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**Howard L. Biddulph. State Toleration of a New Faith
in Post-Soviet Society:
A Case Study of Latter-day Saints in Independent Ukraine**

***Abstract.** This study combines author's experiences as an analyst of post-Soviet politics and religious liberty with personal participation in the founding and public acceptance of a new faith in independent Ukraine during a quarter- century (1). The attempt here is not only to describe a specific outcome, but to propose factors that offer explanation for why Ukraine is among the few Communist successor states in which new minority faiths have been relatively successful in achieving full toleration [Biddulph: 2016].*

Religious liberty has been described as the “first freedom of all freedoms” [Hertzke: 2013, 4], yet it has been noticeably unachieved globally. A 2007 Pew “Global Attitudes Survey” showed that 90% of respondents world-wide said that it was important to live in a country that enabled them to practice religion freely.

Yet a more recent Pew “Forum on Global Restrictions on Religion” found that 70% of the world population reside in countries which have high or very high restrictions on religion either from government actions or from major social

hostilities [Grim: 2013 , 86]. Religious liberty, therefore, is an almost universal human aspiration, but is one of the more unachieved rights in the world. The Soviet Union successor states have a similar record of lower achievement [Lunkin: 2013; Grim: 2013].

Keywords: toleration, religious liberty, freedom of religion, non-toleration, limited toleration, full toleration, pluralism, LDS Church, state policy.

Анотація. Стаття Говарда Біддулфа "Державна толерантність до нової релігії в пострадянському суспільстві: дослідження на прикладі досвіду святих останніх днів у незалежній Україні" поєднує авторський досвід як аналітика пострадянської політики та релігійної свободи з особистою участю у заснуванні та громадському прийнятті нової релігії в незалежній Україні протягом чверті століття (1). Це спроба не лише описати конкретний результат, а й запропонувати фактори, що дають пояснення тому, чому Україна є однією з небагатьох держав-спадкоємиць комуністичного режиму, в яких нові релігійні меншини були відносно успішними в отриманні повної толерантності [Biddulph: 2016].

Релігійна свобода була названа "першою свободою серед усіх свобод" [Hertzke: 2013, 4], проте вона була помітно недосяжна у всьому світі. "Огляд глобальних настроїв" 2007 року дослідницького центру П'ю показав, що 90% респондентів у всьому світі заявили, що важливо жити в країні, яка дозволяє їм вільно практикувати релігію. Проте нещодавній "Форум з глобальних обмежень щодо релігії" центру П'ю виявив, що 70% населення світу мешкає у країнах, які мають великі або дуже великі обмеження щодо релігії через дії урядів або через масштабні соціальні конфлікти [Grim: 2013, 86]. Отже, релігійна свобода є майже загальнолюдським прагненням, але є одним з найбільш нереалізованих прав у світі. Для держав-спадкоємиць Радянського Союзу характерна подібна слабка реалізація цього права [Lunkin: 2013; Grim: 2013 рік].

Ключові слова: толерантність, релігійна свобода, свобода релігії, нетолерантність, обмежена толерантність, повна толерантність, плюралізм, Церква Ісуса Христа святих останніх днів, державна політика.

Part One: Basic Concepts and Explanatory Factors of Religious Toleration.

As Professor Cole Durham has observed, "The litmus test of religious freedom in a society is its treatment of religious minorities" [Durham: 1995]. The boundaries which each state imposes on the acceptability or toleration of non-traditional religious beliefs and practices provide a configuration of the limits of religious liberty.

State religious toleration denotes the official recognition or sufferance by the state of the rights of individuals or groups to hold nontraditional or dissenting religious beliefs and to manifest them in religious practice. It is possible for a minority religion to achieve official toleration and yet to experience considerable intolerant opposition from powerful groups within the society.

The restriction of religious minorities can arise, therefore, from formal actions by the state or from informal opposition by major social groups [Grim: 2013; Hertzke: 2013].

It is useful to distinguish three possible perspectives of state policy toward non-traditional confessions. The first perspective may be designated as non-toleration, inasmuch as official recognition and registration are withheld, and religious participants are denied the right to publicly manifest their beliefs.

Second, *limited toleration*, denotes the granting of legal recognition and official registration by the state, but adherents are allowed significantly reduced rights to publicly manifest their beliefs (such as to engage in evangelical work, enjoy property rights, or media access) in comparison to the predominant traditional churches. Third, *full toleration*, is the granting the full right to publicly manifest the sect's teachings as well as to enjoy official legal standing [Biddulph: 2016]. Of course, *full toleration*, does not imply equality of resources, access, or power among traditional and non-traditional religious confessions within the society.

There are innumerable ways for policy makers to formally limit, deny, or extend toleration, but governments respond to nontraditional religious confessions normally in five ways: (1) by legislation (such as an act of Parliament or an amendment to the same); (2) executive decisions and interpretation of policy (such as formal announcement of legal registration of a sect or rejection of the same); (3) law enforcement actions (such as arresting or detaining participants, opening or closing premises for religious worship); (4) judicial response, (for example, court decisions, consideration of charges brought in behalf of, or against religious participants); (5) responses at provincial or local levels of government which might vary from the national level [Homer and Uzzell: 1998; Biddulph: 2016, 2-3].

Informal restrictions on nontraditional confessions are of two general types. First, individual officials and political actors may find their personal convictions to be at odds with the way in which toleration policy is being officially interpreted, leading them to apply or interpret the law variously. The establishment of religious freedom will depend not only on formal enactments of legal safeguards, but also on the emergence of a broad "culture of toleration" in which there is wide acceptance among officials of pluralism, heterodoxy, and the autonomy of religious confessions [Biddulph: 1999, 11].

Second, this broad "culture of toleration" (or non-toleration) also often includes major powerful groups in society, whose strong opposition could informally restrict the toleration of specific minorities [Howard: 2013; Hertzke: 2013]. In fact, a rigorous empirical data analysis of 143 countries by Brian Grim and Roger Finke seems to demonstrate that governmental restrictions on religious freedom of minority faiths normally originate in pre-existing opposition by major societal groups. (One such group often is the predominant church). Then, working in tandem, such major social groups and governmental agencies articulate and execute restrictive policies or actions toward religious minority groups [Grim and Finke: 2008, 5]. It is possible, however, as we shall observe in Ukraine, for some major social and religious entities to have a continuing different level of minority toleration than the adopted policy of the government.

Factors Influencing State Toleration of a New Minority Faith. In my experience, both as a scholar and as a participant in seeking acceptance of a new minority faith in Ukraine, I have observed the following factors which influence the degree to which a nation state will tolerate a new minority faith:

1) The first factor concerns *the existing religious mosaic of a given society*, whether there exists there a religious monopoly, oligopoly, or integral pluralism. The

history of religion seems to indicate that state toleration of a new minority faith is more likely where religious pluralism already prevails rather than in a society featuring religious monopoly or oligopoly. While some degree of *integral pluralism* is probably necessary, it is not a sufficient factor for religious toleration. Roman Catholics and Latter-day Saints both experienced not only major intolerance in nineteenth century United States, but at times serious social conflict with the pluralist Protestant predominant culture.

