual for evangelicals. However, I argued that the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals is nonetheless worthy of special attention. First of all, the whole of Ukrainian society went through the radical and rapid changes after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Secondly, Ukrainian evangelical movement inherited a strong and solid conservative movement that was formed during the Soviet Union, which in this study is called tradition. Thirdly, together with the particular religious situation in the country, the openness and activeness of Ukrainian evangelicals has no analogues among the countries that belong to the former Soviet Union.

I presented a historical overview on the Soviet evangelical tradition. My aim was to find out how tradition was developed and became so prominent and sturdy during the Soviet period. I found the answer in the ability of the majority of the Soviet evangelicals to make an alliance with the atheist government of the country starting in 1960. The alliance allowed evangelicals to develop and spread their ethic, having no strong competitors. The price they paid for it was a

[50] The third explanation holds only for post-Soviet evangelicals. Soviet evangelicals could not receive any support or build links with evangelicals from the west. Nowadays the multitude links between eastern and western communities appears to justify those who claim that local evangelicals are working as American agents, are the enemies of Russian Orthodoxy. Such a view is actively supported by pro-Russian Ukrainians but not by the political elite like in neighbouring Russia. In Russia, for example, the Protestant branch of Jehovah's Witnesses is banned as an extremist organisation. Russia's controversial 'Yarovaya Package' of 2016 is claimed by officials as a law against extremism and terrorism, though according to the SOVA Centre, the law is actively enforced against Protestants.

sacrifice of some of the most important commitments and activities, such as evangelisation, education, taking one's own children to the church services, printing and distribution of religious literature, reducing the number of baptisms of the 18-30 year olds. On the one hand these restrictions were working in favour of evangelicals' conservatism, they preventing revisions and variations in the movement. On the other hand, the restrictions worked to deepen the dissociation from the society, and created a close and warm relationship between the members of evangelical communities.

I presented some cases from my fieldwork in order to show how some dress and behavioural restrictions rooted in the tradition can easily provoke clashes and conflicts between traditional and new style evangelicals in Ukraine. I also used the data from the fieldwork to represent the traditional evangelical who shared his story telling how the transformation that his community went through in 1990s affected his personal religious life and feelings. I found it useful to insert some excerpts from my fieldwork to illustrate more vividly the matter of daily conflicts between new style and traditional evangelicals in Ukraine.

4. Evangelical Transformation – Learning the Biblical Perception of Reality

> 'For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish; yet the inward man is renewed day by day.
> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;
> While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.' (2 Corinthians 4: 16-18. King James Bible)

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the particular perception of life, which evangelicals start to learn after their conversion. I have in mind the earlier point about the importance of 'rupture' in the evangelical view of the world. This chapter can be regarded as the continuation of the discourses and discussions started by the anthropology of Christianity presented in chapter 2. In this chapter I present the theory of the biblical perception of reality and support my arguments with empirical examples in order to show how evangelical identities develop. During my fieldwork I experienced numerous times how an event from the believers' daily life was understood in the light of a biblical event. Regardless of the fact that these events were separated in time with two thousand or even more years, and in space, the biblical story was still offering them the explanation of why this was happening to them in the present day. No matter which experience they were subjected to, they were skilled in finding an equivalent episode in the Bible, which thus offered them the true meaning and interpretation of what was happening. This particular way of understanding, interpreting and perceiving the meaning in one's life is what I refer to in this chapter, when I explore the Biblical perception of reality.

In the Bible Paul in his letter to Corinthians in the excerpt above explains to the Christians the importance of constant change, renewal and a focus on "the things which are not seen." The conversion with its powerful symbolism of the death of an old and 'outward' personality is a rupture in the individual's life. The conversion and the death of the "old body" often start from a sudden realization of living a wrong, sinful life in the past, which causes a deep remorse. According to many witnesses from my fieldwork, this sudden realization goes together with an emotional outburst. A person falls on his or her knees, bursts into tears and asks God for forgiveness. The person becomes ready to be reborn as a "new man". However, it soon becomes apparent that the "new man" has a lot of knowledge and skills to acquire. As for evangelicals – and indeed this phenomenon is not unique only to that particular subgroup of Christian believers – it is very important to learn to read the messages and recognize the "eternal' meaning in "the things which are not seen" during the daily lives of believers. Those skills are crucial for evangelicals in order to establish communication between them and God. All the instructions needed for acquiring this knowledge and the needed skills are already given in the Bible. The biblical text, however, is not easy to read and comprehend for a beginner.

The last lines of the excerpt above might remind us of Plato's famous cave allegory or Plotinus' concept of "primary essence". However, I argue that for evangelicals it is a part of the theology of Paul. It says that after the individual rupture, which is conversion, Paul demands a particular kind of perception of reality from Christians. To acquire this perception is an important step on the way of changing one's identity for converted evangelical Christians.

Acquiring particular perceptions and changing one's identity goes beyond the single individual. Indeed, leaving the "old" self behind and becoming a "new man" is closely intertwined with the main subject of this dissertation, namely the reasons for the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. We can point to many factors and events in contemporary Ukraine that function as a vehicle of change. Here we can firstly point to the politically uneasy and electrified situation that led to two revolutions and war, to which may be added the

economic uncertainties of an economic system that has emerged imperfectly from decades of state control, leaving many with a precarious existence, migrating in search of work. Secondly, we can mention the end of the prohibition to evangelise that led evangelicals to open up to society, establish different types of social services that help and support the weakest groups. A third factor that has been crucial for the rapid changes is the possibility for them to engage in the global movement of evangelicals, giving the Ukrainians evangelicals a pivotal role in the case of mission, as they both have received missionaries and send their own missionaries abroad. I argue for the importance of the inner predisposition of evangelical theology that makes believers ready to change. This is especially vividly manifested in the case of Ukrainian evangelicals who have an ethic of "not looking back" and "turning the page". This ethic has led them to the stage when the inner renewal of Ukrainian evangelicals becomes manifested through the transformation of the whole movement. Thus, the particular combination of a rapidly changing society, which has been exposed to revolutions and war, and in parallel to the evangelical ethic of change making Ukrainian case noticeable in the region of the former Soviet Union.

The inner renewal is what evangelicals are supposed to constantly seek and work toward. Conversion, which functions as a rupture in one's life separating the "old" man from the "new", is still just the first step in a long journey for born again Christians. Transformation, changes, and daily renewal during one's lifetime are the prerequisites given in the early Christian theology aiming at conveying a particular worldview to the believers. This worldview I coin "the biblical perception of reality," and start exploring how it manifests itself. The chapter consists of three main parts. In the first part I explore the meaning and importance of changes for evangelicals. In the second part I analyse, illustrate and explain the biblical perspective of reality. In the third part I analyse some theories and discuss how the biblical perception of reality is gained or rather learned.

Looking for Renewal

Brigit Meyer in her monograph on Ghanaian Pentecostalism 'Translating the Devil' (1999) gained insights into the way Ewe[51] Christians in Ghana adopted a temporalizing device in order to separate themselves from their non-Christian fellows. Ewe Christians denied that they shared the same time and space with the rest of society. Thus, time became a dichotomizing discursive strategy. In the view of Ewe Christians, they belonged to modernity, to the future and were far ahead of the 'backward', 'traditional' society. God is associated with the future, and the Devil with the past. Christians expressed this symbolic distance not only in their discursive practices, but also through their ways of dressing, through their houses and furniture.

In this case of Ewe evangelicals, we can observe how the biblical perception of reality is exposed in a radical way. It seems that the Ewe believers simply disconnect themselves from what they perceive as the obsolete reality, which is stuck in the past. Instead they start living in another, "modern" time and space for "renewed men". The strategy might sound artificial and unusual. It is however, one of the possible ways of interpreting and adopting Paul's theology.

Although the evangelicals of my research do not pursue such a radical claim of living in a different time and space, similarly with the Pentecostals in Ewe, they do not share an identical perception of time with their fellow citizens either. My Ukrainian informants learned how to make the Bible a central component when perceiving the world and events around them. Their perception of time and space, for example was not a commonsensical steady linear flow from the past to the future. The reality, events, and surrounding world were perceived through the lens of the Bible. The Bible was a primary source of comprehending the contemporary world. It was considered that the Bible contained the templates with all the explanation and evaluation for all the possible events that happen. I will explore how the biblical perception of the world is expressed through discursive practices of believers later in this chapter. I will start with the other

[51] The Ewe people are an African ethnic group.

central characteristic, namely the readiness and eagerness for changes. Converted Ukrainian evangelicals are strongly oriented to their future and distance themselves from their personal past, which they quite often see and describe as dark and dirty, repulsive and sinful. Unlike the Ewe evangelicals, Ukrainians targeted their own, personal past, which belonged to "outward man" who "perished". The future, on the contrary, is a promising personal transformation. Let us start the exploration of this characteristic from an excerpt that was part of a Bible study in which I participated. The session took place in a flat close to the centre of Lviv. The leading person, Vlad, asks us to share our feelings and thoughts about the excerpt we just have read. We are slowly moving through the lines.[52] As we reach the sixth line, 'Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sineth hath not seen him, neither known him',[53] Vlad provokes us by asking whether it is supposed to mean that we do not sin anymore after we have accepted Jesus.[54] Vsevolod says that of course not, it is impossible to stop sinning. Maryna, a young woman in her mid twenties says she wants to share her thoughts about the text and express her personal experience. She starts by telling us about the feelings she had soon after her conversion. Actually, she was looking for rapid changes in her life immediately after the conversion. She thought she would start to live without sin, and jump into an immediate spiritual improvement. However, she did not feel it happened that way… After some time, she was baptized, and again she was looking for and expecting overnight changes. But the result was the same – it looked as if nothing had changed in her life. The same happened afterwards, when she began to study at the university. She even started to think that there was something wrong with her. However, when she now looks back retrospectively, she realises how much she in reality has changed since her conversion.

This discussion raises an important issue: The expectation of personal change. The experience of conversion as the personal rupture with its symbolism of the death of the "old and outward person" implies an immediate replacement with a

[52] That evening we have read 1 John 3: 1-9.
[53] 1 John 3: 6. King James Bible.
[54] To ask Jesus to your heart, to accept Jesus to your heart is the evangelical rhetoric of finalization of conversion.

changed, “newly born” person. However, it is not the case that following conversion a person changes so radically that she or he stops sinning overnight. The young believer Maryna shared her memory of looking for radical personal changes after every significant rite de passage, no matter whether it was a religious or a secular ritual she had experienced. Despite the promising changes of status, she found that personal transformation is a rather slow process. Changing the self is more like renewing oneself “day by day”, and thus a longer process of hard work and determination. Similarly, gaining and polishing the biblical perception of reality is a prolonged and demanding process.

Conversion and baptism for evangelicals serve as the personal rupture that creates a particular condition of searching for change. The Bible is supposed to serve as guidelines and instructions for individuals on the way to their personal transformation. However, studying the Bible is not limited to learning the Christian ethic, and learning about the lives, deeds, and letters of the saints. By studying the Bible on a daily basis, evangelicals gain an additional dimension, which impacts their way of perceiving the surrounding world and social reality. Evangelicals’ perception starts to become deeply influenced by events and models presented in the Bible. Any personal, communal or societal event can be filtered through and interpreted according to the Bible. What happened today or yesterday can be seen as analogical to an event found in the Bible. In this case, the event presented in the biblical text become of primary importance and provides the born-again Christians with the interpretation of what is happening today. During the process of identification and interpretation some contemporary details are often blurred, omitted, or adapted to the “original template” biblical event. The contemporary event however does not lose its recognisability in the process. Furthermore, the Bible gives instructions of how to behave and deal with events of daily life. Thus, in this way the evangelicals’ perception, linear time becomes twisted into a spiral of constantly recurring events and messages given hundreds of years ago, but is re-told again and again in the present. All events and even a person’s entire life in general can be seen and interpreted through the prism of the Bible. Indeed, hidden in the biblical texts “the things which are not seen” become perceivable and more meaningful

than “the things which are seen” daily in the world because the first have “eternal”, “original” meaning and the latter “are temporal” and “repetitive”.

In the next section of the chapter I explore the biblical perception of reality and illustrate how it expressed in evangelicals’ rhetoric.

The Biblical Perception of Reality

I start by presenting and analysing several examples of using the biblical perception of reality in the discursive practices of my informants. All of them are from IDPs from the Baptist community in Donbas who were dealing with traumatic experiences of the war, while they were struggling to adapt to a new place and searching for a reasonable explanation of what happened to them. When studying the biblical perception of reality, it was among the IDP’s that this way of comprehending life was most clearly illustrated, as they constantly reflected on their life and searched for answers to recent events. My informants were searching for and finding answers to questions that resembled their own in the Bible. The first example is an excerpt from an interview with Mykola, an IDP from Donbas, a deacon of a newly established Baptist community in Lviv. The core of the community was made of internal refugees from Donbas and Crimea. We were at a point in the interview where we discussed an incident in his hometown before he fled the war, namely that the evangelical church had been set on fire:

‘Who set the church on fire?’ I asked. ‘Whoever needed to do it...’ answered Mykola. “I do not even want to start guessing. There is evidence that on the day the church was set on fire, there had not been any shelling. If there had been shelling, it could have happened in two possible ways: it [a shell] would come from one or the other side. As there was no shelling that day, the firemen who came to the burning church to extinguish the fire said that someone had set it on fire deliberately. I do not think it was someone from Ukraine, a saboteur who

crept in and set the fire, you know… They[55] had long ago let the watchman of the church go. He had nothing to do with it… The church was threatened. If the threats had been something different, like blowing the church up, or flooding the church, then… But the separatists had specifically threatened to burn the church down. It had been said many times "we will burn it down; we will burn it down; we will burn it down… It is a Trojan horse…" Such phrases. Therefore, what else am I supposed to believe? It is clear. Those, who wanted to burn it, did burn it; those who threatened to burn it, did achieve it. Well, they burned only the building, right? You cannot burn the church. The church was and it remains. Today a heap of brothers and sisters around Ukraine are joining communities and establishing new communities. We are also trying; we have some ideas… And there are ten communities in Ukraine like us. Not only in Ukraine. We have our brothers and sisters in Poland. The church has lived through similar events more than once, ever since the persecution in Jerusalem. The church was originally in Jerusalem but was then persecuted and scattered around the world. The same happens today. Many [people] say: for what did you have to go through these [misfortunes]? I answer that this is a wrong way to ask for what… It happened [to us] because God counted this church ready for being sown, so people could sow and bring the good seed further on, share it. We see that all those people are blessed. All who have left the city were not left hungry or in need. God gave everything and took care of everyone. We had one pastor in our church. Now we have three or four pastors from our city serving around Ukraine. Many serve as deacons… It says a lot…'

At the time I asked for an interview, Mykola and I had been friends for several months and I felt free to ask him to ask him the straight and painful question in the beginning of the interview. The military intervention in Donbas was a traumatic experience for IDPs. Those who continued living in the territories of the war zone were risking their lives. The war divided citizens, families and communities across Ukraine. Pro Ukrainian Mykola, for example, left his hometown, though his pro separatist mother remained living in the military zone. The roof of the burned church in the town was partly repaired with the

[55] The separatists.

help of Baptists from Russia and about a third of the former community, mostly elderly were still gathering on Sunday worship there.

Mykola's answer to my question was twofold. His logical this-world considerations were framed by his biblical perception of reality. The main message was that the same event happened "because God counted this church ready for being sown". According to Mykola this was just a repetition of biblical events. The link with the church of Jerusalem created a continuation for Mykola; a repetition of a biblical event, proved of being embedded in God's plan and participating in fulfilling it. Mykola identified the two events as being part of the same matter. A different time and a different geographical location was no obstacle to making the connection. Rather, it serves as a proof that God now and here acts in the same way as then and there in the Biblical time and places. So this was for the good of the church in general, explains Mykola using numbers when answering those emphatic persons who express their condolences for what happened to the believers of his community.

In the beginning of the interview, before Mykola started explaining where the shells came from, his answer to my question "who set the church on fire?" was "whoever needed to..." That means that whoever made it, they were only the tools, and did it because it was a part of God's plan for His church. By answering my question Mykola went beyond the linear time scale. This step helped Mykola to see through temporal time and get closer to eternal time, something, which for him is more real and meaningful.

The excerpt from the interview with Mykola could be a means to escape a painful reality with its traumatic experience. This is however only partly true. The excerpt also could sound as a typical tale of a fanatic religious fundamentalist with which they usually feed their listeners. For a researcher or a listener who distances her or himself from the believers' interpretation, the way evangelicals speak in general can sound as a set of worn out, repetitive phrases, all learned by

heart.[56] Nevertheless, for evangelicals this is a normal and common way of thinking by transferring things through the prism of the Bible. It is an example of the particular discursive strategy caused by the biblical perception of reality. It is very typical for evangelicals to explain and interpret events, tendencies, thoughts, movements and alike through the lenses of the Bible.

Not everyone however, in the community shares Mykola's personal explanation. The question "why did all this happen with us and for what reason?" was asked many times by the members of the church as well as by evangelicals from other communities. Another IDP, a member of the same church, Egor, told me that some Baptists from the region of Donbas suggested that the calamity to Mykola's and Egor's church happened because the community had turned away from tradition and had therefore become less spiritual. In Mykola's interview we can see his response to such accusations: the reason of events that happened with his church was not God's punishment, but God's blessing. Mykola presented his interpretation of the meaning of the war and the following events for his church using the Bible.

My second illustration is a personal interpretation of the meaning of the war expressed by another member of the same IDP community. The Bible study had started. The majority of the group is in elation. They radiate their mood to others. There is a lot of talking and sharing of memories among the participants, and the actual purpose of the meeting, to read and analyse the biblical text is slowed down. There are several reasons for celebration. The group of IDP believers from Donbas has registered their newly established community in Lviv and the first five new members of the church will be baptized soon. Two of them are husbands of long-term members of the former church in Donbas. Both of their wives are sharing stories from the past starting from 1994 where they prayed daily for their husbands' conversion, and they continue with stories of their failed efforts of trying to get them to "accept Jesus". Yet, despite the years and years of trying to convert their husbands, the conversion only came with the

[56] Susan Harding gives the short account of the attempt by social scientists to answer the question "what is wrong with them [believers]?" It is about searching the external psychological and social conditions that lead to conversion (Harding 1987, 2000).

war. Valeria's husband had recently left Donbas and decided to join his family in Lviv. Valeria is telling us in length the story of her husband and his long journey to conversion, finishes her narrative by declaring 'now, finally, I realize why the war had come to our place. It was for my husband's conversion!' This declaration shocked Tamara. Tamara was a not born again IDP who regularly participated in Bible study meetings as a guest together with her 10 year old daughter, although she never came to Sunday worship giving the reason that it is the day when she meets with her local Jewish community. After Valeria had reached her conclusion and explained the reason for the war with her husband's conversion, Tamara looked around in the room; her eyes wide open, expressing the surprise of what she had just heard. Her facial expression was clearly revealing that in her understanding this was absolute nonsense. Her staring eyes paused at each and everyone in the group, investigating the reaction of the others. However, nobody tried to stop Valeria, and no one criticized her. Thus, Tamara just shook her head and did not say anything either.

Valeria did not refer to the Bible in order to support her point with comparisons with biblical events. She rather presented the proof of God's direct participation in her life. If reading and studying the Bible is equal to listening to God, praying means talking to him. Those two activities are like two parts of a conversation. For evangelicals God is real and alive. God answers those who address Him. Answers can be found coded in the Bible or given plainly in real life like in the case of Valeria. Other members of the community were not surprised by such a personalized explanation of the reason of the war. Valeria's enlightenment was accepted by the others and understood as God's personal gift - a reward for her daily prayers for her husband and for the suffering she had lived through in the war. The connection seemed logical: after many years of prayers, conversion happened only under the condition of war. Thus, the war was needed for Valeria's husband conversion. The meaning of the message was clear for the other believers but Tamara was not prepared, or put more accurately, not able to shift her (rational?) perspective of reality to the biblical perception of reality and thus, she took Valeria's words literally. In her understanding Valeria simply claimed that the whole war happened for the sake of the conversion of Valeria's

husband. So, the difference between Tamara and Valeria was that the latter, like Mykola, was using biblical perception of reality for answering the question on the reason of the war. Tamara was not a born-again Christian, so she did not learn the skill of looking to the world through biblical lenses. Tamara's approach was "commonsensical", as she was not an evangelical believer. Two different approaches and perceptions of reality caused a serious incompatibility for Tamara, while other born-again participants sharing the same biblical perception of reality as Valeria took her claim for reason for the war very calmly and understandingly.

It is up to the individual believer whether they wish to look for – or not to look for - an event in the Bible that would reflect his or her own personal experience. Once learned, the biblical perception of reality is used more frequently with time, as a believer becomes more skilled in using it, until finally born-again Christian becomes completely immersed to it. In the next section I will explore how evangelicals learn the biblical perception of reality. Here I continue presenting excerpts from my fieldwork in order to give further support for my argument with ethnographic material. This time it is from the worship in which the speaker shared his thoughts about searching for a similar case in the Bible, in order to find an event that would contain the closest similarity to what happened with the Baptist community in Donbas.

The IDP Baptist group has a worship meeting. Today several guests participate and give their speeches in the meeting.[57] The last guest who gave a speech was a person taking a high position in the Baptist Union of Ukraine.[58] Originating from Donbas he was serving there many years and knew many of the members of the IDP community personally. For many years he had been working in the same region which most of the IDPs came from. Starting with his impression about the

[57] Guests in general are all non-members of a church who participate in its Sunday worship meeting or Bible studies. They could be non-believers or believers from other churches. It is also very common among evangelicals to visit other churches of their denomination. Pastors often visit other church for giving a sermon there.
[58] The All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists. The largest Protestant body in Ukraine consist of about One hundred twenty five thousand born again believers (UCEPS analytical report 2010: 17). Further in the text – Baptist Union.

community he is visiting and the worship he is observing, the guest said "…I was thinking about what could serve as an example from the New Testament for our relation here. In my opinion, there are many, but I would like to pick the Thessalonian church. It is the story of the eerie persecution of the recently converted believers. After reading 1 Thessalonians 2: 14-15[59] the guest said he saw some similarities with their situation as both churches were persecuted by their "tribesmen".[60] "By us I mean people who were forced to leave the zone of military activity, the theatre of aggression caused by a neighbouring country. Looking from a human perspective, they spoiled our lives, disrupted the usual rhythm, the movement, and our predictability. More than two years ago everything was predictable. Where has that predictability gone now? But in the midst of all those shocks, the anxiety, the distress, and the bombings God showed his grace to us. Not all of us received that grace. Some died there. A bomb in the home yard killed one sister in Lisichansk, an elder mother of our brother.[63] The brother was burying his mother for several days, as he could not find all the pieces of the torn-apart body on the same day. If I could say what comforts me, then it is that these things did not start with us. Similar things began a long time ago with the believers of Jerusalem, Thessalonians. In all cases the distress was brought not by aliens but by the "tribesmen", those with whom we were sitting at the same table, roughly speaking; shopping in the same shops… It is difficult to say something for consolation right now. However, there are no surprises for God. It is not as if something happens in our lives and God misses that moment. [God] looks (the guest looked down to the floor) [and says] wow, I must say!

[59] "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:
Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:" (King James Bible).

