

## **THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN POST-COMMUNIST UKRAINE**

### **Historical Sources, Modern Status, and Perspectives of Cooperation**

By Lyudmyla Filipovych and Anatoly Kolodny

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Post-Soviet society and its attitude toward religion are going through drastic changes that have to be grasped both at a secular and a theological level. The secular analysis of religion (its individual and social dimension) is taking place within the framework of religious studies. This is a somewhat new field of humanities in Ukraine. Theological interpretation of religion and its functioning in society is presented by theology which is now in a state of revival for traditional and nontraditional religions. The reason why religious studies and theology are presently at an embryonic stage can be found in past history, when religion itself and its study were forbidden due to domination of foreign and communist regimes. Theology and religious studies are specific forms of knowledge about religion on the one hand, and scholarly subjects taught to students at colleges and universities on the other. **Religious Studies**

This secular science appeared in Ukraine in the XIX century. But the modern history of Ukrainian religious studies was deeply connected with Soviet times when a new sphere of knowledge - scientific atheism – was created. Religious studies were included as a critical

part of this new subject. The positive aspect in scientific atheism took a priority for a long time. Having scientific atheism divided into two aspects, positive and critical, some researchers identified it with the latter. Religious studies were presented not as knowledge about religion but as a critique of it. This was a distortion of the subject of religious studies, its meaning and sense. It put an emphasis not on research of religious phenomena in its different forms and complex history, but on a search for discrepancies in religious beliefs and perspectives. It turned out that normal interest in religion, without atheistic bias, did not have a right to exist. The objective to overcome religion and to form an atheistic conscience was the end of any religious studies. In a word, to be involved in religious research was considered neither intellectually respectable nor fruitful. As a positive science rather than a critique part of atheism, religious studies began after the fall of the Soviet Union, when the situation in this field of study changed dramatically. Religion and the church obtained a new status in society. Millions of people turned to religion, and the need for more scholarly knowledge became apparent. Scholars and the educational system faced new theoretical tasks.

First of all there was a need to specify the meaning of the term “Religious Studies” (in Ukrainian – “Religiyeznavstvo”, literally “Knowledge about religion”). Is it:

1. 1. a combination of scientific disciplines that study religion?
2. 2. a critical part of scientific atheism?
3. 3. a neutral part of theology (unlike the apologetic part of theology)? or
4. 4. an independent sphere of a humanistic knowledge of religion?

There was also a need to define whether religious studies differs from theology, and whether there is a difference between academic and theological research. To answer these questions we have to clearly formulate what is the object and subject of religious studies.

Ukrainian religious studies has still failed, to some extent, to answer this principal question. There are lots of different opinions and positions concerning this in Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> From the authors' point of view, religious studies is an independent area of scientific knowledge that has its own specific object of studies. Very often using the etymology of "religious studies" people assume that its object is religion itself. But such a logic would lead us to the conclusion that the object of philosophical science is philosophy, of political science is politics, of art studies is art, etc. But this is far from being true. Any study of humanities reflects a certain side of human existence in the world, whether it is activities or experiences. We accepted the rather primitive understanding not just of the meaning, but also of the structure of religion. Religion, to our understanding, is composed of the manifestation of external human activities, such as the level of mental understanding, emotional backgrounds and certain cult activities. At the same time the religious experience of a person and his or her interpretation of it were simplified or even ignored.

Therefore the object of religious studies is to represent the human condition, that can be defined as the state of self identification in the world, self determination of the individual by discovering "inner-supernatural" feelings that unite him or her with the transcendental. In its functional application religion goes far beyond its individual existence. It can be interpreted doctrinally and symbolically, as in ceremonial forms of worship. Religion becomes a part of different areas of human life, making them sacred. As a result, religious

