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ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES FROM THE 16TH TO THE 21ST CENTURIES IN UKRAINE

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Abstract

The article discusses the way the creeds of Protestants are reflected in their sacred architecture on Ukrainian lands. It investigates the evolution of the architecture of Protestant churches and religious buildings in Ukraine from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century. Three periods in the formation and development of Protestantism in Ukraine are distinguished: the magisterial reformation, the classical currents of Protestantism (Calvinism, Lutheranism), and late Protestant currents (Baptism, Pentecostalism, Adventism). The article establishes that the church architecture of Protestant denominations in each of these periods was influenced by the particular teachings of the Protestants themselves, the dominant political ideology, and the mentality and tradition of the Ukrainian people. Examples from the beginnings of Protestantism in Ukraine to the present are considered. The article identifies both a diversity of styles and a lack of architectural ingenuity, which is due to the various historical conditions in which Protestantism developed in Ukraine. Emphasis is placed on the features of the architectural evolution of buildings associated with late Protestantism, that is, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Adventists. Due to the influence of Soviet ideology, the architecture of houses of worship in these denominations did not differ from residential buildings. After Ukraine acquired independence, representatives of late Protestantism returned to the construction of church buildings with mixed architectural styles. Protestant architecture, despite its heterogeneity, shares common features; the content of the service is placed above the form, the sermon is considered more important than magnificent visual decorations, which shifts the emphasis from the church as a building to the church as a meeting of people participating in the worship of God.

Keywords: Chetfalva, Protestant architecture, Protestantism, Baptism, Pentecostalism, Adventism, Lutheranism. Ukraine.

Introduction

Since sacred architecture differs from ordinary, it conveys the connection of the spiritual with the material and expresses the beliefs of believers about spiritual realities. Its study can give a better understanding of the doctrine and thinking of a particular religious tradition—in this case, Protestants in Ukraine. The arrival of Protestantism in the Ukrainian lands, for the sake of convenience, shall be divided into three chronological stages. The first stage is associated with the so-called Magisterial Reformation, which resulted in the emergence of a new branch of Christianity alongside Catholicism and Orthodoxy. The churches built by the followers of the Reformation demonstrate a shift in emphasis in worship, a different relation between the internal and external in a sacred service.

The second stage (the second half of the 18th century) was characterized by the active immigration to the lands of the present-day Ukraine of the representatives of the whole spectrum of Protestant denominations, which led, in its turn, to the strengthening of Ukrainian Protestant communities. To some extent, these churches gave birth to later branches of Protestantism, such as Baptism, Adventism, and Pentecostalism, which formed the basis for the third stage (the second half of the 19th century) in the history of the development of Protestantism. Each of these stages was characterized by certain features that related to various areas of church and religious life, including those that took place in the architecture of Protestant buildings, which we will discuss below.

The first stage began a few decades after the Reformation in Western Europe. During the period from 1560–1580, Protestantism came to the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which included a significant part of the Ukrainian lands. During these years in Ukraine there were about 500 reforming communities that professed the teachings of John Calvin. Due to the fact that Protestants paid great attention to the development of education, science, printing, and proclaimed freedom of religion, they were characterized by high social activity. At the invitation of the authorities of the time, representatives of professions from different countries of Europe settled in Ukrainian lands, in particular, from Germany, Sweden, and England.

The ancient Reformed church in the village of Chetfalva in Zakarpattia Oblast is a prime example of a mixture of Ukrainian and Hungarian cultural traditions displayed in architecture.



Fig.1. The Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, Chetfalva village, built in the 15th century

Zakarpattia as a region has a rather complicated history. It had been a part of the Kingdom of Hungary, the Princedom of Transylvania, the Austrian empire, the Austria-Hungarian monarchy and Czechoslovakia. From 1944 onwards, the village of Chetfalva as well as Zakarpattia has been a part of Ukraine.

The church in Chetfalva was built in the 15th century. During the Reformation, it became the property of the Reformed (Calvinist) Church and remains as such today. A wooden bell tower (30 m), which bear strong resemblance with Czech and German defence towers, was added in 1753 as a part of the renovation work¹.

The wooden ceiling of the church displays cultural synthesis at its best. The ceiling is divided into 60 coffers (sunken panels of rectangular shape), which are richly decorated with painted floral motives. All painting were done in 1753 (in the nave) and in 1773 (in the altar).