2) “*Principled Pluralism*” is the term used by Chris Seipel and Dennis Hoover to denote the ideological perspective of thinkers such as John Locke, Roger Williams, William Penn, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and some modern theorists concerned with the role of religion in social capital and civil society [cf. Seipel and Hoover: 2013, p. 322-26]. Principled pluralists agree with both the generalizations and moral imperative of the following perspective from Roger Williams (1663): “*A person who lives in a society and under a rule of law that respects his or her freedom of religious conscience will be likely to maintain feelings of loyalty to the state and to be motivated to live out religious ethics in socially responsible and constructive ways ...*” [Seipel and Hoover (eds.): 2004, p. 160]. In societies where principled pluralism becomes widely accepted as a value-system among the social and political intelligentsia, full state toleration of religious minorities will increase in response to the promotion of religious freedom by its advocates.

3) A third set of factors influencing state toleration of religious minority faiths is described by Andrew Gill as “*political and economic incentives of decision makers*” [Gill: 2013]. Such incentives involve perceived political and economic costs or benefits of specific policies which regulate or deregulate religious bodies, including the leaders’ perceptions of political stability or instability that such actions could generate.

4) The fourth and final factor involves *actions by a previously non-tolerated minority which promote trust or a positive re-evaluation by the dominant culture leading to mutual accommodation*. A classic example is the accommodation of Mormonism with the dominant Protestant culture in the United States, which was achieved after the Latter-day Saint Church discontinued plural marriage and stopped the theologically directed economic and political aspects of a “secular” Zion. This enabled the State of Utah to be admitted into the United States and Mormonism to achieve toleration [Alexander: 1995]. A current, and as yet unresolved example, is the issue of accommodation and toleration of Islam within the dominant cultures of the United States and other Western societies.

Part Two: Gorbachev as ‘Soviet Cyrus’ - Principled Pluralism of Perestroika.

[cf., H. Biddulph: 1995, *The Morning Breaks*, pp. 1, 27-35, 56].

Before 1989, approximately one-third of the earth’s population resided in countries ruled by Communist Party states whose official ideologies proclaimed the objective of freeing human consciousness completely from the “harmful delusion” of religious belief and practice. While this goal of universal atheism and the total disappearance of religious practices was never fully attained in any of these lands, the power of the state and its ruling party was utilized to greatly restrict religious liberty, and enormous resources were expended at every level of society to achieve these goals throughout much of the twentieth century.

Even the predominant Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) under the Moscow Patriarchate (MP) lost its legal standing in the 1920s, as did other minority faiths, but Stalin entered into an agreement with the ROC-MP on 4 September 1943, in which the Church

pledged to help mobilize citizens for the War Against German Fascism, in return for which it received *de facto* recognition under heavy state control of all property assets, and even under NKVD (Secret Police) direction.

Meanwhile, ideological, educational, and communications institutions remained committed to a policy of what we might call “principled secularism,” until the Gorbachev era.

Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev, the youngest member of the Politburo, was chosen by his colleagues to be General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, at a time of unprecedented deterioration of economic performance in the USSR. Together with his supporters, Gorbachev formulated a major plan for economic reform called, *Perestroika*, (“restructuring.”) *Perestroika* originally involved mainly economic measures: the decentralizing of economic decision making, the replacing of “command from above” with contracts between individual enterprises, and material incentives to encourage greater worker productivity.

Gorbachev and his associates soon came to recognize, however, that economic stagnation could not be resolved by simply decentralizing the economy and devising new incentives. Poor economic performance, he came to believe, was rooted in worker apathy caused by a feeling of “powerlessness.” This is what the early Karl Marx of 1844 had called *alienated labor* (which Marx had blamed on capitalist exploitation). Gorbachev, on the other hand, was blaming “command socialism” for worker alienation in the USSR which his previous Politburo colleague, Leonid Brezhnev, had called the society of “*advanced socialism*.” For Gorbachev, Brezhnev was horribly wrong. To achieve *advanced socialism*, *command socialism* must be replaced by “*market socialism*,” (i. e., social ownership of capital in what many western thinkers have called a “*civil society*,” in which pluralism and social autonomy predominate not only in economic, but also political, cultural and religious groups participating in the society) [cf.

Seligman: 1992; L. Diamond: 1994; Verba, et.al.:1995]. A number of these theorists have identified religious pluralism as making positive contributions to robust civil societies [Seipel and Hoover: 2013; R. Putnam: 2000; C. Schmidt: 2003].

In his discussion of the importance of *glasnost*’ (openness), *demokratizatsiya* (freedom of expression), “*the pluralism of opinions*” in all public discourse, the means for establishing legal safeguards for freedom of speech and press, and the relinquishing by the Party and the Soviet state of controls over social groups so they might become “self-managing,” Gorbachev comes across as a genuine advocate of civil society, a “principled pluralist” in the Soviet context.

Religious Reform Begins.

Like many other “principled pluralists” Gorbachev also was convinced that full toleration and freedom of religion must be established to produce a new Soviet civil society, although there is no evidence that he was a religious believer. From 1986 onward, he had experts drafting legislation for freedom of religion. This was a difficult and contentious battle between “new thinking pluralist reformers” and “traditional anti-religious secularists” armed with Lenin’s famous declaration: “*Every religious idea, every idea of god, even flirting with the idea of god, is unutterable vileness, vileness of the most dangerous kind, ‘contagion’ of the most abominable kind. Millions of sins, filthy deeds, acts of violence, and physical ‘contagions’... are far less dangerous than the subtle, spiritual idea of a god*” [V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, II, 675-76].

Gorbachev and his colleagues were more than “flirting with the idea” of fully tolerating the practice of “spiritual ideas about God.” Rather than the “vile, dangerous, or contagious” alarms of their Bolshevik founder, they were more willing to regard the wisdom of Roger Williams in his July 15, 1663 Rhode Island Charter, 250 years before Lenin, to “*hold forth* a livelie experiment, that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintaine...with full libertie in religious concernements” [quoted in Seipel and Hoover, 324].

On 29 April 1988, Gorbachev received Patriarch Pimen of the Russian Orthodox Church and other members of the Patriarchate in the Kremlin. This was the first formal meeting between party and church leaders since Stalin’s September 1943 meeting with the ROC-MP during the War Against German Fascism, described above. This time, however, the enemy to whom Church mass mobilization of their faithful was to be directed would be the powerful institutional foes of Perestroika.

The Soviet government gave material support and publicity to the grand celebration of the millennium of Orthodox Christianity in Kyiv and Moscow, June 5-16, 1988. Foreign dignitaries and the electronic and print media covering the event gave high visibility and political legitimacy, signaling the rehabilitation and full toleration of the Russian Orthodox Church as an authentic part of national Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarussian culture.

