

Toward an Appropriate Missiology for Post-Soviet Evangelical Churches: Global Missiological Trends and Local Realities

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It is not popular these days to write objectively about missiology in post-Soviet countries. Churches want to hear words of encouragement about the prospects of the evangelical movement, about church growth, and high-profile mission projects. But a serious researcher, uninfluenced by temporary fads and unconcerned about his own advantage, cannot fail to see the obvious crisis of missions in evangelical churches. The current crisis has both local roots and global connections, therefore missiological discourse must take into account history, experience, and different approaches—all the components of global Christian heritage in all its diversity.

It seems strange that the evangelical churches and missions of the former USSR never formulated their own missiological paradigm. Generally this is explained by the fact that in twenty years of religious freedom they have not had time to prepare theologians and missiologists capable not only of gaining practical ministry experience, but also of putting it into the perspective of original concepts. This explanation is acceptable, although twenty years is a rather long period, and it is time to show at least initial results and signs of growth.

What is more surprising is that multitudes of Western researchers and missionaries with seminary education, who have had the opportunity to conduct research in the best Christian libraries, have not yet written any serious analytical works over the course of twenty years in the former USSR. Exceptions include Catherine Wanner's interesting articles,^[1] which ask im-



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^[1] Catherine Wanner. "Missionaries of Faith and Culture: Evangelical Encounters in Ukraine," *Slavic Review* 63(4), (2004): 732-755; Catherine Wanner. "Missionaries and Pluralism: How the Law Changed the Religious Landscape in Ukraine," in *Contemporary Ukraine on the Cultural Map of Europe*, Larisa Onyshkevych and Maria G. Rewakowicz, eds (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2009).

portant questions about the relationship between cultural and social realities in post-Soviet countries, on the one hand, and the missions activity of churches and international Christian cooperation on the other. However Wanner's optimism regarding the growth of evangelical churches in the former USSR (mass "conversion to evangelicalism") is poorly supported, as it is founded on changing socio-political conjectural situations (which will unavoidably change in favor of the national Orthodox Church) and international missions investments (which are steadily decreasing) and does not sufficiently take into account the intra-church and theological contradictions of evangelical Christians themselves.

In perusing the multitudes of international journals on missions and missiology one cannot help but ask, "Why is there Caribbean, African, and Thai missiology, but not Slavic? Why is this gap not only not filled, but not even noticed? Is it really not important to local churches in the former USSR, not interesting to Western missionaries working there, and does it really not make even normally attentive professional missiologists from Western seminaries pause for consideration?"

We are not talking about a missiology that is promoted by local or Western missionaries and is in accord with their culture

^[2] Charles H. Kraft, ed., *Appropriate Christianity* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2005), pp. 4-5. Kraft goes even farther and posits the radical non-church character of missions, which categorically avoids canonized forms and, when faced with a choice between its traditions and the interests of unchurched society will always choose the interests of non-Christians: "It would have been easier just to continue doing what is foreign, that is, remain non-incarnational. Ironically, long-practiced Western forms in mission-planted churches are usually not considered as foreign to local believers. This is because they were introduced from Europe and America when very little was understood about Incarnation as the way to evan-

and interests, but about a missiology that responds to the needs and questions of people beyond the church walls, the people at whom missions work is aimed. Of course, this missiology is not only modern and contextual, but also biblical—it can be called "appropriate Christianity," so named by Charles Kraft. In his opinion, "*Appropriate Christianity* will be a Christianity that is appropriate to the Scriptures, on the one hand, and appropriate to the people in a given cultural context, on the other."^[2] The concept of incarnation can form the basis of this kind of mission theology, as it brings together the inner world of the church and the outer world of culture, overcoming spiritual and social alienation.

Appropriate Christianity is the Good News expressed for different cultures, nations, and social groups, always specific and requiring a creative approach. *Appropriate Christianity* arises out of *appropriate missiology*—the former cannot be expressed relevantly and effectively until a church reaching out with the gospel has the latter.