¹ Поп, И. и Поп, Д. *В горах и долинах Закарпаття*. Москва: Искусство, 1971. С. 71.



Fig. 2. The painting in the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, village Chetfalva nave 1753

We also know the master who had done the reconstruction of ceiling: one can still read his name—Ferenc Sandor—in one of the coffers. A plane as a symbol of his craft is painted right after his name. Unfortunately, the painter chose to remain anonymous.



Fig. 3. Coffer (caisson) with the name of the master: Ferenc Sandor

Grygoriy Logvin, the well-known Ukrainian local historian of Zakarapattia, rightly said: “These paintings are not only a unique example of monumental decorative art, but an evidence of the artistic exchange between Ukrainian and Hungarian painting.”² These paintings, indeed, are quite uncommon for Calvinist churches and, therefore, hint at the strong influence of the Ukrainian popular culture; they have strong affinities with Ukrainian ornaments from the Western and the Central regions of Ukraine. Other scholars also pointed to these paintings and remarked that the ornaments in each coffer had independent compositions from one another. The whole ceiling painting they asserted resembled “a gigantic Ukrainian *plachta*” (an element of the Ukrainian national women’s costume). At the same time, one can easily find analogues for the ceiling ornaments in the decorations of the typical Ukrainian country houses (*khaty*) or the household utensils such as *mysnyky* (kind of a coaster), *skryni* (chests), plates etc.³ The ornaments were also described as “done in the national style against

² Логвин, Г. *Украинские Карпаты*. Москва: Искусство, 1973. С. 123.

³ Логвин, Г. *Украинские Карпаты*. Москва: Искусство, 1973. С. 122-126.

the white, black and ochre red background” and compared to “a parti-coloured carpet woven by the local needlewomen.”⁴ As Logvin summed up: “Chetfalva is a Hungarian village on the Ukrainian territory, therefore, all cultural contacts and exchanges between Ukrainians and Hungarians were natural.”⁵

Lutheranism is one of the earliest denominations to gain popularity in Ukraine. It is much more liberal in the matter of architecture and church decoration when compared with the Reformed Church. Some of the Lutheran churches preserved the episcopacy, two sacraments are recognized, baptism and communion, in the churches there is church painting, the image of the cross and frescoes, but they do not represent sacred meaning (say, an icon is just an illustration, and not an object of worship or a kind of “window,” a guide to the afterlife). However, as in most Protestant churches, the sermon plays a central role in liturgical practice. Today in Ukraine, Lutheranism is represented by three main faiths: the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Swedish Lutheran Church.

The term “church” or “pick” is usually used to designate Lutheran ritual constructions. The original German meaning is *Kirche* [church], both the community and the building, without any confessional color. The German word “*kirche*,” the same as the Dutch “*kerk*,” the Scottish “*kirk*,” the English “*church*,” and, accordingly, the Russian “church,” in accordance with the Greek word “Κυριακή” (*kuriake*)—translated “Lord’s.”

Architects of Lutheran churches usually drew inspiration from different historical styles: Pseudo-Romanesque, Neo-Gothic, Neo-Classicism, Renaissance, Baroque or Art Nouveau. One can distinguish three main types of buildings that are traditionally distinguished: a cathedral, a church, and a chapel. The cathedral is usually referred to as a rather large church building, where the bishop's chair is located (with the episcopal system of the church structure). The cathedral also refers to the buildings where this department was once located.

Traditionally built churches are characterized by dividing the building into parts, which are common for Christian religious buildings. Currently, in the construction of the church in the Art Nouveau style, such a division may be absent. However, the arrangement of buildings cannot be an obstacle to worship in them. The narthex, as a rule, is used for auxiliary church needs. For example, there could be spaces for the servants or parochial groups, a library, a changing room, etc. As a rule, one or two towers (they quite often functioned as bell towers) were constructed above the narthex.

⁴ Поп, И. и Поп, Д. *В горах и долинах Закарпаття*. Москва: Искусство, 1971. С. 71.

⁵ Логвин, Г. *Украинские Карпаты*. Москва: Искусство, 1973. С. 123.

Choir is the space that is usually located above the entrance to the main room, where the musical instrument, the organ, is placed. The nave is, as a rule, the bulk of the building. In this section are seats for parishioners. These can be special benches or pews, in which one can kneel without leaving, or ordinary chairs. The arrangement of church furniture is not dogmatic; however, if processions take place in the church, a passage is supposed to be opposite the altar. Small chapels may not have such a passage.