Between 1988-1990, government bodies began quietly registering local parishes of the ROC-MP, but it was at first difficult for other churches to accomplish the same objective, particularly for the Greek Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church, who had remained major underground faiths in Ukraine for most of the previous Soviet era. The Chairman of the State Council for Religious Affairs of Ukraine sought to bar other churches from registration by falsely claiming in 1989 that “in hundreds of statements, signed by tens of thousands of citizens, there are only requests to register the Orthodox Church and not other religions” [Keston News Service, 16 March 1989, pp. 8-9].

Although denied legal registration by the Ukrainian government, the Autocephalic (independent Ukrainian) Orthodox Church, suppressed by Stalin in 1930, began to openly participate again. In August 1989, the L’viv Parish of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul threw off the jurisdiction of the Russian Moscow Patriarchate and announced its adherence to the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church. A number of other Orthodox Churches in Western Ukraine followed suit, and in October 1990, the Autocephalic Church was finally officially registered.

Greek Catholic churches of Western Ukraine, who followed the authority of the Pope in Rome but with the liturgy of Eastern Byzantine Christianity, had been banned for 50 years, their buildings and parishioners handed over to the ROC. In 1989, they also began to publicly participate without official recognition. On June 18, 1990, one hundred thousand demonstrators seeking religious freedom gathered openly in Ivano-Frankivsk. Upon hearing that Gorbachev was leaving for Rome to seek accommodation with Pope John Paul II on December 1, great crowds of Catholics demonstrated in L’viv on November 26. They had already seized the Church of the Transfiguration there, transferring its authority to Rome from the ROC in Moscow. After Gorbachev’s visit with the Roman Pontiff, Myroslav Cardinal Lubachivsky, Primate of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church,

was permitted to return after 53 years of exile to lead the fully tolerated, largest Church in Western Ukraine.

Among Protestants, too, there was a growing avalanche of involvement in religious affairs. Evangelical Christian Baptists, Adventists, and a few local sects such as the *Molokans*, had existed in the Russian Empire before 1917. A few Baptists and Adventists remained legally registered even during Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign in the early 1960s, but Reform Baptists, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witnesses functioned illegally. New congregations of Baptists,

Adventists, Pentecostals, Lutherans, Methodists, and Jehovah's Witnesses were registered in Russia during 1989 and finally in Ukraine during 1990. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a Christian church, and several non-Christian groups such as the Baha'I World Faith, and the Unification Church (of Rev. Moon) were registered, first in Russia and then in Ukraine, during 1991.

The Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations.

In May 1990, after four years of discussion, sharp debate, and delay, the draft of the new "USSR Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" was read in the USSR Supreme Soviet (Parliament). This historic law was finally enacted on 26 September 1990 in Moscow, going into effect on October 9.

The new law was a major accomplishment in the legislating of freedom of conscience and religious liberty. Freedom of conscience was promulgated in full correspondence with existing international covenants. Similarly, freedom of worship, the separation of church and state, and full equality of all faiths before the law were promulgated. Religious groups were ensured the right to conduct evangelical missionary work throughout the Soviet Union, the right to own their own places of worship and other properties, including the right to import literature from abroad and to publish their own literature within the country.

They received the right to engage in charitable activity, and to provide religious education in the schools after hours as well as in their own institutions. Parents were assured the right to bring up their children in their own religious faith.

Personal income taxes of members of the clergy were made equal to that of other citizens, (13% instead of the former rate of 64 %).

The new law specifically forbade government interference in religious activities or discrimination on the basis of religious belief. It barred the government bodies from funding atheistic teaching or campaigns, as well as preventing the funding of any religious activities. The USSR renewed its adherence to all the commitments of the United Nations Charter and Helsinki Accords, and during the final months of its existence at the end of 1991, declared religious liberty to be an "inalienable right." The fifteen Union Republics were then expected to adopt similar legislation compatible with that of the USSR Supreme Soviet. The Russian Republic (RSFSR) and Ukrainian Republic Supreme Soviets both accomplished this objective during 1991, before the final collapse of the USSR on December 25th of that year.

How was it possible that an immense empire of "principled atheism," one of two world super powers, could move without major conflict from a policy of religious non-toleration in most cases, and limited toleration with heavy government restrictions for the remainder, to a sweeping policy of full toleration of all faiths in such a short period? Among the speculations circulating at the time, was one offered to me by Evangelical

Christian Baptist (ECB) Minister Medvedev in Donetsk during a visit in 1991: “Maybe, President Gorbachev was the ‘Cyrus of the Soviet people?’” Rev. Medvedev’s explanation likened Gorbachev’s toleration to the permitting the Children of Israel to return from Babylonian captivity to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, which the Bible alleges was inspired of God.

Whatever one might think about divine intervention in human affairs, Gorbachev’s toleration, in my view, measures up to the historical analogy of the Biblical Cyrus. In spite of the ultimate failure of Perestroika to successfully remake and preserve the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev may be properly portrayed as “*the Soviet Cyrus*” motivated by his own version of “principled pluralism.”

Part Three: The Era of Full Toleration and the LDS Beginnings in Ukraine.

The provisions of the USSR Law and similar Union Republic statutes allowing 1) freedom to proselyte as missionaries, 2) acquisition of meetinghouses, 3) ownership of property, 4) printing and distribution of religious literature, 5) teaching of children in the church and the home, 6) performance of charitable services, and 7) liberal visa laws for foreign workers were all helpful for the minority faiths and particularly essential for foreign based non-traditional confessions.

As previously explained, a branch [small congregation] of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon Church) was officially registered in Leningrad in 1990, and the LDS Russian National Association was approved by the Russian Ministry of Justice and announced by Vice President Rutskoi in 1991 [Biddulph: 2000, 8-9]. The Kyiv Branch of the LDS Church was officially registered by the Kyiv City Soviet on September 9, 1991, at midnight, in response to a petition this author made to Viktor Cherinko, a deputy of the City Soviet, who introduced it to the assembly [ibid., p. 10]. Two days later, Elder Boyd K. Packer and Elder Dallin H. Oaks, both of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Seventy, arrived in Kyiv to officially dedicate Ukraine to the Lord Jesus Christ. I was asked to conduct the service at the statue of Volodymyr the Great overlooking European Square in Kyiv.

During a remarkable two-year period (1989 to 1991), Communist rule collapsed in the Soviet Union and in eight other countries in east-central Europe.

Approximately 425 million people reside in this vast area from central Europe to the Pacific Ocean. This area subsequently divided into 30 separate countries, 15 of which were former Union Republics of the USSR whose formal independence began at the close of 1991. One of these countries was Ukraine.

Newly independent Ukraine and the Russian Republic (RSFSR) inherited the full toleration religious policies of the Gorbachev era, and initially continued them under the provisions of each Republic’s version of “The Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations.” This legislation, combined with official registration of a number of faiths new to Ukraine, resulted temporarily in a cordial relationship between Ukrainian officials and representatives of these nontraditional confessions.