<sup>1</sup> Aliayev G and others. Lectures on the religious studies. – K. 1996; Vandyshev V. Religious studies. – Sumy, 1996; Gubenok V. Religious studies. Simferopol, 1999; Gudyma A. Religious studies. – Ternopil, 2000; Dokash V., Shnurova O. Religious studies. – Chernivtsy, 1998; Yeryshev A. Religious studies. – K., 1999; Kalinin Y., Kharkovschenko Y. Religious studies. – K., 2001; Kalinin Y., Lubs'kiy V. Religious

studies. K., 2000; Religious studies (ed. M.Zakovych). – K., 2000; Religious studies (ed. M.Rybachuk). – K.,1997; Religious studies (ed. V.Lubs'kiy and V.Teremok). – K., 2000; Religious studies (ed. S. Bublyk) – K., 1999; Semianiy O. and others. Religious studies. – Ternopil, 1999; Taranenko V. Religious studies. – Kharkov, 1999; Khodakova L. Religious studies. – L'viv, 2000; Cherniy A., Lakhno A. Religious studies. – K., 2002 etc. (in Russian and Ukrainian).

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studies, in its subject covers more than its object. To define the latter we would use terminology such as religiology emphasizing that the nature of religion can be defined only by words, and not by knowledge. The latter can be used to describe the functional wealth of religious phenomena. Therefore, the subject of religious studies in its full meaning is the functionality of religion and not just its nature. While the object of religious studies, which is individual religious experience, is relatively stable, the subject changes with time and in the quantity.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, Ukrainian scholars are facing another problem, which is the definition of religion. In our opinion, post-Soviet religious studies still use in general Engels' definition of religion that explained religion as a fantasized reflection of external powers that oppress people in their everyday life. Agreeing that there cannot be only one acceptable definition we can talk about dominant understanding of religion that reflects the level of cultural development of the society. Therefore the situation is as follows: We still have an archaic definition, from which we are not yet liberated, and a new alternative has not come to the fore. From the academic religious studies point of view, defining religion proceeds from an existential measure of human beings. Religion exists, on the level of separate individuals, on the level of its own faith and feelings. This is basic. All the rest – theology, church with its system of accepted worshiping rites, temples, and

church attending – are secondary, derivative, external and most of all – human religious inventions. Therefore in a more narrow sense, the most essential in understanding religion – is the internal individual state of the human being, where he/she feels that he/she belongs to a Higher Power that determines all in this world.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Rep.: Academic Religious Studies. ( Kyiv, 2002), pp. 17-28 (in Ukrainian).<sup>3</sup> Dictiona ry on R eligious Stu dies, edit. A.Kolodny and B. Lobovyk.(Kyiv, 1996), p. 279 (in Ukrainian).

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Thirdly, seventy years of isolation from religion and the religious studies context, historical as well as contemporary, again made relevant our own religious studies legacy. It was found that in the past there was a school of authoritative religious researchers, that were in different methodological positions (from the Orthodox Metropolitan Makariy, who created an unsurpassed history of the Orthodox Church, to the positivist M. Dragomanov and O. Potebnya, that laid foundations of native sociology and politology of religion, linguistic religious studies). Many interesting names appeared in even the atheistic twentieth century: S. Tokarev, J. Kryvelev, V. Garadzha, M. Gordiyenko, M. Novikov, D. Ugrinovich, M. Shakhnovich, I. Yablokov, A. Yeryshev, B. Lobovik, Y. Duluman, P. Kosuha, etc.

Beside the above listed theoretical problems, our indigenou s researchers faced other problems, such as, the structure of religious studies, which also includes other fields, methodology of religious research, specifics of academic and theological research, etc. Religious studies in Ukraine includes the following subtopics: philosophy and

phenomenology of religion, hermeneutics of religion, history and historiosophy of religion, sociology and psychology of religion, the cultural studies of religion, ethnology of religion, geography of religion, language of religion, and denominational religious studies<sup>4</sup>. It also needs to be considered that along with these, the differentiation of academic religious studies continues.

So, who represents religious studies in Ukraine on the personal and institutional levels?