The transept is a transverse nave that separates the main nave from the altar. It is presented mainly in medieval buildings. In most Lutheran churches the altar is facing the west; however, in Ukraine, we encounter cases where the location of the altar itself does not coincide with the generally accepted norm. Most likely, this was due to the mentality of Ukrainized Germans, who perhaps did not know the general norms for the construction of Lutheran churches. It is also possible that some places did not allow these norms to be fully implemented due to spatial availability.

If the building is not oriented from west to east, then the altar is called the liturgical east. There may be a lift on which the altar is located. On the altar there is a cross or crucifix and liturgical objects. In the stained-glass part, a picture (or stained-glass window) depicting events from the gospel or a simple cross can be located. In modern church buildings there may be a picture of nature or (if there is a beautiful landscape behind the altar) a simple window.

However, in the late 17th to early 18th century there was a decline in Protestantism in Ukraine. One significant reason was the military operations on these lands, and their consequence was a cultural and economic recession. The offensive of the Roman Catholic Church, which was trying to restore its dominant position in the Commonwealth, also had a significant influence. On the other hand, in Eastern Ukraine Protestantism was subjected to pressure from the Russian Orthodox Church, which in the 1680s annexed Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

The second stage of the arrival of Protestantism in Ukraine began in the second half of the 18th century. At this time, at the invitation of the Government of the Russian Empire, foreign immigrants began to come to develop the lands of southern Ukraine reclaimed from the Crimean Khanate in order to develop the mining and processing industries and engineering. From the second half of the 19th century foreign engineers were invited to Ukraine, among whom were representatives of various branches of Protestantism. Due to the influence of these immigrants, the ideas of Protestantism began to spread among Ukrainians who worked in factories and mines. An example of a Protestant building of this period is a Lutheran church,

which seats 520, in Dunaevtsy, built in 1866, and Kamenetz-Podolsk, built in 1901, which seats 150.



Fig. 4. Church in Kamenetz-Podolsky, 1901



Fig. 5. Church in Dunaevtsy, 1866.

In addition, in 1885, the Swedish St. Michael's Church was built and consecrated in the village of Zmievka in the Kherson region. Before this, Prince Gregory Potemkin allocated a wooden building to the immigrants from Sweden for worship. However, it burned down, which was the reason for the construction of a new building.



Fig. 6. Swedish-Lutheran church, the village of Zmievka, built in 1885

In 1827, in Odessa, the construction of the first German Evangelical Lutheran church was completed, designed by the Italian architect Franz Karlovich Boffo. The church was built in 1812 when Odessa became seat of the Lutheran bishop (superintendent) under whose jurisdiction were South and Eastern Ukraine. After the establishment of the bishop's seat, the German community asked the city council to provide the space for the construction of the new church. The city council acceded to the request. The Tsarist government, German colonists and private patrons sponsored the construction works.⁶ The first cornerstone was laid in 1824 and the construction works were completed in 1827.

The church was built in the Neo-Classical style with Gothic and Romanesque decorative elements typical for the eclecticism of the end of the 19th century. The foundation of the church is made of limestone slabs, the walls are blocks of cellular limestone; a hall type building with a faceted apse in the southwest and a five-tier lancet bell tower in the northeast. The southern and western corners of the building are adjoined by square, four-tier towers, which are completed in the form of tents. The walls are fortified with buttresses. The building had a 6-column portico with a tented bell tower and was made in Neo-Classical style.



Fig. 7. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul in Odessa, (after 1850)

This church was reconstructed between 1895 and 1897, which was the fastest construction of a new church. Unlike the old building, built in a strictly classical style, the architect K. Scheurambrandt used the features of the Gothic and Romanesque styles in the new project. The new church building was given special beauty by the 5-tier main tower of the bell

⁶ https://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/history_culture/history/stpaul/historyger.html.

tower, almost 50 meters high, decorated with rich decor and beautiful architectural composition, which, thanks to its favorable location on the highest point of the central city plateau, dominated all the buildings of the port city.