Such friendly “full toleration” policies, when combined with the demand created by the remarkable spiritual awakening spreading among the citizenry, resulted in a veritable onslaught of foreign missionaries arriving in Ukraine and other republics of the former USSR during the period, 1990-1993. Protestant evangelists and Jehovah’s

Witnesses conducted mass rallies in stadiums with campaign style media blitzes unlike anything Ukrainians or Russians had previously experienced. Roman Catholic and Lutheran missionaries came in large numbers, as well as representatives of the Reverend Moon's Unification Church, Scientologist disciples of Ron Hubbard, Hare Krishnas, Sunni, Sufi, and Shiite Muslims, Ba ha'i World Faith, Buddhists, Hindus, Rastafarians, and apocalyptic emissaries of the Japanese Aum Association, Chimnoy and Rerikh Movement, as well as more indigenous groups such as Orthodox "Old Believers" and "The White Brotherhood" (Beloe Bratsvo) [Biddulph: 2000, 10]. As with the representatives of other confessions, the number of Latter-day Saint foreign missionaries grew significantly during the years, 1991-1993. There were eight full-time missionaries serving in Kyiv on July 1, 1991. By July 1, 1993, those numbers had grown to 140 in Ukraine, one half of which were assigned to work in the new mission in Eastern Ukraine, named the Ukraine Donetsk Mission, and the remainder retained in the Ukraine Kyiv Mission [Ibid., 10-11].

The number of baptized converts to Mormonism also grew rapidly. From a single branch of 40 members in mid-1991, church membership in Kyiv by mid-1993 had grown to nearly 2,000 baptized converts organized into sixteen branches. Each branch was presided over by a local Ukrainian lay leader called a branch president, and the sixteen branches were divided into three *okrugs (districts) each directed by a Ukrainian district president [Ibid.]*. Each local branch president was encouraged to assign every active adult member of the church to a specific "calling" involving service to others. There were also almost as many unbaptized "investigators" attending weekly worship services in each of the sixteen branches as the number of members of record.

In March 1992, approval was received to begin missionary work in Donetsk. On March 18, three young Americans and one young Canadian arrived in this hub city of the Donbas Coal Basin. They were immediately met and welcomed by local government officials, including a representative from the State Council for Religious Affairs (CRA), with whom they quickly established a cordial relationship. By July 1, 1993, when the Ukraine Donetsk Mission was officially established, there were four new branches registered in Donetsk, with one additional branch registered in nearby Gorlovka, and one as yet unregistered branch in Makayevka, with a total church membership in the Donbas of almost 375. Local Ukrainians were directing all branch religious activities. The leadership of the Donetsk City Government offered the LDS Church a beautiful visible site for a future large church to be erected, which the Church gratefully accepted [Biddulph: 1996, 63- 64].

Kharkov, the second largest city in Ukraine, received four young American missionaries at the end of September 1992. Nine months later on July 1, 1993, there were six new small branches functioning under local Ukrainian leaders with 370 members of record in Kharkov. Unfortunately, the local government had not officially registered the LDS Church in Kharkov, as the policy of the Ukrainian CRA began to change significantly from toleration to heavier restrictions. In 1994, a court case was utilized by the LDS Church to force the government to accept full registration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Kharkov, while the opponents of toleration were implementing other measures to restrict foreign missionaries to Ukraine, as will be shown below.

Part Four: Restrictive Legislation and “Limited Toleration” (1993-1995).

The dramatic rise of religious movements new to the people of the former Soviet Republics, supported by an unprecedented foreign missionary force, was bound to produce a major negative response from the predominant traditional confessions. The political power of Russian and Ukrainian Orthodoxy, in turn, generated negative state responses to the newer religious movements, which would have a significant effect on the work of LDS missionaries.

The predominant Orthodox Churches of both the Moscow and Kyiv Patriarchates viewed the missionary work of the indigenous and foreign based nontraditional confessions as a direct attack and competition with them for the souls of their own flocks, in spite of the fact that only 30 % of former Soviet citizens considered themselves to be even nominal believers in 1990 (Filipovich, 1999: 3).

Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad (the second most prominent Russian Orthodox cleric of that time) accused both the Catholic and the nontraditional faiths of being “*spiritual colonizers who by fair means or foul try to tear the people away from the church*” (Witte, 1998: 5). Patriarch Aleksii II responded in a similar accusation: “*It is our obligation to battle for people’s souls by all legal means available ... We must react to the continuing intensive proselyting activity by Catholic circles and various Protestant groups ... to the growing activity of sects, including those of a totalitarian nature ... for it is largely our own brothers and sisters who fall victim to these sects*” (Ibid., 1). Natan Lerner has perceptively described the resulting conflict over the missionary activity of the nontraditional religions: “*What constitutes the sacred duty of evangelization for one group is seen by another group as improper proselyting ... Some groups would consider a given act as a normal exercise of freedom of expression ... while others would view the same act as an illegitimate intrusion into their group identity and a violation of their freedom of conscience*” (Ibid., 15).

Amendments to both the Russian and Ukrainian versions of “The Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations,” which were designed to significantly restrict the legitimacy and activities of nontraditional denominations were adopted in the Parliaments of both countries. The most controversial provision of the amendments to the Russian law was the requirement that a religious confession had to be certified by the local government to have existed in the territory for at least fifteen years to enjoy the rights of a “religious organization.” Otherwise they existed as unregistered “religious groups” that were denied the right to engage in missionary work, or to publish religious material, or to engage in other activities associated with registered legal status (Durham and Homer: 1998, 6; Homer and Uzzell 1998: 1-29; Gunn 1998: 1-22; Witte 1998: 1-19).

The Amendments of 23 December 1993 to the Ukrainian 1991 “Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations,” were adopted by the Verkhovna Rada and received the signature of President Leonid Kravchuk in January 1994. Unlike the legislative changes proposed in Moscow, the Ukrainian amendments did not reduce the liberties of Ukrainian citizens participating in the smaller indigenous confessions. The restrictions in the 1993 Amendments applied directly to foreign religious representatives, requiring that they serve in Ukraine only by an official invitation of a registered local religious body approved by the local responsible government entity.

Furthermore, the invited foreign missionaries could only serve in the specific location where the hosting religious body had jurisdiction (cf. consult especially Article 24, as discussed in Biddulph: 1995, 339-41).

It was evident by 1993 that President Kravchuk supported the establishment of the new Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) as the de facto state confessional church of Ukraine. To this end, the State Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) of the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers, under its Chairman Zinchenko, became the main instrument for accomplishing this objective (Plokyh: 1998, 10- 13; Kuzio: 1997, 10-12). Its actions were directed against both the Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) and other smaller confessions.

In a report to the international supervisor of our mission, dated April 20, 1993, I wrote: *“For several months we have observed a change in official attitude toward Western based religious groups. Prominent members of the intelligentsia and some political figures have made speeches and public statements objecting to the increasing evangelical activities of the so called Western churches . . . [which are] ‘attacking and subverting the flowering of Ukrainian culture’ ... My friend who holds a high position in the Ukrainian government ... has confirmed [this opinion] and expects some form of official curtailment or restriction is now politically inevitable for the government”* (Biddulph 1993: 2).