It must be stipulated that we are speaking not simply about theological doctrines for missions, but about a holistic Christian worldview and the way it is expressed in the culture and social life of the people around it, and about what can be called *comprehensive contextualization*,^[3] that is, a complex, multi-faceted, developed meth-

gelize. Held as sacred, churches feel these imported forms guard the church from syncretism and provide differentiation from non-Christians... Appropriate Christianity calls for courage to minister with innovations that risk misunderstanding even disapproval from those who are entrenched in older mission styles and methods. The Incarnation of Jesus was a radical, totally unconventional event; it did not connect with the long-held tradition of the Jews about how the Messiah would appear" (Ibid., pp. 518-519).

^[3] Scott Moreau offers this understanding as an expression of the unity, complexity, and substance of missions in concrete historical conditions. He speaks not only of biblical principles, but also of interdisci-

odology. *Appropriate missiology* can become the foundation for the theory and practice of comprehensive contextualization, thanks to which society not only learns about historical Christianity in museums and archives, but first and foremost comes into contact with appropriate Christianity as a real opportunity for a wonderful life transformation.

What can be the foundation of *appropriate missiology* as a paradigm for missions in post-Soviet countries? There are at least four sources for such a foundation: biblical teaching, theology of missions, historical experience, and the particularities of the local situation. To understand these sources, we must turn to relevant concepts of leading missiologists, which bring together biblical and modern approaches and patterns. The complementary nature of biblical, theological, historical, and local conditions (in that order!) make it possible to create a relevant and *appropriate missiology* for churches in the former USSR.

1. Rights and responsibilities, principles, and models of contextualization must have a biblical basis. On top of multiple references within the text, the structure itself, the very way a biblical text is or-

ganized, encourages its study, interactive reading, and creative application for carrying out missions. In the New Testament the theology of missions is revealed not as a system of universal rules, but as a creative process of implementing eternal concepts in a world of cultural and social relativity. Missiologists see in this encouragement for their search for new models, and inspiration in their attempts to make the gospel relevant: “New Testament writings do more than give us a finished theological product. They also model for us a process of doing theology in context, of engaging their cultures and offering their audiences a fresh and fitting articulation of the good news. The contemporary church must therefore be shaped not only by what the New Testament *says* (the message), but also by what it *does* (the *process* of doing theology).”^[4]

Patterns of almost every possible approach to missions can already be found in apostolic churches. Roland Allen, in his classic works, discovered the contemporary nature of the Apostle Paul’s methods, and noted the cyclical character of missiological discourse—renewal is possible through contextualization, creative application of long-known biblical methods, all new

plinary approaches to culture: “While contextualization is anchored in the Bible, it brings to bear a number of disciplines, each of which has a distinct contribution to make. History, theology, anthropology, linguistics, communication, psychology, economics, politics... All can be invaluable in gaining a comprehensive view of local setting” (Scott Moreau, “Contextualization that is Comprehensive,” *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3 [July 2006]: 326). For evangelical Christians in post-Soviet countries, such an interdisciplinary synthesis appears as suspicious philosophizing, but it is clear that without it our understanding of missions (missiology) and our missions work will remain narrowly religious, abstract, and distant from the real lives of ordinary people.

^[4] Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament. Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), p. 296. Flemming draws attention to the fact that the New Testament text creatively brings together spiritual and everyday truths, the languages of religion and culture, which can serve as an example for modern Christians, who often strive to appear more traditional than the evangelists and apostles themselves: “We have much learn from the ways that Matthew, Luke and Paul appropriated concepts and images from their world in order to shape their audiences. Some of their language was biblical and traditional, which they recast for new circumstances. Other images were creatively drawn from everyday realities in their cultural world. Both forms of appropriation are needed today” (Ibid., p. 298).

appeals to them within the modern situation.^[5]