[60] 1 Thessalonians is the letter written by apostle Paul to the Christians of the Thessalonian church.

[63] The members of evangelical communities call each other brothers and sisters. It is a Christian tradition that is based on the lines in the scripture: "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.
Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.
But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?
And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!
For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matthew 12:46-50. King James Bible)

What is happening in Eastern Ukraine! It is not like that… There are no surprises for God. Everything is under God's control. And that comforts me, my friends. God allowed it to happen and lets us go through it."

In this excerpt the speaker chose the case of the Thessalonians church and offers this case as a blueprint for the church he visits. One of the similarities was that "all the distress was brought not by aliens but by the "tribesmen". Another similarity with persecuted Thessalonians was the loss of the daily predictability. I would here suggest that an important reason for choosing Thessalonians was that the author of the letter Paul already indicated the Thessalonians church as "followers of the churches in Judea", it is that both churches experienced the same kind of sufferings and persecutions. That is Thessalonians themselves repeated a course that was already blueprinted in Judea. However, the question is about the meaning of this event that repeats itself through history. What is the meaning "of all those shocks, the anxiety, the distress, and the bombings?" For what reason "God showed his grace to us?"

The guest continued his speech to the community criticising their attachment to the past. However, the critique on the perception of the past was merged with the topic of recent political issues. He said that he had visited the occupied territories in the beginning of February. 'The brothers who stayed there did not like when I called the territories occupied. 'They even did not like when I called the territories by their official names ORLO and ORDO.[64] I did not like when they called it a republic: LNR, DNR.[61] Finally, in order not to offend anyone we reached an agreement to call the districts Luganshchina and Donetchina. These are the old and neutral names of the districts). It should not offend anyone… I try to do that puzzle [about the conflict regarding names] in my brain and I think that it is because it is so difficult to deal with our past. I have noticed that syndrome in you, actually. That group you have on Facebook.[62]… It was good for

[64] ORLO (Separate District of Lugansk). ORDO (Separate District of Donetsk Oblast).
[61] LNR (The Lugansk People's Republic). DNR (The Donetsk People's Republic).
[62] It is most likely that the guest had a group in the social network Vkontakte in mind. Vkontakte is the Russian version of Facebook, which is also in use in some neighbouring with Russia contries.

continuing the conversation, especially during the period that we had. But it is almost two years ago [since the war came to your town]. Can you say you are the inhabitants of your hometown right now? You have to add an 'ex-', because your hearts could still be there… I do not know, maybe some of you will go back there one day. So, when you are back you can again call yourself citizens of your hometown. But if you are not going back, then the Thessalonian church will serve as an example to us… In 2015 I did not reflect about memories. In 2016 I did; I said it is good to remember that wonderful church we had, that building. But now it is different, there is no dome on the church any more, and you cannot evangelise there. But you can evangelise here and now, in the place you are living in now. For that you need to learn the language of the people you communicate with. Otherwise your children will do it and you will be distanced from them. You will keep the old [style, tradition] then." The guest ended his speech by giving the worst scenario example of the Soviet evangelicals that emigrated to the west: "A similar thing is happening in the emigrant churches in the US or in Europe. They try to create enclaves there. And they went so far in that, how to name it… that they made a hero a colonel of KGB.[63] For people whose parents were imprisoned for their faith, those who were put behind bars by the same KGB officers, for them, a KGB colonel is a hero today! It is because they are living in the past, not today, in the present. Maybe it is too radical a comparison, but I think we have to think very seriously about that mini diaspora of the ex-hometown. It is worth choosing that if we want to integrate into an existing local church with a Russian speaking service, or a service with IDP's or something like that… Or we have to start all over with a new church but with the necessary requirement of reaching non-believers. So, I call on you to turn the page. We cannot live in the past with yesterday's blessings. We need blessings today…"

The speaker in the second part of the speech made it clear to his listeners that the comparison with Thessalonians is conditional. The recurrence of the biblical events creates a loop, a spiral in time, which gives believers an opportunity to feel something else than just linear time, which moves from past to present and future, by complying with calendars and watches. The speaker using the Bible

[63] This is a reference to Putin.

transfers the believers' perception of time and place, making the events that happened almost two thousand years ago close and familiar now and here. However, according to the speaker, believers have to become active participants in the fulfilment of God's plan. It is not enough to establish a church in a new place. Another very important message, which has a direct link with the main topic of this thesis, is sent to the members of community. The message is a call for transformational changes. The nostalgic, emotional links with the past and previous place of living have to be broken. The page should be turned, and links and contacts with the new place should be established instead. The ethic of turning the page and do not looking back comes in a harsh opposition with preservation and keeping tradition. The new style church, which even was accused by members of traditional churches for its transformation, now was rebuked and warned for its diasporic mind that leads to losing links with reality. The instruction for changes sounds simple. However, when facing a total rupture of time-and-place, it takes tremendous effort to start on a blank page. I noticed that the stories people told me about the church in Donbas changed over time, as they started to draw a more and more attractive picture of it. Close to the end of my fieldwork period the church was shown to me as an example of an ideal community with the perfect relationship with its non-believing neighbour citizens. However, based on other stories that had been told to me before, I knew that this was not the case. The guest who gave the speech in the community saw the threat of self-imprisonment in the past and urged the believers to get out of it immediately. The speaker therefore gave examples of migrants, possibly refugees who in place of responding to God's call, stuck in the past, out of reality. Those believers chose to live in enclaves and establish diasporic close churches, distancing themselves even from their own children. The speaker's message or the answer about the meaning of the war for the IDPs in Lviv is integration in the new place, renewal. Turn the page, let the past die, and make a new place yours for reaching non-believers there. Only then will the church in Lviv complete the repetition of the biblical examples of Thessalonian and Judean churches.

It can sound like a discrepancy when the speaker is so involved in the biblical past but at the same time is attacking the recent past. However, there is no

contradiction for evangelicals. We have to remember the tremendous importance of the Bible for evangelical Christians. It is God's revelation to humanity. It is given once in the past but is eternal and timeless. The Bible is not regarded as a historical document from the past but as an eternal reference point. There is this no paradox in seeing Biblical support for a rupture with one's own past. The whole world with its small and huge events of the past, present and future can be seen, read, and explained through the biblical lenses. I have termed this ability of seeing and interpreting things according to the scripture the biblical perception of reality. If it is decided that the past or present does not fit the ideas and aims and instructions given in the Bible, then believers deny their past and start looking, calling for, and working on changes. The biblical perception of reality is a skill and I will explore in the next section how evangelicals gain it.

The strong cohesion between time and place seen in the excerpt from the fieldwork given above gave me some additional thoughts. I already wrote in chapter 2 that the anthropology of Christianity became deeply involved in and made a significant theoretical contribution to the theme of discontinuity, cultural rupture and disjunction. I follow the approach that stresses the importance of the experience of discontinuity. However, I also agree that the perception of discontinuity unavoidably includes and is affected by a complex mix of historical, political, and sociocultural forces that create the dynamic of life in every particular setting (see Desjarlais and Throop 2011). The variety of the settings explains the heterogeneity of global evangelicalism and particularity of Ukrainian evangelical movement.

A similar cohesion between time and place affected by a complex mix of historical, political, and sociocultural forces, though in a much larger scale, I argue, provoked and stimulated the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. It happened that in a very short period of time all evangelicals living in Ukraine, together with their fellow citizens, found themselves in a different place and time. Although the local surroundings may have looked the same and although time went on in the same way as usual, it was obvious for everyone that the

epoch of the Soviet regime was over, and that something new was coming for everyone.

It is interesting to note here an apparent conflict with the emigrant churches in the US and Europe. The speaker criticised the decision of the emigrants to keep their old style by making closed diasporic communities, leading members of those communities to isolation and inter-generational alienation. Moreover, being far from their homelands, evangelicals started to praise "a KGB colonel". The speaker did not mention however the fact that among those he had just visited in Donbas were believers from the burned church in Lugansk district who had decided to stay in their hometown. Most of them have similar feelings, as do the people from the emigrant churches in the U. S. and Europe, whom he referred to. There are around 50 Baptists, mostly of the older generation who continue to gather in the burned church building. The reason for making no links could be unwilingness to criticize the members of the Baptist Union of Ukraine he and the listeners have known personally for many years and still keep contact with.

To sum up the section: I explored three different ways of dealing with trauma using biblical perception of reality. Mykola saw the direct link between his scattered hometown community and the persecuted but growing "original church in Jerusalem". Valeria after many years of praying "earned" the last non-born again member of her family. The speaker found a community in the Bible that resembled the current scattered one. However, he warned the members of the church that external resemblance should not be taken as self-sufficient and can easily be diminished if the members of the church stay passive or living in the past.

The speaker touched an important topic of division in his speech, which can be seen as the conflict between tradition and new style evangelicals. The ideological division among the members of evangelical communities he tied with division between staying in past, is being unable to "turn the page", and the present, being able to undergo renewal and respond to God's call to participate in His plan. I argue that this focus on the future without looking back to the past, this

readiness for "renewal day by day" serves for Ukrainian evangelicals as the inner transformational power. In the next section I will enquire into the process of learning the technique of biblical perception of reality.

Learning the Biblical Perception of Reality

Not all the displaced evangelicals found their traumatic experiences revealed and meaningful. In the previous section I explained some of the 'successful' cases in order to demonstrate how biblical perception of reality works. It has to be said that not all converted evangelical learn and become skilled in perceiving reality through biblical lenses. The skill comes after months and years of thorough studying and immersing oneself into the Biblical texts. The gaining of the interpretive skills and ability of making linkage between biblical and post contemporary events and periods are also important. In the excerpt below, I present the case when evangelicals themselves speak about the gain of what I call the biblical perception of reality and my informants call "the work of the Holy Spirit".

We are reading the gospel of John, the third chapter. In the beginning of the chapter Jesus speaks with Pharisee Nicodimus. Jesus explains the meaning of being born again to Nicodimus. To the straight questions asked by Nicodimus, Jesus answers in metaphors. The explanations of some of the lines in the most sophisticated of gospels, I find unclear. That is unusual, and therefore I feel uncomfortable and I ask for more explanatory analysis. The leader of the study group, Igor welcomes my involvement and goes back for a more thorough explanation every time I complain. I am not the only one who slows down the reading and analysis of the text. After mentioning the Holy Spirit, Jelena starts to tell the story of the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit that happened in Donbas during Stalin's regime. Soon two other participants who know the story join her by helping with names and details. We hear a story about a Baptist, who refused to renounce his belief at the office of a commissar of NKVD[68] during the severe period of Stalinist persecution on religion. The commissar became furious and

[68] NKVD (Rus. НКВД) - The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. Precursor of the KGB.

told the Baptist to come back tomorrow with a pack of the most necessary things, which at that time meant that the commissar is sending the believer to the Gulag. A mysterious stranger met in the street advised the believer not to go to the office at all. After a few days of sitting at home and expecting the NKVD officials coming and arresting him, the Baptist at last went to the street and bumped to the funeral procession of the same NKVD commissar. The story was interpreted as a miraculous rescue from the prison with involvement of the Holy Spirit.

There followed a prolonged discussion about how the Holy Spirit works inside the participants. Jelena does not agree with Kirill, who claims that the Holy Spirit starts acting in a person soon after she or he is born again. She gives us her example and says that even a long time after she was baptized she remained being 'a baby in belief'.[64] Only after quite a long time she started to comprehend the Bible and feel that the Holy Spirit started acting in her. Kirill agrees that it happens in many different and individual ways. He personally started to feel the work of the Holy Spirit in him after he read the entire Bible about twenty times and after having learned big parts of the text by heart. After that, the biblical texts started to emerge to him in daily situations where they could be applied meaningfully. In the beginning it was strange for him and he used to check if it is really an excerpt from the Bible that had just come to his mind, or whether it just appeared to be. Several times he even tried to type a line on the computer of what had emerged to him and checked it on the Internet, on the Bible online page. There were more suggestions, discussions and stories about the different ways the Holy Spirit acts in people. It was getting dark when it was decided to end the Bible study for that day. After the final prayer I came to Kirill to shake his

[64] Jelena here paraphrase the lines from the Bible: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.
I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." (1 Corinthians 3: 1-2. King James Bible)

hand and say goodbye.[65] 'It is good that you came here' Kirill said to me with a smile and asked if I know where in the Bible those words are written.[66]

In this excerpt from the fieldwork we hear the discussion on how the Holy Spirit works inside a believer or for his/her sake. During the discussion at least two paraphrases from the Bible were made. One of them, "a baby in belief" I recognised myself, and the other was given to me by Kirill. In both cases the pieces of the biblical text were used intertwining them into the context of usual speech. Constantly using quotations from the Bible makes everyday narratives more meaningful and 'thicker', although an uninitiated outsider might not be able to notice the embedded biblical points in evangelical speech. What Kirill referred to as feeling that the Holy Spirit started to work in him after multiple readings of the scriptures, I call the attainment of the biblical perception of reality. It is the condition when an evangelical believer immerses herself/himself into the biblical text and starts to look at reality through the biblical lenses. Although conversion and baptism are crucial for the evangelical identity, I argue that the real breakthrough for gaining the evangelical identity comes with learning the biblical perception of reality. Here we can also observe the similar conflict between expectations and reality as in the case of Maryna, given in the beginning of the chapter. Although evangelical symbolism tells us that a believer is gaining the Holy Spirit immediately after his or her baptism, the Holy Spirit actually 'starts working' in a born again person only after the person does hard work of "renewal day by day". I have already shown how a guest merged two stories – one biblical and one recent, turning them into the same kind of narrative. In chapter 6 I will demonstrate how personal narratives are merged with biblical ones in marking personal transformations from drug addicts to mature evangelicals.

[65] It is common in Eastern Europe for men who know each other to shake hands every time they meet or say goodbye after having a conversation or being together at the same meeting, in the same group.

[66] "Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." (Acts 10: 33 King James Bible).

Conclusion

In the chapter I began answering the main question of the thesis: what are the reasons for the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. My argument is that one of the reasons is embedded in the evangelical ethic of constant changes, "renewing day by day". I argue that this ethic is accelerated and sustained by the authorities of the Ukrainian evangelical church, which claims the necessity of "turning the page", and of not looking back. The claim is due to the particular position of discontinuity Ukrainian evangelicals have undergone since the end of the Soviet Union. The challenging constitution of uncertainty and instability in political, social, and economic spheres needs to be given a meaningful explanation. The explanation of this world's unexpected, sometimes shocking, and even traumatic experiences of evangelicals are found in the Bible. Biblical perception of reality helps believers find in the scripture events and experiences corresponding with their own situations, that provide with meaning and instruction for the future. The same works for very personal experiences, national, or even global scale events.

In the chapter I presented and explored the theory of the biblical perception of reality. The theory is helpful in understanding the importance of the biblical texts for evangelicals and a tool for understanding and following the development of evangelical identities.

5: Transformation of Ukrainian Evangelicals: Politics

> "As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people" (Proverbs 28: 15. King James Bible).

Introduction

In chapter 3 I discussed the circumstances under which the Soviet evangelical tradition was formed, and how and why it became a predominant branch of Soviet evangelicalism that was able to survive the antireligious policy of the Soviet government. I also explored the tensions and challenges between the new style evangelicals and followers of the Soviet tradition inside contemporary Ukrainian evangelical movement. In the following three chapters I give three factors that have made the strongest impact on rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. Thus, I continue to explore the main question of the dissertation. The first factor, which will be the topic of the current chapter, is the way politics has transformed and continues to transform Ukrainian evangelicals. The evangelicals' concern with the issues in society in general, has been a vehicle for change of Ukrainian evangelical movement itself. The second impetus for transformation, which will be dealt with in the next chapter, is the engagement in society in terms of social services such as helping the poor and not least the growing number of drug addicts in Ukraine. Finally, chapter 8 will focus on the different forms of engagement in terms of mission that we witness in present day Ukraine. What links the three findings together, is that all of them are concerned with an increasing engagement in the surrounding society in contrast to the rigid separation of faith and society which was symptomatic for the Soviet period.

In this chapter I investigate how political events in Ukraine accelerated the transformation of evangelicals and division between the traditionalists and new style evangelicals. In the chapter I also explore how excerpts from the Bible are used and referred to in order to interpret and explain the new position Ukrainian evangelicals have taken. In the last section of the chapter I look at how it is

possible for different evangelicals to support conflicting views using different interpretations of the same source and sometimes even quoting the same line from the Bible. My argument is that unstable political conditions in Ukraine have electrified its society and stimulated the involvement of evangelicals in political life. This contrast challenges the Soviet evangelical tradition and its ethic of non-involvement into political affairs and conformism with political rulers.

Evangelical Movement in the Ukrainian Way

In spite of the multiple links with their western acquaintances, Ukrainian evangelicals do not adopt a pro-Western position. While traditional evangelicals prefer to keep the apolitical attitude they cultivated during the Soviet period, there is a tendency for the new style evangelicals to support Ukrainian nationalism. This was very clear at the Second Missionary forum where the leaders of the Baptist Union were participating and giving speeches.[67] Many of the speeches were politicised and were characterised by being pro-Ukrainian and anti-Russian. However, I did not hear of anyone calling for copying and developing an American model of society, or call for building a particular westernised church and society. The new style evangelicals were for building the new *Ukrainian* society. I will return to the speeches and the ideas expressed in them later in the chapter.

The Ukrainian evangelicals that had stood aside from political life in the Soviet period now started to get politically involved, as Ukraine became an independent country. The examples of the twice-elected mayor of Kyiv Leonid Chernovetskij and Baptist minister Olyksandr Turchynov who became a provisional president of Ukraine during the government crisis in February 2014 speak for themselves.

As an informant explained to me during an interview the only thing we clearly can state about Ukrainian evangelical movement is that "it has been sweepingly

[67] The All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists. The largest Protestant body in Ukraine consist of about One hundred twenty five thousand born again believers (UCEPS analytical report 2010: 17).

globalised during the last 25 years of the independence". Later, during the interview, he stressed the fact that "there are distinctions between leaders of churches, local churches, besides there are different denominational unions. Therefore, the attitude [of each] cannot be homogeneous". Here, he pointed to the fact that despite existing as one community, the evangelicals do not represent a homogenous group with one set view on the surrounding society. The interviewee continued saying: "Unfortunately, what I see and what I feel is that during this period [of independence] we have had different kinds of leaderships. Each different leadership had different outlooks." He stopped here and continued after having expressed concern whether it was important to mention this approach in the dissertation, and asked me not to make any direct reference to him in case I decided to include it. "I am personally acquainted with and I personally know our leaders[68] who till recently supported and tried to affect the local churches to make them support Yanukovych.[69] Such an attitude depends on many factors: politics, authority, or personal contacts. But what happened is that they failed to embody homogeneity, because one part of the leadership was ready to support [Yanukovych] and the other part of the leadership was not ready to support him. A part of the local churches did not want to be involved in those processes. And a larger part of the local churches stepped away from that altogether".

I found his statement important as in a few sentences he had managed to describe some of the most complex processes going on inside the community of Ukrainian evangelicals. The doctrine of autonomy of each community makes it difficult even for the leadership of the various evangelical unions to drive it in one particular political direction. There are several evangelical unions and thousands of local churches, each having their own leaders. Contemporary Ukrainian evangelicals do not have to submit to the vagaries of Soviet

[68] The interviewee is talking about the leaders of the largest evangelical union in Ukraine, All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists (AUC ECB).
[69] Viktor Fedorovych Yanukovych (Ukr. Віктор Федорович Янукович) was a pro-Russian Ukrainian politician, the president of the country 2010-2014. Both of the recent revolutions, The Orange Revolution (2004-2005) and Euromaidan (2014) in Ukraine were provoked by his political activity and decisions he had made. In early 2014 during Euromaidan he fled to Russia and was therefore removed by the Ukrainian parliament from the presidency on the basis that he had become unable to fulfil his duties.

governments and work out collective strategies for survival, as did their predecessors, who build a common direction, which now is viewed as merely tradition. There is no threat of persecution for being politically engaged in and critical towards society. Do these changing conditions mean that the Ukrainian evangelical churches are receding from the Soviet tradition? If so, then in what way and at what speed are they changing? And for the individual members the question arises whether it is necessary to change at all or whether it is better to keep the traditional conformist style. The previous chapters and the interview above showed that there are disagreements about those questions among the members of the same union as well as inside local churches.

The interviewee also shared his experience as to how some leaders of the Baptist Union had tried to sway the local churches in favour of the previous controversial pro-Russian president of the country. As I have shown in the previous chapter, the unconditional conformism to political authorities of the state was a distinctive attribute of the Soviet evangelical tradition, which helped evangelicals survive under the regime. Those evangelicals who refused this 'contract' were persecuted in great numbers. The fact that traditions were kept by part of the evangelicals despite new freedoms was justified and explained through particular Biblical verses and abstracts. I will return to this at a later stage. Here, however I want to stress that what I experienced during fieldwork was that the leaders of the Baptist Union were strongly and openly supportive to a democratic model and expressed heavily critics of the political, ideological and military strategies of neighbouring Russia. My informant's memories of the leaders' attempts to shift from quietly governing the Baptist church in a pro-Russian direction to the opposite happened in the course of a few years. This rapid change of political preference of the leaders of the Union can be explained by simultaneously following the political conditions and events in Ukraine, and the national responses to them. The shift demonstrates the decision of the leaders of the Baptist Union of Ukraine to choose and openly declare their active political position. It is hardly a coincidence that the very same year, namely 2014, when Yanukovych fled the country for Russia, the Evangelical Baptist Union of Ukraine elected its new head Valeriy Antonyuk, who was not supportive

towards Russia. The shift of Ukrainian Baptists toward an open and direct involvement in the state's political life caused tensions and confrontations between them and Baptists in Russia. The latter were not ready to consolidate with Ukrainian evangelicals and support the transformational changes of their counterparts. Instead Russian evangelicals declared their maintenance of a position outside 'worldly matters' and loyalty to the government at the same time. However, in the context of the political tension in Ukraine, the choice not to get involved became a politicised choice in itself.

Two Revolutions and the War: To Get Involved or not to Get Involved?

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the new ruling political elites of the countries in the now former Soviet region turned to the use of national symbols. At the same time, they started to form alliances with the clergy of the national churches in order to gain cultural capital and broaden their power bases (Plokhy 2002). However, for Ukrainians, the transition brought unexpected religious patterns and "revealed the loss of clear traditional religious identity" (Marynowitch 2000: 4). The efforts to build an idealised homogenous Ukrainian society and to establish a lasting alliance between Ukrainian officials and the Orthodox Church failed from the very beginning as the support of the ruling elites for particular denominations shifted after each election (Plokhy 2002). So, the newly established (1992) UOCKP briefly enjoyed support from the government during the administration of the first president of independent Ukraine Leonid Kravchuk. However, in 1994 the elected president Leonid Kuchma and his government made the decision to support the UOCMP, which "fully corresponded to the broader policy of the presidential administration on questions of nationality, culture and language" (Plokhy 1999: 18). Kuchma's turn to a closer relationship with Russia and to support of the Orthodoxy of the Moscow Patriarchate was a logical step because he represented his electorate – most of his southern and eastern voters were primarily oriented to Russia (Wilson 2015). For the Ukrainians from the western region, UOCMP was not seen as a Ukrainian national church, despite it having operated in Ukraine for several

hundred years (Kolodnyi 2000). For them the existence of UOCMP in Ukraine is rather based on the historically colonial relationship between Russia and Ukraine (Wanner 1998) where this church aims to serve as an agent to organize its pro-Russian missionary activity in Ukraine (Kolodnyi 2000: 6). Mostly due to the votes cast in the western and central regions of the country, Viktor Yushchenko won the elections of 2005 and became the third president of Ukraine. However, in 2010 the pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich was elected. In 2014 the pro-western Petro Poroshenko won the elections. Thus, the situation bears witness to the movement of a pendulum, when every newly elected president seeks the opposite direction and course for the country than his predecessor. I assume that this pendulum effect was one of the main reasons why the political atmosphere in Ukraine became so electrified and explosive. I argue that this atmosphere along with two revolutions, and especially since Russian military intervention, affected many Ukrainian evangelicals' personal attitudes to the political life of their country, and forced them to abandon the traditional stance of not being involved in political affairs.