Learning ahead of time what the new December 1993 Amendments to the 1991 Law would likely be, we responded proactively before they were officially promulgated. Missionary work was opened quickly in Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk, and Simferopol with the objective of baptizing sufficient converts to officially establish a small branch in each city which would then be able to invite foreign missionaries according to the provisions of Article 24 to be proposed in the December 1993 Amendments. This was successfully accomplished. The new LDS Branches in Odessa and Simferopol were approved in November and December 1993, after successful lobbying of the local governments by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education in opposition to the Council of Religious Affairs.

The approval of the LDS Branch in Dnepropetrovsk was initially rejected by the local government which agreed with the Council for Religious Affairs in its opposition, but like the situation in Kharkov, the registration was eventually approved by judicial action after the national religious policy again began to radically change (Biddulph 1996a: 65).

The Council for Religious Affairs.(CRA) also tried to curtail LDS activity by refusing to renew the short term visas of foreign missionaries already in Ukraine, as well as rejecting visas of prospective missionaries approved by local LDS branches.

This CRA approach toward restriction was appealed to the U.S. Embassy and Ambassador, who tried unsuccessfully to intervene with the Ukrainian government. Those missionaries serving in Ukraine whose visas expired before their two-year mission completion received official notes from the U.S. Embassy to be kept with their expired visas declaring that they had applied for visa renewal and were awaiting acceptance by the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry. This action successfully deterred the police and CRA from arresting and expelling any missionaries during 1993 or 1994.

Another policy we put in place to oppose the curtailment by CRA of the number of “foreign” LDS missionaries was to invite and train Ukrainian young adult members of the Church to serve as missionaries. In every city where an LDS Branch existed, there were at

least a few of these Ukrainian “District Missionaries,” and in Kyiv there were 30 impressively trained youth, each serving 20 hours per week. Ten of these went to Odessa to replace ten American missionaries for thirty days, while the latter had to temporarily leave Ukraine to renew their visas. The Americans left 25 investigators for the Ukrainians to teach and prepare for baptism. One month later I visited them in Odessa and interviewed these investigators and 23 out of the 25 were ready and we witnessed their baptism. I was so impressed with the work of these local Ukrainian missionaries! (Biddulph 1996a: 117-19).

Three young Ukrainian Latter-day Saints were in the first few months of serving full-time two-year missions in Russia. From Kyiv, we proposed to the International Missionary Committee of the LDS Church in Salt Lake City that these Ukrainian citizens serving as full-time missionaries in Russia be reassigned to serve in Ukraine. This request was granted, helping to increase the missionary force in Ukraine.

As foreign missionaries completed their two-year missionary assignments in Ukraine, the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) blocked any replacements. To offset these losses, a number of the 30 local young Ukrainians trained as part-time missionaries accepted callings from the LDS Church to serve 18-24 months as full-time missionaries in Ukraine. During 1994-95, not only did the total number of missionaries serving remain close to the high point of 1993, but the number of new converts baptized was only slightly less than the previous rate during those two years. In addition, while foreign missionaries from Western countries were banned during this time, a few other young Mormons from Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, East Germany, Japan, and Argentina were allowed visas for missionary service in Ukraine.

It seems clear that in the case of the LDS Church, the governmental restrictions imposed for the purpose of closing out this foreign based non-traditional religious confession did not succeed during the years 1993-95. At the same time, local Ukrainian converts assumed increasingly more of the proselyting and other religious assignments in comparison to foreign missionaries, thus helping to solidify the permanence of the LDS Church in Ukraine.

Part Five: The Restoration of Religious Toleration in Ukraine: 1995-2017.

The beginning of change in Ukrainian religious policy came with the defeat of President Kravchuk by Leonid Kuchma in the runoff election of June 1994.

Kravchuk’s re-election bid had been openly endorsed by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) and its leader, Metropolitan Filaret (Denysenko), a close friend of the President. Leonid Kuchma’s base of support came from the Eastern and Southern provinces, where he appealed to the culturally Russified population who were also predominantly members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP). The UOC-MP responded by publically supporting Kuchma in the election for President.

President Kuchma acted quickly to support his main religious ally. The Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) which had supported the UOC-KP and Metropolitan Filaret was abolished by the new President. The administration of religious affairs was given to a new Ministry of Nationalities, Migration, and Cults, and put directly under the control of Vasyl Sereda, a high official strongly favoring the UOC-MP (Plokyh: 1998, 18). Until the bloody clashes of “Black Tuesday” on 18 July 1995, President Kuchma’s religious

policy, like that of his predecessor, involved choosing a de facto state confessional church, although now it was a rival body to that chosen by President Kravchuk. Continuing “limited toleration” towards the activities of foreign based religious confessions was initially signaled by President Kuchma. In an address to religious leaders on 29 July 1994, he emphasized the importance of the 1993 Amendments for “regulating foreign religious influence” (Biddulph 2000: 26).

Relations between the two large opposing Orthodox churches was “non-tolerant,” exploding into violence on “Black Tuesday.” Black Tuesday involved a confrontation between the funeral procession of UOC-Kyiv Patriarch Volodymyr and the police, who prevented his burial in the famous shrine St. Sophia in Kyiv on 18 July 1995. The government had taken no notice of Volodymyr’s death, who was regarded as a saint, not only by the Kyiv based Orthodox Church, but also by Western Ukrainian national democrats, because of his opposition to Communism during the Soviet era. The government was not about to grant the burial of Volodymyr in St. Sophia, the control over which was hotly contested between UOC-KP and UOC-MP. Therefore, a pitched battle with police troops ensued involving many casualties. Before authorities could prevent it, members of the funeral procession had dug a grave in the square facing St. Sophia and buried the body of Volodymyr.

Black Tuesday was a media and public opinion disaster for the new President and his religion policy. It induced the government to normalize relations with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate and other religious bodies in Ukraine. Vasyl Sereda, chair of Kuchma’s religious policies favoring UOC-MP, was removed, sacrificed for the purpose of accommodation between the major branches of Orthodoxy. The Ministry for Nationalities, Migration, and Cults was dissolved and replaced by a new State Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) with full representation in the Cabinet of Ministers. Anatoly Koval was appointed its first head in the latter part of 1995 (Ibid., 18-19; Biddulph: 2000, 25-26).

Kuchma’s intent after Black Tuesday was not simply accommodation, but a complete uniting of these rival branches of Pravoslavia into one Ukrainian Orthodox Church under a single Patriarchate to be located in Ukraine, and to enjoy the status of the confessional state Church of this new independent republic [Yelensky: 2017]. Since the Kyiv and Moscow Patriarchates had both sought that status individually, Kuchma hoped that he might be able to persuade these two intolerant rivals with almost identical doctrines and liturgy, to re-establish their historical unity. The big sticking point was that the Patriarchate in Moscow would no longer exercise authority over its present churches, monasteries, parishioners, and other extensive holdings in Ukraine. The UOC-MP defended the interests of its parent leadership in Moscow, and did not accept President Kuchma’s offer, in spite of his assurances that he would continue his friendly support of this Church that had helped elect him in 1994. When he later left office, Kuchma declared that the failure to bring about the reunion of the major branches of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was one of his greatest disappointments [Ibid.].