Personal level. Ukrainian religious researchers represented quite significant diversity as far as age, education, worldview orientations, and methodological approaches are concerned. Traditionally religious researchers were professional philosophers or historians

<sup>4</sup> Academic Religious Studies, pp. 3-10.

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that specialized in the study of religion. The majority of them were from the older generation, former atheists, that studied in Soviet universities and received their scientific degrees for their atheistic dissertations, and their scholarly accomplishments connected with their atheistic past. They were not respected among intellectual humanists because they were considered overly apologetic of the dominant ideological system. Among them, however, were also highly qualified specialists who knew ancient languages, religious literature, had a deep understanding of the philosophy and theology of religion, as well as the history of religion. Some of them had gone through a complex transformation of their world view in order to become researchers of religion. The middle-generation, which in general also studied in the philosophical and historical

faculties, feel more independent from the atheistic past. Historically, sociologists and psychologists were not at all interested in religion and there were no special institutions or faculties for religious studies. These did not exist until recently.

Only in later years were such faculties created, in the Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, and the National University “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy”, Chernivtsiy & Prykarpatiy Universities. The Donetsk Institute of Artificial Intelligence has a special faculty for teaching religious scholars. Ukraine has a few departments of Cultural Study and Philosophy where they make a connection to religious studies (Odessa, Lugansk, L’viv, Lutsk, Rivne, Poltava, Sevastopol’, Chernigiv, Uzhgorod, Kharkiv, Sumy, Ternopol’). Every year Ukraine graduates about 50 specialists in the field of religious studies. Of course, the level of their education is not equal and it could be better. But at last, young professional religious researchers are being trained. The future of Ukrainian religious study depends on their knowledge, skills, and orientations.

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Among secular religious researchers there are many who are connected to religion – historians, scholars, linguists, philosophers, archeographers, etc. Some theologians who are studying apologetic theology also consider themselves religious researchers. We will speak about theology and theologians later though in our opinion some of them represent a theological religious studies approach in distinction to academic (secular) religious studies.

As far as the study of religion in Ukraine today, the general public is involved. On an amateur level many problems are discussed, which on the one side, encourages some scholarly research. On the other side it vulgarizes and simplifies (distorting and twisting) the course and goal and consequences of this research.

On an institutional level Ukrainian religious studies are presented by:

Scientific institutions;

Educational institutions (secular and religious);

Science departments of the educational institutions;

Independent research centers.

Traditionally in the former republics of the Soviet Union, religious research was separated from teaching about religion. There was a certain distance between scientific and educational institution, between scientist and teacher, between the generator of ideas (the analytic) and the translator (implementer) of it. Therefore religious research as a part of scientific atheism was being developed in research institutes (there was even an Institute of Scientific Atheism in the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union). It was also developing as an educational subject in educational institutions. There were pluses and minuses to this approach. This strict paradigm established by the Soviet state, as a rule, has ended. And while science had to be taught, scientists, without attracting too much attention were working as teachers (with varying motives). Pedagogy had to have a strong theoretical base, therefore, in return,

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teachers strove to engage themselves in scholarly research (also with varied motives, but mostly to obtain scientific degrees of academic studies and to find corresponding work).

The present situation is different. Religion is studied in religious (denominational) spiritual seminaries and academies and in secular institutions (universities, institutes, and colleges). Religion is being researched in educational institutions (usually in the sub-faculties or departments of religious studies or philosophy, sub-faculties or departments

of cultural studies or humanitarian sciences) and scientific institutions. At present scholars, as a rule, can also be teachers, or teachers of well known universities working simultaneously in a scientific center or an institution, created along with the university (Western version). Thus in the Kiev University there is an Institute of Ukrainiology or along with the Spiritual Greek-Catholic Academy in L'viv (from 2002 – Catholic University) the Institute of History of the Church and the Institute of Society and Religion were created.