Moreover one must touch upon the impact of the revolutionary events of 2004-5 and 2013-14 in Ukraine and evangelicals' participation. Yanukovich was at the centre of both revolutions and had a polarising effect. The Orange Revolution in 2004-5 was provoked by the announcement of the victory of Yanukovich in the corrupt presidential election. Euromaidan started after President Yanukovich decided not to sign the European association agreement at the very last minute. Although all Ukrainian churches played the role of peacemakers, seeking a peaceful resolution to conflict during these events, almost all of them, including the most visible branch UGCC, supported the opposition towards Yanukovich and his faction (Lunkin 2014). Ukrainian evangelicals, with the exception of the charismatic Church of the Embassy of God, whose senior pastor Sunday Adelaye supported Yanukovich, were on the side of protestors as well (ibid). Evangelicals who decided to join the protestors in both set of events, and particularly in 2013-14, saw it as an additional opportunity to evangelise among them by organising prayer gatherings and participating in Bible distributions (Гордеев 2015). Evangelicals who decided not to get involved in politics could not just remain as

calm observers at homes and churches anyway. Later in this chapter I will support this claim by exploring the case of an evangelical who speaks of the personal transformation he underwent during and because of Maidan (2014-5), telling of how the bloody encounter at Maidan provoked him to start searching for meanings in the scripture that would support his changing political convictions. In other words, I will grapple with the issue of "how the Christian scriptures circulate in particular sociohistorical moments" (Bielo 2009: 3-4).

According to Jeffrey Haynes (2016), religion can affect the world by what it says, which relates to doctrine or theology, and what it does (270). Although Ukrainian Baptists share the same doctrine with their acquaintances around the world, there are a variety of modes of identity expressed in social and political activities. Haynes claims that in "…the realm of politics, it is necessarily to be concerned with *group* religiosity, whose claims and pretensions are *always* to some degree political" (Haynes 2016: 271). According to Haynes, religion can help to understand related political outcomes only when it is expressed in the level of a group (Haynes 2016: 270-271). However, I will show that individual decisions of Ukrainian Evangelicals to participate in such extreme political events as the Maidan revolution prove the possibility of the opposite. These individuals, some of them pastors, did not discuss their decision to get involved inside their communities but often even hid it from other believers. However, their initiatives, such as building tents for people to come and pray with them and distribution of Bibles became an important part of Maidan. I continue the section by supporting my claim with an illustration of the testimony of a pastor who experienced the transformation and wrote about it:[75]

"I did not do anything to make Maidan happen or not to make it happen. I just faced it as a fact, which I could not ignore as a Christian and citizen, as a minister and pastor (Гордеев 2015: 9)." These words belong to Mykola Romaniuk, the pastor of the Bible Church in Irpin[70] who wrote an introductory chapter to the

[75] Testimony – a public recounting of a religious conversion or experience. Testimony by meaning is close to witnessing. However, testimony deals with personal experiences, which evangelicals usually share during Sunday worship meetings.
[70] Irpin is a small city located in the Northern Ukraine, close to Kyiv.

book of Aleksey Gordejev 'Church on Maidan'.[71] The pastor continued "Half a year before the events of Maidan, after reflecting on psalm 11, I had concluded that mass street protests are not for Christians.[72] I wrote that the most efficient if not the only method to protest for the children of God is living a holy life, which is a rebuke to society in itself.
I still agree with this view, but the answer was insufficient after armed groups attacked a group of [protesting] unarmed students in the middle of the night and brutally started to chase them and beat them (ibid)."[73]

Romaniuk wrote that it was an impulse to revise his understanding of earthly power and his attitude to it. He describes the sequence of his thoughts. Not surprisingly, being an evangelical he started with a famous excerpt in the New Testament on that matter – Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 13, verses 1-2:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.
Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Romans 13: 1-2; King James Bible).

[71] Rus. Алексей Гордеев 'Церковь на Майдане'. The book is a chronologically arranged account of the events on Maidan from the 21 November 2013 to the 23 February 2014. The account has a sequence of interviews taken from 28 members of evangelical churches who had participated and witnessed the Maidan, and their decision to get involve in the events.
[72] In the psalm 11 David says that in times of trouble we have to rely on God, who examines all people and does justice. In the article of 21 June 2013 ' Did Jesus send his disciples to the actions of protest?' (Ukr. 'Чи посилав Ісус своїх учнів на акції протесту?') Mykola Romaniuk used the interpretation of the psalm arguing that God does not approve people going on the actions of protest (see http://www.rmikola.com/pohlyad/chy-posylav-isus-svojih-uchniv-na-aktsiji-protestu.html; last seen 6 May 2018). One of his explanations was that using the secular technologies hostile to evangelical ethic leads to the wrong idea of the possibility of changing something by human themselves. Therefore, evangelicals have to stay away from protesting.
[73] Here Romaniuk is writing about the event of the night of 29-30 November 2013. At that time the protest against the unexpected last minute decision of the president Viktor Yanukovych not to sign the agreement between the EU and Ukraine was almost over. However, after the attack of government forces against the protestors – a small group of young people, mostly students, an enraged crowd of people came back to the square in even higher numbers. Since then what was before called Euromaidan became Maidan. That means that not joining the EU became the secondary reason of the protest. People started to claim that they go to protest mostly against outrage and corruption of government, courts and militia.

The pastor then questioned what the apostle meant by 'power'. Did he mean every person who was in power, or the institution of power? Romaniuk argued that the answer is not every person in power but the institution of power, which is given by God to help the sinful humanity survive. According to him, biblical prophets opposed iniquities of rulers even when they knew they were going to die for it. That is a biblical proof for the pastor that his finding is right. However, Romaniuk did not stop here and along with the Bible he started to study the constitution of Ukraine. The constitution, according to the pastor, says that authority belongs to the people of Ukraine, which has power to elect people and control them. Thus no one can define or change the law personally by him or herself (Гордеев 2015: 9-11).

I presented here the case of the personal transformation caused by the polarised political situation in the country. This situation continues, keeping high numbers of Ukrainian citizens politically involved. It divides citizens in general, so it also divides the evangelicals. Above we saw the case of an evangelical pastor, who according to the tradition of detachment from the worldly deeds, had written about and preached in public for the silent separation of God's children from the sinful society just a few months before Euromaidan started. The pastor had previously lived through all the political changes including the Orange revolution without doubting his certitude.[74] However, his personal transformation started after the brutal behaviour of the security forces against peaceful protestors. This event had pushed the pastor not to automatically rely on the traditional interpretation of the famous biblical excerpt of Romans 13: 1-2, but to contemplate on, revise and reinterpret it by finding a new and even opposite meaning of some verses.

This example shows that in the way of transformation evangelicals cannot rely on the same old traditional interpretations of scriptures. Changing

[74] The Orange Revolution was a series of protests that started on November 2004 immediately after the presidential election as a consequence of massive voter intimidation and electoral fraud from the side of the team of the candidate Viktor Yanukovych. The revolution lasted until January 2005 when protesters succeeded and the results of the election were annulled. Viktor Yushchenko won the second run-off.

understanding and perception of events requires that one searches for and revealing the new supportive meanings extracted from the Biblical texts. However, by letting go of the old interpretation that argues for a strict separation between the church and the secular world, the pastor of the church in Irpin made new important connections. First of all, without diminishing the authority of Paul, Romaniuk was able to make a link to the Old Testament with his new interpretation of the script. The fact that the old prophets publicly had challenged the corrupt and infidel rulers gave his new interpretation legitimacy. Furthermore, he was able to make links to the 'worldly' protests against the same kind of rulers in contemporary Ukraine. Secondly, Romaniuk interpreted the meaning of power by understanding it as represented by the state institutions. Romaniuk who quite recently had proclaimed the rebuke of society stepped so deep into the realm of worldly sinners that he started to study the constitution of the country. The logic is quite clear. The constitution is the main book and instruction, which helps to define what political power is in the country where he lives. The constitution becomes a kind of secular bible. Thirdly, I argue that changing and broadening the interpretation allows the pastor to deepen his perception of God as a living and acting being who is present among all people, and thereby not only among the saved born again Christians. Through reinterpretating Romans 13: 1-2 the biblical perception of reality becomes present. It convincingly links and explains affairs in contemporary Ukraine in light of biblical events starting with the comparison with the time of the prophets. In this new interpretation the evangelicals do not keep their commitment to God only in the churches among other born again believers. This is a call to act on God's side in the realm of the world driven by secular rulers. This call is characteristic of the new style evangelicals in Ukraine.

In the same way Tanya Luhrmann suggested (2004, 2012a, 2012b) that in the course of one generation evangelical Christians shifted their identity from a type of Christianity as practised by a community, to a highly individualistic religious practice (Luhrmann 2004, 2012a, 2012b). I also argue, that we witness a new style of Ukrainian evangelicals who have emerged in the light of the collapse of the Soviet Union. This new generation is directly involved with the surrounding

society and differs remarkably from the communities that practiced a clear separation between the church and the surrounding world. The new generation does not only meet God in church, they also meet God in secular territories, territories they were bound to avoid during the communist regime. This is also a step away from the communitarian type of relationship characteristic of traditional evangelicals, to a more individualistic specific to new style evangelicals in Ukraine. The participation in the secular world multiplies different kinds of activities and challenges for Ukrainian evangelicals, and thus requires quicker answers and responses to them. This also expands the biblical perception of reality, making God's deeds more visible and sensible. Engaging in new interpretations of the biblical texts, as the one made by Romaniuk serve as an illustration of this point. It provides the understanding that the role of the believers is not so much one of passively waiting inside the church for the second coming of Jesus.[75] The newly understood role is rather going to the 'world' and acting there for God as well as hand in hand with God.

After the political events such as the Orange Revolution (2004-2005) and the Maidan Revolution (2013-2014), combined with the recent war in the eastern part of the country, Donbas, Ukrainian Evangelicals found themselves under pressure to choose a side in the conflict. The case of the pastor in Irpin is not unique. There are witnesses from other believers and pastors who decided to participate in Maidan, sometimes even without telling other members in their own communities, as they were afraid that their fellow-believers would not share or support such activities (Гордеев 2015). Therefore, I argue that participating in politics is a strong feature of the new style and new-minded evangelical in Ukraine and indeed can be an individual choice. Below I present an excerpt from my fieldwork to support my argument.

[75] The Second Coming is a Christian belief about the return of Jesus Christ to fulfill prophecies given in Old and New Testaments. In the First Coming Jesus was a humble suffering servant. In the second coming He will be a conquering king. The belief is built and described mostly on the Book of Revelation.

A "small group" meeting had started.[76] We were reading Acts, chapter 16 that evening. A deacon of the community led the meeting. There were a few refugees from Donbas participating in the meeting together with a few local non-believers. Two pastors from two different communities, as well as one retired pastor had joined the meeting. The intensity of events, miracles and visions in the chapter we were reading that evening, included the story about Paul who with his companions was travelling and evangelising in different places.[77] We read how in Macedonia the group was accused of being Jews and arranging uproar among locals. Paul and his companion Silas were severely beaten and thrown into prison, from which they were released the next day. The chapter was accompanied by many comments and interpretations from the participants of the small group meeting. One of the pastors focused on the verses 36-37 asking us to pay attention and take them as an example of how we should defend our rights.

The verses read: "And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, the magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out." (Acts 16: 36-37; King James Bible).

Paul, according to the pastor, was a citizen of Rome and did not allow anyone to treat him as having no rights. "He stood his position very clearly, and demanded that he should be treated accordingly [to his status of Roman citizen]."

I chose this excerpt from my fieldwork data in order to make a comparison with the case I explored in the previous section about the pastor from the Irpin church. Both excerpts are interesting as they show how the circulations of biblical texts find new interpretations in particular sociohistorical moments as "the uses and purposes Christians find for the Bible are tightly bound to their

[76] Small group is a common way to refer to a Bible study meeting.
[77] That evening we were reading and analysing The Book of Acts 16.

surrounding cultural milieu" (Bielo 2009: 2). In this latter excerpt the pastor continues the discussion on the matter of worldly power that Romaniuk was engaged in exploring in Paul's letter to Romans. Romaniuk reached the conclusion that worldly authorities are not allowed to play daily politics as they wish, for their own sake. Authorities have to make decisions regarding the written law. The pastor in Lviv learned that Christians, on the other hand should not be detached from the 'world' but on the contrary have to know their rights and stand up for them when it is needed. Thus, the core meaning of the verses stressed by the pastor was that Paul encouraged him not to resign his worldly citizenship for the sake of heavenly, but rather that he should be an active citizen in both realms.

Romaniuk, facing civil unrest and the way the authorities dealt with it, started to doubt the veracity of the well-known traditional interpretation of Romans 13: 1-2, which served as the implementation of simplistic dualism in explaining the world. His reinterpretation of the verses opened up for a much wider and more sophisticated view of the world.

In the small group meeting the situation was different. Here the attention of the participants of the meeting was drawn to verses (Acts 16: 36-37, see above) that normally would not have been singled out, and normally not would have been interpreted in this manner. The context of the story written in the Bible is about Paul who after many miraculous and dramatic events described in Acts 16, demands the authorities of the city of Philippi to be treated in accordance with the law could just as well be seen rather as a small victory. After all, Paul and his companion Silas were already beaten and thrown into prison. And they were anyway asked to leave Philippi afterwards without gaining many converts there. It was unusual to highlight this exact excerpt as something particularly educational for the believers. However, in contemporary Ukraine the two verses were chosen and picked by the pastor as having great importance. They show that Paul who dedicated his life to spreading the transcendental Christian message did not dissociate himself from the worldly reality. He was a Roman citizen, he knew Roman law and insisted on being treated in accordance with it.

I argue that the biblical perception of reality is a key part of the new style, more than it was of the old style, because there is more need for it in complex and changing circumstances. In the example above by stressing those two verses the pastor used the biblical perception of reality in order to connect and merge the concerns of biblical time with contemporary ones. The biblical perception of reality merges the experience of two different historical periods, thereby making them contemporaneous by letting them interact through a lively dialogue. For evangelicals, the answers to all the possible questions and concerns of their present day life are *already* given by God and are written in the Bible. How to react to present day political instabilities is *already* explained through parallel Biblical stories. The believers' task is to study the Bible thoroughly and answers will be found. The Bible transcends the boundaries of an accustomed perception of time as steadily flowing in one direction, and thereby differences in time and space become blurred. The constant reading, studying and discussing of the Bible offers the evangelicals the opportunity to be constantly immersed in the biblical texts and thereby continuously grasp new aspects and nuances of the texts, as they engage in a dialogue with it by drawing comparisons to their present life.

The interpretation of the text by the pastor and his comparisons with the believers' life provoked neither discussion nor argument. Neither the lay participants nor the other pastors opposed it as being controversial or out of line. The episode presented itself as the usual flow of thoughts on the text that was read. Some other thoughts on different verses that evening were listened to in silence; some initiated reactions and discussions from other participants; some were confronted. The participants that evening became the most involved in the episode told in 16-18 verses…[78]

[78] The verses read: "On one occasion, as we went to the place of prayer, a servant girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." She did this for many days. But becoming greatly troubled, Paul turned to the spirit and said, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out at that moment." (Acts 16: 16-18. Modern English Version Bible)

It happened that the verses stressed by the pastor hit on the essential evangelicals' topic of their relationship with 'the world'; it is evangelisation, bringing the Christian message to 'the world'. However, the pastor that evening brought another message he had dug out of the text – learning and dealing with the law of the 'world'. In this way the pastor responded to the constant evangelical question 'what do the lines of the Bible which I have just read tell us about today, about our time and about our situation?' At the same time the pastor let us feel the closeness and relevance of the biblical stories as they closely correspond to contemporary local situations. Feeling the meaning of the Bible in this manner means entering the realm of biblical perception of reality, of time and space. Both Romaniuk and the pastor from the Bible study brought the message that Ukrainian evangelicals are ready to reflect actively on wider political events, and that their involvement is legitimized through the new ways of interpreting the biblical stories.

I will present another example of a speech that is representative of the current direction that Ukrainian evangelical movement is taking. This time it is the view of one of the leaders of the Baptist Union. This case is interesting as the spokesman who spoke to an audience consisting of twelve hundred Baptists used an allegory taken not from the biblical text but from classical literature. Moreover, the text in itself, as well as the speech said nothing about religion. The speech was about the political choice that has to be made by Ukrainian citizens:

Igor Bandura, First vice-president of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists speaks at a missionary forum. The forum was held at a building in the Maidan, which was the scene of both the Orange and Maidan revolutions. The speech is about reclaiming the missionary spirit. In the middle of his speech Bandura gives an allegory about a bird from a story written by Gogol.[85] Bandura says that the bird from the story flies to the middle of Dnieper[79] where it stops, starting to doubt if it is able to cross the entire river and whether

[85] Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol (Rus. Николай Васильевич Гоголь) was a Russian writer of Ukrainian origin who lived and wrote in the nineteenth century.
[79] The Dnieper River (Ukr. Дніпро, Rus. Днепр) is the fourth-longest river in Europe and the longest in Ukraine and Belarus.

it has enough strength to do it.[80] The speaker says that it is the allegory of Ukraine. "There are countries", – Bandura continues, - "where the collapse of the Soviet Union is called the biggest catastrophe of the twentieth century.[81] Those countries try to turn time back, to restore what is lost and gone, what does not exist anymore and will not exist anymore, what is impossible to restore. Ukraine, which flew to the middle of the river, does not need to look back searching for what no longer exists. The distance to both of those shores is the same…"

There is something interesting in the parallel between the speech of Bandura and the information given by the interviewee in the beginning of the chapter. Both of them are talking about the political perspective and direction seen by the leadership of the largest evangelical union in Ukraine. Bandura is talking from his own perspective being First vice-president of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists. He sees and proclaims the only possible direction for Ukrainian citizens moving forward without looking back. Without mentioning any names Bandura, however lets his listeners know very clearly, which country is referred to as the one mourning for what is lost, and which political side is responsible for the endeavour to turn time back and restore what does not and will not exist anymore, what is impossible to restore. As a contrast to this story, the interviewee from the beginning of the chapter shared his experience about some of the leaders with me. Leaders of the same union who during the meeting with the leaders of local churches tried to persuade them to support the Russian protégé Yanukovych. The question is what impelled the leaders of the union to make such a radical shift of changing the

[80] The narration is taken from the second volume of the short story collection 'Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka' (1832), from the story 'A Terrible Vengeance'. Although Gogol just wanted in his story to emphasize how wide the river is, saying that a rare bird can fly to the middle of the Dnieper River, Bandura himself developed and added a small psychological overview from those few words.
However, the line from the story by itself is famous enough. There is a monument of 'the rare bird' built in the middle of the Dnieper River in Kyiv.

[81] It is a clear reference to the famous comments of Putin during the Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation April 25, 2005 at the Kremlin, Moscow: "Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century." See the speech of Putin in Russian on you tube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTvswwU5Eco. See also: http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/statements/2014/mar/06/john-bolton/did-vladimir-putin-call-breakup-ussr-greatest-geop/

priorities from supporting the protégé who 'try to turn time back' to the perspective of rushing to the future without looking back. I argue that the turning point and the event that propelled such a rapid change was Maidan and following the Russian military intervention to Ukraine and seizure of Crimea after Yanukovych fled the country. It served as a climax for countering and straining longstanding intimate relations and ties between Russian and Ukrainian evangelicals (Elliot 2014; Lunkin 2014).[82] Although it was possible to consolidate the support of some leaders of the Baptist union to the pro-Russian Yanukovych during the revolution, things radically changed afterwards. At the Missionary Forum, beside the speech of Bandura, other speakers and participants likewise expressed a strong nationalistic spirit and optimism about the future of the country, and shared their antipathy to the Soviet past and the successors of its repressive policy. As there was a rotation of some leadership positions inside the Union since Maidan had started, we can guess that many of those who previously had taken an apolitical or active pro-Russian position, either changed their mind, like Romaniuk did, went quietly into the shadows of the Union, or were silenced.

Like their Soviet predecessors who developed evangelical traditions, evangelicals in Russia continue the policy of supporting the government and of non-interference to the world outside the church. So, it seems at least when compared with Ukrainian evangelicals. Just like their predecessors Soviet evangelicals, the Russian Baptists do not have much of a choice for going in other directions. According to Serhii Plokhy: "The new law of the Russian Federation on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations, enacted on October 1, 1997 has effectively reestablished state control over religious life in Russia and is considered an obvious setback to democracy as compared with Soviet legislation of 1990" (Plokhy 2002: 297). With the new law Russia enforced discrimination for the religious minorities' special relations between the state and the Russian Orthodox Church, where the latter was given special privileges.

[82] Deadlock in the relationship between Russian and Ukrainian evangelicals happened after Russian evangelical leaders denied the characterization of Russian intervention as an aggression, and declined to condemn anti-Ukrainian rhetoric in Russian mass media (Elliot 2014; Lunkin 2014).

Ukraine chose another way and "after some hesitation, refused to establish special relationship with any of the country's traditional churches and, although reluctantly, has been supporting religious pluralism on its territory" (Plokhy 2002:298). However, regardless of whether we speak about the active reaction, as demonstrated by the new-style evangelicals, or whether we speak about the seemingly a-political separation of church and society (which in the case of Russian evangelicals also becomes a political position of choosing between the advocacy of the national government and supporting of the new style Ukrainian 'brothers'), then both sides use the biblical texts in justifying their positions. How does it become possible to experience and interpret so different worldviews, as the same textual source is used for supporting both positions? I will answer to this question in the following section.

This section I end with the example showing that the tension between Russian and Ukrainian Baptists crossed the boundaries of both countries. Egor, the IDP from Donbas told me a story about his brother who fled from Donbas and was living with his family as a refugee in the US. Egor's brother met there with traditional Soviet Baptists who had migrated from the Soviet Union decades earlier than him and had been living in the US ever since. Shocked and angered of the passive reaction of local Baptists to the event in Ukraine and for their sympathy to contemporary Russian policy and its leader, Egor's brother raised the Ukrainian and American flags at the house he was living in and distanced his relationship with the Soviet Baptists in the US. Surprised that their political preferences provoked such a radical reaction of their acquaintance, the Baptists tried "to bring the new fellow to reason" by saying that Russians and Ukrainians were and always will be brothers. According to Egor his brother cut this statement off by arguing that if one of the brothers think that the other is misbehaving, it is not reason to break into his house and kill the members of the brother's family…

This estrangement and deepening lacuna between traditional and new style evangelicals is a consequence of Ukrainian evangelicals' decision not to continue the ethic of staying away from political life of their country. This example

supports my argument that the constantly uneasy political situation that led to the dramatic events in Ukraine accelerated the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals.