Study of the New Testament gives only a foundation, guidance. Missiology is not built merely on biblical quotes and does not suddenly appear only when those reference points correspond to the surrounding situation, when the world of the Bible comes into contact with the world of actual modern people. Anthropologist Paul G. Hiebert explains this well: “When we go out in missions, we find that just knowing the gospel in its original context is not enough. We must communicate that gospel to humans who live their everyday lives in worlds far different from our own.”^[6]

The contemporary nature, relevance, and the practical applicability of the gospel are guaranteed by God and are reliable, but their realization depends on how seriously missionaries and missiologists take the human context. Often in answer to questions of vision and strategy, missions leaders of evangelical churches answer that everything is written in the Bible, and apart from that they need nothing. This

can be considered, at the very least, an over-simplification. If we approach fulfilling Christ’s Great Commission responsibly, then we ought to not only memorize it and try to do *something*, but to use all of our God-given intellectual, social, cultural, and economic resources to in every way possible fulfill the mission of the *church* in the *world*, while having a good understanding of both the *church* and the *world*.

2. An advanced theology of missions sheds light on the missionary nature of the church and prospects for the service of every Christian as a missionary.

When a church loses its missions vision, its members become nominal Christians. North America and Europe even more so, are starting to be seen as a mission field. It is in this context that discussion is picking up on the *missional church* concept, with many pastors and churches concentrated on involving active youth in ministry and returning faith and missionary spirit to the young generation that has practically been lost to the church.^[7] Dan Kimball, one of the leaders of the Emergent Church move-

^[5] Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962). Here are only those innovations of the Apostle Paul that are of greatest interest to the modern church noted by Allen. First, the autonomy of the local church, giving it the right to choose its life and ministry style: “We are talking today of indigenous churches. St. Paul’s churches were indigenous churches in the proper sense of the word; and I believe that the secret of their foundation lay in his recognition of the church as a local church (as opposed to our ‘national churches’)” (Ibid., p. vii). Second, an understanding of the church not as a closed comfort zone or a Christian club, but as a strategic platform for transforming all of society: “We have often heard in modern days of concentrated missions at great centers... The seizing of strategic points implied a strategy. It is part of a plan of attack upon the whole country. His method of work was so designed that centres of intellectual and commercial activity became centres of Christian activity” (Ibid., pp. 16-17). Third, the financial independence of the local church and the responsibility of each Christian for its ministry: “It is important

that the missionary should educate the whole congregation in the principles of church finance because this is a question which touches every member directly in a very obvious way. Control of finance is in their own hands” (Ibid., p. 154).

^[6] Paul G. Hiebert. *The Gospel in Human Contexts. Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2009), p. 12.

^[7] Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church. A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 59. American missiologists see in the “missional church” an alternative to the “institutional church”: “The churches in both the United States and Canada have developed a type of functional Christendom in the form of church culture... Therefore today we find churches seeking a public voice but finding that they are no longer taken seriously. Their voice in the United States has been marginalized into a highly personalized and privatized practice of faith, while their voice in Canada has been silenced through the declining participation or nominalization of membership within the institution-

ment predicts the imminent death of churches built by Christians as protected areas for themselves: "It could be our destiny that in 30-40 years all of our recently constructed mega-church buildings which are now filled with people will end up as virtually empty tourist attractions." And he dedicates his bestseller, "to Church leaders and Christians who have enough missional courage to do whatever it takes to escape the Christian subculture and be citizens of the kingdom rather than citizens of bubble (John 17:15).^[8]"

3. *The historical missions experience of Christian churches is summed up in the phenomenon of emerging world Christianity, where global tendencies and local particularities are brought together seamlessly.* The history of missions has a rich bibliography, comprehensive periodization, and detailed characteristics of regions and eras, but the realities of globalism force us to think about the world entering a new condition (in which history and geography no longer play a large role), and of new radical challenges for missions, related to this post-historical *modus vivendi*.

al churches. These results are related to the fact that North American Christianity has evolved and been organized as denominations and Para local organizations" (Ibid., p. 60).