The level of development of any science is defined by the existence of professional occupational organizations such as associations, societies, unions etc. Such organizations were already created in Ukraine. They unite secular scientists as well as theologians, which shows that this system of religious studies is open and capable of self-development. We are talking about the Ukrainian Association of Researchers of Religion (UARR), which was created in 1993, based in the Religious Studies Department of the Philosophy Institute of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Ukraine, created as a part of the system of the Academy of Sciences in 1991. From that time on the Association's and the Department's head was the doctor of philosophical sciences, Professor Anatoly Kolodny. Since 2000, along with the Association, the Center of Religious Information and Freedom is working. The Association of Young Religious Researchers was created in 2001.

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The most distinguished center of scientific research in Ukraine is the Religious Studies Department (more precisely – Department of Studying of Religion) of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The other ones are: the Department of Religious Studies of Kyiv National University (Chief Prof. V. Lubskiy) and Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, (Chief Prof.

V. Gussev). There are also some researchers in different universities, i.e.: in the Institute of International Relations of NAS of Ukraine and the Institute of Strategic Studies. A few years ago the Institute of Religious Research that was created in L'viv connected with the Museum of Religion (Candidate of Science A. Bandrivskiy), Center of Comparative Studies at the Philosophical Faculty of the National Odessa University (Assistant Prof. Y. Martynyuk), Kharkiv NRM's Center (Assistant Prof. Y. Kachurov), Kyiv Center of Humanitarian & Religious Studies (Candidate of Science V. Yelenskiy), Donetsk Center for Religious Research of the Institute of Artificial Intelligence (I. Kozlovskiy). Local centers of UAR in Ternopil' (Ternopil Medical Academy –Assistant Prof. A. Gudima), L'viv (L'viv Commercial Academy – Prof. N. Gorbach), Rivne (Slavic University Prof. N. Stokolos), Ostrog (Ostrog Academy, Prorector Prof. P. Kralyuk), Chernivtsiy (Chernivtsiy University Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Philosophical Theology V. Dokash), Poltava (Pedagogical University Rector V. Pashchenko), Sumy, Ivano-Frankivs'k, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovs'k, Luts'k, Chernigiv, Khmal'nitskiy, Uzhgorod, Odessa, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Sevastopol', Zaporizhia, Cherkasshare all are the initiators of very interesting activities connected to religious studies (conferences, seminars, printing books, educational programs on TV & radio, lectures in a mass-auditoriums, authors' study courses in places of higher learning).

The Religious Studies Department of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine was founded in 1991. It was based in the Department of the Philosophy of Religion that existed within the framework of the Institute of Philosophy of NASU for many years.

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Generally the first organized religious scholarly institution in Ukraine was created in 1931 in Kharkiv, Anti-religion Sector as a part of the IP and Natural Sciences of the All-

Ukrainian Association of Institutes for Scientific Studies (AUAISS). Its work was headed by the famous teacher of social sciences D. Ignatuk. Four people were working in this sector: I. Elvin, M. Krivokhatskiy, D. Chernitsov, O. Chefranov. Works of this sector were printed in different periodicals, as well as in the form of separate brochures. After the liquidation of the AUAISS, its institutes were given to scientists of the Philosophical Commission of the social-economic department of Ukrainian Academy of Science who were working in this field. At that time the development of the knowledge of religion in academic spheres was totally dedicated to the task of spreading anti-religious information and explaining the “opiate of the people” ideologies.

In 1947 the Institute of Philosophy was restored within the system of the Academy of Sciences. In 1957 a department of scientific atheism appeared in its structure. This Department was headed by a famous researcher of religions of the ancient world Prof. Avetik Avetisian. V. Antonenko, A. Yeryshev, P. Korobko and Y. Okhrimenko were also part of this department. Although during the next four decades scientific work had to be within the framework of the implementation of resolutions and directions of the Communist Party about constant improvement in atheistic education, the workers of the department none-the-less did some religious studies. They did wide-scale concrete sociological research of the Ukrainian population’s state of religiosity plus studies on the history of religion and free thinking. They studied the essence and the structure of religious phenomenon, the specifics of its social function and interaction with other components of spiritual culture, in particular, domestic and ritualistic spheres, the arts, science and philosophy, observing the dynamics of the directions of religious evolution in conditions of scientific and technical progress. In the

1970s and 1980s practically for the first time, a complex study of atheism as a spiritual phenomenon was done. This was, in a way, beyond the borders of ideological apologetics and it opened a real basis for an atheistic world-view; real aspects of its influence on the spiritual culture of society and the individual.