Interpretation of Events: Same Doctrine and Perception, Different View and Direction

> "For the Lord gives wisdom;
> Out of His mouth come knowledge and understanding." (Proverbs 2: 6. Modern English Version Bible)

The data and its analysis in the previous section shows that the current elite of the Baptist Union is strongly future-oriented toward an active participation in society. While I hitherto mainly have explored the external causes that have resulted in the internal conflicting opinions among the evangelicals, I here turn to the internal conflict and return to the question of why some Ukrainian evangelicals see a call for transformation in the Bible, while other communities in the neighbourhood are eager to keep their traditions. Does it mean that the same Bible can be interpreted differently, and even in opposite ways? And how strict, or how flexible are the hermeneutical strategies when facing the changing ideological priorities of the interpreters of the biblical texts?

Born again Christians note that God always says what He means, that every single word in the Bible is inspired by God and that the meaning of the biblical texts is the same today and as ever (Bielo 2007). Consequently, they are associated and associate themselves with literalism and inerrancy, though in reality their interpretive tradition is highly nuanced and sophisticated (Bielo 2009; Coleman 2006; Harding 2000; Robbins 2006b; Vallikivi 2014). As Crapanzano (2000) explains, literalist understandings of born-again Christians focus not as much on the pragmatic aspects of language but rather on its semantic dimension. That implies that the meaning of a given biblical text can be decidable and traceable (Crapanzano 2000; Coleman 2006). That means that interpretive and decision-making process can be challenged, argued, negotiated,

discussed, and even lost (Bielo 2008; Engelke and Tomlinson 2006). Therefore, it makes sense to change the earlier question 'does it mean that the same Bible can be interpreted differently, and even in opposite ways?' to the more relevant question as to how "theological speculation [based on biblical texts] can become popular in practice?" (Robbins 2006a: 286).

Sharing the same doctrine does not imply only one possible way of understanding the text. The biblical texts are multifaceted, and a daily reader of the Bible can be surprised to find a new facet, a meaning that she or he did not expect to find in the lines that looked clear when reading them many times on earlier occasions. Czarniawska has named four types of biblical hermeneutics mostly employed in discovering God's intentions: 1) literal, prohibiting any kind of expanded explanations; 2) moral, seeking in the Bible ethical lessons; 3) allegorical, which accept of a second level of reference on the biblical texts, and 4) mystical, assuming that the Bible reveals future events (Czarniawska 2004: 63-64). Previously in this chapter I described the case of a pastor of the Bible Church in Irpin, who stepped out of his accustomed literal interpretation of the Biblical text. Although the interpretation of the verses from the Bible remained literal for the pastor, the reflection and revision of the text made it possible to add a secondary secular text for clarification of the meaning. Moreover, the same process of intense reflection and revision of the accustomed meaning was provoked by a purely secular, worldly event. Thus, staying with his new though still literal interpretation of the text, and without confronting the doctrine, the pastor approached the text from a different perspective, driven by the political unrest; it is circumstances in which he was confronted. Instead of bounding the hermeneutics of the taken text to its biblical circumstances, he started an interaction with that particular text. Thus, the biblical text did not lose its credibility but it rather started "to speak" with the pastor instead of simply dictating him a rule for behaviour. The logic and the meaning of the text has changed for the pastor, changing his stance as an obedient reader of the given verses as the text of command, to actively linking and juxtaposing the same verses with other parts of the scripture. The link between two timely and geographically remote spots became binding not through the command given a

long time ago and the obedient commitment to it nowadays. Rather, it became vibrant as he was adding dynamism and new perspectives. In the new dialogue Romaniuk played a more active role by making personal, individual inquiries and conclusions instead of defending the traditional interpretation of the text as he had done recently. By doing so he joined the evangelicals who are building a new style of evangelical communities in Ukraine.

The examples from the fieldwork given above show us that the exploration of prevailing hermeneutics, and techniques of interpretation of biblical texts employed by Christian groups can tell us about the formation of ideas inside that group and how theological speculations are realised and operated in practice by its members. Similarly, Bielo calls (2008) on us to pay closer attention to the way believers interact with the Bible as it allows to "grapple with the semiotics of their faith through their approaches to reading" (Engelke 2009: 155). The focus on Christians' interaction with the Bible is "valuable because it allows us to analyse how, and to what extent, religious texts are made meaningful and authoritative within particular Christian traditions and communities of practice" (Engelke 2009: 152).

In the case of the pastor of the Bible Church in Irpin, the changed meaning of the text was most likely going to be shared among other believers in the church, among the members of his community. Were they ready to accept the pastor's findings and agree on them? And how can the old meaning in general be changed by a new one? How is the new meaning suggested and then maybe discussed and then accepted or rejected? Bielo (2007) proposed two theories, of recontextualization and of hermeneutic circles adopted from linguistic anthropology I analysed in chapter two. These theories explain how extracted from the original text, inserted in a new contextual setting, and leading by meta-commentary, a segment becomes meaningful and accepted in a new discursive situation. The pastor, following his personal changes in how to read and perceive the Bible in relation to changing circumstances in the country, efficiently started to read the Bible in a new manner that thus corresponded to his new perception of how evangelicals should act in the world. This, however, would not be possible

to convey further, without finding evidence in the Bible for his new thoughts in line with theories proposed by Bielo.

Although I do not know if the pastor succeeded in conveying the message to the members in his church, I can speculate about it using the above-mentioned theories and by knowing the circumstances in Ukraine in general at that time. Thus, for the pastor from Irpin the primary goal would be to show to the members of the community that the meaning of the word 'power' in a particular text of the Bible could be understood and explained through its worldly definition without losing the literality and inerrancy of the text. The success of the introduced interpretation in that case depends on the initial assumptions about the text and on the worldly ideological preferences of the group. Some members may continue interpreting the text in what they see as the only possible way – the traditional way - while others would resist the new interpretation being supportive of pro-Russian ideology. Others again, having no deep sympathy for tradition, doubting the legitimacy of both sides, or supporting the pro Ukrainian side, could accept it.

Thus, the biblical texts can be translated according to their meaning in the modern world. This does not only make the text more or less imperative, it also creates the possibility of a dialogue between God and the present day readers of the Bible. God does not just become alive among the believers, He becomes active and He is calling the readers to join Him outside the church. This is one of the strong impetus for transformation amongst evangelicals.

Conclusion

In this chapter I started to present my findings on the main factors that pushed and accelerated the process of transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. The first characteristic, or rather circumstance for such an impetus under which evangelicals in Ukraine are living and acting, is the long-lasting highly uneasy political situation in the country. Unable to establish a political balance, the leaders of the country replaced each other after every election, working like a

pendulum by redirecting the course of the country back and forth between the interests and influences of either the West or Russia. Under these circumstances the new style evangelicals multiplied, transformed and became more visible. They no longer kept away from political life or supported the existing rulers like their predecessors evangelicals. And though they opposed the open military aggressor Russia, transformed evangelicals, as I noticed in the chapter, did not take the western model as the alternative. Rather, they looked for their own nationalistic way of building their nation and their church. While they sympathized with core elements of western societies, it did not mean that they intended to copy them. They were attempting to build a Ukrainian model.

The chapter shows and illustrates how the electrified and active political life in the country activates the process of the evangelicals' transformation. Indeed, with open confrontations and war, the apolitical stand became harder and harder to justify for those who opposed the Russian invasion. I argue that this transformation goes hand in hand with the conceptualization of the evangelical ethic of constant renewal I explored in the previous chapter. At the same time, I argue that the involvement of evangelicals in the realm of the secular world happens partly because of the activation of the biblical perception of reality. That means that the biblical perception of reality becomes a way of searching, questioning, and participating in the world in which Christians are embedded. The opening of the community to the society and the reaction to political events, I argue, intensified and vitalized the perception of the biblical perception of reality. The Bible changed from being a well known hermeneutical pattern to offering new instructions and ways for those who started to seek answers to what were, for them, unprecedented challenges and questions. Thus, the meaning of the line from the Bible I presented in the very beginning of the chapter can be interpreted in different ways according to the preferences of the group that reads it. For example, for Soviet evangelicals, wicked rulers could be understood as sent by God to punish the sinners and test the faithful. In contrast, for transformed Ukrainian evangelicals a wicked ruler can be taken as an exceeding the authority given to him – as an offender that needs to be challenged. Both the starting political discussion and activities, and studying the

precedents of it in the Bible create a dialogue between the reader and the text and in this way stimulated an even more intimate relationship. The perception of biblical time becomes more recognizable and thus closer to now for the contemporary reader, which relates to my findings in chapter 4.

One more theme I mentioned in the chapter, was the deadlock between Ukrainian and Russian evangelicals. After feeling the pressure from their Ukrainian brothers to condemn Russian aggression against Ukraine, Russian evangelicals kept a fragile but safe alliance with the government of their country instead. The rhetoric Russian evangelicals used, was the same as used during the Soviet Union, namely the dissociation from political affairs. Presumably, the Russian evangelicals, now constrained by legislation that does not exist in Ukraine, have been forced back into the framework of the old 1960-91 Soviet evangelical tradition. The conflict politicized the whole environment in Ukraine and did not just move the evangelicals towards activism, but activism in support of the Ukrainian patriotic cause. In this climate, evangelicals opposed to Maidan or pro-Russian would have remained silent just as their Russian equivalents remained silent about their government's policy. The evangelicals were not just motivated to join in politics; they also were swept along with a particular newly-dominant political view. This example supports my claim that the rapid transformation that Ukrainian evangelicals experience has its own particular characteristics that provoked changes inside the movement.

In the last section of this chapter I continued exploring the theme of evangelicals' perception of reality by applying some hermeneutical theories, which help to explain the possibility of the radical shift of meaning of the biblical texts. I illustrated how use of hermeneutical techniques makes it possible to change to the opposite interpretation and meaning of the same verses of the text. I showed that changes in ethics and behaviour for evangelicals could not come instantly. It had to come hand in hand with the process of rethinking and reinterpreting the biblical text. The whole hermeneutical process during the transformation is redirected to support and accept a point of view that an evangelical Christian in light of recent event has come to understand and accepted.

6. Transformation of Ukrainian Evangelicals: Social Engagement

> "Likewise, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous men who need no repentance." (Luke 15: 7. Modern English Version Bible)

Introduction

Repentance symbolizes the giving up of a personal ego. It stands at the core and is the first step of evangelical conversion. One of the tasks for the one who is serving on mission or is evangelising, is helping a person to realize that he is a sinner and consequently, helps him reach the condition of repent. After the country gained independence, Ukrainian evangelicals established and developed different kinds of social service in order to reach non-believers, to provide help and evangelise at the same time. This was not unique but done by many religious organizations in the former USSR – as the state collapsed and people were uprooted from the economy, religious organizations tried to fill the gaps in social provision.

With this chapter I continue to answer to the question of the research: What is the source, or the cause of rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals? The second of the three main reasons I present and explore in the thesis, and the topic of this chapter is about the social engagement of Ukrainian evangelical Christians. I see the social engagement, which was illegal during the Soviet regime, as an important and contributing factor of transformation of the evangelical movement in Ukraine.

Evangelicals emphasize and put much effort into reaching non-believers and spreading the gospel, in order to win sinners over. Evangelisation is a way to appeal to sinners and transfigure their hearts. For some evangelicals, social services have come to play an important part of this. Social service is a large variety of activities aiming to help people in need. Among them are soup kitchens for homeless people, distribution of charity to the poor, organizing free summer

camps for children and youth, visiting prisoners, helping elders at hospitals and similar activities. Such activities serve as meeting places where evangelicals seek to meet non-believers and interact with them while providing them a service they need. Evangelisation is integrated in all the services. However, not all evangelicals necessarily understand social service as the right way for Christians to live and act. Although there are many places in the New Testament where Jesus taught and showed how to love and help sinners, there are internal disagreements about the value of social work.[83] For example, for some traditional post-Soviet Baptists, social service is "a way to nowhere" while the new style Baptists call it "God's call to the church" (Черенков 2012: 13).

During my fieldwork I investigated the activity of feeding poor people at the Baptist seminary. For almost one hundred days I daily passed the tent where the poor gathered for their daily meal provided by the workers of the seminary. I had also been able to take a part in the distribution of charity for poor people from Switzerland, which was organized on a regular basis by one of the communities of my research. I have also taken part in several camps targeted for different age groups. However, I have not directly participated in any of rehabilitation centre established by evangelicals. Nevertheless, I am convinced of the significance and effectiveness of social service for evangelicals. Every church of my research had members who previously were drug addicts and went through rehabilitation centres where they had been converted. Those centres were established and supported by evangelical churches. The centres were as a rule run by believers who themselves had been through similar experiences and treatments after being heavily addicted to drugs. Moreover, many previously addicted converts became active and eager religious participants standing at the front lines of their communities. These previous addicts and others converted in the process of receiving social support from evangelical communities. Before that, the vast majority had known nothing or only very little about born again Christians. They did not belong to segment of evangelicals whose families had practised their faith for generations and who had become socialised in this

[83] See, for example Jesus words about himself: "even as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve…" (Matthew 20: 28. Modern English Version Bible).

manner since childhood. Their religious involvement and learning started in independent Ukraine and as a rule their teachers were new style evangelicals. Therefore, evangelical tradition inherited from the Soviet period did not mean much for this group of believers. They themselves became new style evangelicals and moreover, often some of the most active participants in the process of transforming Ukrainian evangelicals.

In this chapter I present some of the multiple testimonies from Sunday worship, personal stories told me by members of the Baptist communities, and excerpts from interviews taken from previous addicts. I will discuss the role of those new converts in the transformation of contemporary Ukrainian evangelicals.

The Rehabilitation Centres

> "…I was blind, but now I see." (John 9: 25. Modern English Version Bible).

In this section I illustrate how after experiencing conversion in rehabilitation centres such believers are keenly engaging in the same kind of services and in the projects of evangelisation in general. These newly converted evangelicals choose to be practically involved in church activities and social services, for example by helping others addicts, instead of looking for tradition and framing themselves in it.

According to the Ukrainian sociologist Lyubashchenko (2010) who had been studying a Pentecostal community in Lviv for 25 years: "Protestants are prominent in cultural, educational and medical associations and in young people's and women's organisations, and the effectiveness of their social projects, particularly in the social rehabilitation of alcoholics, drug addicts and people with AIDS and in collaboration with the penal system, rivals that of many state structures" (Lyubashchenko 2010: 270). The sentiment of the value of "one sinner who repents (…) over ninety-nine righteous men who need no repentance" goes together with experiencing the social issue in a country with a

growing number of drug-addicted people. The group of drug-addicts join the company of other socially stigmatized groups, such as alcohol addicts, with whom they also share rehabilitation centres with all over the country. However, drug addiction is a relatively new phenomenon in Ukraine, whereas alcoholism however, is a severe and long lasting problem among Ukrainian citizens, inherited from the Soviet period and before. While alcohol thus is a well known substitute that also is integrated in much social interaction, drugs represented a new and more severe issue after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The number of drug addicts was growing on an epidemic scale. The changing governments of independent Ukraine were not able to continue the harsh and uncompromising policy of their Soviet predecessors, namely strict control, criminalization and punishment for keeping and making drugs. The governments had neither resources, nor experience, and often were lacking a basic will for helping those who suffered from drug addiction. The initiative of helping addicted people was therefore taken on by the church, which offered human and financial resources for dealing with the problem, mostly by establishing and running rehabilitation centres. In Ukraine there were many different Christian denominations involved in carrying out that kind of social service. Some of the most active were evangelical churches. From being an invisible and suppressed problem during the Soviet regime, it was now out in the open and proved to be very hard to fight. Both communities of my research had previous drug addicts among their members. And having believers who go through rehabilitation centres is typical rather than exceptional for Ukrainian evangelical churches. In the chapter I retell the stories of four people, Roman, Vadim, Rinat and Danil. They were all former drug addicts and criminals that had managed to turn their lives around by entering the Baptists rehabilitation centres. Importantly, three of them, Roman, Vadim and Rinat, though belonging to different Baptist communities, were old friends previously engaged in crimes and drugs. I demonstrate how by helping each other to quit drugs they formed a new and visible group in contemporary Ukrainian evangelical movement. Let us start with the story of Roman:

The Bible study was over and everyone was leaving the room. It was my fourth participation in one of two simultaneously on-going Bible studies organized by the group of Baptists, IDPs' from Donbas and Crimea. I helped Roman to put the chairs and tables back in their original place. Roman was leading the service in the rehabilitation centre at the Baptist church in his hometown in Donbas before the war. I had already heard the stories about the centre from his former helper, the other member of the IDP community, Dima. Dima was asked to serve at the centre after he finished working with the youth of the community.[84] Dima vividly narrated to me his shocking experiences after he started serving at the centre. One that did not escape his mind was the persistent smell of rotten flesh, coming from the wounds of the addicts – the wounds being severe side effects of their drug abuse. Along went the sound of ruptured abscesses on the addicts' legs while he was sharing a room at the centre with alcohol and drug-addicted people during the nights.[85] Although I had met Roman several times before on Sunday services, we only started to get to know each other better when I started participating in Bible studies. We were the last who left the accommodation, which was a boiler room, rearranged and used as a hall for the Bible study meetings on Thursday evenings. The accommodation was only a few kilometres away from the flat I was renting at that time. As usual, I did not use public transportation but preferred to walk home. Roman, who lived in the opposite side of the city, decided to keep me company for a while instead of going straight to the tram stop. It was the middle of April and we were enjoying the pleasant evening. The warm weather reminded Roman of his past, of his life before conversion when he used to go out on the streets of his hometown with an open bottle of beer in his hand. Roman told me "If I could keep a cold bottle of beer in my hand while walking during a chilly day, it meant that spring had come. Afterwards I was walking with a bottle of beer in my hand every day. People noticed that I was in a strange condition, that I was dizzy, but seeing the bottle in

[84] "I realized that I do not understand the new generation. They were different from the previous group of youth I was working with. So, I informed the pastor I do not want to continue that service anymore."
[85] Addicts could not be left on their own for any period of time, thus Dima often used to stay for the night with them.

my hand they just assumed that I had had too much beer. They did not suspect that I was affected by [heavy] drugs".

That Thursday in the middle of April was the first time Roman started to tell me about his past. We continued our conversation on several occasions afterwards and I conducted an interview with him about his life before the conversion and his service in the rehabilitation centre. Roman was one of many former drug-addicts who were converted to evangelicalism at the rehabilitation centre. Afterwards he played an important role in going through the rehabilitation centres and converting some of his drug-addicted friends. Although living in different parts of Ukraine Roman and his friends keep in touch and visit each other time after time forming a specific network of new style evangelicals. I present below two testimonies of Roman's friends who came to visit him in Lviv during my fieldwork. The first testimony of Vadim illustrates how the biblical perception of reality is involved in telling his personal story where also Roman plays an important role.

Vadim, a man in his thirties was testifying during the Sunday worship service. He said that today he had to speak in a school where he prepared to tell the children the story about four people who did a good deed. They brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus to be healed. However, there were so many people coming to see Jesus that they could not get through the crowd in the building. Then they took him onto the roof and by attaching ropes to his gurney, they were able to let him down through a hole they had made in the roof. "He did even not want to be healed, but was healed because of his friends' belief,'" stated Vadim.[86] "The paralysed needed four persons to help him. If they had been three people, that would mean that one of them have to hold two ropes. He would not be able to do that. The paralysed could fall and his friends trying to keep the ropes could fall after him. It needed four friends. Everyone was playing his role. Each and every

[86] The story in the Bible about the miraculous healing of a paralysed person told in Mark 2: 1-12 and Luke 5: 17-26. Vadim is mentioning the event "When they could not find a way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his bed into their midst before Jesus." (Luke 5: 19. Modern English Version Bible). It is not said in the Bible that the paralyzed man did not want to be healed, as Vadim claimed.

one of the four was saving their friend. According to Vadim, the same could be said about him. In his case everything began from the first person, Vadim points his hand in the direction of Igor, who was sitting among the other believers and listening to the testimony. Once Igor had stopped his old car and had given three or four drug users a ride. Vadim did not even remember what the driver exactly had been saying to them then. The drug users, among them was Vadim, at that moment were "with drugs, in sin, in theft and in everything else…" The second person was Tatiana Ivanovna, Vadim's kindergarten teacher.[87] The next person was "that man", and Vadim shows with his hand towards Roman. "That man does not even suspect how he managed me. After the second time I tried to hang myself he called me. I was trying to hang myself in the evening, though I did not succeed as the hook broke. Although he himself had not been in the best condition, Roman was at least already among the believers. He asked how I was doing and I said that everything was bad. I tried to hang myself twice, and I was crushed. The last two years I was using the worst and the cheapest chemistry. My weight was 45 kilos, while my height was 180 cm. For two years I had been injecting drugs to the neck. That was a devilish act. He [the devil] tricked me (naveshyval Rus. slang навешивал) that even if I bisect me I would still be alive… I did not hear from Roman for a year, therefore I thought that he had died and was buried somewhere in Kyiv.[88] But he called me and said that he was at the believers' [rehabilitation] centre. I thought he had lost his mind. I asked him what they were doing there. He answered that they were reading the Bible, and getting clean [of addiction]… The message, that somewhere there is freedom interested me and I was trying to reach Roman calling him every two-three days, as I wanted to know more about it. He did not pick up the phone but called me back two months after. My condition at that time was very bad. The militia wanted me; bandits were looking for me. Everything bad that could happen had happened to me. Roman brought me to the centre. I was there for a long time; I was "getting out" from that state of coma very slowly. It was because everything was close [to the rehabilitation centre]; the city was close… A phone, a call and

[87] Tatiana Ivanovna was also a member of the Baptist church in Vadim's hometown living in his neighbourhood at the time the story happened. She did not leave her hometown after the war started and at the time of Vadim's testimony was still living there.
[88] The last time Vadim and Roman were in touch before the call, Roman was living in Kyiv.

that is it, and everyone is suffering…[89] the fourth person was Sergei Viktorovich, who sent me to western Ukraine.[90]
What about the story about four persons I began with? When I became a believer the faces of those four people who were praying for me arose before my eyes. I went to Rovno, to the [rehabilitation] centre and there I found my freedom."[91]

I put such a long excerpt of Vadim's testimony for two purposes. The first purpose is my intention to show how Vadim had acquired a biblical perception of reality. Vadim made parallels of his personal life with the miraculous healing of the paralyzed man taken from the scripture. I explored in chapter 4 how skilled evangelicals master to parallel and merge biblical stories with contemporary events. This time the personal story of the healing of Vadim was intertwined with the biblical story of the healing of the paralysed man. It is interesting to see how Vadim is dealing with some discrepancies between two stories. For example, the team of four in the Bible was cooperatively working in concert at the same time and Vadim met his four in different episodes of his life. However, according to Vadim, the four in his personal story formed a team of prayers for Vadim's healing. Moreover, he started seeing the four in his vision. There was one more place where Vadim made his own adjustment to the biblical event. The Bible does not tell us whether or not the paralysed man wishes to be healed. Vadim, however, "granted" the paralyzed man from the Bible his own characteristic of not being strong enough and not willing to be healed. These slight changes helped Vadim and his involved and emphatic listeners to see his case not as just one more miraculous healing, but which is not less important, as the repetition of the story given in the Bible. His story was seen in a perspective where the distances in time and space as well as particular details of the story became adjusted so as to fit with his own personal experience of healing. Thus, any biblical event can be experienced and testified today. Thus, being a Christian for Vadim and other believers was not just reading the Bible and trying to live according to it. It is perceiving the world, and even living the life once told in the scripture. Those experiences and testimonies are of great value as they usually

[89] Vadim had in mind here that it was easy to get the access to drugs.
[90] The person is unknown to me.
[91] Rus. Rovno; Ukr. Rivne (Ukr. Рівне; Rus. Ровно) is a city in western Ukraine.

tell and explain the turning points in the lives of individuals, they narrate the transformation of one's soul and gives reason to a seemingly senseless war. It illustrates the way of the evangelical perception of the world through a hermeneutical technique and a rhetorical composition.

