

# FOREWORD:

The Ukrainian Free University was founded in 1921 in Vienna, Austria, and transferred in the fall of the same year to Prague, Czechoslovakia, where it received the support of that state and recognition of the scholarly world. After the disruption of World War II the University reopened in the fall of 1945 in Munich, Germany, under extremely difficult circumstances. On September 16, 1950 the Ukrainian Free University was officially recognized by the Bavarian Government and granted Charter No. XI 60710, by which all diplomas and academic degrees were given an official status and international academic recognition. During its existence as the only university in exile, the Ukrainian Free University has conferred a whole series of major academic degrees and issued some 160 volumes of scholarly works. By this contribution our university has served well the free scholarship and culture of humankind.

The author of this collection, Petro Borys Tereshkowych Bilaniuk, rich in the languages and culture of Ukraine and of all Europe, immersed in the classical and theological heritage of Christianity both East and West, was born in Zalishchyky, Ukraine, on August 4, 1932. After an 'Odyssey' through many countries, he came to Canada in September of 1949 and became a Canadian citizen on May 30, 1955. As his contribution to Ukrainian scholarship and to his new country, he obtained a Doctorate in Theology with *magna cum laude* from the University of Munich in 1961, and another Doctorate in Philosophy with *summa cum laude* from the Ukrainian Free University in 1972. Since 1962 Dr. Bilaniuk has pursued his honourable career as a professor of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto and the University of Toronto. In 1973 he also became a visiting professor of Church History at the Ukrainian Free University in Munich.

The Ukrainian Free University is proud to present the first volume of Professor Petro B.T. Bilaniuk's collected essays in English; it represents a series of diverse perspectives and interests of the author. Their common point of departure is the Eastern Christian spiritual optimism and *Weltanschauung*, which are firmly rooted in the pneumatic understanding of Sacred Scripture, the rich patristic and liturgical tradition, and rich in the live perception of the mysteries of the Christian faith and of the contemporary Christianity.

The ambient of these studies covers issues ranging from practical concerns of Christian life to ecclesiastical discipline, liturgical theology, philosophical and theological speculation, also questions pertaining to ecclesiastical history. The author uses the critical scholarly method both in his historical investigations and theological elaborations. These investigations are based on extensive and thorough academic research, and their themes engage him in the on-going dialogue of thinkers of both Eastern and Western Christian traditions. Previous to this volume, the author has also written on various theological and Church-historical subjects in Ukrainian, Latin, German and English.

The first work of the present volume is on prayer. It gives the foundation of a theological discussion concerning the intimate nature of prayer, based on Sacred Scripture and Origen, and it attempts to correct the one-sided description of prayer, which dominated Christian tradition ever since the writings of Euagrios Pontikos in the fourth century. The author describes prayer as a charisma of the Triadic God, a polylogue, and an ontological relationship. Here the author exhibits his uncompromising theocentric and anti-Pelagian orientation.

In his article on Transfiguration, we see an example of Eastern Christian liturgical theology elaborated as a theological theme encompassing the whole field of religious thought. This article is a classical example of what can be done with the incredibly rich and profound liturgical texts of the Eastern Churches.

Another central theme of Eastern Christian theology is the mystery of *theosis* or divinization. The author offers an introductory article to this extremely important theme which clearly distinguishes Eastern Christian theology from Western theology of grace.

One might wonder why an article on the Christology of Teilhard de Chardin is included in this volume dealing with Eastern Christianity. There is no doubt that Teilhard de Chardin was raised and educated in the Western Christian tradition. However, he constantly invokes the authority of the Eastern Fathers of the Church. This constitutes a major breakthrough, and is in fact an Eastern Christian mode of thought cast into a mould of evolutive *Weltanschauung*. Furthermore, the author of this volume, in analyzing Teilhard de Chardin, exhibits his Eastern Christian approach to this contemporary thinker.

'Celibacy and Eastern Tradition' is the longest investigation in this collection. It establishes the author as a very solid Church historian and researcher of the development of Christian thought and discipline. This article is very well documented and based on original sources. However, the author does not stop there. In the last part he boldly criticizes both Eastern and Western traditions and advances concrete proposals for a re-examination of contemporary thinking and discipline on celibacy and the married priesthood.

For the last two hundred years Hryhorij Skovoroda has been considered as the greatest Ukrainian philosopher and one of the greatest minds in Eastern Europe. Professor Bilaniuk challenges the all too narrow identification of Skovoroda as a philosopher and proposes the view that he was primarily a theologian firmly rooted in Sacred Scripture and and the Eastern Patristic tradition. The evidence brought forth to support this view is very substantial.

In the last article the author analyses the Ukrainian Catholic lay movement in the light of an ethnopsychology of the Ukrainian people, an academic expertise which he developed under the guidance of the professorial staff of the Ukrainian Free University during his doctoral studies. There is no doubt that his analysis will provoke academic discussion which will be welcomed in the future.

In order to limit prohibitive expenditures of this publication it was decided to adopt the method of offset reproduction of the articles as they were originally published. This method does not permit renewed editing, i.e. the inclusion of desired corrections, or some omissions, and constitutes an evident drawback. However, we felt very strongly that these studies should be collected under one cover and offered to the scholarly community at large. We hope that this valuable collection will constitute a modest contribution to the inter-Christian dialogue and ecumenical endeavors of our day. In the spirit of the Second Vatican Council we trust that this volume will stimulate Eastern Christians to rediscover their rich spiritual heritage and share it with the rest of the world.

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Rector

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