Fig. 8. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul, the city of Odessa, modern look

Finally, we would like to point that German architects did all construction and renovation works. It resulted in a church built without pronounced Ukrainian national character. However, the blocks of stones interleave with brickwork, which divide the Gothic vertical into parts. It alludes to building principles and aesthetics of the Byzantine churches typical for the Kyivan Rus period. One can mention as examples the St. Sophia cathedral in Kyiv or St. John the Baptist Orthodox church in the centre of Kerch built in the same Byzantine technique of the mixed masonry of blocks of stones and plinth (*opus mixtum*). Maybe the need to address ancient building techniques can be explained by the necessity to highlight the ancient character of Lutheranism itself. The most significant for us is the combination of Western and Eastern traditions: of the Gothic style, characteristic for Germany, and the Byzantine style, typical for medieval Ukraine.



Fig. 9. Neo-Gothic church walls divided into layers by the brickwork. St. Paul Lutheran Church in Odessa



Fig. 10. St. John the Baptist Church in Kerch, the 8th - 11th century, Ukraine

One cannot ignore the Lutheran church in Lutsk, which was built in 1907. Today, this church building is on loan and used by the local community of the Church of Evangelical Christian Baptists. The building was erected in a neo-Gothic brick style, not plastered. For the face masonry of the walls, the builders used a high-quality yellow clinker brick measuring 27x13x7 cm from the mechanized brick factory "Lucian" of the local manufacturer A. Gliklikh. For exterior decoration, differently profiled bricks were used. In the internal masonry of the walls, the brick of the former Carmelite church was partially used, the foundations of which were used to build a new church. The structure has a high bell tower above the entrance, although there are no bells. The internal layout of the church is traditional for Lutheran churches. The inner space has the following parts: narthex, choirs, nave, and apse. In the apse, on the altar site, there is a stage for the choir, to the left of which a preaching pulpit is located on a special elevation. The body, which was mounted in 1907, is not in the church today.

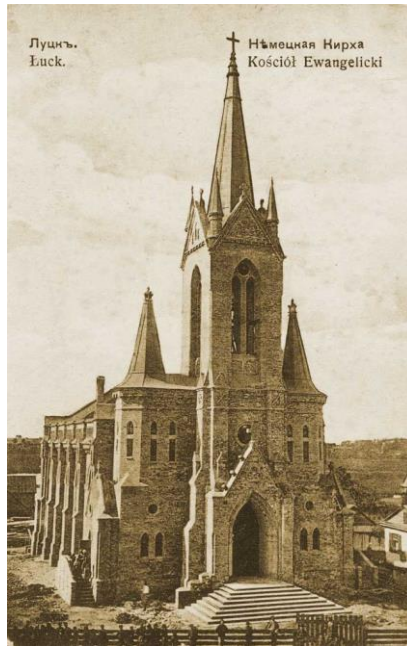


Fig.11. Lutheran church, the city of Lutsk, built in 1907

Externally, the entrance has a promising lancet portal, which ends with a steep pediment. The sacristy and the sexton are attached to the west-oriented apse. Upward growth of peaked volumes is observed. The windows have lancet endings, the nave and the apse are supported by buttresses with the blind arcade. A tall 24-meter spire of the church completes the vertical composition, supporting smaller side spires located above the narthex.⁷

The Kirche occupies an important place in the compositional completeness of the square in front of it and Cathedral Street. It is also the extreme western architectural object of the Lutsk Historical and Cultural Reserve, on the opposite eastern end of which is the Lutsk Castle. The high bell tower and the steeple of the church play an important aesthetic role in the general panorama of the Old Town. The construction of the Lutheran church in Nikolaev began in 1849. The author of the construction project was the English architect Charles Ackroyd, and the project was approved by the Russian emperor Nicholas I.

⁷ Гуцул, И. “Христианская символика в сакральной архитектуре протестантов Украины – визуальное выражение духовности верующих”. *Богословские размышления (Спецвыпуск “Реформация: восточноевропейские измерения”)*, 17: 327–345, 2016.



Fig. 12. Lutheran church, the city of Nikolaev, built in 1849

By that time, neo-Gothic dominated the cultic architecture. This direction was taken as the basis for construction, although the architect also used the Anglo-Gothic style, which was unknown in southern Ukraine. The church is rectangular with a slightly protruding vestibule, the architectural decisions are made in strict forms. Entrances to the vestibule as well as windows have lancet arches characteristic of Gothic architecture. One can also notice vertical pseudo-buttresses between the windows. The building is oriented to the northeast. The church attracts attention with the originality and grace of its architecture and thus differs sharply from the bulky heavy Lutheran churches of the south of the empire, built on the model of the Odessa church in 1827.