The question of whether or not there would be an official state confessional church in Ukraine or even special status for traditional faiths was finally resolved when the long awaited Constitution was promulgated in 1996. With respect to religion, the Constitution is a democratic and egalitarian document for those who hold citizenship. Article 35 does not establish a state confessional church, nor does it offer any special

status to any religious denomination. “No religion shall be recognized by the state as mandatory.” All citizens of Ukraine are guaranteed “freedom to profess or not to profess any religion, to perform alone or collectively and without constraint religious rites and ceremonial rituals, and to conduct religious activity.” Religious bodies are separated from the state and also from the school (Constitution of Ukraine: 1996, art.35). Noncitizens are not offered any of these guarantees.

In spite of a continuing lack of full inter-confessional tolerance among major, as well as smaller religious bodies, after 1995 the State Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) has generally acted in basic harmony with international conventions of religious liberty, with the important exception of the rights of noncitizens [Biddulph: 2003a and 2003b; for the nature of these conventions, cf. European Convention: 1950, art.9; Vienna Concluding Document: 1989]. In practice, however, both traditional and nontraditional faiths would now be treated by the government with acceptance and accommodation. The amended Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations as well as the Constitution, Article 35, were interpreted by the government and Verkhovna Rada so as to relax restrictions on the non-indigenous minority faiths. As a result, the restrictions of foreign missionaries for Latter-day Saints, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and other denominations were liberalized.

The Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) has remained a state committee with status in the Cabinet of Ministers. Originally the CRA was the Soviet method of administering state controls and restrictions over religious bodies. Much of its personnel had come from state security agency careers even down to the Kuchma era. Kuchma’s successor, President Yushenko, attempted unsuccessfully to abolish religious administration completely as a separate portfolio from the Cabinet of Ministers, but the CRA outlasted such attempts. Increasingly, however, religious policy expertise and agenda setting initiatives have become centered in the Parliamentary Committee of Culture and Spirituality [Yelensky: 1917].

There now seems to be a deliberate effort by the Parliamentary Committee to balance the interests of not only rival branches of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, but the western-based Greek Catholic Church, and the equally legitimate needs of the smaller non-traditional faith communities [Ibid.]. One important example of this is a law permitting conscientious objectors, who object to military service based on religious beliefs, to avoid the military draft required of others, but requiring them to perform community service. Legislation also has established the legitimacy of diplomas issued by religious educational institutions. Chaplains in military and penal institutions are allowed for all faiths desiring to participate.

This “policy balance” among faiths has become more crucial as the hostilities between Russia and Ukraine have intensified in recent years. This is because one of the major Orthodox faiths in the country is influenced by its religious leaders in Moscow, who are not supporters of Ukraine. The UOC-MP matched its prelates in Moscow in hostility to the papal visit to Ukraine, and its intolerance (even since 1995) toward the minority faiths. Unlike the other major faiths, the UOC-MP has not been perceived as supporting or defending Ukraine in the military conflicts with Russia in the Crimea and Donbas. Recently, the UOC-MP alone has come out in vehement opposition to new proposed legislation, “Parliamentary Bill, 4128,” providing permission and a democratic procedure for a local church parish to change its own religious affiliation [Ibid.]. It

seems that the government may now worry less about nontraditional minority faiths than about a major faith directed or at least strongly influenced by leaders under the control of foreign political adversaries.

One of the indicators of government toleration of religious faiths is the large universe of differing confessions which achieved legal registration in Ukraine after 1995. In the early 1990s, nine distinct religious bodies were legally registered, whereas by 2001, this number had reached 105, including a large variety of new religious movements from many Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Oriental and other tendencies (Kolodny: 2001, 124). The total number of registered religious communities reached 24,311 in 2001. The rate of registered religious bodies in comparison to the total population in Ukraine reached approximately the level of Poland, but was twice as high as Belarus and four times as high as in the Russian Federation (Kolodny: 2001, 124).

There have been a few actions by regional or local officials to prevent registration of specific new religious movements, but such actions seem to have contradicted the policy of the national government, because these groups were registered without difficulty in other regions of Ukraine (Biddulph 2003a). Only one or two applicants seem to have been rejected by national action.

A second indicator of government toleration (or the lack thereof) is state action to deregister or penalize religious groups. There have been no such actions since the encounter of state security organs with “Beloe Bratstvo” in 1993. That group was deregistered because they were believed to be involved in actions that violated national security.

A third indicator of toleration is the positive relations which the national government has established with all registered traditional and nontraditional confessions. The grievances of some religious bodies against actions of the State Council for Religious Affairs in the past, such as Latter-day Saints and Jehovah’s Witnesses, were ameliorated after 1995 (Biddulph: 2000, 27). The State Council has been a patient, persistent mediator in trying to resolve conflicts, to treat each side with respect, and to foster tolerant relations among differing religious communities. Some religious property issues remain unresolved, but considerable progress has been made in accomplishing this objective.

The present government’s most important achievement has been its respect for the liberty of minority faiths, in spite of the opposition of some political and religious forces in the country. The mediation role of the government and full toleration policy toward nontraditional confessions did not change during the brief authoritarian interlude of the Yanukovych presidency, which was brought to an end in 2014 by the mass opposition at Kyiv’s large public square called Maidan and the fleeing of the President to Putin’s Russia.

Part Six: Factors Explaining Current Ukrainian State Religious Policy.

The record of post-Soviet Ukraine on economic reform, state control of corruption, political democratization, and general human rights, has not been impressive in comparison to other post-communist states [D’Anieri, et. al.:1999, 3-6; Motyl: 1993, 31-75]. Yet at least since 1995, Ukraine has been one of a minority of former Soviet states which have consistently given liberal support to the freedom of a broad spectrum of religious orientations. Why then, has Ukraine had a more positive record on religious

liberty and full toleration of non-traditional confessions by comparison with most other new states of the former Soviet Union? Why has Ukraine had a record of relatively “full toleration” with respect to nontraditional confessions, whereas its nearby Slavic orthodox neighbors, Russia and Belarus have not? [For brief discussion of Putin’s “Yarovaya Anti-Extremism Law,” cf. Biddulph: 2016, 13; for a summary of Belarus, cf. Biddulph: 1999, 10; and 2003c].

I shall utilize the factors outlined in Part I of this paper to endeavor to explain the process of state toleration in contemporary Ukraine as it particularly applies to the case study being examined.

Increasing ‘Integral Religious Pluralism’ in Ukraine.

This refers not necessarily to the number of participants, but that the variety of religious confessions is increasing away from monopoly or oligopoly towards polyarchy, bringing greater competition and choice. As previously shown, increasing or stable religious pluralism seems historically to have been a necessary, but not sufficient, factor in the state toleration of new non-traditional confessions.

After Gorbachev opened the way for religious autonomy, two major Ukrainian underground churches that had been suppressed for decades ‘came out of the closet’ and were then registered. Several smaller denominations acted similarly and also achieved legitimacy. Even more important, the predominant Orthodox Church ruled by the Patriarchate in Moscow, Russia, split into two major churches in Ukraine after its national independence, one large branch of which established its separate Patriarchate in Kyiv. This meant that no single confession—neither Orthodox nor Greco-Catholic—would be predominant, even the largest churches would all be minorities. With the other smaller denominations even more robust than in Russia or other post-Soviet Republics, Ukraine had become an integrally pluralist society in religious terms. Nowhere else among the post-Soviet states has this occurred even close to the same degree.