After the creation of the specialized Religious Studies Department in the Philosophical Faculty of Taras Shevchenko University, the research of religious processes in Ukraine was greatly revived. This Department was headed by V. K. Tancher for the next 30 years. After that similar departments were opened in other educational institutions in the Ukrainian Republic.

In spite of the apparent ideological character of religious research of the Soviet and early years of the post-Soviet time, some works of Ukrainian scientists are worth attention. Thus the gnoseological essence of religious phenomenon was studied by B. Lobovik; its socio-historical characteristics – by Y. Duluman and V. Kulik; social-psychological appearances - V. Dolya and V. Pavluk; specifics of religions origins – G. Lebedinets; irreligious form of conscience studied by O. Onischenko, A. Kolodniy, V. Tancher. P. Saukh; historical and confessional peculiarity of theological thought – by V. Nychik, Y. Kalinin, L. Konotop, V. Stokyalo, P. Kralyuk, V. Fomichenko. I. Bohachevska, O Sarapin, R. Trachuk addressed some problems of philosophy of religion in their dissertations. A. Yeryshev, P. Kosuha, M. Zakovich, A. Cherniy, O. Buchma gave a sociological analysis of the religious specifics of the modern believer. In their works, P. Yarotskiy, I. Mozhoviy, V. Bondarenko, O. Sagan, P. Lobazov, V. Klimov, A. Gudima, O. Nedavnya, P. Pavlenko, N. Stokolos, G. Nadtocka, G. Bakanurskiy, V. Lubskiy, V. Lubaschenko, V. Paschenko and M. Kiriushko covered questions about the history of religion and specifics of the functioning

of different denominations. The introduction of Christianity to Ukraine became a subject of study for M.

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Briychevkiy, A. Glushak and P. Kotlar. Modern theological, moral-ethical and eschatological concepts were analyzed by P. Gopchenko, Y. Tereschenko, V. Schedrin, and A. Gudyma. The problems of freedom of conscience and state-church relations were studied by M. Babiy,

O. Utkin, M. Rybachuk, P. Panchenko, V. Yelenskiy, O. Ogneva, O. Shuba, V. Suyarko. The works of V. Ulyanivskiy, S. Plohiy, O. Kryzhanivskiy, V. Rychka were devoted to the history of Christian churches. New Religious Movements in Ukraine and mystic groups were studied by L. Filipovych, A. Schedrin, and Y. Martynuk.

Currently working in the Department of Religious Studies of the Institute of Philosophy NAS of Ukraine are the doctors of sciences (A. Kolodny, P. Yarotskiy, L. Filipovych, M. Churilov) and 10 candidates for doctors of sciences (I. Bohachevska, O. Nedavnaya, O. Sagan, O. Buchma, G. Kulagina, P. Pavlenko, V. Yelenskiy, V. Klimov, M. Babiy, S. Svistunov). Active systematic work on the research of the actual problems of sociology, history, ethnology of religion, modern religious processes continue in the world as well as in the Ukraine. The Council of the Defense of Candidate and Doctoral Dissertations on the topic of “Religious Studies” was created in the Department. Ten to twelve dissertations are presented every year. Unlike many Western institutions, this department receives a budget from the government.