The Lutheran church in Chernivtsi began to be erected in 1847. Its construction lasted only two years. They consecrated the new Evangelical Lutheran church on September 30, 1849. Today this building is located at 20 Lozovskaya Street and has a very modest appearance. But it is worth recalling in more detail, since it was the first stone building on this street, which at that time was called Episcopal.



Fig. 13. Lutheran church, the city of Chernivtsi, built in 1849

The construction of the church in the so-called “Theresian style” was a typical Protestant worship building at time of construction, boasting an elongated building, large bright windows, and a clock tower. It was 18 meters long, 7 meters wide and 6 meters high. The clock tower rose directly above the entrance. Its copper crown was decorated with gilding, and the temple bath was covered with a tin plaque. It had two entrances; stone steps led to the front door, and the entrance itself had double oak doors. To the side, through single doors, climbed a wooden staircase. Through the front door, parishioners walked into the nave, whose floor was wooden. There was an organ with a choir in the church, which were preceded by wooden stairs from the hall. Four stone columns supported the choir. The ceiling of the pickaxe was ornamented, the walls had a more ascetic appearance. Lutherans, like most Protestants, lack icons; the only ornamental permitted is a crucifix or cross. The daylight in the picks came through ten semicircular windows, glazed partly with ordinary and partly with colored glass. From the nave, four wooden steps led to the altar, which was illuminated by three windows. There, behind the glass doors, was a room for baptizing children, one of the two sacraments recognized by Lutherans.⁸

The third stage of the entry of Protestantism into Ukraine is less related to the classical Protestant lines—Lutheranism (Evangelical Church) and Calvinism (Reformed Church), but to the later Protestant movements—Baptism, Adventism, and Pentecostalism. Representatives of these denominations appeared on the territory of the Russian Empire and, in particular, Ukraine in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, they were persecuted until the famous Manifesto of Emperor Nicholas II of October 17, 1905. The manifesto, among other

⁸ Козменко, М. 2018. Исторична розвідка. Лютеранська кірха. *Інформаційне агентство АСС*. <https://acc.cv.ua/news/chernivtsi/istorichna-rozvidka-lyuteranska-kirha-571>. Accessed 08/04/2020.

things, proclaimed and conferred political rights and freedoms, such as freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and inviolability of the individual.⁹ This document for a while provided Protestant denominations in tsarist Russia with somewhat better legal conditions for existence. After the Bolshevik coup in 1917, the atheist Soviet government announced the campaign against religion. However, the outbreak of the Civil War (1917 – 1922) and economic issues prevented the implementation of the idea of the atheistic state. Therefore, the Protestant churches for a long time had not experienced the pressure of authorities.

However, in the 1930s, the situation changed dramatically and all Protestant denominations in the USSR, regardless of the direction of dogma, were subjected to total persecution. A significant number of clergy were sent to Siberia, tortured in camps and prisons. Any religious activity was prohibited. For this reason, Protestants had almost no opportunity to build houses of worship.

After the World War II, when there was a certain weakening of religious persecution; Protestants were already able to build church buildings, but with strictly regulated sizes, and a simplified exterior and interior. That is why the architecture of the houses of prayer of this period gives the impression of residential houses or public secular institutions typical for the time. An example of such structures is the prayer house of evangelical Baptist Christians in the village of Nedoboevtsy, the Adventist prayer house in the city of Krivoy Rog, as well as one of the oldest prayer buildings of the Baptists and Evangelical Christians (Pentecostals) of Ukraine built in the village of Chovnitsa, Volyn Region.



⁹ Высочайший манифест об усовершенствовании государственного порядка 17(30).10.1905. 100 главных документов Российской империи. *100 главных документов Российской империи*. <http://doc.histrf.ru/20/vysochayshiy-manifest-ob-usovershenstvovanii-gosudarstvennogo-poryadka/> Accessed 01/04/2020.