^[8] Dan Kimball. *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights From Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), p. 16. This interesting book perfectly illustrates the chasm between the world of the church and the world of ordinary people, and challenges Christians to have the courage to be in the world: "You might feel safe in the church world you live in, but step outside into real world and things aren't quite the same anymore" (Ibid., p. 15). At the same time the book confirms that missionaries should not simply occasionally leave the church for the world on military expeditions, but should live fully in the real world, because it is precisely there that God is living and working: "Being missional means that we understand we don't 'bring Jesus' to people but that we realize Jesus is active in culture and we join Him in what He is doing" (Ibid., p. 20).

In a world where everything is mixed up, where borders have become fluid and everything has become *too* close, traditional concepts such as mission field, canonical territory, Christian countries, unreached countries, etc., have lost their meaning.

Christians and non-Christians have ended up as neighbors in this crowded space. Missions is no longer seen as expansion, but more as mediation in cross-cultural dialogue. Of course, there is always a need to send missionaries to other countries where Christians are in the minority and in need of support, but we must note that they are in a minority even in traditionally Christian countries; therefore soon we will need to send missionaries to Europe. In answer to the question, "What is the shape of the new mission paradigm?" modern missiologists say less about pioneer missions and more about the next step in missions: "A second part is that growing number of missionaries are in-betweeners who stand between different worlds, seeking to build bridges of understanding, mediate relationships, and negotiate partnerships in ministry."^[9] In accordance with

^[9] Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts. Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2009), p. 179. Hiebert gives an objective evaluation of the past paradigm (which, incidentally, for post-Soviet churches is by no means a thing of the past, but is currently the main paradigm) thanks to which the gospel spread throughout the world: "The modern mission paradigm, developed roughly between 1700 and 1970, was characterized by 'going' from one place to another to spread the gospel. The organizing principle was geography. The flow was one way: from the West to the non-West: from the 'civilized Christian world' to the 'uncivilized pagan world.' God used the modern mission movement, with all its flaws and failures, to plant churches around the world" (Ibid., p. 177). But today religious particularities of geographic regions are being erased and it is completely unnecessary to travel great distances to meet representatives of non-Christian nations in one's "Christian country." Globalization interacts in a complex way with regional

the new paradigm of missiology, which responds to the challenge of globalization, missionaries are not warriors, and are not selling their ideas, but are instead cultural mediators—between the gospel and the world, churches and church, theology and theologies, the academy and the missions movement, changing world systems, and etc.

Thus, Christians find themselves in a multi-cultural and polyreligious world, which means that they must understand the relative character of their social forms and learn to rise above them, as the gospel has universal and cross-cultural meaning. In a world of endless religious variety Christians must once again recognize not only their unity and uniqueness in the face of militant non-Christian religions, but also their intra-Christian unity.

In a global world, for the first time a synthesis has become possible of missiological approaches from the experience of various churches, regions, and eras. In part, today we are talking about a synthesis of Catholic, Conciliar Protestant, Orthodox, Evangelical, and Pentecostal traditions, from which three main missiological approaches stand out: the first is founded on

the documents of the Vatican's II's AG and documents of Orthodox Churches (the church's mission consists in the unification and fellowship of the world around the Trinitarian God). The second is expressed in the documents of the WCC (mission focuses on liberation, concern, respect for the human being, and social evangelism as the proclamation of the Kingdom of God). The third is inspired by John Paul's II's encyclical RM and the documents of LCWE (emphasizes the centrality of Christ and the importance of sharing God's truth with humankind). Also, Evangelical missiologists speak of the Christianity-wide, non-denominational meaning of these models: "While we believe that all three approaches are valid, we also believe that only a synthesis of all three will provide the firmest foundation for the model of mission that we are proposing as the most adequate model for these first years of the twenty-first century: mission as prophetic dialogue."^[10] Dialogue assumes a denial of personal exceptionalism, isolationism, and egocentric interests. It is a new opportunity to become united in our prophetic ministry in a post-Christian world.

and local systems, and there is reason to speak not of global *or* local, but of a *global* world, where instead of the *or* there is always an *and* (and Christians, and Muslims, and Taoists, and Hare Krishnaites all find themselves next to each other and all influence society in their own way; therefore preaching exclusivity ["just us and no one else"] is becoming not just impossible, but even dangerous).

