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Puzynin's "The Tradition of the Gospel Christians. A Study of Their Identity and Theology during the Russian, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Periods" - Book Review

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understand each other, we always have to translate the other one who speaks to us. Explaining the concepts of encoding (coded messages) and its decoding, the author applies them to the liturgy as a process of a specific communication.

Having in mind that we live in the age of domination of media culture, the author deals with the subject of the relationship of media and the Roman Catholic Church. The question is, to which measure the Church can use contemporary media (newspaper, radio and television) in order to promulgate its faith? Media literacy is an imperative for all of us today, and consequently, also for the people active in Church life. For this reason, the author urges that the possibilities afforded by modern media should be used in a creative way, which implies not only to educate the clergy, but also that people working with the media who are also adherents of the Church, be better educated, so that they can broadcast the liturgy with the maximum efficiency for the benefit of those who watch the TV broadcast.

The book of Marijana Ajzenkol presents in a complex way the relationship of religion and modern culture in a time when religion is becoming important for the practice of people throughout the world but especially for those living in cultural regions of post-socialism and transition, such as Serbia and the rest of Eastern Europe. She shows how we can think and speak about religion with contemporary theoretical concepts, which is an imperative of the time we live in, and in which global changes take place.

Reviewed by Dr. Dubravka Djuric, professor at the School of Media and Culture, Belgrade University, Serbia.

Andrey Puzynin, *The Tradition of the Gospel Christians. A Study of Their Identity and Theology during the Russian, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Periods*. Eugene: Pickwick Publications 2011. xiii-xl, 1-313. Price 39.00 US paperback. Reviewed by Mark McCarthy.

Ever since the mid-1980s and the development of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* the state of East European historiography has been changing quite dramatically. That change only increased with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the emergence of fifteen newly independent states and the corresponding opening of formerly restricted archival and library resources. Not only were earlier historical assumptions being reevaluated, but whole new topics of research were presenting themselves as people began to realize that paths of historical development once thought to be closed were now possible again. This led people to begin to look for the historical roots of a whole host of contemporary issues including political freedom and the democratic tradition within Slavic history prior to 1917.

It is no surprise, then, that religious history of Eastern Europe has experienced a dramatic increase in interest over the past twenty years with the resurgence of Orthodox and other religious traditions. Andrey Puzynin's new monograph, *The Tradition of the Gospel Christians*, fits in quite nicely with this reexamination of Eastern Europe's past. In his work, Puzynin attempts to trace the identity and theology of the Gospel Christians from their inception in the 1870s up until the present time. The motivation for this study was an attempt to deal with a twofold crisis of identity and theology that has developed among Ukrainian Protestants in the present day.

Puzynin carries out his study in seven easily managed chapters. His first chapter deals with the birth of the movement with the arrival of the British evangelist Lord Radstock in St. Petersburg in the early 1870s. Puzynin argues Radstock must be seen as an evangelical influenced by the Plymouth Brethren and early Keswick movements. The second chapter analyzes the main publication of the Gospel Christians, their monthly magazine, *The Russian Worker*, in which one can

find both Western evangelical and Russian Orthodox influences. Chapter three examines the work of Radstock's Russian successor, V. A. Pashkov, who attempted to restore Apostolic piety and the primitive church to Russia. Chapter four covers the work of I. S. Prokhanov from 1905-1910 who was heavily influenced by the proto-fundamentalist Moody Bible Institute. Chapter five deals with Prokhanov's work from 1910-1939 in which he began to modify the historical narrative of the Gospel Christians to stress their Eastern origins in order to reestablish their Apostolic Christianity which he thought might possibly help save the West from militant atheism. Chapter six covers the developments of the Gospel Christians from 1944-2008 and their changing historical identity due to socio-political forces. It was after 1991 and the fall of the Soviet Union that their identity and theology entered into a crisis stage due to a number of factors including a lack of a strong indigenous research culture and a dramatic increase in the influence of Anglo-American fundamentalism. It is in chapter seven where Puzynin, using the insights of Alastair MacIntyre, John Howard Yoder and others, attempts to offer a solution to the crisis of present day Ukrainian Gospel Christians. Puzynin suggests using an, "evangelical program based on holist (coherentist) realist epistemology provides the necessary intellectual resources for solving the epistemological crisis of the Gospel Christians" xxxix.

Overall I was very pleased with Puzynin's work and think it will be a valuable resource in placing present day Ukrainian Protestants in an historical context. I also find his desire to alleviate a crisis of identity and theology among the Ukrainian Protestants quite admirable. On the other hand, I think his desire to engage in contemporary issues may be the source of some of my concerns with the text. Puzynin's main goal sometimes seems to be more focused with the present instead of the past. This may be understandable, however, given his academic training was as a theologian rather than as an historian. In addition, I found some aspects of the book quite frustrating. For one, the footnotes lacked critical details. Instead of giving full bibliographical information at the first citation of a text, there was only the last name, the title and a page number. In order to find the full name of the author, publisher or the date of publication you had to turn to the bibliography. Another issue I had was the arrangement of bibliography in that primary and secondary sources were listed together. I would have liked to have seen them separated to make it easier to identify one from the other. Finally, the biggest shortcoming I noticed was the lack of any type of index. This made it very difficult to find key items in the text. These concerns aside, however, I believe Puzynin has written a fine monograph that will serve scholars well.

Reviewed by Mark McCarthy, Montreat College, Montreat NC

Gregory L. Nichols, *The Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality: A Study of Ivan V. Kargel (1849-1937)*. Eugene OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011. 308pp. Reviewed by Walter Sawatsky

With the virtual invasion from the West of missionaries to the former Soviet Union starting in 1991, there also came theology teachers for staffing the newly established theological schools. One striking feature was the frequency with which such teachers seemed to assume that their particular theology, especially if they represented a Baptist denomination or seminary, was what their presumed counter parts in the Slavic world must also share. Within a few years, one point of debate that surfaced was between adherents of a strict Calvinist predestinarianism, often with the free church code phrase of 'eternal security' as short hand, and a Reformed theology associated with the Dutch theologian Arminius, that allowed for a greater role for free will of human beings in response to the divine initiative. New graduates of the schools returned to their home churches