Fig. 14. The house of prayer of Evangelical Christians Baptists, the village of Nedoboevtsy, built in the 1920s



Fig. 15. Seventh-day Adventist Prayer House, Krivoy Rog, built in 1993



Fig. 16. The house of worship of Pentecostals and Baptists, the village of Chovnitsa, built in the early 1920s

The peculiarity of this building (Fig. 16.) is that this house belonged to the famous Ukrainian mathematician Mikhail Kravchuk. During the years of the Soviet Union, two movements held the service in this building: Baptists and Pentecostals. Moreover, it is one of the few prayer buildings in Ukraine which was always used for its intended purpose during the years of the Soviet Union and continues to be used up to this day; Other similar buildings were appropriated by the authorities from believers for various state needs.

It is worth noting that the late Protestant denominations in Ukraine in their history, until recently, were inclined to completely abandon the use of the symbolism that is inherent in the

dominant Christian denominations (Orthodox and Catholic). For comparison, classical Protestants who previously settled on the territory of Ukraine (Lutherans, Calvinists) who for the most part were emigrants from Europe, used elements of Catholicism (towers, spires) in the architecture of their religious buildings, as well as a simplified, Protestant form of the cross with four make ends. The Baptists, Adventists and other Protestants shunned any Christian symbolism and the similarity of their houses of worship with Catholic or Orthodox churches.

This trend took place precisely in the Soviet period. On the one hand, oppression of the Soviet government limited the possibility of building new houses of worship for believers and forbade the use of various architectural techniques and symbols that were characteristic of their religious buildings. On the other hand, representatives of later Protestant movements themselves opposed the pomp of their houses of worship and the installation of crosses on them. It is also important to indicate that in Soviet times, Protestants were limited in their ability to obtain higher education and did not have access to intellectual activity. That is why, both at that time and after Ukraine gained independence, when there were unlimited opportunities to build houses of worship, there was an acute shortage of domestic architects who could design attractive and original Protestant church buildings.

Thus, it was quite often that non-professional architects amongst members of the church created the design-projects for the future building for they had the proper understanding of aesthetics of a particular confession and understood the messages that the church had to convey. Although, all calculations and working plans for the big churches were authored by professional secular architects.

One should notice that the later Protestant confessions that built their churches in the independent Ukraine often relied heavily on foreign experience. However, in the late Protestant architecture of Ukraine, national cultural influence became tangible. The Protestant architecture of Ukraine, like all its artistic culture, cannot remain aloof from social and cultural transformations, since Protestants are part of the entire Ukrainian people. The use of the national language, national culture is one of the important ways to get closer to those people to whom the gospel call is directed. Only in the recent past, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Adventists began to use the cross as an element of the external design of houses of worship to indicate to Ukrainian society their belonging to Christianity. But the symbolism of its use only reminds of the torments of Christ and is not an object of worship.

Also, modern religious buildings of the late Protestants differ in the means invested in them. For example, a house of prayer in the private sector of a city or in a village may look

similar to an apartment building from the outside but is remodeled inside. This is explained by the fact that many communities buy existing homes and simply convert them to fit their needs.

If the house of worship is newly built for church purposes, then it has more differences from ordinary residential buildings, but with a small budget, it generally looks modest and concise. It is characterized by greater spaciousness, spacious rooms, and a solid facade, but it does not always have architectural decorations, such as turrets or pointed spires. Finally, with a sufficient budget to implement a large building and a striking architectural project, a Protestant church can embody in an expanded form an architectural style or an original idea. From a multi-story neo-Gothic church with pointed towers, spires and lancet windows (typical of large Adventist churches, which is explained by the desire that the building should look like a church, but not like an Orthodox church), before postmodern architectural projects, often symbolically reflecting an idea or time (characteristic of Christians of Evangelical Faith).

For example, the house of prayer “Golgotha” of the Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Lviv, 2 Skripnika St.), symbolizes by its appearance Mount Golgotha, on top of which there are three crosses (as we know from the Gospel, Christ was crucified in the middle between two robbers). The side wings of the building resemble the arms of Jesus Christ, symbolizing His love for people. The shape of the three-part building recalls the Trinity - God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



Fig. 17. Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith “Golgotha”, city of Lviv, built in 2012

The house of worship of the Philadelphia church (which means “brotherly love”) of the Evangelical Christians Pentecostals (47 Golosievskya St., Kiev) is a symbol of “New Jerusalem”—the capital of the New Land, where the saints will live according to the book of Revelation. The architecture of this house uses contrasts, as well as solutions symbolizing the “city gate,” etc.