While both the UOC-KP and UOC-MP helped initially to destroy full state toleration for the new non-traditional churches, their mutual competition to become the state confessional church led to serious conflict and disruption. When Kuchma tried unsuccessfully to unite them into a ruling Orthodox Church, it was apparent that state religious policy would need to recognize that religious pluralism was a fact of Ukrainian life which would require a more even-handed approach to all religions. It is also notable that the rate of new denominational registration is so much lower in post-Soviet Russia and Belarus, who are Orthodox monopolistic societies, than in independent Ukraine where Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Churches operate in a more polyarchical system. Those minority nontraditional faiths that are officially registered in Russia and Belarus, all endure heavy restrictions against proselyting, property ownership, and other activities.

Political and Economic Interests of Decision Makers.

Anthony Gill has correctly observed that “political leaders will favor policies of religious liberty when [they believe] it enhances their hold on power, enriches the nation’s economy ... and minimizes social conflict. When policymakers see religious freedom as deleterious to those social goals they will not promote it,” even where pluralism seems to naturally predominate [Gill: 2013: 109]. This provides a second factor which I believe helps to explain toleration and religious freedom in Ukraine. I will provide several major examples of how it worked in that country.

In spite of the dramatic development of religious pluralism in Ukraine during the era 1989-1994, both of Ukraine's first two Presidents sought to elevate rival Ukrainian Orthodox Churches to the top official status of the confessional state church in the election of 1994. Each of the two candidates sought and received, in turn, the official public endorsement of one of the two largest churches in Ukraine. When the intended political benefits of such policies were perceived to disastrously threaten instability and major regional cleavage in the newly independent state, as indicated by the events of Black Tuesday, President Kuchma ultimately changed policy in favor of uniting the two major Orthodox Churches into one predominant faith. When the mutual intolerance of the Moscow and Kyiv Patriarchates rendered this objective to be impossible, the political leadership retreated into the pluralist policy of "balancing the interests" of major intolerant Orthodox confessions, a large western based Greco-Catholic Church, and rising non-traditional faiths. Such a "balancing of interests" has been perfected by the Parliamentary Committee of Culture and Spirituality, whose policies have developed into a mature religious pluralism.

These events therefore show the explanatory power of both integral pluralism and also of Anthony Gill's "political incentives of decision makers" in accounting for Ukraine's policy uniqueness.

The Role of 'Principled Pluralism' in Post-Soviet Ukraine

A principled pluralist is one whose agenda is to increase or maintain religious pluralism and full religious toleration in his or her society or the world. I have known or met "principled monopolists" in contemporary Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, and Ukraine, who seem convinced that a stable or peaceful society, cultural identity, or political legitimacy require ONE acceptable or predominant religious confession in the country in which they live. I have also observed politicians and public figures in many cases that appear to me to operate according to "situational ethics," in which their "political, economic, or social interests" in a given situation determine whether or not they support greater freedom or tolerance of a particular religious group. Marxist-Leninists during the Communist era were, as we have seen, "principled secularists" both as observers and as purveyors of a moral imperative (except for Perestroika's "new thinkers").

During the Communist era, a phalanx of scholars analyzed religious bodies and behavior, with the objective of eradicating religion. In the post-Communist era, religious study has become more scientific, but has also changed in its agenda. The vast majority of scholars have become principled pluralists.

Ukraine has the most impressive phalanx of scholars of religious studies of any of the post-Soviet countries. Led by Honored Scientist of Ukraine, Doctor of Philosophy, Professor Anatoliy Kolodny as President of the Ukrainian Association of Researchers of Religion, and Professor Dr. Liudmyla Fylypovych, who heads the Philosophy and History of Religion Department of the Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences and is Director of the Center for Religious Information and Freedom (CERIF), Ukrainian religioznavstvo directs an impressive program of conferences and literature on the International conventions on religious freedom for government officials, members of Parliament, university faculties and students throughout the country. These scholars publish an impressive variety of journals and books, organize and attend international

conferences in Europe and North America, and arrange for government officials to do the same, thus exposing those involved in formulating and administering state religious policies to Western democratic ideas. A notable example of Western intellectual assistance to Ukrainian religioznavstvo is the well known International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS) at Brigham Young University (BYU), which brings scholars and government officials worldwide to its annual conferences. Ukrainian scholars and officials have been involved with BYU's ICLRS for a number of years.

Some Ukrainian scholars, such as Viktor Yelensky, have become members of Parliament, serving on the important policy making Committee on Culture and Spirituality. (Yelensky is the Deputy Chairman of that Committee). While it is difficult to measure exactly the degree of religious policy influence, it is obvious that principled pluralism exerts significant effect in Ukraine. This is obviously an important factor for explaining the correspondence of Ukrainian religious policy with the International Conventions on Religious Liberty.

The Accommodation of a Religious Minority With the Dominant Culture.

A minority faith which was previously not tolerated may achieve accommodation with the dominant culture by actions that promote cultural trust or reduce mistrust. The arrival of hordes of American foreigners - Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormon missionaries, and Evangelical Christians - produced fear or mistrust in late twentieth century Ukraine. One of the major causes of cultural mistrust of religious minorities typically has been misinformation promulgated in the media and by anti-sectarian folklore among officials and unsympathetic rival confessions. The particular buzz word by which Russian Orthodox literature characterized the non-traditional smaller groups, including the LDS, was "totalitarian sects or cults". Examples of media misinformation about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were the false allegations that: (1) Mormons are not Christians; (2) Mormon missionaries are mostly members of the American government CIA; (3) Mormon missionaries try to convert Ukrainians by falsely promising them opportunities to emigrate to North America, or to receive scholarship stipends to attend LDS Church colleges; (4) Local citizens who become Mormons promise their loyalty to the LDS Church to take precedence over their national citizenship; (5) Mormons are required to pay 10% of their income to the church, which funds are sent directly to the church headquarters in America. All of these allegations are completely false, but such misinformation produced cultural mistrust, alienating Latter-day Saints from the Ukrainian state and dominant culture.

The correcting of false information about the LDS Church was greatly aided by highly effective testimony given by specialists on religion, including the top Ukrainian authority, Professor Anatoly Kolodny, who performed this role for the government in behalf of a number of religions [Kolodny: 2010]. The role of Professors Kolodny and Lyudmyla Filipovych, and also their colleagues in the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences was immensely important in correcting false information in the Ukrainian media and governmental bodies about the LDS Church after 1993.

Another important factor in overcoming mistrust was the establishment of the Latter-day Saint National Association by 40 Ukrainian citizen branch presidents. On April 6, 1994 this national association elected as their president, Dr. Aleksandr Manzhos. Dr. Manzhos is a well-known and impressive biological scientist who was the LDS Kyiv

District President. After a number of direct negotiations and long discussions during 1995-96, Dr. Manzhos obtained the full confidence of the Council for Religious Affairs [Biddulph: 1996a, 65].