The other reason for giving this testimony relates to the main theme of the thesis and this chapter. Vadim is an example of a new style evangelical who accelerates the transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement. We see that Vadim had learned to make a rhetorical composition for adapting his personal story according to the biblical perception of reality. The mastering of the biblical perception of reality shows Vadim as a mature and involved evangelical. Vadim, like his friend Roman, was converted and became an active member of the evangelical movement after going through rehabilitation centres. He came to testify to the church the same day he was preparing to give an evangelising speech at the school. The characteristics of becoming active participants of evangelisation projects, maintaining and fostering human and social communication and networking, are typical for those, which succeed getting through healing and conversion. Believers like Roman and Vadim do not devote their time to get inside the denominational differences or a particular tradition. Neither do they see it as having any particular importance. After their conversion they start to build their own "tradition" that we in this study call the new style. I present the testimony of one more person of the group of friends previously having been a drug user.

Rinat, a sporty man in his thirties was testifying, starting with his adolescence years. His parents were upper middle class and were able to pamper their son. Rinat was good at school and very early he became very self-confident. He soon felt bored with his regular friends. Rinat told us that he started to make friends with hooligans and drug users. It was more interesting to mingle with them. He was not afraid of becoming a drug addict, as some of his new friends already were addicted. Rinat was sure that it just couldn't happen to him. He was sixteen years old the first time he shot drugs into his vein. Little by little he became involved in drug abuse and did not know how to get out of it. He thought that

marriage and the birth of his son would help him to quit drugs, but it turned out not to be the case. At some period of time he was living in Kyiv. There he was engaged in manufacturing and selling furniture. He had enough of money and it seemed as if it was going to be like this always. However, everything unexpectedly came to the end and he was left with nothing. He left the city and came back to his hometown where he started to use 'Crocodile'.[92] After one and a half year of shooting 'Crocodile' Rinat found himself in such a poor physical condition that, according to him, even old ladies with walking sticks easily could outpace him in the streets. The doctors gave Rinat their verdict: both legs needed to be amputated, and one of Rinat's lungs did not work because of a lung infarction. The conclusion was that in a short period of time Rinat would die. Roman, who at that time was in Rivne used to call him from time to time and invite him to come to the rehabilitation centre there. Rivne was twelve hundred kilometres from Rinat's hometown, so once he replied to Roman that he did not have enough strength for the journey, but if Roman would come and take him, he was ready to go to Rivne with him. So, it happened. At the very first day at the centre people asked Rinat his permission to pray for him. Rinat was a non-believer and indifferent about that. He just said "go on, do as you want." However, he soon became impressed by the fact that everyone tried to be nice to him and help him. The very first night at the rehabilitation centre he was able to sleep for about two hours and that already was a miracle, because according to Rinat it usually takes up to ten nights without sleep for an addicted person who withdraws from drugs. In the beginning he was so weak, that he used to make his way to the second floor at the rehabilitation centre by crawling. Little by little Rinat also started to pray and get better and better.

[92] Rus. Крокодил (Krokodil). The medical name of the drug is Desomorphine. It is a morphine analogue, cheap and easy to make. Crocodile is made of codeine, gasoline, paint thinner, iodine, hydrochloric acid, and red phosphorous taken from the matchbox strike pads. The drug got its nickname because of the skin, which on the injection site becomes greenish, bumpy and scaly. It happens for the reason that the blood vessels burst and the surrounding tissue dies. The flesh on those body parts later rot off, leaving bare bone.
The 'Krokodil' users, just like in Rinat's case, typically start with homemade heroin – opiate cooked from poppy bulbs. They switch to 'Krokodil' because it has a similar effect but is several times cheaper than heroin and is much easier to make.

My intention in presenting the stories of three friends was to illustrate how social services are working in the process of building the new networks of recently converted new style evangelicals. A successful case of Roman, who went through evangelical rehabilitation centre, was a beginning of his efforts to connect with the acquaintances from the previous network of drug users. Little by little, Roman successfully reconnected the old and loose ties and managed to get his friends involved in the evangelical movement. Although, during my fieldwork, the three friends were living in different places of Ukraine, Rinat and after some time Vadim came to visit Roman and the other members of his community in Lviv, and shared their stories during Sunday services.[93] Rinat was not yet so skilled as Roman and Vadim in perceiving the reality in a biblical way. It can be seen in his testimony, which consists of telling the story of Rinat's addiction, the description of his condition just before he was taken to the rehabilitation centre, and his impression of what other persons did to him for help. Although Rinat's story sounds impressive, it lacks the transcendental level, seeing things through the biblical lenses. We can compare it with Vadim's story. In his narrative, Satan was involved, and the four friends were acting in the way as it was written in the Bible. Although those four individually were aware and deliberately helping and praying for Vadim for getting him out of the condition he immersed himself, in Vadim's interpretation in the way of biblical perception of reality, they unknowingly composed the supernatural team, which was initiated not by humans, and acting for his sake even without his will. That made him a passive receiver of the grace of God in the beginning of the healing. Rinat's testimony reads as a simple secular linear story without references to the biblical events. We were left without knowing whether Rinat will learn the biblical perception of reality.

The case of the three friends who went through the rehabilitation centre and then became active evangelicals is not accidental or untypical in present day Ukraine. I present one more testimony of an active evangelical from a different region of Ukraine than the three friends I presented above. It is the case of Danil,

[93] Vadim was testifying in the beginning of 2017. Rinat visited Lviv at the end of summer 2016.

who nowadays is the pastor of a small and young, local Baptist community in Lviv. Here is his shortened story:

"I would like to speak about good things that happen to me and I do not like to speak about bad ones. But that is how a human being is. We like to appear better than we are in reality. As I reflect on my childhood, all that wickedness was growing in me. When I was fourteen years old I met a bloke from Chelyabinsk.[94] The bloke asked me if I knew where to get drugs in the city. Out of hospitality I decided to help the guest. I knew guys who were using drugs. I gave them money and got a syringe from them, which I gave to the bloke. We went to the nine-floor house where I was living. The guest dealt drugs in two syringes. One of them he shot up and the other was offered to me. I refused, but when he asked whether I was afraid, I answered that there is not a thing in the world, which could scare me. So, my 'I' was bigger than it was in reality. As a consequence, I injected drugs and that was the beginning of an even bigger evil growing in my life. Someone once has said that drugs draw people out, and that is true. I was hiding all the evil and iniquity that was in my life, but influenced by drugs it started to get out of me. Soon it came to things that were to be expected. Several times I went to court and was imprisoned. I reached a condition, where I did not want to live anymore. In the beginning, I thought that there is truth and honour in the streets. Everyone lives according to the [unwritten] Moral Code. Over time, however, I realized that human beings in essence are selfish and think only about themselves. Disappointment, hopelessness took over. I would wake up in the morning and only think about where to get money or drugs… I started to dislike myself. I was 24 and I did not want to live anymore.
My brother at that time was studying at the Institute of Physical Culture. His teacher was a woman who loved God, who believed in God. She noticed that my brother was full of sorrow and started talking with him. He talked with that woman [about me] and she did several things I did not know about then, but which I know about now. She shared the history in her church and the church started to pray for me. She also invited my brother and me to the church. I

[94] Chelyabinsk (rus. Челябинск) is nowadays a seventh largest city in Russia by population located east of the Ural Mountains. Danil met the man in Danil's home city Lviv.

remember that Sunday service vividly… Nevertheless, I continued living my life as before. However, that woman did one more important thing. She got the address of the rehabilitation centre for the addicted persons. She gave the address to my brother and he asked me to go there. I recklessly promised that I will and later I could not refuse. 15th January 2004 I arrived at the rehabilitation centre. What I remember and what impressed me at first was that I had never before experienced the feeling that somebody is praying for you and you see and understand that. There were people who prayed for me, naturally. For example, we were waking up and someone started to pray: 'God, bless Danil, let him sleep during the night, help him to go through the withdrawal, and start to live a normal life.' All those things I was able to understand and that was strange. Another thing [that impressed me] was that people, whom I could not give anything back, were eager to help me. I saw their sincerity and acceptance of me, and that surprised me a lot. I am still thankful to those people. Nothing extraordinary happened in my life when I started my new way. However, I experienced a new desire, a longing to read the Bible. I used to wake up at six o'clock in the morning to read the Bible. At 8 a. m. we used to start breakfast. Another new thing I noticed in me was that I wanted to share the new feeling of peace and joy with other people. I wanted to tell everyone about how I lived before, and how everything had changed; God helped me to quit smoking, to quit drugs, he gave me rest and peace. But when I started to tell people about it, they asked me from which confession I am. At that time, I did not know from which confession I was, I did not know why there are so many confessions and churches. All what I knew was that I used to be blind and now I could see. I remember the story of a man who was healed by Jesus. He was asked how it happened in his life. He answered that he did not know if Jesus is sinful or without a sin; all that he knew was that he was blind but Jesus made him see.[95]

[95] Danil had in mind the story about the miraculous healing by Jesus of a man born blind and the further thorough investigation of the healing by the Pharisees: "So again they called the man who was blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this Man is a sinner." He said, "I do not know if He is a sinner. I know one thing: I was blind, but now I see." (John 9: 24-25. Modern English Version Bible).

We can see that despite the fact that Danil was living in the opposite part of Ukraine, the experience revealed in his testimony is very typical when compared to the stories of the three friends presented in the beginning of this section. Danil overcame drug addiction and was converted after he got help in the evangelical rehabilitation centre. All the testimonies are similar in their composition. They begin their narratives with telling how the addiction started, continues with explaining how they met significant others with intentions to help, and ends with conversion, which comes together with healing, getting freed from addiction. They also shared the feature that before they started at the rehabilitation centre, they were all indifferent towards religion. Thus, the former drug addicts had become active evangelicals. The first impetus after conversion for Danil was his eagerness to share his personal experiences and new knowledge with everyone. This eagerness became the impetus for evangelisation, which led him to establish a new style community of like-minded and converts reached on the streets of Lviv. In the beginning, after conversion Danil was not familiar with the confessional multiplicity of Christianity, as hardly could be expected for a new convert. It is hardly possible that Danil, like other converted former drug and alcohol addicts, are interested or engaged in studying Soviet evangelical tradition either.

We can also see some other points that repeat themselves in the testimonies of getting through the addiction. The maturity of believers can be traced by the rhetorical composition of the testimonies. The biblical perception of reality implies the secondary roles for humans. For evangelicals it is God who acts directly using significant others as tools. A clear example of this can be seen in Vadim's testimony where separate significant others were acting without knowing their own roles until the whole picture was revealed to Vadim in his vision. In the testimony of Danil, God helped to overcome human characteristic of growing wickedness, which is a consequence of the inability "to see".

My collection of stories could appear as if they were picked from here and there in order to create a coherent story about the success of converting people through the Baptists' rehabilitation centres. It does not mean that all people

turning to the rehabilitation centres become active evangelicals. Many fail in their attempts to get 'clean', many find it too hard to get through with and return to the street. Thus, the presented stories resemble stories of success in the Baptist church. However, throughout my fieldwork I have multiple times been listening to these and similar witnesses; mostly at the Sunday services but also while visiting Baptist families at their home or during interviews. I argue that many of the evangelical churches in Ukraine, especially those, which turned away from keeping tradition, have members who took a similar path towards conversion. Once at a Sunday service of IDP church the pastor presented a believer of the community, who was about to witness about his life and conversion: "some of our guests who have been listening to witnesses of people here for several weeks in a row, may have started to believe that there are no normal [ordinary] people in our community. It is not true though… Let us listen to such a person now…"[96] This joke of the pastor by itself is telling.

Here I come back to Roman and present an excerpt from the interview with him where Roman shares some thoughts about rehabilitation centres:

Roman: '…Then God sent me to the city of Ostroh where I could strengthen [my belief] further, and there I could start to serve in the rehabilitation of addicted people.[97] I spent several years there. I came back to my hometown, having been invited by the pastor.[98] Originally, I did not want to come back because many of my old friends still were living there. Although having spent three years away, I came back and saw the town with different eyes. I had namely no fear anymore that someone could take me away from the clear path [I was now on]. On the contrary, I had empathy for them and fear for people I knew. And subsequently I

[96] That day it was a young man whose family had been Baptists for generations who was about to testify. His quite predictable way towards baptism contrasted with the testimonies of the harsh life stories heard during some previous Sunday services. Asking community members or guests of the community for testifying became a tradition in which I also took a part. One Sunday, soon after I was accepted in the community for carrying on research there, I was asked to testify about my life and how God was taking place in it.
[97] Ukr. Острог. A town with population of 15,000 located in West Ukraine, in Rivne Oblast.
[98] The pastor was an aquantance of Roman in their childhood. It was him who brought Roman to the rehabilitation centre after they met after about ten years with no contact. Roman was running the rehabilitation centre in his hometown one and a half year, until the war started.

was witnessing to those people, and nowadays they are believers who serve to God, they went the same way that God had led me…
Me: How did the idea of establishing the rehabilitation centre come about?
Roman: I think it is a problem of the Slavic nations. We have a culture of alcohol… People think that they relax, as if they are having a rest. Not only do they have a rest, but it is also set up in a way that people drink if they are sad, and they drink to have fun… Respectively, it is the same with drugs. In this way people end up consuming constantly. And how does the church become aware that there are many such [addicted] people? Let's say that a mother of a family is a churchgoer. In the [same] flat [with her] lives a young drug addicted son. And she is coming to the pastor and says, "What can I do? I do not know what to do, how to affect him, how to struggle with him." Or a woman is coming [to the pastor] and saying, "I am living with an alcoholic. My husband is an alcoholic. He has become an inveterate drunkard. What can I do with him? I talk and talk with him [and there is no outcome]…" In those cases medical methods are not working or they are having only a short time effect. Neither moralizing, nor militia helps. And that process [of getting out of addiction]…is a long-term process. You cannot withdraw a person from addiction in three days and say, "that is it, you are free". I cannot. God can do that, but practice shows that God wants *us* work with those people. Those who primarily are working with such [addicts] are those who were like them previously… Thus, the decision [of establishing the rehabilitation centre] was taken, and service was gaining impetus, and God made a lot through that service. Nowadays in Ukraine many pastors are previously addicted people, though I do not know exactly the percentage. That is, [the previous addicts] they are now the people who are leading the church. There are really many names, and many such people… Some time ago God was working through evangelisation, yet God is changing His approach and society is changing…"

We can see from the excerpt an example of how former addicts became involved into rehabilitation services and use their old networks for reaching their addicted friends. Roman, quite typically, sees him and other former addicted people who are working in rehab centres as a tool for leading the power of God. Unfortunately, like Roman, I do not know the percentage of evangelical pastors

who previously were addicted. I do not know the percentage of those who succeeded quitting using drugs either. I do not know if evangelicalism attracts addicts, and how effective are other denominations in Ukraine that provide help in their rehabilitation centres. However, it is obvious to me that evangelicals ran this kind of social service quite successfully.

Conclusion

I chose the rehabilitation centres for this chapter as I argue they are the most successful of contemporary Ukrainian evangelical social services. Moreover, I argue that people who experienced personal transformation in rehabilitation centres are among the most representative groups that force the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement.

The main idea of presenting the various accounts of previous addicts in this chapter was to illustrate how the changing circumstances after Ukrainian independence radically change the inner dynamics of the church. The newly achieved options of reaching out to people stimulated a mass of newly converted believers who seemingly came from nowhere. Society changed from being governed by atheists, to experiencing a massive wave of evangelisation in the late 1980s when the communist regime was getting to its end. Some converts that had been helped by the church's social services, started themselves to work for the church and to reach out other addicts. This "snowball effect" with time resulted in the previous addicts becoming those who held prominent positions in the church. When compared with the other branch of the evangelicals previously described, namely the traditionalists, the latter did not multiply to such an extent, as they did not show much of interest in working with social services and thus converting people in such great numbers. These two branches continue to develop in opposite directions, as the previous addicts who are having active positions within the churches of the new style evangelicals, cannot be convinced to keep the prescribed traditions.

Besides its symbolic meaning, being born again for those people has a quite literal meaning, as they recovered physically, mentally and psychologically after withdrawing from addiction. Like for many other newly converted evangelicals, and for former addicts especially, tradition means, tells, and teaches nothing. Efforts for making a strong and closed community and separating themselves from the broader society, the world, confront their experience of gaining freedom and developing a new ethic.

In this chapter I continued analysing the biblical perception of reality. Here, I illustrated how evangelicals make a specific rhetorical composition for taking a listener into a transcendental level of their life stories. Their life stories show how in a period of about ten years heavy drug addicts and criminals are able to become mature and eager evangelicals, transforming the face of Ukrainian evangelical movement.

7. Transformation of Ukrainian Evangelicals: Engagement to Mission

> 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.' (Matthew 28: 19-20. King James Bible)

Introduction

Catherine Wanner (2007) had been going to Ukraine at least once a year since the early nineties and often felt that she was "the only person on the whole jumbo jet who was not "on mission" (Wanner 2007:6). In her writings she highlighted the plethora of eager missionaries from the US that travelled to Ukraine, plane after plane, spending their annual savings and vacations in order to witness to Ukrainians (ibid). As Wanner noticed in her analysis of missionaries in Ukraine, intentionally or not, when going on mission they "embodied the political values and morality of their home cultures" (Wanner 2004: 742). Wanner also pointed out that the missionaries likewise were striving to implement their own morality and values in the societies abroad.

Having read Wanner's comprehensive and authoritative work, I went to Ukraine with the expectation of and the intention to meet American missionaries. And since her study concluded that the missionaries actively spread the form of Baptism accepted in their own countries, I likewise expected to study the ways in which they have changed and continue to change Ukrainian evangelical movement. I thus entered the field with a range of questions: Is the vast amount of active missionaries the main reason behind the rapid transformation of local evangelical movement in Ukraine? Are they actively advocating an open style evangelicalism as is practised in the U.S? And if so, do they advertise this as being a better way to practice religion? And, intentionally or not, are they in that case

working to overcome the old and rigid style of practicing religion in Ukraine, the so-called tradition? From an anthropological point of view, it would be difficult to assume that a direct influence from "the west" to "the rest" smoothly would be incorporated into local communities, as the communities already were operating with their own ways of practising their beliefs. A further question would thus be how the local communities influenced and shaped the missionaries, and if they encountered situations of conflict.

In order to find answers to my questions I decided to find and approach foreign missionaries in Ukraine and conduct research among them, and likewise discuss the issue of missionaries with the local Baptists in my communities. However, this task turned out to be more difficult than I initially had thought. Contrary to my expectations the communities were not crowded with American missionaries, instead I had to put much effort into finding some at all. Furthermore, when I approached the local Baptists to discuss the issue of missionaries, the majority could only vaguely recall any missionaries, nor were they able to tell me what impact they actually had had in the local communities. The issue of mission turned out to be a complex matter that was difficult to approach in the field.

I base this chapter on the argument that mission lies at the core of the evangelical identity, and thus both accepting missionaries into the community and sending missionaries from the community are vital parts of evangelical life. I will continue by discussing western, mostly the US missionaries' influence on the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. Here I make a distinction between two forms of mission, short-term mission and long-term mission. In Ukraine the short-term mission has been the dominating form. Short-term mission means that a missionary from abroad spends a few days or weeks on mission in a foreign country, before he again returns home. It is typical to use one's holidays, or take short leaves from work in order to carry out mission. However, people engaged in short-term mission do not intend to stay in the community, to learn the language or engage in any long-term activities. The other way of going on mission is long-term mission, or career-mission. This term

is used to describe the situation where a missionary, maybe with his family, settles in a community, learns the language and stays possibly for a year or several years, to carry out mission.

Based on the importance of mission in the Baptist self-understanding I will grabble with the dilemma why I had difficulties in finding both actual missionaries and memories or traces of their work in the communities studied. Here I will point to four reasons for this.

The first is, that Ukraine appears to have lost its immediate attraction as terra incognita in the present day missionary world. While it was new land for American missionaries in the 90's, after the Soviet dissolution, the actuality of the country as a place for mission has somewhat decreased in the many years that have passed since. Thus, the streams of missionaries Wanner described have now been redirected to other places.

The three remaining reasons that will be elaborated in greater detail in the chapter are as follows. Reason number two: the majority of the missionary work carried out in Ukraine is short-term mission. Here my core argument will be that not all contemporary foreign missions are working for the sake of its receivers. Rather, short-term missions are often satisfying missionary's own need to go on mission, and thereby serve God's command, as stated in the quote in the beginning of the chapter. Thereby, the short-term mission mainly takes form of a rite-de-passage for the missionary, as he returns to his home country with a new status, having spread the word of God as commanded. However, the "hit-and-run" missions do little to transform people in the receiving country. Drawing on anthropologists who have studied short-term missions (Howell 2012; Priest and Priest 2008; Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen and Brown 2006), I view the phenomenon predominantly as a form of Christian tourism, pilgrimage, and an adventure for young believers. I will illustrate that in terms of making a lasting influence, the committed long-term mission is far more successful.

The third argument will be that not all missions work directly from foreign missionaries to the people. Rather, mission itself has been under transformation and is in the present world less a question about "spreading the word to the people" and more about supporting existing communities in the receiving countries. Thereby, much of today's mission may work in disguise for the average member of a religious community, as it takes form of monetary support, material support and collaboration between communities. I will argue that exactly this form of mission is the most efficient because it is based on mutual exchange of knowledge, needs and collaboration and as locals actively are involved in directing and forming the help needed. Yet, it remains less visible for the average community member, who may not even classify it as missionary work.

After having discussed how foreign missionaries have, or in many cases, have not, left any impact on the local communities, I will move on the subject of Ukrainian missionaries. This outreaching activity is yet another result of the changing face of Ukrainian evangelical movement, as Ukraine has transformed from being a country that primarily receives missionaries, to being a country capable of sending its own missionaries abroad. Herein also lies the fourth argument that explains why missionaries and their work were hard for me to trace in Ukraine: it is not perceived as prestigious to receive missionaries. Mission itself gives voice to an understanding of a superior country or community sending people to help and teach an inferior country or community abroad. Thus, much energy in Ukrainian communities has been directing towards sending out their own missionaries to foreign destinations. Therefore, there has also been little interest in discussing the impact foreigners made in Ukraine, compared with the interest in discussing how Ukraine supports other poorer regions through missionary work.

