

ENCOUNTERING THE MYSTERY: ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF SERGII V. SANNIKOV ON HIS 70<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY. EDS. T. DYATLYK, O. GEYCHENKO, M. RABER, J.T. SEARLE, R. SOLOVIY. RIVNE: PP "FORMAT-A", 2020, 284 p.; ISBN 9786175153437 (Hbk.); 25.00 USD.

*Encountering the Mystery* is a *Festschrift* dedicated to Dr Sergii V. Sannikov on the occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday by a number of his former students and current colleagues. The book contains contributions in English (8 articles) Russian (4 articles) and Ukrainian (7 articles) which cover such areas as theological education, church history and Baptist theology, philosophical theology and theological methodology, as well as church and its witness. The publication of the articles in three different languages is a reflection of Sannikov's linguistic aptitude, as well as the international extent of his influence and significance. The topical range of publications attempts to showcase Sannikov's ability to bridge various.

Introductory chapter by Lev Golodetsky provides an overview of Sannikov's early life and academic career. Aspects of his later career and academic development are mentioned in several of the articles in this volume.

The first part of the volume, on Theological Education, contains the reflections of Taras Dyatlik on theological education and intergenerational continuity. Walter Sawatsky offers a historical perspective on the accomplishments of the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association, to which Sergii Sannikov gave leadership for many years. Joshua T. Searle evaluates the prospects for renewal and reform of theological education in the former Soviet Union by tracing some of the positive changes within the evangelical movement since the late 1980s.

Part II is devoted to Church History and Baptist Theology. Anthony Cross addresses the fear of sacramentalism among some Baptists and explores the language used by Baptists throughout their history to define baptism's relationship to grace, including Sergii Sannikov's holistic approach to baptism as part of the divine-human encounter. Tony Peck offers personal insights on the differences between Baptists in Eastern and Western Europe, while Mary Raber reflects on some of the same perceptions from the point of view of the 1920s, when Baptists cooperated to bring aid to famine victims in Soviet Russia. Ian Randall presents a sketch of the remarkable Scottish Bible colporteur, John Melville, who was based in Odessa from the 1840s to the 1860s. Finally, Alexei Sinichkin allows a glimpse of surprising details from a heretofore unknown congress held in 1914.

Part III addresses the issue of Philosophical Theology and Methodology. Yuri Chornomorets focuses on the theological methodology of Sergii Sannikov, characterizing it as a holistic hermeneutic that endeavours to transcend the parameters of modern rationality, but still includes its best elements. Inna Golubovych discusses Sannikov's audio series, "Theological Portraits", as part of a general interest in biography as a methodological approach to the study of the humanities and draws attention to important philosophical

and methodological implications of this approach. Sergii Holovashchenko reflects on the methodological issues involved in the collection and interpretation of archival materials related to the Evangelical Baptist movement in Ukraine. Roman Soloviy explores the critical function of the prophetic philosophy of religion by reflecting on the works of Merold Westphal and arguing that Westphal's ideas can further develop Sannikov's views on the prophetic ministry of the church as an instrument of the continued presence of Christ and as a way of proclaiming his message of justice, peace and compassion.

Part IV deals with the social witness of the church. Mykhailo Cherenkov examines Sannikov's contribution to the development of the church's mission and strategy for theological formation from four perspectives: education as mission; freedom as a foundational principle; Christian culture as a mission field; and radicalism as a form of witness. In another paper Yuri Chornomorets reflects on new forms of Christian existence within the cultural parameters of a post-industrial society that marginalizes Christian faith and advocates a movement towards a church model based on a theology of interpersonal relations. Lyudmila Fylypovych offers insightful personal impressions of her friendship with Sergii Sannikov, fitting them into the context of their collaborative scholarly contributions and emphasizing Sannikov's witness to authentic Christianity. Oleksandr Geychenko attempts to dialogue with Sergii Sannikov's ideas concerning Baptist sacramentalism, seeking to apply the signs of sacrament to the cause of church unity. In the final chapter of Part IV, Katharina and Peter Penner explain the importance of contextualized Bible commentaries and describe the challenges and rewards of producing commentaries situated in the Russian-speaking world (*Slavic Bible Commentary*), Central Asia, and Central Europe.

In addition to the articles, the volume provides the most recent bibliography of Sannikov's published works, his life's timeline and a number of photographs majority of which were published for the first time.

*Editorial Committee*