In the ten years of its existence scientists of the Religious Studies Department held analyses in fifteen topics. Following are some of the topics covered: Methodological Principles and System of the Religious Studies Categories; The Phenomenon of Religion: Nature, Tendencies; Specific

Features and Distinctiveness of Ukrainian Christianity; The Present Day Religious Situation in Ukraine: the State, Tendencies, Prognosis; Religion as a Factor of the Ethno-social and Political History of Ukraine; New Religious Movements and Cults During the Period of the Socio-Economical Crisis in the Post-Communist Society in Ukraine;

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Freedom of Religion in Post-Communist Countries; Transformation of Religious Spirituality in Modern and Post-Modern Situations; Trends in Religion and Religiosity in the Modern Ukrainian Society. Now scholars are working on a new topic: Religion in the Globalization of Society. In relation to the Department's publishing activities, it is necessary to mention that

during the past five years alone, the Department printed nearly 70 books and brochures; over 600 individual and collective articles, mainly in Ukrainian. Since 1996 the quarterly magazine *Ukrainian Religious Studies* was issued, as well as a monthly, *Religious Freedom*. From July 2000 a wide range of readers benefited from materials in the monthly magazine *Religious Panorama*. Five out of ten volumes in the *History of Religion of Ukraine* along with a study book were published, as well as *The Dictionary on Religious Studies* (1996) and books and brochures from the series *Thinkers of the Ukrainian Diaspora*, *Confessions and Churches in Ukraine*, *Aid to the Teachers of Religious Studies*, *Spiritual Workers of Ukraine* etc. The three-volume *Ukrainian Encyclopedia of Religion* is to be published in 2003-2004. The religious researchers of Ukraine consider the book *Academic Religious Studies* (862 pages) the most valuable of their accomplishments, containing all the major results of their creative research during the last decade.

In previous years the Department conducted wide ranging sociological researches of specifics of the religiosity of a modern believer, the state, and tendencies in interdenominational relations, linking of the religious and national factors in the spiritual

revival of Ukraine, the character of the neo-religious process, etc. Financial difficulties forced the Department to discontinue these very necessary scientific researches.

During the last five years the Department, along with the centers of the UARR elsewhere, organized over 50 scientific religious research conferences, in particular devoted to the anniversary of Christianity, to the problem of the place and role of religion and the

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Church in the social and spiritual needs of present day Ukraine, the history of religion in Ukraine, and freedom of religion in the post-socialist countries, etc.

Nowadays the Department of Religious Studies is actually the only scientific unit in this specialty. Its task is to conduct basic scholarly research of religious processes and occurrences, to coordinate religious research in Ukraine, to determine priorities in research, to organize training of new scholars, to connect with the international religious scholars, to organize and hold scientific conferences, seminars, etc. Therefore in the Independent Ukraine the process of the intense development of religious studies as separate sphere of scientific knowledge continues within the whole diversity of its disciplinary formations.

The very important accomplishment in recent years is the fact that Ukrainian religious scholarship reached the world level of religious research. The Association of the Researchers of Ukraine became a member of some international associations on religious research. Ukrainian religious researchers present their findings at different foreign scientific conferences and in numerous foreign publications. Honorary members of the Department of Religious Researchers IP HASU are Prof. H. Biddulph and C. Durham (USA), I. Muzychka (Italy), S. Fostun (England), St. Yarmus (Canada), I. Shevtsiv (Australia).

Ukrainian Religious Studies has developed not only as a branch of the humanist sphere of knowledge, but we can rightfully talk now about practical religious studies as well, dealing with interdenominational and inter-church conflicts, attempts to politicize religion and to religionize politics, to limit the freedom of existence of faiths by dividing them into traditional and non-traditional, “betrayal” by children of their parents’ religion through accepting new faiths, spreading of missionary activities in Ukraine by different foreign religious centers, etc. These are real problems of religious life, which need not only to be thought about, but also to be solved practically. Thus preparing of different scientific-expert

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documentation, analytical notes for interested structures that hold power is one of the integral parts of religious researchers work in Ukraine.

The Religious Studies Department of the Philosophy Institute of the NASU offers to organizations that are interested in it to carry out joint research on actual religious problems, preparing for them informative, analytical and prognostic materials concerning the religious situation in Ukraine, in particular about the state and perspective of different denominations, interdenominational relations and relations inside of the denomination, about specifics of the present religiosity, spreading of non-traditional religious movements, about evolution of the meta-religion mystics, etc.