My argument in the chapter is that though western mission undeniably has played and continues to play a role in the changing face of Ukrainian evangelical movement, the influence of westerners remains minor compared to the long-

lasting and dedicated work Ukrainian evangelicals conduct in their own communities and their own country.

Mission in Ukraine: An Overview

"A church without mission is not a church but a social club." This statement was spelled out by Paul Msiza, the president of the Baptist World Alliance in his opening speech of the Second Missionary forum.[99] There is no doubt that Paul Msiza had no intention of insulting the generations of evangelicals who had preserved and maintained the churches during the decades of the harsh antireligious regime when evangelisation was a perilous activity, forbidden by law and persecuted by the authorities.[100] Rather, the president was looking from the perspective of the present life of the church, where the commitment to evangelise was taken voluntarily, eagerly and very seriously. Why is mission so important for evangelicals? Does engagement to mission make a church a real church as Paul Msiza has implied?

In order to answer these questions, I here briefly return to the definition of evangelicalism explored in chapter 3. There I defined evangelical Christians by their set of beliefs and commitments. One belief is that the Bible is inerrant. Another firm belief is that the only way to receive salvation is through conversion, which in short is the personal acceptance of Jesus's atonement on the cross and a 'born again' experience. The third belief is that sharing the Christian message through evangelisation is indispensable and should be taken as a strong commitment, and as an expression of authentic faith (Bebbington 1989; McGrath 1997; Shah 2009). According to this definition one of the three commitments, which describes the evangelical identity is sharing the Christian message. In order to better understand what mission means for evangelicals let us take a look at the Bible, which evangelical Christians hold as an undisputable

[99] The Second Missionary forum in Ukraine took place in Kyiv 26-27 of August 2016.
[100] In the chapter 4 I explored the consequence of the secret directive imposed to the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists by Soviet government in 1960. It made the cleavage inside Soviet evangelicalism as some evangelical leaders refused to accept the new laws and directives. Those disobedient automatically became illegal, went underground, and experienced severe persecution.

authority. According to evangelicals the Bible is inerrant and serves as God's revelation to humanity, in which all examples and instructions for every case and concern of daily human life can be found. That is another belief defining evangelicals' identity (ibid). Thus, the excerpt from the Bible in the beginning of the chapter is for the evangelicals a commandment and an obligation to go on mission and spread the gospel around the world.[101]

At the same Missionary forum Anthony Peck, the general secretary of the European Baptist Federation regretted that the church is divided in two parts. One part is involved in mission, and the other part is engaged in social activities.[102] These two parts, he said, are set apart from each other and that is a mistake. However, the division made by Anthony Peck sounds as a simplification of the situation in Ukraine. The autonomy of the evangelical church gives every one of its communities the opportunity to decide which activities the community engages in and whether it prefers staying true to the tradition of the church or to choose a more modern and outreaching path. It could be that a given community mainly focuses on social service, while another mainly focuses on mission. Some prioritise both of these activities, and some prefer to stay a closed community detached from the surrounding society and global missionary work. The ambitions of the believers, however, are often limited due to a lack of financial and human resources. Still, the possibility to work overtly and legally outside the church has opened new horizons for post-Soviet evangelicals. Evangelical Christians who lived and practised their belief during the Soviet regime were deprived of engaging in evangelisation, missions, educational, social work and other outgoing activities because of the sheer pressure from the Soviet regime. According to the Law of Religious Associations of 1929, which remained in force until October 1990, evangelisation, religious education, production and distribution of religious literature and other activities was illegal and prohibited

[101] The Great Commission – the final command of Jesus for His disciples to evangelise, baptize and teach all the peoples. The Great Commission, in less or more extent and zeal for it, is approved of Christians of all denominations.
[102] Anthony Peck contrasts here mission as an active evangelisation going out and trying to reach non-believers and planting churches with an evangelisation through the social services established by churches for the sake of locals.

in the country (Walters 2005: 13).[103] Under these circumstances Soviet evangelicals had to make the choice between caution and having regard to evangelical identity and expression of evangelical beliefs and commitments (Sawatsky 2005a). As a consequence, "too" active evangelicals spent most of their lives in Soviet prison camps (Panych 2012). Others, who stayed away from the illegal religious activities, avoided imprisonment but were deprived of obtaining a higher education, a good job, just as they were put under pressure in various other ways by different Soviet institutions. The entire system was working to repress religion and it consistently caused a lot of harm to believers.

As Wanner has pointed out in her writings (2007), and as I myself have experienced, there are stories, or, I would rather name them, legends about Baptist victories during the Soviet regime that still circulate among the evangelicals in Ukraine. These entail narratives of brave believers risking their own lives for their faith, the establishment of underground churches, which were kept hidden for decades, or we hear examples of attempts to evangelise entire villages without fear of encountering the local militia (see Wanner 2007: 84-85). There are stories about how the evangelical communities were supported by non-believers or, at the very least experienced sincere empathy from non-believers around them, and then there are the testimonies about how miracles have saved the lives of believers facing Soviet authorities. This kind of story I presented in chapter 4. Stories like these might give the impression that evangelicals were doing quite well and even thriving (see for example Wanner 2007: 2). However, I argue that the story of Soviet evangelicals is not one of thriving communities but one of surviving. It is not a story full of fights and victories, but a story filled with fear and suffering. While many of these stories could entail elements of truth, they mainly function as a kind of therapy, a way of relating to the traumatic events evangelical Christians experienced on a daily basis during the previous regime. In reality the resistance and bravery of most of the believers only happened in rare and exceptional cases. Returning to the theme of mission, this was both an important activity they had been deprived of

[103] In chapter 3 I explore the further restriction of 1960, the secret directive of Soviet officials applied to the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

during the former regime, and thus also a new thing they had to learn when the circumstances changed and opened up for the opportunity for them to evangelise.

Isolated Soviet evangelical Christians neither had the possibility to travel abroad and meet their counterparts from other parts of the world, nor to receive missionaries or any kind of help from the outside. This isolated position changed drastically soon after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Within a short time-span, western evangelical Christians found their way to the territories of the former Soviet Union, which became a challenging terra incognita for their missions.

While Ukraine today appears as an open country with religious pluralism, it is still not without obstacles to carry out mission in present day Ukraine. Despite the fact that the country has no national church, there are still religions that are stronger positioned than others, and thus try to influence the religious activity in the country according to their own agenda. The strongest claim for being a national church belongs to Ukrainian Orthodox, to which the majority of parishes belong, even in western part of Ukraine. According to statistics on Ukrainian Christian congregations by church affiliation, in 2013 Ukrainian Orthodox Churches subtotal with 19 030 parishes prevailed in the country (Lunkin 2014:5)[104]. However, divided Orthodoxy, large minorities, and religious pluralism overcome them from officially being the country's national church. Moreover, due to the historically grounded responsibility of the state to protect its Church, the lack of experience and the lack of resources to compete with Orthodoxy, is a constant challenge for evangelical missionary activities in the country (Marynovitch 2000). As is characteristic for the Orthodox Church, as well as for many governments in the former Soviet Union, evangelicalism is considered a "foreign religion" (Elliott 2005). Even though the Orthodox Churches publicly claim a respectful attitude towards all religions, the tension and irritation provoked by the on-going evangelical missionary activities is in the air. The Orthodox hierarchy and spokespeople try to eliminate competition by

[104] Catholic Churches subtotal had 5029 parishes. Protestant subtotal had 9469 congregations. However, as a rule, Protestant congregation consists of much smaller amount of members than Orthodox or Catholics parishes.

trying to ban missionary activities, based on the arguments that they are destroying morality and spiritual health of the citizens along with the national traditions. Thereby it is threatening the entire existence of the country (Kolodnyi 2000). The head of UOCKP Filaret even made a statement that missionary activity is going to lead to changes in the Ukrainian spiritual gene pool (Kolodnyi 2000: 6). Based on the immanent threats towards evangelicals and evangelicals' missionary activities, today's missionaries are still facing challenges in Ukraine, in form of administrative work, bureaucracy and difficulties in establishing new communities.

Mission plays a central role for believers as a way of spreading the Word of God, reaching out to the surrounding communities or even foreign countries and converting people. In the present day world, however, mission often takes the form of offering support to existing communities as in the case of Ukraine and several other previous socialist countries after the dismantling of the Soviet regime. Countries that before had been situated behind the iron curtain were now accessible for eager missionaries, mainly from the U.S., that came to support fellow evangelical Christians with knowledge, money and other forms of material support.

"Ghost Missionaries"[105]

Egor, an IDP from Donbas, Eastern Ukraine and I were going around the centre of Lviv and talking about everything and nothing. I used the opportunity to ask Egor about missionaries. Had many of them visited the church in his hometown in Donbas starting, let us say, in the nineties, when the church he belonged to was built? "What do you mean by that?" Egor asked me. "I do not know, maybe Americans," I said and continued. "There were many missionaries from the U. S.

[105] I coined the concept of "ghost missionaries" in order to reflect the discrepancy between my expectations of finding crowds of foreign missionaries coming to Ukraine and the real situation of meeting no one foreign missionary in the beginning of my fieldwork. For the evangelical Christians I met in Lviv mission first of all meant going abroad but not receiving foreign missionaries at home. I was very surprised during the conversations with local evangelicals that even memories about any of a missionary coming for the mission from abroad there were not existent.

in Ukraine at that time, you know. Some of them, I suppose, had to reach your town and your church." Egor answered "Well no, none; there were not any of them in our town as I recall." He then continued "though, yes there was one preacher from America who came to our town, I remember now. He gathered a huge auditorium. People were very interested; they had never seen an American before. So, a whole crowd came in order to see what a real American looks like, and to listen to how he speaks. No one was converted after his speech though, as far as I know…"

As Egor's answer to my question shows, it appears rare that travelling missionaries reached his hometown in the most eastern part of Ukraine, Donbas. And one who had, had mainly attracted a large audience because he was "a real American", which people from the town curiously gathered to see, but not because of his mission and message about God.

If we take a closer look at Egor's example then his community in Donbas grew constantly until it became the largest Baptist community in the region. At the same time, it was little by little losing the attributes of tradition inherited from the Soviet period. It had become an open and free style Baptist church in the region, and this transformation was so extensive that some Baptists referred it to as a non-spiritual church from other communities in the region. According to Egor, this transformation happened without any contact to the free style missionaries from the West. Originally, I had come to Ukraine with the assumption that the high amount of American missionaries had played a vital role in the way Ukrainian Baptism had changed since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This assumption soon started to change, after I entered the field and neither encountered many missionaries, nor was able to learn much from the locals about them. This observation did not fit well with the descriptions of Wanner, who had observed a vast number of eager American missionaries that travelled to Ukraine, plane after plane.

After having put effort into finding an American evangelical missionary in Lviv, I started to realise that it is very likely that more than a decade after Wanner had

conducted her research, there were not many western missionaries left in Ukraine. It seemed as if most of them had gone back to the U. S. and stayed there, or that they had chosen other countries for their missionary activities. While this surprised me, I was even more surprised when I found out that the local believers in Lviv had not preserved many memories about individual missionaries and preachers from abroad, who had been visiting their city, which they proudly called the cultural capital of Ukraine. Did this mean that their effort of evangelisation had faded away without leaving any impact and even any memories? When I asked my interlocutors about the causes of the rapid changes within Ukrainian evangelical movement, the impact of foreign missionaries was not present in their answers. For the younger members in the communities, the answers somewhat differed. They would in any case not be able to re-collect any memories from the early days, but present in their answers was, that foreign missionaries hardly were needed. As one Baptist in his twenties explained "you can turn on your computer any time, find and listen to any preacher you like. So, you do not need them coming to your place and change your mind. Therefore, I think technologies are more efficient than travelling missionaries." Comparing this statement to Egors earlier story about the American missionary, the many changes that had happened from the 1990s to the present day, became obvious and visible. While the mere presence of an American had attracted attention after the Soviet dissolution, the same phenomenon would not attract any particular attention today, especially not from the young believers that with ease could access all information online and search for a preferred preacher on YouTube.[106] If the goal of the missionaries was to spread the word, young Ukrainians had other means of accessing foreign speakers. If the purpose was financial support, it appeared that parts of the Ukrainian communities now had become strong enough to take this role upon themselves, and that it now was the local strong communities that supported the weaker communities. In addition to this, it appeared that Ukrainian evangelicals had changed from being those

[106] That was not an option when Wanner conducted her research. At that time people did not have their own computers, and the internet was not well developed. Furthermore, poor or no knowledge of English language was a serious barrier for understanding American preachers. Russian language remains the language lingua franca in contemporary Ukraine. It is loosing the position in western part of the country. English is the most attractive among youth, though so far not many are able to understand or keep conversation in English.

receiving missionaries, to being those who were sending missionaries abroad to places that needed it more. Faced with the various statements of my informants, none of which gave voice to any particular impact or benefit from having received American missionaries I started to rethink parts of my initial ideas about the importance of missionaries.

In order to understand the discrepancy between an excessive amount of western missionaries who devoted their time and money for witnessing to Ukrainians, and lack of memories about it from the side of the receivers of those missions, I started to take a closer look to the complex phenomenon of mission.

On Contemporary Mission

The evangelical missionary K. P. Yohannan claims that the future of the global mission belongs to the indigenous missionary movement. However, the call to go and teach all nations – in the excerpt from the scripture given in the beginning of the chapter – implies that the very same word 'missionary' refers to a believer who leaves her or his country and travels abroad in order to evangelise. Ukraine, as well as the US, is a country of Christian tradition. The tradition in Ukraine and in the neighbouring countries was challenged for several decades by the communist regime. The removal of political obstacles in Eastern Europe in the end of 1980s was the main reason that led to a rapid increase in evangelical ministries working in the region and sending missionaries to Eastern Europe (Elliott and Corrado 1997; Sawatsky 2005b). The phenomenon of mission though is not so homogenous as it might appear. The main difference concerns the period and the goals of the missions. I believe that the jumbo jets full of missionaries mentioned in Catherine Wanner's monograph, mostly consisted of believers who went on short-term mission. However, despite that, and in spite of the impression of a very large quantity of missionaries leaving for Ukraine, the country, according to the statistics, was not on the top 15 for the US Protestant missionaries, neither those who were going on short-term mission, nor those

who were going on long-term mission (Priest and Priest 2006: 63).[114] Nevertheless, according to Global Issues Survey 1,6 million U.S. citizens each year take trips to participate in short-term missions in other countries (Wuthnow and Offutt 2008: 218). Such a great number suggests that short-time missionaries are the overlooked globalizers of the world (Priest and Priest 2008; Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen and Brown 2006). This observation may not be surprising; taking into consideration that much anthropological and sociological literature written on globalisation (Appadurai 2001; Friedman 1999; Giddens 1999) largely ignores Christianity (Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen and Brown 2006: 441).

My thesis voices the observation that the globalizing impact of short-term missionaries from the US despite their presence in Ukraine is indeed not visible, at least not from the first sight. The main cause of such invisibility might be the fact that short-term mission typically is a collaborative project with local Christians (Priest and Priest 2008). As a rule, this partnership is between locals who are confident, committed and speak the local language and therefore play the main role in witness, service and gospel presentation, and short-term missionaries who provide the locals with the material resources that make those activities possible (ibid). Thus, here despite global mobility and interconnectedness, we observe the locals conducting the visible work. This might partly explain my inability to trace the US missionaries in Ukraine in the beginning of my fieldwork.

However, let us take a closer look at the phenomenon of the short-term mission. As anthropologist Brian Howell pointed out (2012) the short-term mission is a contemporary movement which includes a wide variety of activities, travels, places and time frames and has much in common with tourism and/or pilgrimage (Howell 2012). As the anthropologist has noticed about short-term missions "few of us have ever come to understand this phenomenon through scholarly literature, as relatively little research yet exist" (Howell 2012: 26).

[114] The only Eastern European country on the list for short-term mission destinations was Romania, which was number 14. Russia was number 11 in the list of Protestant long-term mission destinations.

Robert Priest and Joseph Priest have provided (2008) more concrete and quite critical definition of the phenomenon: "The short-term missions movement is a populist movement, emergent not out of the strategic vision of leading missiologists or theologians, but out of grass-roots impulses. It is largely a lay movement, and the writings intended to train and orient short-term leaders are missiologically unsophisticated and frequently anti-intellectual." (Priest and Priest 2008: 67).

Moreover, the anthropologist Robert Priest confessed that he had ignored until recently the short-term mission and "depending on the mood" had used a comparison of short-term missionaries with dogs running through an art museum: "They see everything and understand nothing!" (Priest and Priest 2008: 53-54).

Looking from the point of view of a person taking part in short-term mission, his or her travel, according to Howell (2012) is a cultural journey (Howell 2012). The purpose of the travel is derived from a specific missionary narrative framework which provides the basis for the subsequent meaningful experience. Howell argues that "for many Christians today, the telling of a missionary narrative is a significant part of understanding faith, the Christian community," and the short-term mission trip as well (Howell 2012: 58). The contemporary short-term mission phenomenon focuses on sending average young laypeople abroad and is organized around the rhythm of academic life, for a period of time generally reserved for a vacation (Howell 2012: 41; Priest and Priest 2008). As a further matter, the movement "involve a temporal reorganization of voluntary service to fit extended blocks of vacation time rather than weekly or daily service commitments" (Priest and Priest 2008: 58-59). According to Howell, short-term movement has much in common with tourism and other kind of religious travel such as pilgrimage (Howell 2012: 48). The claim can be supported by statistics that shows that the median cost of a short-term mission trip abroad does not exceed $1,500, which is relatively inexpensive compared with international tourism expenditures (Priest and Priest 2008: 57). One more characteristic that makes short-term mission travels comparable to tourism is the pattern of

choosing the destination for short-term mission trips. At least one third of all such trips from the US are to Latin America, with Mexico being destination number one (Priest and Priest 2008; Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen and Brown 2006). But there are more than 40 million Hispanics in the US, so we can say that Latin America is not only somewhere else, but it is inside the US (ibid). However, the participation in short-term mission does not stimulate the involvement of travellers into stronger domestic interethnic relationship (Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen and Brown 2006: 445). Similarly, many tourists withdraw from social others from their own suburbs, who are considered a social problem, but readily pay to engage social others abroad where they become exoticised objects of empathetic interest (Bruner 2004; Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen and Brown 2006). As for comparison of short-term mission with pilgrimage: "Like pilgrimages, these trips are rituals of intensification, where one temporarily leaves the ordinary, compulsory, workaday life "at home" and experiences an extraordinary, voluntary, sacred experience "away from home" (Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen and Brown 2006: 433-434). Short-term mission serves for the personal transformation producing new selves after participants from the mission come back home into everyday life (ibid).

The descriptions of short-term mission given in this section reveal a picture of the phenomenon, which has little, if anything in common with the biblical call for going and teaching all the nations. Rather, the short-term mission trip is shown as a vacation length cultural journey oriented mostly to young believers. The trip helps religious travellers to reflect on and frame their Christian identity. In a way of comparison, anthropological fieldwork can likewise be a life changing experience for the anthropologist, though it is unlikely to be so for the people studied. I met many young Ukrainian evangelical Christians enthusiastic for going on short-term mission abroad. As for receivers, I found that short-term missions for Ukrainians left hardly any memory. I have not heard any narrative about "medical personnel, dentists or skilled trade workers bringing their time and expertise to impoverished communities" as described by Howell in his outline (Howell 2012: 26). However, it should be noticed that the denial of any influence made by short-term missionaries from abroad to Ukrainian evangelical

movement might not be the entire truth. Behind this could also be a wish to prove one's community independence and self-sufficiency. Even so, the foreign short-term missionary-tourists had already made an indirect influence on the locals by presenting themselves as wealthy and "free style" westerners. I will continue to develop the importance of short-term mission for the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals in the next section.

Based on my fieldwork I would add that it is not *per se* the period of time spent on mission that determines for its outcome. It is likewise related to the skills and resources a person brings to his site of mission, as well as on his personal reasons for conducting mission. During my fieldwork I encountered a young missionary who, inspired by a previous short-term mission, decided to come back for a long-term mission. It was curious, however, that his prolonged stay mostly was centred on his personal transformation and working in order to solve his problems at home.

Ethan is a young, warm, friendly and a bit shy man in his early thirties. He comes from a small Baptist church in Clearwater, Florida. He arrived to Ukraine for the first time twelve years ago in order to do missionary work during his summer study break. After finishing his studies, he looked for a job in the U. S., but did not succeed in finding one. He then decided to return to the country of his mission and continue his stay there, this time as a long-term missionary. It was his own decision as he was not sent by, and thus not supported by his home church. However, a group of senior members in the church had decided to partly support him financially. He earned the rest of the money he needed to finance his stay by teaching English. Ethan had been living in Ukraine for five years already. He was, in his own words working "on helping the organisation of churches". In fact, he had joined a young and small local community. However, his actual missionary work appeared vague. Without strong support from his home community or institution, without much practice of missionary work or any experience in carrying out organisational work, Ethan was rather an ordinary, indistinguishable member of the church in Lviv, and was viewed as such by the members. His ambition of being an active missionary did thus not fit well with

the practical daily realities. The young community he had joined was in need of all kind of resources, human resources as well. That had allowed Ethan to find the church of his mission. As he was not able to support the church materially or financially, he was at least able to put in work in the community. He had learned Ukrainian quite well; and was able to navigate in daily life. However, in the rare cases he was giving a sermon, he still did so in English with an interpreter.

During my fieldwork Ethan was busy arranging his personal life. He was preparing for marriage with a local Ukrainian believer, a member of the same community, and was taking his future wife to Florida to his relatives on vacation. He was also searching for a flat to live in with his wife and their future children in Lviv, just as he was struggling with the legendary Ukrainian bureaucracy on the issue of gaining permanent Ukrainian residency permission, and so on and so forth. All that took up his time and influenced his ability to participate in church activities. However, from time to time he would still host the Bible study group meeting. On one of these occasions he received the members of the community in the rented flat where he lived. As usual I arrived first. We had a chat while waiting for others participants, and I showed him a book I had just bought in the seminary. It was the book of Ukrainian author Roman Solovyi on the phenomenon of the emerging church.[107] I was amazed to find out that Ethan, who navigated so well in the chapters of the Bible and the interpretations and interpreters of them, claimed that he had never heard about the emerging church before.[108] His lack of knowledge struck me as odd, as I had assumed that a missionary and church organizer, as Ethan titled himself, would have knowledge about one of the most significant contemporary evangelical movements. Without drawing any definite conclusions, the incident suggested that whatever Ethan's ambition and promotion of what he wanted to be, while he in Ukraine not only had few material resources and also little time to engage in the church work, as organising his personal affairs and making extra money for a living, was taking up considerable parts of his time.

[107] Ukr. Роман Соловій 'Виникаюча церква' (Emerging church).
[108] The emerging church is a postmodern Christian movement, started in the late 20th century. It is a movement of cultural critique formed out of deep disappointment of America's conservative Christian subculture (Bielo 2011).