^[10] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context. A Theology of Mission for Today*. (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), p. 283-284. Bevans and Schroeder call for a reexamination of traditional views on missions, which were not mistaken, but were one-sided: "No longer can we conceive of mission in terms of church expansion or the salvation of souls; no longer can we conceive of mission as supporting the outreach of colonial powers; no longer can we understand missionary activity as providing the blessings of Western civilization to 'underdeveloped'

or 'developing' peoples and cultures... Mission is dialogue. It takes people where they are; it is open to their traditions and culture and experience; it recognizes the validity of their own religious existence and the integrity of their own religious ends. But it is *prophetic* dialogue because it calls people beyond; it calls people to conversion; it calls people to deeper and fuller truth that can only be found in communion with dialogue's Trinitarian ground" (Ibid., pp. 284-285). There is no place in dialogue for arrogance and discrimination, as there is a presumption of respect and human equality. Through dialogue positions are clarified and fleshed out; it is the place for diversity and unity in their living dialectic. But *prophetic dialogue* is unique in its missions direction, and in the fact that it cannot be a discussion between human traditions, but proclaims a universal gospel, expressed in various forms in answer to exploration and questions.

4. Regional particularities of evangelical missions in the former USSR remain little-studied as problems and are untapped as unique opportunities. I see several key components of the formation of an appropriate theology of missions for post-Soviet countries.

First, an understanding of missions requires contextualization, adherence to biblical principles, and, simultaneously, relevance to the surrounding culture. If the church creates a subculture and sets itself apart from its cultural context as a closed society, it will inescapably become formal, nominal, and institutional. For Evangelical churches of the former USSR, missions means sending missionaries as far away as possible with the goal of church expansion. But such a vision of missions does not meet with understanding and responsiveness from the surrounding society. It is imperative to think of missions not as a specific activity performed by particular people, but as a means for the church to be present in the world and participate in its fate (not only in spiritual questions, but also in political, cultural, and economic situations), as a calling, which each individual Christian can fulfill in his or her sphere and in accordance with his or her talents. The demarginalization of the church becomes an important task, a return to society and the

preaching of *appropriate Christianity* instead of narrow denominational teachings, which are incomprehensible and uninteresting to modern people. For this to happen, faithfulness to evangelical principles must^[11] be supported by a deep understanding of modern culture, and a study not only the context of the New Testament (for understanding the gospel), but also the context of today (for applying the gospel).

Second, the appropriate contextualization of the gospel in Orthodox culture remains little-studied and an unrealized opportunity. The evangelical current within Orthodoxy must be seen as an opportunity for missions, and not just an intra-denominational phenomenon. If the majority of a country's population is Orthodox, then we must think about how to help them become *evangelical Orthodox*, instead of proving to them the un-Christianness of Orthodoxy and convincing them to become evangelical Protestants. The first step towards such missions (inter-denominational and even non-denominational) could be neighborliness,^[12] the skills of which are extremely important in a multinational and multi-religious country, which unites territories and history; despite all the diversity, there are also general needs and a call to care for the good of

^[11] We use the strong word "must" (instead of "ought") in order to emphasize the extreme importance of this condition (of double faithfulness) for genuineness and effectiveness, biblical authenticity and cultural relevance. It is impossible to achieve success in only one of these two tasks—success must be achieved in both simultaneously. This is concisely described by David J. Hesselgrave: "Christian contextualization that is both authentic and effective is based on careful attention to both the biblical text and respondent cultures" (David J. Hesselgrave, "Contextualization that is Authentic and Relevant," *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol. 12, 3 (1995): 119.