A final important means of overcoming mistrust was the decision at the international Church Headquarters to create a new “stake of zion” in Kyiv, the first in Eastern Europe, Eurasia, or the former Soviet Union. This meant that the Church in Kyiv would no longer be directed by an American or European “Mission President,” but by a totally Ukrainian Stake Presidency and High Council, with Ukrainian Bishops presiding over every congregation and a Ukrainian Patriarch.

The charge that the LDS Church in Kyiv was governed by “foreign nationals,” was no longer credible. In June 1994 the “Kyiv Ukraine Stake” was organized by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, with Dr. Volodymyr Kanchenko, of Kyiv, sustained by the Church membership as Stake President. Meanwhile, Dr. Aleksandr Manzhos was appointed as the first LDS Ukrainian citizen to become a “Mission President,” presiding over the eastern Ukraine Mission, with headquarters in Donetsk, Ukraine.

Achievement of Full Toleration by a Minority Faith in Ukraine

That the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has achieved full toleration by the Ukrainian State is symbolized by the approval and building of the Kyiv Ukraine LDS Temple. Regular public religious services and activities are conducted in “chapels” erected for “wards” (full size congregations) and “branches” (smaller congregational units). Temples, however are more elaborate edifices, open only to church members who hold “recommends” from their local bishop testifying to their current worthiness as fully participating Latter-day Saints. Temples are “the House of the Lord,” where the most sacred ordinances of the faith are performed. While there are more than 30,000 congregations and 3,000 regional (stakes) in the world, there are approximately only 150 temples in the world. The beautiful, ornate Kyiv Temple is the 134th in the world, the only LDS temple in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, or in all of Eurasia, serving Latter-day Saints in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, and Armenia, while also being visited by Latter-day Saints from Turkey, Poland and the three Baltic States. The Kyiv Stake is the host for Latter-day Saints in this vast area who make regular visits to perform temple marriages and other higher ordinances for both the living and their deceased ancestors.

The LDS Kyiv Temple, which has won several national awards for its stunning architecture, sits prominently on a 12.35 acre site in the southwest area of Kyiv. It took nine years for government and church approval, but groundbreaking commenced on June 23, 2007. It was completed in August 2010 and dedicated by international President of the Church, Thomas S. Monson, of Salt Lake City, Utah on August 29, 2010. Delegations from the nine countries served by the temple and an international delegation from Salt Lake City, Utah and the government of Ukraine participated in the several day celebration, attesting to the full state toleration of the Church.

My wife, Laurel, and I attended the Gala Concert in Kyiv’s grand National Opera Theater on September 17, 2016, in which a full house of Kyiv Latter-day Saints celebrated 25 years since the beginning of the LDS Church in Ukraine at the Statue of Volodymyr the Great overlooking the city. In addition to beautiful music, three individuals addressed this vast throng at the National Opera House - Elder Bruce D.

Porter, LDS international Area President; Dr. Lyudmyla Filypovych, Director of Religious Studies of Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences; and Mr. Andriy Yurash, Director of the Ukraine Government Department of Religion and Nationalities. To thunderous applause from this large assembly, Mr. Yurash declared:

“Ukraine celebrates the 25th Anniversary of its independence, and at the same time, there is another great anniversary – 25 years of the development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In my mind, these two anniversaries are bound together, creating an unusual unity. We can hardly imagine this Church without Ukraine. We cannot imagine Ukrainian religious life without the LDS Church. It is not just a simple coincidence; it is an important and symbolic coincidence that allows the establishment of freedom, liberty, and opportunity for every person and every religious organization to realize itself” [Pokhilko and Laurel C. Biddulph: 2016, 14].

CONCLUSION

This is not to confidently predict that religious freedom for traditional and nontraditional religions is secure in Ukraine’s future. Ukraine has not yet become a culture of harmonious religious denominationalism in which each group accepts and respects the rights of others. There are still powerful political forces that might try to hitch the Ukrainian “national carriage” to the “race horse” of an officially established or predominant religion. It appears, however, that Ukrainian policy makers are now wise enough to continue to resist that siren call, realizing that “national renaissance” is fully consistent with religious pluralism and for the freedom of all confessions. They now realize that existing “balanced” religious policies will be more likely to ensure the safety and stability of the Ukrainian “national carriage” than the alternative.

More than any other post-Soviet society, Ukraine is now a country of “integral religious pluralism” with a predominant ideology of “principled pluralism” that accepts the concepts of religious freedom enunciated by John Locke, Roger Williams, and Thomas Jefferson. The gravest danger of changing this scenario is in the Russian military intervention in Eastern Ukraine. In this conflict, churches have been seized, including LDS buildings, with many parishioners, including several hundred Latter-day Saints, driven out of the Donbas, and others establishing underground “house churches.” The nation of independent Ukraine continues unitedly to resist this invasion of their country and to seek international support in the conflict. Where Ukrainian sovereignty prevails, the toleration of nontraditional faiths is likely to continue.

CITED SOURCES:

1 This study combines the experiences of political analysis with personal participation in the establishment of the state toleration of a new religious faith in Ukraine. The author holds a Ph.D. degree in Government and a Certificate of Specialization from the Russian and East European Institute of Indiana University in Bloomington. As an analyst of Soviet politics at Indiana University (1959-62), Rutgers University (1962-69), and University of Victoria (Canada) (1969-1991), he conducted research visits to Ukraine, Russia, and other venues in the USSR during 1961, 1976, 1979, 1984, and 1990. After academic retirement, he lived in Kyiv and independent Ukraine from 1991-94, presiding over the founding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) in Ukraine and the inauguration of its foreign missionary program.

From 1999-2004 he represented Brigham Young University (BYU) as a visiting scholar in Ukraine at the Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University (TSNU) in

Kyiv, and the Religious Studies Department of Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences (UNAS). This included the directing of student 'Study Abroad' exchanges between BYU and TSNU students, and personal teaching assignments at the University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, Taras Shevchenko National University, the Ukrainian National Polytechnical University, as well as the presentation of academic papers at Religious Studies Conferences throughout Ukraine. He was chosen as the first foreign representative on the Ukraine Organizing Committee of the Center for Religious Information and Freedom (CERIF).

The author also attended the organizing of the first LDS stake in Eastern Europe (Kyiv Ukraine Stake) in 2004, and the dedication of the Kyiv LDS Temple (the first temple in Eurasia) on August 29, 2010. During 2016-17, he and his wife, Laurel, worked in Kyiv according to an agreement between the Religious Studies Department of Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences and the International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS) of Brigham Young University, participating in the 25th anniversary commemoration activities of the establishment of the LDS Church in Ukraine, as well as three national scholarly conferences commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The Biddulphs also served as ordinance workers in the Kyiv Temple. Alexander, Thomas, 1995: "Mormon Primitivism and Modernization," *The Primitive Church in Modern World*, ed. Richard Hughes, U. Illinois Press, 167-96.

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