Fig. 18. The Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith “Philadelphia,” Kiev city, built in 2000

It is also worth paying attention to the building of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which was one of the first to be erected on the anniversary of the independence of Ukraine. Similar architecture, size, color of the building and the like during the Soviet Union were never used in Protestant architecture, since most believers hid their faith and buildings from government agents. Not being able to get a higher education (because they were not a party members and pioneers) or get a job because of honoring Saturday, did not allow Adventists to inherit the experience of their American mother church. Therefore, when the building of the Left Bank Spiritual Center was erected, not all the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine were immediately able to adopt such an architectural style of a house of worship, which is also located in the center of the capital of Ukraine. The Soviet attitude was the reason for the wariness, that one needs to hide from the authorities and not get their attention once again. However, over time, focusing on the Kiev religious building in other cities of Ukraine, Adventists began to rebuild residential houses of worship into church buildings.



Fig. 19. The left-bank Seventh-day Adventist spiritual center, the city of Kiev, the building was built at the beginning of 2000

As the researchers note, in the prayer houses and churches of Ukrainian Protestants, one can notice the “rational beginning of the movement towards the functionality of these structures.”¹⁰ At the same time, the functionality of architectural projects is not always one hundred percent or full. For example, a beautiful and well-designed exterior building can be convenient for a large number of people to gather, but at the same time have poor acoustics, which leads to a not quite appreciable perception of the song and music component of the service. It is the result of the lack of experience of similar construction in Ukrainian Protestants, as mentioned above.

In general, modern Protestant construction in post-Soviet Ukraine, according to researcher N.G. Lavretsky, “provides for a creative approach, combining a mixture of styles and trends and focusing on the architectural and cultural traditions of the territory to which it belongs. Therefore, the architecture of Protestantism is diverse, it takes on the shades and colors of local building techniques, architectural styles and directions.”¹¹

Moreover, in almost all cases, heterogeneous architectural projects of Ukrainian Protestants are united by a common feature of Protestant architecture, the concept of “church as a house,” the emphasis is not on the magnificent liturgy, but on the meaningful sermon, not on the church as a building or holy place, but on the church as a community and meeting of believers who are equal to each other, including the clergyman, and have no other mediator than Jesus Christ before God.

Conclusion

Ukrainian Protestantism has a long and complicated history. Nowadays, one can still grasp how the main principles of the different Protestant denominations were reflected in the church architecture. It also differed significantly from the Orthodox one for the erection of Protestant churches was supervised by the foreign architects and sponsored by Maecenas amongst immigrants. Thus, each period in the history of Ukrainian Protestant architecture shows different tendencies, which heavily depended on the current political or ethnical situation. The church architecture flourished in the periods of the relative religious freedom (up

¹⁰ Гуцул, И. Идеи Реформации в современной сакральной архитектуре протестантов Украины. *Theological Reflections: Euro-Asian Journal of Theology*, (Спецвыпуск “Реформация 500”): 186–202, 2015.

¹¹ Гуцул, И. Идеи Реформации в современной сакральной архитектуре протестантов Украины. *Theological Reflections: Euro-Asian Journal of Theology*, (Спецвыпуск “Реформация 500”): 186–202, 2015.

to 1920s) and demonstrated how fruitful can be a mixture of ‘imported’ (Romanesque, Neo-Gothic, Neo-Classicism, Art Nouveau) and local styles. During the Soviets, the architecture was reduced to its bare minimum of insignificant buildings, which were hardly distinguishable from the regular houses.

Only after Ukraine gained its independence Protestant confessions could start looking for their architectural identity. Contemporary church buildings, thus, show the rich mixture of styles and the quest for novel and sometimes unorthodox solutions. This quest is typical for such dynamic confessions as Ukrainian Baptists, Adventists, and Pentecostals. Lutheran and Calvinists, which are less numerous in present-day Ukraine, limit themselves in most cases to existing buildings, which now became an essential part of Ukrainian cultural heritage. However, even these heterogeneous architectural projects have some common features: the idea of the church as a ‘home’ with an accent on the church as a community of believers and not on the building itself.

Summing up, we can also say that the possibility to express teaching through the architectural elements in present-day Ukraine can be regarded not only as an effort to reveal one’s religious identity to others, but also as a sign of religious freedom offered by the State.

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