Another incident that contributed to this understanding appeared during a later Bible meeting in his flat. He told the participants who had gathered for the meeting that Danil, the pastor of the church, had been calling him earlier that day and asked if Ethan could host some believers for the night. The issue was that there was a Baptist conference in Lviv and apparently, more guests had arrived from other cities than expected. Therefore, at the very last moment, the local believers had started to search for possible accommodation for their brothers who still had not found a place to stay for the night. Ethan was renting what by local standards was a large flat. He was living alone in a two-room apartment of about 70- 80 square meters. So, it seemed understandable that Ethan had received a call asking for help. Nevertheless, Ethan refused to accommodate any of the conference guests. "Danil informed me too late, and I have to leave tomorrow early in the morning anyway," Ethan told us, consoling himself.

This made me think about whom and what is changing as a result of Ethan's mission. He was the only American missionary I had encountered during my fieldwork who had joined and was working with the local church. He was shy rather than leading, he was learning rather than teaching, he was hiding and avoiding cultural intrusions rather than calling for changes. Even becoming a long-term missionary by arriving on his own without institutional backing and provision, and without proper preparation, Ethan remained fixed on the same level of concern, namely struggling for his personal existence. His story is not about someone who came to Ukraine to help to transform life of others. It is rather one about a person who tried to sort out and cope with his own personal life, and keeping his personal space safely cordoned off from cultural intrusions.

Mission that Transforms

As outlined above short-term missions are mainly meaningful for the missionaries themselves, in a way of transforming and developing their Christian self. However, short-term mission is only one way of doing mission. The more traditional way is long-term mission, or career mission.

I present here one more case of transition from short-term missionary trip toward settling in Ukraine, this time much more spectacular. In the search for western missionaries in Lviv I once visited an evangelical church established by an American. A member of the community of the refugees from Donbas made me aware of it. He told me that I might meet a believer from Donbas there. He added that after visiting the U. S. where her daughter was studying, she became very fond of the way evangelical church service was practised in the U.S. and upon her return she spent more time in this church than in the one established by other IDP's. The church was in the basement of a building, which had been reorganised to serve the new purpose. There was a hall, checkroom and even a small café. The pastor was American and most of the participants in the Sunday worships were Americans. I was surprised to meet about ten black people in the same worship hall containing about fifty persons all in all. I had seen very few during my daily walks in the city before. I interpreted it, as the church's worship style is closer to foreign residents' expectations than those established by locals. The church was oriented toward young people, though there were people of different generations.[117] There were also young and old Ukrainians among them too. The pastor was absent that day so I had a talk with his son who was about thirty years old and who also was a member of the church. He told me that the church in Lviv was the fifth in a row founded under the same name of New Horizons. The American missionary, who once visited the Ukrainian capital for a short evangelising trip, shortly after Ukraine had gained independence, established the first church in Kyiv. During his first visit to Ukraine the missionary was touched by seeing so many people "thirsty of the Word" that he called his wife, who at

[117] There was a band of young people singing and playing electric guitars and drums, the sermon giver was twenty five years old at the most.

that time was at home in the U. S. with their nine children. He commanded her to pack their things, take the children and come to him immediately, because he realised that from now on they would have to live in Ukraine. After establishing the church in Kyiv, he founded another one in Dnipro.[109] The church in Lviv was functioning quite well for a while already though without being registered. The American complained to me about the difficulties in registering their community properly. As he explained to me, it was because the influence of Catholicism was very strong in Lviv. The antagonism and resistance of the city government to their project made it difficult to register the church even as a club…

This case of serving long-term mission is interesting because instead of young religious tourists coming to visit a 'terra incognita', we here see a matured father of a big family, a skilled evangelical whose first short trip to Ukraine became the first step in long term commitments and goals. In this case, the missionary was active, committed and able to make use of resources and thereby establish a number of churches based on a more American version of evangelicalism.

Another form of missionary work, which had more lasting impact, was collaboration between Ukrainian communities and their American counterparts, which led to a steady exchange of ideas through networking and sermons. The Baptist seminary had close associations with similar institutions in the US where the head of the seminary Yaroslav Pyzh defended his PhD before he returned to Ukraine and was appointed rector of the seminary. The network, connections and friendships in the US allowed him to invite Americans to come to Ukraine in order to teach different courses and to help him with administrative work. Although those who came to Ukraine to teach did not settle in Lviv, they came on a regular basis and stayed at the seminary for some days in order to give short intensive courses. Although they were not named as short-term missionaries but rather as guests, in reality they were those skilled professionals taking and devoting time from their busy schedules in order to come to Ukraine for a short period at least once a year. The people invited were

[109] Ukr. Дніпро. Until May 2016 Dnipropetrovsk (Ukr. Дніпропетровськ). The city is located in the south-central part of the country and is the fourth largest city having about one million inhabitants.

professional Baptists with a high degree of authority, popularity and influence to the locals. The most famous among the visiting Baptists was Clay Barnes who, during my fieldwork, was giving a course in social help and support in practice. Having spent considerable time among Ukrainian Baptists, the difference between their ideas and his were in some instances outspoken. Here I encountered some instances where local beliefs were challenged by Barnes. I will present two cases to illustrate it.

After giving a short account on the comparative statistics on divorces in different countries (the highest percentage of divorces in the world according to the speaker was in the USA, Sweden and Ukraine), Barnes asserted the consequence of the high level of divorces in the world: "the UN already consider redefining the family institution; therefore, we do not have to blame homosexuals for ruining the concept of family. The concept is successfully being ruined without their help…"

The defensive, or at least neutral stance towards homosexuals was a radical statement to air in the largely homophobic former Soviet Union societies. Much less was it to be expected in an evangelical teaching institution in that part of the world. The subject of the LGBT community had been a heated subject during my fieldwork, not only among the Baptists, but also in the country as such. The case of LGBT rights as a symptom of moral decline in Europe was the core of pro-Russian and anti-European propaganda. It was used in multiple narratives to show what would happen to Ukraine if the country strengthened its cooperation with Europe and weakened its Russian relations. Statements such as 'Europe is ruled by gays', 'gays are going to rule Ukraine', were frequently used in the media and by common people alike in order to frighten those who sympathized with Europe. Rejecting homosexuality became a manner to show the moral superiority of Orthodox Russia compared to the sinful West. A popular Russian concept had been coined to point to the immanent dangers: Gayropa' (rus. 'Гейропа'). A word that origined from the words 'gay' and 'Europe' (rus. 'гей' and 'Европа'). Narratives like these were making Ukrainian evangelicals uneasy as well, some of them found them downright scary. I often had the experience of

concerned believers asking me about the situation of homosexuals in Europe, about their visibility, aggressiveness and the degree to which they are accepted in western societies. While Barnes' comment was given in a larger context, it was still a powerful and challenging message that was opposing the accepted understanding of gays, as being a threat to the nuclear family, and Barnes was very well aware of it.

The other message I heard during Barnes' lectures, that likewise was at odds with the common evangelical, and even Christian in general understanding of the order of things was as follows: "in many churches I have heard that poor naïve and trustful Adam was seduced and cheated by Eve. That is not true though. We can read in the Bible that Adam all the time was beside Eve, so they shared the same knowledge and awareness. Adam was together with Eve all the time but he did not stop her when it was needed. Thus, both of them shared the same responsibility. The other thing is that both of them tried to avoid their responsibility; Adam did it by saying that it was Eve's fault, and Eve saying that she was seduced by the Serpent, therefore it was Serpent's fault…"

This episode sent a message about gender equality, and as it is common in the Baptists circles was it done through an interpretation of a biblical text. The lecturer did not accept Adam's answer to God that it was Eve's fault but made his own deductive investigation into the text in order to extract the deeper meaning. His conclusion was: both sinners are equally guilty. Neither of them was cheated, neither of them was more nor less aware, neither of them was more or less irresponsible, neither of them was morally or spiritually inferior or superior. Barnes narrated that he had heard the classical interpretation of the story in many churches, which alludes to the fact that the woman is at fault. This interpretation allows for an a priori justification of gender division and diversification attributed to gender characteristics given by God. The lecturer offered an alternative point of view. For evangelicals, however, the message coming from Barnes was radically different than what they normally heard from

Ukrainian preachers.[110] Among Ukrainian Baptists importance is given to the fulfilment of specific gender roles. But 'the natural' differences and division between genders was challenged by the lecturer through the story of genesis of the original sin.

Those challenges might seem small and of little importance. These ideas did not relate directly to the course of social help and support in practice. However, receivers of Barnes's messengers were students of the seminary – the most active, visible persons in their communities, people that others listened to; pastors, deacons, missionaries and churchgoers sitting in the front rows in their churches. In addition to that, the lecturer had the status of the star and the auditorium during his classes was always full of students. I cannot claim that the lecturer had an agenda to transform local evangelical Christians when he came to Ukraine for teaching every year. However, intentionally or not he brought the challenging liberal ideas from his home to his eager listeners in the seminary. He was among those who came from the US to Ukraine in order to teach. There were more of them coming from the US for short-term, expressing their worldviews during the courses, and unavoidably making an impact on the development of their students. Despite being short-term missionaries, these teachers had enough resources to be influential participants in changing Ukrainian evangelical movement.

During my fieldwork I did hear of other successful involvements of western missionaries into different projects with locals in Ukraine. As a rule, those who were able to stay in Ukraine for a longer period and achieve their goals were professionals receiving strong support for their activities from the institutions in their home countries. One such case is the cooperation between Baptists from Mississippi, the US and Odessa, Ukraine. During my conversation with Andrew who was working in the office for the outer mission[111] at the Baptist seminary in

[110] For example: 'Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.
But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.
For Adam was first formed, then Eve.
And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression' (1 Timothy 2: 11-14. King James Bible).
[111] The outer mission is the mission, which takes part abroad, outside the home country.

Lviv I asked him about the impact of Americans in organizing the mission work. Did they feel it? Did it exist at all? "Yes, it exists and there is a lot of it" Andrew answered and told me about an American who had come to Ukraine and spread the idea of the outer mission. Andrew mentioned Mark Evans from Broadmoor Baptist Church in Mississippi, who is working on the institutional partnership basis with Ukrainian Baptists in Odessa. In the beginning he was helping to finance the missions from sources in the U. S. However, his main idea and the key issue was that Ukrainian communities and institutions should be able to financially support missionaries by themselves. At the time of my fieldwork he still supported missionaries by providing ten per cent of the money needed for mission. Andrew said that when comparing Ukrainians with Americans in the matter of outer mission, the formers are like small children who have to learn.

According to him in the U. S. everything is arranged and has functioned for many years already. Paul, another believer working in the office for the outer mission at the seminary also told me about the influence of Americans in the development of mission activities in Ukraine and how he admired the ideas, initiatives and innovativeness they bring to Ukraine. He told me that Ukrainians are eager to take the American system as a model for how to raise funds for missionaries. For that reason, a mission committee was established. Paul, who himself spend some time on mission in Tajikistan, explained me the simplest scheme for going on mission abroad. First, a mission committee decides in which locations missionaries are needed the most. Then the committee makes a call for young people. Those who respond to the call then have to search for financial support, and then they can go on mission. As no large sums of money for short-term mission are required, the potential missionaries can ask for financial support from their communities or from individual believers.[112] Some of them spent their personal money.

[112] The calendar of planned mission trips for a year and amount of money (in American dollars) for a person who decided to participate in a particular short-term mission can be seen on the site missiya.in.ua. On the same site there are reports of activities from some of the previous mission trips. Short-term and long-term missions can also be organized and supported inside evangelical churches, which supply, prepare and send their own members to mission abroad.

Here I have to add that Evans's idea and his project met keenness and strong support from the Ukrainian side as well. Namely Volodymyr Shemchishin, vice-president of the Baptist Union of Ukraine served as an enthusiastic protégé of the project. That can partly explain the success of the initiative. However, we can notice that there is not easy to reach equality in the partnership when many Ukrainian church, mission agencies and theological schools depend on foreign finances (Penner 2005).

To end the section I provide an excerpt from an interview I made with one of the pastors of the community of my research. I asked the pastor "my assumption before coming to Ukraine was that the reason for the rapid changes was the work of the foreign missionaries, mostly Americans. I actually read about it. However, being here for a while I noticed that Ukrainian evangelical movement still experiences rapid changes, though I have not seen many Americans working on it. Can you say that there has been an impact of Americans, that they have brought the spirit of changes to Ukraine?" The answer was "you see, here we have to think strategically, I suppose. The work of Western missionaries alone would not be enough to change the philosophy, the way of life and the orientation of the church. But the fact is that thanks to their participation we have been able to found educational institutions, hold seminars and conferences and making teaching materials accessible. Thereby, the thinking of the national [evangelical] leaders was transformed. And then, as a result of the initiative of the national [evangelical] leaders the church reforms took place."

To sum up it could be said that mission changes or at least challenges both parts involved. Without a doubt mission always impacts a missionary. Mission can achieve many forms such as an attractive trip, a sightseeing tour, a binding involvement into global evangelical movement, as well as a life changing, and a personality-transforming event. It is more difficult to determine the impact missionaries make on locals. Short-term mission produces short-term memory events when there is only one side, which shows interest for meeting. However, among them there is a minority of professionals who rather than acting out a role as the "exotic other" or giving a one time sermon have been invited and

welcomed by their local colleagues. Those missionaries build international teams and devote their time, energy, and skills to the Ukrainian evangelical movement, changing and transforming it at the same time.

Ukrainian Baptists on Mission

After having participated at my very first Sunday worship in the Baptist church I had contacted in the beginning of the fieldwork, I talked with one of the pastors of the community. During our conversation I asked him if they have missionaries in their church. "Yes, we do, in Russia. We also support one missionary in Azerbaijan" – he answered. "That is impressive, but I meant missionaries from abroad. What about them? Do they come to your church?" I continued asking. He answered, "Yes, sometimes they come to say a sermon." "And that is it? Don't you work together with them continuously?" I asked. "No, our community is big and financially strong, so we do not need any help or support," the pastor explained.

By engaging in the theme of mission, my intention had been to find out whether the community had received "its own" missionaries from the west, who were working there on a permanent, or at least regular basis, so that I could learn more about how missionaries impacted the church. However, the pastor understood the phrasing "their own" missionaries as those who were sent and supported by the church, not those the church received. This misunderstanding is quite understandable as the Bible calls to "go (…) and teach all nations." But why do evangelical missionaries from one country go to evangelicals living in another country to tell them what they supposedly already know? What is the reason behind this kind of mission? The pastor I talked with already provided the answer to this question: Foreigners are coming to offer their support to the existing local communities to make them bigger and stronger. A big, strong and financially stable church does not need any help from the outside. Its concern is rather to help and support other, smaller and weaker communities, and thus to take the role of being the supporter, rather than the supported. This was the way the pastor understood the main purpose of foreign missionaries coming to Ukraine. This is yet another example of how present day mission does not work

according to the call from the Bible, where people are urged to convert non-believers or people from other religions.

"Remember, a high percentage of the missionaries who are sent overseas are not involved in the primary tasks of preaching the Gospel and planting churches. And approximately 85 percent of all missionary finances go to support missionaries who are working among already-established churches on the field— not for pioneer evangelism to the lost" (Yohannan 2017: 84 [1986]).

The excerpt is taken from the seventh edition of the book written by an indigenous evangelical missionary working in his home country India.[122] K. P. Yohannan in his book claims that after the end of WWII, the Western Church lost its grip on world mission. Because of the history of colonialism and a raising awareness of nationalism, the doors were being closed for Western missionaries in China, India, Myanmar, North Korea and other countries. However, local people are much more sympathetic to national believers. That are people who are on mission in their own countries. According to Yohannan the future of the global mission belongs to the indigenous missionary movement (Yohannan 2017: 17).

Although Ukraine did not experience any colonial claims from the US and although American evangelical missionaries came to Ukraine determined to help and support the existing local churches, they were in many instances met with resistance from the local communities, who declined their attempts of help and support (Wanner 2004). As Wanner explained, in the case of Ukraine this was due to the unwillingness to become dependent on wealthier western counterparts. Two branches of Baptists, the Soviet and American, were isolated from each other and developed divergent styles. Ukrainian evangelical Christians tried to preserve their Soviet evangelical tradition and saw the flood of western missionaries as a threat to their evangelical tradition that helped them survive the Soviet regime (ibid).

[122] Numbers were taken from the other book (Barrett and Johnson 2001: 40) where authors claimed that 85 percent of global Christian resources of all kind devoted for foreign missions benefit only the lands, which are already Christian.

As I have experienced during my fieldwork, most Ukrainian evangelical Christians prefer to keep financial and ideological independence when it is possible. They are fascinated by the idea of travelling to other countries and supporting people who are materially weaker than they are themselves. To be able to send out missionaries bears witness to a superior position, whereas receiving missionaries bears witness to an inferior position. The theme of going on mission was at the core at The Second Missionary forum, which took place in Kyiv in 2016. Ukraine was meant as a strong and active member of evangelical movement, a country that was capable and eager to organize and maintain long-term missions in Africa, New Guinea, or Central Asia. Western missionaries were treated as equal partners. The pastor from the interview however admitted that western missionaries and their aid played a central role for the national evangelical church reform. The example of the partnership between Baptist institutions of Odessa and Mississippi is a good example of interest of the both sides in diminishing the financial dependence from the western side. Here we see how a superior western partner teach and train the locals making them independent and building in such way the equal partnership.

A peculiarity of Ukrainian evangelical mission is that the missionaries from the country traditionally are very active in the territory of the former Soviet Union, from Siberia to Latvia (Vallikivi 2014; Wanner 2007). The reason for such activities is the sharing of a common lingua franca and cultural heritage. Central Asia is the most popular destination for Ukrainians going on short-term mission, with the exception of Turkmenistan, which in general is a closed state. There are several reasons why this is a popular region. First of all, living standards in Central Asia are lower than in Ukraine, which means that Ukrainians are able to give something to the locals. Second of all, there is no language barrier as all Central Asian states, like Ukraine, formerly were Soviet republics, so people speak Russian as a lingua franca. Thirdly, in Central Asia Christian mission is forbidden for Americans. If it is suspected that an American is there on mission, the person is sent out of the country immediately. This means that missionaries from other countries have to take over.

When I asked Paul, who had served as a missionary in Tajikistan, if Protestant communities are multiplying in Central Asia, his answer was 'no'. Paul told me that the number of communities and believers is more or less stable. The reason for this is, that the law of the Central Asian states forbids its citizens to change their religion. It does not allow for a growing number of Christians. Although, according to Paul, people there in reality are atheists, nominally they are Muslims. So, converting those people automatically breaks the state law. "Our mission in those states is mainly to help the existing poor communities to survive", Paul concluded. Paul's conclusion corresponds with the claim of Yohannan given earlier in the chapter that the vast majority of all missionary finances and efforts go to support missionaries who are working among already-established churches on the field.

However, a new generation of English speaking missionaries from Ukraine is eager to go to new and for them more exotic destinations in order to carry out their missionary work. At the Second Missionary Forum, which took place in Kyiv in 2016 it was announced that more than twenty Ukrainians now are working as long-term missionaries in nine countries outside the former Soviet Union. This geography includes countries as Egypt, Uganda, and Papua New Guiney. It was added that soon a team of missionaries from Ukraine is going to be sent to Brazil, where a very closed and conservative diaspora of half a million Ukrainians Greek Catholic resides. Americans tried to evangelise among them without any success. Therefore, it was decided to send Ukrainians there.

Again, many mission projects are based on cooperation with American partners. The Southern Baptist Convention is very active in organizing Ukrainian missions to the former Soviet Union, as well as just mentioned missions to Africa and Brazil. As I have highlighted before, discussing the impact of American missionaries in Ukraine, is mission often taking the form as a project for self-development. I would state that the same is the case for Ukrainian missionaries: meeting and working under other cultural and religious traditions, and develop close cooperation with partners from the different evangelical style and

tradition, is making a significant change in the church's self-perception as well as for the individual missionaries. Being able to send out missionaries is already a sign of the transformation of the Baptist church in Ukraine, and it further works to validate their status as a superior actor in the global religious field. Thus, while it is uncertain how much they are able to change abroad, then the entire mission project is a part of the larger project of self-transformation in their own country.

The Inner Mission[113]

I started the chapter with an excerpt from the Bible, which calls to go and teach all the nations. Those words imply going outside one's own country and evangelising the nations abroad. However, I cannot omit here the phenomenon of the inner mission, which reflects the dynamism and changes of Ukrainian evangelical movement. I will not treat this subject in as much detail as the outer mission, as I have prioritised the international dynamics of the cross-cultural mission.[114] Still, I find it important to give some insight into this kind of activity, which in Ukraine is considered an important constituent of the phenomenon of mission as a whole.

The inner mission testifies to the fact that, in a broad sense, all evangelical Christians are on mission when they are evangelising, that is teaching and 'sharing the Good News'. This is regardless of whether they go abroad, or whether they go on mission in another region or other city of their country, or even in their local surroundings. Therefore, the inner mission is a concept in use, and the fact that there is a position as the head of the inner mission in the Baptist Union of Ukraine, testifies to its popularity. However, that does not mean that evangelisation and inner mission are the same. The difference consists mainly in the purpose of evangelisation. If evangelisation is targeting people for converting them, the purpose of the inner mission is church planting; it is the establishment

[113] The concept for organized evangelisation inside the home country, usually the local areas mostly having aim of building a new or expanding the existing community.
[114] Cross-cultural mission – missionaries working among peoples of a different cultural background, either within their own country or abroad.

of a new local church. This purpose makes the inner mission a large-scale event. I continue the section with the reminiscences of Serhiy Moroz, vice-president of the Baptist Union of Ukraine, to whom the chair of inner mission belonged during my fieldwork. His experience bears witness to the early enthusiasm of Ukrainian evangelical Christians facing new opportunities and seeking for novelties in the period after the collapse of the Soviet communist regime:

"I remember the time when freedom came to us after the Soviet turmoil. We felt a bit confused, as we did not fully realise the possibilities this freedom brought to us. In the beginning we were simply glorying in the fact that we were not persecuted for our faith anymore. Only later came the awareness that this is not enough. Although, we did not yet know how to take advantage of the opportunities that just had opened for us. Some believers and churches immediately incarnated every idea of evangelisation that was used by someone somewhere. Here I mention a few of them: Christian youth started to visit hospitals (we did not know anything about volunteering then); outdoor libraries of Christian literature; 'Gospel week' in a city, a village; events with Christian poetry and singing; the 'Jesus' film; exhibitions of reproductions of pictures of Biblical themes. Some of these ideas, for example the outdoor libraries, were so efficient, that thanks to them, not only did individuals turn to Jesus, but entire churches were born. Afterwards these libraries lost their topicality…"

This excerpt illustrates the first enthusiasm and success of the new activities of evangelising and planting new churches that had been forbidden in the Soviet Union. The enthusiasm and first success however, was challenged by a constant need to work on new ideas and targets for practicing the inner mission, as the old ideas quickly lost their applicability in the constantly changing Ukrainian society. The need for finding new ways and forms for evangelisation was still a very present concern by the end of my fieldwork in February 2017. In the previous chapter I explored the struggle for seeking new ways and forms of evangelising through the engagement of evangelicals to the social services. Work in rehab centres was explored as an example of an exceptionally successful activity. The inner mission, as well as the outer mission was adapting to the new

challenges and circumstances. For example, at the time I left my fieldwork there were 1,500,000 IDPs around Ukraine due to the war in Donbas. The displaced were in need of many different sources of help and support, and they became a new target for the inner mission. The most active evangelical Christians who are engaged in developing new ways for the inner mission are young people. At the Second Missionary Forum it was stated that people younger than 35 established most of the new Baptist churches in Ukraine during the twenty-five years of independency of the country. Thus, the local evangelicals who try to adapt to the surrounding political inconsistency and social instability, the ones who seek out new possibilities under the constantly changing circumstances, are central actors in the massive changes of Ukrainian evangelical movement.