### Theology

Not being theologians, it is quite difficult to analyze the state of modern Ukrainian theology as was done in religious studies. Unlike religious studies which historically can be perceived as coming from theological and secular interpretation of religion, theology had been in existence in Ukraine from ancient times and Ukrainian Christian (Orthodox) theology was known since the Kyiv Rus’ baptism in 988. Without

going into the historical details we can speak about theology in terms of phases: for example, the works of Metropolitan Illarion Kyivskiy (XI century), Metropolitan Kliment Smolyatych (XII c.), Metropolitan Petro Mohyla (XVII c.), Metropolitan Ivan Ogiyenko and Andrey Sheptytskiy (beginning of XX century)). Many recognized the level of Ukrainian theological thought as of a very high standard. For example, the Mohyla Catechism was studied and used by all Orthodox churches of that time.

The Synodal and the Soviet periods were difficult times in the history of theology. Theological schools (seminaries and academies) fell into decay or were destroyed. During the

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Soviet time only one seminary existed in Odessa. Therefore, theology in Ukraine now is weak both in the organizational and ideological sense.

However, we can see changes for the better in the field of theology in recent times. The number of spiritual schools, coupled with the increased number of religious organizations, is growing. Statistics of the Ukrainian State Committee for Religious Affairs reports about 26,000 religious organizations, 120 denominations and movements for the period November 2002<sup>5</sup>. In 2001 Ukraine had 147 religious educational institutions that enrolled 11,554 full-time students and 7,000 students by correspondence. They were students of different churches: Ukrainian Orthodox Church – 15 schools/1805 regular +2360 correspondence students, Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchy – 15/1177+404, Ukrainian Orthodox Autonomous (Autocephalic) Church – 8/205+80, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church – 13/1166+340, Roman Catholic Church – 6/322+171, Baptists – 42/3849+2078, Pentecostals – 13/691+59, Church of the Full Gospel – 3/236+560, Adventists – 3/180+563, Jewish– 5/88, Muslims – 5/383+80.

In spite of these statistics, Ukraine has some problems with theological education. Since theology in Ukraine has only recently (April 2001) been included in the list of educational subjects for which specialists receive training, the standards of theological education have not yet been established. Therefore none of the theological institutions have state licensing. Theologians receive either a diploma of “Religious Studies” or “Theology”. The latter is not recognized by the state and it should be added that neither the theologians nor the secular researchers are interested in changing this.

The relation between religious studies and theology, as well as between secular and non-secular religious researchers are not simple. This can be explained by historical reasons

<sup>5</sup> Vas'kovsky, V. State of Religious Network in Ukraine // National Security and Defense. – 2002. - m10 (34). p.22 (in Ukrainian).

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and by the ambiguous policy of the Ukrainian state in this field. According to the law of Ukraine about freedom of conscience and religious organizations (1991) the church is separated from the state and the school is separated from the church. Therefore state educational institutions have no right to include in study curriculum any theological subject by theologians and the church cannot operate public schools (ordinary or high), which would be recognized by the state. Such a situation creates artificial difficulties in the relations between religious studies and theology.

On the one hand, former atheists consider religious studies are playing up to the religions and are surrendering their world-view positions to theologians, therefore they

dislike and criticize scholars of religious studies. On the other hand theologians and confessionally oriented researchers are suspicious that secular researchers of religion are biased, anti-religious, and in league with atheists. Gradually in some confessions a creative scientific collaboration is developing between secular scientists and theologians, where they understand the mutual need.

Collaboration between secular and non-secular religious researchers is developing in different directions: 1) organizing and holding conferences; 2) writing books and publishing; 3) various projects; 4) team-teaching in the schools and universities.