The importance of the inner mission should not be underestimated; in reality the majority of Ukrainian evangelical Christians have never left their country for mission abroad and have never had any close cooperation with their American colleagues. Most of the Ukrainian evangelicals are facing enough challenges living in their own country. Everyone decides on his or her own how to reflect and react to the changes - whether one wishes to adapt to it and find ways to act within the new framework, or whether one wishes to stay firmly loyal to the old tradition and live accordingly. The latter can provide a sense of security among its practitioners as they avoid too abrupt changes that challenges their ideas, just as it, after all, is the method that secured the survival of the evangelical communities during several generations during the Soviet period.

Conclusion

Mission in itself is a dynamic movement that has experienced changes throughout history. According to Yohannan I quoted earlier in the chapter, the future of the global Christian mission belongs to the indigenous missionary movements, as local people are much more sympathetic to national believers. This is due to the history of colonialism and the raising nationalisms the world experiences. As I have illustrated, mission today differs from the description in the Bible: it is not as much a matter of converting non-believers, but about

supporting existing believers. The biblical call for going and teaching the nations is hardly applicable. It is likewise illustrated in the case of contemporary Ukraine, as it already is a highly religious country and home to multiple Christian denominations that enjoy a relatively tolerant political and legal environment (Lyubashchenko 2010; Wanner 2006, 2009, 2010). As Yohannan has stressed, it is the already existing churches that receive the majority of the support from missions.

Moreover, calling for teaching among other things implies bringing and implementing the ideology of the teacher to those who are absent from teaching. However, local evangelicals in Ukraine do not want to be taught how to be Christians in their own country. Going on mission or supporting local missionaries is much more appealing for Ukrainian evangelical Christians than receiving help from abroad. Instead, Ukraine is becoming a more and more visible part of the global evangelical missionary movement. Thus, Ukrainian evangelicals are more engaged in learning how to become an efficient and successful missionary, or for example how to build a successful modern educational institution. In this respect Ukrainians need help of successful professionals – teachers, practitioners, coordinators, and managers. And it is thus in this domain that experts and specialists from abroad fulfil an important function by collaborating with them and teaching them the organisational and practical issues connected to mission. By working together with locals, western missionaries become agents of a new tradition, as there has not been any tradition for going on mission before due to the pressure experienced by the Soviet regime. In this regard they are able to stimulate the transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement. Thus, the transformational potency of the mission lies in the co-operation between Ukrainian evangelical institutions with their overseas partners.

As I have argued in this chapter, the quantity or quality of missionaries has not determined the development of the Ukrainian evangelical movement. Instead, the short-term missions mainly function to fulfil the needs of the missionaries themselves. Therefore, most of the western short-term missionaries' impact was

indirect, short lasting and ephemeral. Summing up: the impact of foreign missionaries on the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals should not be overestimated. Although westerners were and remain important players in the process of the transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement, the main agents of initiatives and changes are Ukrainian evangelical Christians. I suggest that the most vital transformational power lies in local evangelisation and the inner mission. This group of missionaries actively realizes their passion for mission and carries out the persistent daily work, are engaged in the local environments and constantly reflects and experiences with new ways to carry out mission – in correspondence with the ever changing political and social environment in Ukraine. Thus, the missionary theme is about contact with the outside world and being active and engaged with the wider world. Therefore, it has symbolic importance, especially where Ukrainians themselves have been doing it, and this can be shown to be a clear example of the new style evangelicals. However, this does not mean that the new style itself has been simply the product of external missionary activity, as Wanner appears to imply. The new style itself emerged mostly through the removal of previous restrictions, mediated through the practice of active 'biblical perception of the reality' and accelerated by the national crisis/conflict of 2014 and after.

8. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore the rapid transformation of the contemporary Ukrainian evangelical movement. The focus of the fieldwork was on the Baptist communities in Lviv. The main challenge and question of the thesis was to explore the principal causes and transformational forces.

In order to answer the main question, I began by elaborating the setting and people of my study. My first goal was to define evangelicalism, in order to explore in detail, who the evangelical Christians are. I emphasized here that despite multiple differences and varieties between different segments of the evangelical groups and denominations, two issues remained at the cornerstone of their identity. Only by knowing these beliefs are we able to understand the logic behind the thoughts and acts of the evangelicals. The most important set of beliefs and commitments, that are shared by all evangelical Christians are as follows: 1) the belief that the Bible is inerrant; 2) the belief that the only way to receive salvation is through conversion, which in short is the personal acceptance of Jesus's atonement on the cross and a 'born again' experience; 3) the belief that sharing the Christian message through evangelisation is indispensable and should be taken as a strong commitment, and as an expression of authentic faith (Bebbington 1989; McGrath 1997; Shah 2009). The doctrinal differences within evangelicalism, say between Baptists and Pentecostals, or Baptists and Charismatics, did not hold significance in my research; rather the definition of 'evangelical' more generally was the focus. Therefore, the Baptists of my research are simply referred to as 'evangelicals'.

The second point to clarify before turning to the issue of transformation was which kind of transformation is addressed in the dissertation. This can be framed as the question: what kind of evangelicalism was practised during the Soviet regime and into what is it transforming in present day Ukraine? My answer was: Ukrainian evangelical movement is transforming from being predominately based on a rather rigid tradition during the Soviet period, to being predominately what I refer to as "new style" today. But how to define the

evangelical tradition in Ukraine that is changing to something else, the rather contrasting phenomenon I call here the ”new style”?

Catherine Wanner in her studies on Ukraine evangelical movement named several peculiar characteristics of the traditional Baptists inherited from and caused by the Soviet regime. She mentioned a general suspicion of worldliness, a strict dress code, social conservatism, isolationism, and others (Wanner 2007, 2009). The introversion of traditional evangelical Christians is understandable given that they had been under constant pressure since the first evangelical communities were established during the Russian Empire. Having the status of a religious minority, the evangelicals experienced hostility from the Russian Orthodox state church. In the Soviet Union evangelical Christians came under pressure from the atheistic government. In both periods many active evangelicals experienced arrests and exile. After the end of the Soviet Union Ukrainian evangelicals experienced unprecedented freedom. However, it appeared that a large number of Ukrainian evangelical Christians did not desire that freedom and resisted any changes and kept their closed style. I decided to conduct a study to find out how the evangelical tradition was formed, took roots and became regarded as still the most proper and valuable way, ethic, or style for some Ukrainian evangelicals, while by contrast there appeared a process of transformation among other evangelicals. This resulted in conflicts and clashes between the traditional and new style evangelical Christians. I made the choice to study Baptists partly because they were the most successful and numerous among Soviet evangelicals. That meant for me that the evangelical tradition was most strongly rooted in them. Therefore, the conflicts and the clashes between the tradition and the “new style” were most visible among Baptists.

In undertaking this research, I took as a starting point the elaborate historical overview on the matter of the Soviet evangelical tradition by Wanner (2007). However, in her study I did not find an explanation of what made evangelical tradition so enduring and vital. So, I made my own investigation, which I presented in chapter 2. My findings were that the crucial moment for building the tradition was 1960, when the Soviet government tightened its policy

regarding evangelical Christians. The government among other restrictions prohibited evangelisation. We already know that evangelisation is taken as a strong commitment and is at the core of evangelical identity. So, the very essence of the evangelical identity was attacked. Therefore, quite predictably, some of the Soviet evangelicals refused to obey the new law. Soviet evangelical Christians split into those who refused to obey the new policy of the Soviet government, went underground, and experienced severe persecution, imprisonment, and other deprivations, and those who complied with the new rules started to form the Soviet evangelical tradition. To sum up, the reasons the Soviet evangelical tradition established itself and had even strengthened towards the end of the communist regime were as follows: 1) Those evangelicals who cooperated with the government were benefited; they received permission to open their own school, the Moscow Bible Institute. The school gave the possibility of consolidating resources for developing theology and training evangelical leaders for the churches. This helped to unify the ecclesiology and view to other theological questions and issues of those who received education in the Moscow Bible Institute and then came back to their communities at home; 2) Isolated from global evangelical movement and experiencing multiple restrictions, including the prohibition of children from attending services, or minimization of the number of baptisms of 18-30 year-olds, resulted in a slowing down of the internal dynamism of evangelical communities and furthered their conservatism and inwardness; 3) Deprived of the ability to evangelise led them emphasise the importance of family relationships as a way for multiply the ranks of the Soviet evangelicals. By means of socialization the new generations inherited the tradition and accepted it as important and valuable in itself. It helped to establish the solid and non-debatable status of the tradition among the Soviet evangelical Christians. Thus, the Soviet evangelical tradition is a consequence of the "contract" made between the Soviet government and evangelicals. In the next three decades after the "contract" the tradition took root among the Soviet evangelicals, who faced little competition.

My third goal was developing and presenting the theory of the biblical perception of reality, which is my theoretical contribution in this study. I

presented and explored it in chapter 3. Being in the field I noticed a peculiar ability of my informants evangelical Christians that excited me. It was the ability to insert, intertwine details or pieces from the biblical texts when talking about recent and common daily events. The stories or events that became linked with the scripture in this way sounded like repetitions of the biblical events, which made them more meaningful and significant than if they were told without the biblical references. Evangelicals added to the common linear perception of time and space a third dimension that transformed the present event into something already seen, told, and written down a long time ago. When I started to work on my fieldwork data, I gave this phenomenon the working title 'the three dimensional perception of time and space' because the Bible constantly was brought in to interpretation, in order to understand a person's current experiences in life, linking the present with a biblical eternity. Later, after developing the theory, I named it the 'biblical perception of reality', as I found that this was a more adequate way of framing the phenomenon. Indeed, time, space and biblical references are not three separate dimensions, but one coherent way of understanding, interpreting and perceiving one's life. This perception is closely related to the belief that the Bible is inerrant, and the significance of the scripture for evangelical Christians, which according to them is God's revelation to humanity. I already noted above that knowing core beliefs and commitments helps us understand the logic of evangelicals' thinking and acting. In chapter 3 I explored how we better can understand evangelicals' relationship with the Bible, and how they learn their particular way of thinking, as well as their rhetorical and hermeneutical techniques. All these things allow a deeper insight to the transformational process of Ukrainian evangelical movement. Indeed, as Ukraine has undergone huge transformations in the social, economic and political sphere, combined with war and rupture, these events provoked intense evangelical efforts to incorporate them into the larger biblical picture where one always must look to the Bible in order to understand the true meaning of the present, and the impact these events have on the believers' lives today.

Ethnographic fieldwork was the methodology of my research. The methodology was developed in the discipline of social and cultural anthropology and is particularly suited for studying of complex social constructs when a researcher needs to gain people's trust to get information. The main method of my study was participant observation. Embedded for a prolonged time in one place, observation and participation *in situ* supplies researchers with rich data, and for that reason is widely used by socio-cultural anthropologists. The interview was a complementary method of my research. In the dissertation I used the data from my field notes, recorded data from interviews and church services. As a supplementary data I used texts taken from the evangelical books and from evangelical sites on the Internet.

My study of the sub-discipline of the anthropology of Christianity sensitised me to the need to pay closer attention to the inner theology of believers very seriously. The scholars working in the discipline criticize the tendency among social scientists to bypass the inner theology, perception, and religious experiences of believers they study (Cannell 2005, 2006; Harding 1991; Robbins 2003, 2006a). It leads to misleading assumptions such as Christians being passive agents mostly depending on secular institutions and beholden to external cultural, political, economic, social contexts. This however is not borne out by evidence, especially regarding evangelicals whose religious experience encompasses and permeates their private and social life (Bielo 2012; Harding 2000; Jakobsen 2011; Luhrmann 2004; Robbins 2014). Thus, my goal on travelling to Ukraine was finding the balance between inner perception of believers I study and the "outer" circumstances that become determinative of them. I reflected, illustrated, and illuminated the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals mainly by giving voice to, and paying attention to the individual believers and their interpretations. Therefore, my dissertation is full of excerpts from the Bible, and from the personal testimonies of evangelicals from my field research. I also engaged with the discussion on the conflict between the continuity and rupture in Christianity. This theme was raised and developed inside the same discipline of the anthropology of Christianity. It influenced my thoughts on the conflict between continuity and rupture. The theme is presented

in chapter 2 where I explored the connections between the personal, religious, and large-scale ruptures and ways of dealing with them in Eastern Europe. The discussion on the discontinuity also helped me to coin the theory of the biblical perception of reality, which is my theoretical contribution in the thesis.

In the thesis I argued that constant changes and transformation in global evangelical movement are not something rare or unique. In chapter 3 I illustrated this with some examples of significant dynamism in the shifting identities of evangelical Christians in the US presented by local anthropologists in their studies. I have also supported my claim of the readiness of evangelicals for change in the chapter 4 with an excerpt from the Bible telling about the daily renewal of converted Christians, and the data from the fieldwork, which tells about the constant expectancy of the changes of a young evangelical believer, and daily endeavours of studying the Bible before the possibility of growing to become mature evangelicals.

Some characteristics of the religious situation and of religious politics that help to explain the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement are well known. The situation in Ukraine is not typical among the states of the former Soviet Union due to the competition for leadership inside the split orthodox church. That characteristic prevented the proclaiming of one national church that could make an alliance with government and push religious minorities to the margin of society, as we have witnessed in most of other post-Soviet countries. This circumstance together with a relatively tolerant political and legal environment made possible the involvement of different kind of religious minorities into competition between each other and with the largest churches. The competition fostered the dynamism and changes inside a large number of churches.

However, I argue that these facts, while being informative, only partly explained the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. As already criticised by scholars working in the sub-discipline of the anthropology of Christianity, these facts reflected only “outer circumstances” showing evangelicals as passive agents

mostly depending on secular institutions. Moreover, as I showed in my discussion with Wanner in chapter 1, these characteristics that at first sight seem like advantages have their dark sides and can reverse to disadvantages. For example, despite the split of the Orthodox Church, it still remains the major religious power in Ukraine. In Lviv the UGCC was the leading and the strongest denomination, and it was quite visible. As I showed in chapter 7, UGCC was suspected of influencing local government to prevent the registration of the new evangelical community in the city. If it is true, then we can doubt whether the political and legal environment is as tolerant in reality as it looks on paper. Thus, I did not find the existing explanation of the rapid transformation of the Ukrainian evangelical movement based on relative pluralism exhausting. Moreover, it was not the goal of my study to keep a balance between the worldview of believers and the "outer circumstances" in exploring the basis and reasons of changes inside Ukrainian evangelical movement.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 provide the main support for my argument about dynamism and change among Ukrainian evangelicals. There I have singled out three main reasons for the evangelical transformation. These are: 1) the particular political situation in the country; 2) the high degree, and successful engagement of Ukrainian evangelical Christians with social services; 3) the involvement of Ukrainian evangelicals in the global and inner mission movement, in which they act at the same time as receivers and as senders of the missionaries. While I find these themes central and crucial for the transformation, I do not claim that they are exhaustive. There are without a doubt several other causes that have stimulated and encouraged change and transformation in Ukrainian evangelical movement. In chapter 3 I referred to the story of a traditional believer who had his own theory about the main cause that changed people in his district and his church. He saw it as caused by changing economic conditions and the expectations of the citizens and the members of his community. His version of the transformational force was convincing. However, I did not explore the economical factor in my study and confined myself to the three reasons I laid out above, arguing they are crucial for the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals.

In chapter 5 I argue that one of the principal causes of the transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement is the constant highly turbulent and electrified political scene in the country. I explore how believers became engaged in political life and events happening in Ukraine, and how excerpts from the Bible are used and referred to in order to interpret and explain the new position they have taken. I apply hermeneutical theories, which help to explain the possibility of the radical shift of meaning of the biblical texts. The changed meaning allows believers to adapt their position to changing circumstances.

In the chapter I demonstrated the increasing distance between Russian and Ukrainian evangelical Christians. Showing no support and empathy for Ukrainian evangelicals after the harsh reaction of the latter to the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, Russian evangelicals proved to have little prospects and/or will for change. This is understandable. The Russians evangelical Christians were under pressure from their own government and would have been regarded as traitors if they had supported their Ukrainian colleagues. In other words, at least publicly, the Russian evangelicals are constrained by law along the lines of the traditional evangelicals were in Soviet times, whereas in Ukraine they are not. This moves apart the Ukrainian evangelical Christians from their Russian colleagues. What makes the Ukrainian evangelicals different is the degree to which the rupture implicit in their theology is being played out around them in the Ukraine conflict.

In chapter 6 I continued with the second reason for the rapid changes: the social engagement of Ukrainian evangelicals. Here I focused on the particular activity common among the post-Soviet Cristian Church in general, as well as among contemporary Ukrainian evangelical churches. It is establishing and serving at the rehabilitation centres for addicted persons. During my fieldwork I have heard many witnesses from the previously drug addicted persons who came through the rehabilitation centres, withdrew from addiction, and became eager believers. A few of those witnesses I presented in the chapter. I illustrate how evangelicals make a specific rhetorical composition using the biblical perception

of reality for taking a listener into a transcendental level of their life stories. They form a representative group that forces the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement, as like for many other newly converted evangelical Christians, tradition to them means, tells, and teaches nothing.

In chapter 7 I explored the phenomenon of evangelical mission and its influence on the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals. I started with the flood of the western evangelical missionaries to Ukraine based on the assumption that it might be the most important constituent of transformational force for local evangelicals. However, in the field I found that local evangelicals have very few memories about missionaries from abroad. I argue that lack of memories and impact is due to the phenomenon of the short-term mission, which may be regarded as more religious tourism than a missionary work in a classical sense of "going and teaching". Under these circumstances the mission makes impact and changes the missionaries themselves, while it is doubtful how much it actually changes the recipients. Going on mission lies at the core of evangelical identity, thus Ukrainian evangelical Christians themselves are more eager to go and serve as missionaries to other places than receiving help from abroad. These mission goers come back home somehow changed. I illustrated this with the example in chapter 3 how going on mission to Kazakhstan transformed the pastor of a Ukrainian community to the extent that he openly opposed and challenged the tradition he used to adhere to, as confronting other pastors in the church he was serving. There is also a concept of the inner mission in Ukraine. The concept means an organized evangelisation inside the country having the goal to establish new local evangelical communities. I argue that this kind of mission is of the most importance for changes and transformation of local evangelicals. On the other hand, Ukrainian evangelical Christians often find themselves in need of different kind of material support and professional experts and specialists – teachers, practitioners, coordinators, or managers. The involvement of the professional western missionaries into different projects with local evangelicals in some extent also stimulates changes and transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement. To sum up, the phenomenon of mission includes many different aspects such as long-term mission, short-term mission, the inner

mission, missionaries, and mission receivers. All of these aspects are able to have a vast variety of consequences and have various impacts on the people who were involved or somehow came into contact with it. Here I point to expectations, professionalism, the ability (or lack of) to provide money and material to the churches, the extent of preparation before the mission, the ability to work as a team and in a team, and so on and so far. There are many cases where the best outcome is a somewhat indirect influence. Still and without a doubt the involvement of Ukrainian evangelicals into the inner and global missions has noticeably stimulated change and supported the transformation of Ukrainian evangelical movement.

In conclusion we can point out that the speed the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals takes is noteworthy when compared with other states of the former Soviet Union. If in the beginning of the millennium, as Wanner (2004) showed, tradition was challenged mostly by the missionaries from the US who came to Ukraine offering help. In little more than a decade afterwards my fieldwork data showed that the encounters and clashes between tradition and new style evangelicals happened between native Ukrainian evangelical Christians on a daily basis. There are several reasons for the transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals and the speed of it, which should be seen as intertwined phenomena. Some are mentioned by Wanner. One of them is the decision of Ukrainian political leaders not to engage in a special relationship with any of the churches. Newly converted evangelicals, who, we can assume, were not particularly engaged in preserving the Soviet evangelical tradition, filled 'the gap' of evangelicals that was created when high numbers of traditional evangelicals started to migrate. We can also suppose that this happened partly due to historical circumstances: in the late 1980s we generally witnessed a high interest in religious and spiritual movements among citizens of the USSR. We can add an additional reason to why it happened in Ukraine, namely because of the traditionally high religiosity of its citizens where being religious was considered a normal practice even during the atheistic regime. Furthermore, Ukraine was a particularly fertile ground for transformations because it hosted a traditionally strong evangelical minority, which was able to use the new possibilities of

evangelising and substituting the membership of the communities with newly converted believers. I wrote extensively about the most prominent factors that worked for the rapid transformation of Ukrainian evangelicals, along with the factors mentioned by Wanner. During the time I conducted my research in Lviv I claimed the crucial importance of evangelicals' engagement in politics that was provoked by the turbulent political situation in the country; evangelicals' successful involvement into the social services; and evangelicals' involvement into the global and inner mission. However, contrary to Wanner's data that shows a significant impact by western missionaries on local evangelical movement, my ethnographic material demonstrates that Ukrainian evangelicals have mostly changed not because believers were passive recipients of western help and style, but due to local missionaries' eager involvement in global and inner mission, and locals' active engagement in mutual projects with their western colleagues.

Further Research

Thinking about the future of Ukrainian evangelical movement, it would be interesting to come back and study its further development after some years have passed. An interesting research project would be to expand my research of evangelical Christians to studies on Pentecostals and Charismatics in order to conduct a comparative study of their development and transformation. Further it would be interesting to expand the geographical location in Ukraine with other regions. During my fieldwork I was told about the evangelicals in Kherson, in South of Ukraine, a region where they are very strong. However, it would also be worth considering cities that have fewer believers and investigate the causes for this as well as how varying conditions and varying support impact the local evangelical movement.

Another venue that remains largely unexplored among anthropologists and other social scientists engaged in religious studies is the Christians' experiences of encountering Satan. During my fieldwork both among Lithuanian Baptists, whom I researched during my BA and MA, as well as among Ukrainian Baptists, I

noticed an interesting phenomenon of stories of Baptists claiming hearing voices. These persuasive appeals they were subjected to were recognised as being the various voices of Satan. This happened despite the fact that Baptists, unlike other evangelical Christians, such as Charismatics or Pentecostals, are known for not having any tradition of dealing with possession, or other kinds of demonic appearances. Thus, my observations made me suggest that I was dealing with possibly novel and unexplored characteristics inside this branch of Christianity. Taking this research further would also allow me to expand my thoughts about the Biblical perception of reality, as the inclusion of Satan as a transcendental being and the personal encounters with his voices require that the Christians further work with their perception of the world through the lenses of the Bible. Thus, I see the novelty in including to the study anthropological comparative research on the encounters with Satan and how they have been dealt with in Christian tradition presented by different Christian denominations. Expanding it with the hitherto unexplored experiences of Baptists and others, would break new ground for our deeper understanding of the different groups of Christians. This would involve Lithuanian Catholic exorcists, and members of Lithuanian and Ukrainian Pentecostal, Charismatics, and Baptist communities.

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