1) Almost fifty scholarly conferences initiated by the Religious Studies Department of the National Academy of Sciences together with different religious organizations were organized and held during the last decade. Cooperation with Orthodox, Catholics, Adventists, Muslims, pagans and some new movements has been the most fruitful and successful. The 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Orthodox Metropolitan, Petro Mohyla, 400<sup>th</sup> year of Berestetsk Union, and 115<sup>th</sup> year of Adventist Church in Ukraine had been celebrated at the state level. We may speak about constant cooperation with Roman Catholics with whom a conference

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devoted to the Pope's encyclicals "Fides et Ratio" were organized lately. Scholars of religious studies did much to prepare the public for John Paul's visit to Ukraine (2001) including broadcasting on radio and TV. There were organized scientific conferences devoted to religious and national minorities (Karaites, Judaists, Muslims, Old-Believers, pagans, etc.) as well.

2) Writing and publishing books and collections. Religious Dictionary (1996), History of Religion of Ukraine in 10 volumes (1996-2003), collections of conference addresses and reports are the result of team work.

3) Joint projects to study the history of the Baptist movement in the Ukraine; International Youth Summer School on “Religious Tolerance” (2001 and 2002) with young religious participants of different religions and denominations.

4) Visiting teaching by scholars of religious studies at theological schools and vice versa.

The academic religious studies welcome the activation of theological religious studies in Ukraine, which is recently occurring. Here we can mention the works of Cardinal Myroslav-Ivan Lyubachivskiy, Patriarch of the Orthodox Church Filaret (Denisenko), and Dimitriy (Yarema), Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan), Archbishop Igor (Isichenko), Bishop Sofron Mudriy, Professor of Spiritual Academy D. Stepovik, Prorector of the Kyiv Christian University Iu. Reshetnikov, the Counselor of the President of the Pentecostal Church V. Franchuk, sorceress Zoreslava (Galina Losko), etc. Important theoretical articles were published in the Baptist periodical Bogomysliye [“Godly Thinking”] from Odessa. The Ukrainian Bible Society made a new translation of the Bible into the Ukrainian language. Collaboration between academic religious studies and theology does not lead to the blurring

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of the scientific approach or the giving up of secular methodology of the academics. But we can hear voices of Catholic and Greek Catholic theologians, of Orthodox and Protestant ones.

As we can see there are more and more reasons to talk about religious studies and theology in Ukraine as a sphere of knowledge that has been formed already. They strive for self-identification, often through opposing one another as different forms of knowledge about religion. The opposition “religious studies - atheism” still dominates in such identification. In recent years, following the example of the Western pattern of relations between secular religious studies and theology, first attempts to separate them appeared in Ukraine too. But in the complex “religious studies – theology” as a whole the pre-dominant modus operandi is one of opposition rather than of collaboration. The camp of theologians appear more aggressive and irreconcilable at that.

It is obvious that Ukrainian society is lacking in specialists in the religious sphere. It needs specialists in problems of interdenominational relations, state-church policy, etc. There is not enough theological comprehension of social processes of the modern world that would provide an alternative to the secular view in Ukrainian society. The knowledge about religion could be provided by theology, as well as religious studies, that are represented by different institutions, indigenous researchers from different regions, opposite conceptions. Basing on certain accomplishments and having good prospects, Ukrainian religious studies are waiting to solve a number of important theoretical and organizational problems.

Post-communist scholarship must creatively reevaluate and try to apply the results of scholarship by colleagues from different countries, while reflecting on these and striving to create it's own principles, own understanding of the object and subject of researches, to separate operating categories and appropriateness. First steps that were done in the field of Ukrainian religious studies and theology are almost unknown in Western countries, even in

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neighboring countries such as Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Russia, Byelorussia, Bulgaria, and the Baltic countries. The only thing needed is self determination of the Ukrainian religious researchers (secular and non-secular), a wider range of contacts with foreign specialists in the sphere of the study of religion, translations of Ukrainian scholars' works into English and other languages, and to include in the Ukrainian information space, the works of non-Ukrainian religious researchers, and professional discussion between colleagues - religious researchers.