^[12] Professor Robert L. Gallagher presents an

interesting conception of good neighborliness ("mateship") for Australian missionaries. He begins with an reiteration of the lack of success of imported approaches: "The Church presented Christianity in a form inappropriate for the Australian worldview" (Robert L. Gallagher. "Me and God, We'd Be Mates: Toward an Aussie Contextualized Gospel," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. Vol. 30, No. 3 (July 2006), p. 130. In addition, he calls for building bridges between the church and communities for joint work on the cultural and religious identity of society: "The churches should join with the Australian people and help to shape their cultural distinctiveness. They must work together to produce an authentic Christianity genuine to Australia" (Ibid.).

one's country as a whole. The second step could be a search for a common evangelical foundation for Christian unity, in relation to which denominational differences would be secondary. Responsibility for the historical fate of one's nation, missions calling, sincerity of faith, and faithfulness in ministry may unite Evangelical Christians and evangelical Orthodox, in other words representatives of different denominations for whom commitment to the gospel and the Great Commission is more important than commitment to one's religious affiliation.^[13]

Third, we need a Christian perspective on the history of our countries, or, one could say, a Christian philosophy of history. The evangelical movement is but a part of this history, just as a millennium of Orthodoxy in Slavic countries is also just a part, though larger than the Baptist or Pentecostal parts. What Christians in our countries need is a healing of their memory and to gather the broken pieces of their history together. The Orthodox Church and the evangelical movement confront each other as periods and historical lineages, but in the big picture they are both parts of one great history, the history of the church. Reestablishing this unity is an important task for theologians and missions historians, requiring creativity. Andrew F. Walls wrote authoritatively about this task in the context of African missions, calling missionaries to overcome historical "amnesia" and honestly answer the ques-

tions, "Who am I in relation to this society? What is my relationship as a local modern Christian to this country's past, to pre-Christian and various historical Christian traditions?" Early Christians also experienced difficulties with the past, in particular with Greek and Jewish culture, and out of these situations grew an inclusive Christian identity: "The real test of theological authenticity is the capacity to incorporate the history of Israel and God's people and to treat it as one's own."^[14] Today these problems can be a good test of our readiness to put into practice the indigenizing principle, and our ability to be a part of the history of the society surrounding us.

This is an interesting task, not only for the church as a whole, but for each Christian individually—to make peace within ourselves with parts of the past, to glue the pieces together into something whole. The past four generations of my family have been evangelical Christians, but some of them, before coming to Christ, were communists, and before 1917 were Orthodox priests. These are all parts of the larger context of my personal history, which is, unfortunately, torn into pieces by circumstances. Restoring the unity of this history means restoring my wholeness and authenticity as an individual to my ministry in this society.

There is yet another task—summing up historical experience and connecting it to the present, creating a bridge between the

^[13] Such precedents in Russia and other Orthodox countries are well-known and have been described. However conceptual theses, conclusions, and recommendations are for the most part being offered by Western authors, who, in contrast to authors from post-Soviet countries, see this not so much as an interdenominational problem as the overall future of evangelical Christianity. See John B. Toews. "Revival and Mission in Early Communist Russia (1917-1927),"

Direction, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2002), pp. 206-19; Herb and Maureen Klassen, "An Evangelical in the Russian Orthodox Church: Fr. Alexander Men (1935-1990)," *Direction*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring 1997), pp. 30-42.

^[14] Andrew F. Walls, "The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture" in Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig, eds., *Landmark Essays in Mission and World Christianity* (New York: Orbis Books, 2009), p. 145.

past and the future, so as not to be stuck in one place. This refers to prioritizing the contemporary over the past, which in Jewish tradition was expressed in the phrase, “*Halacha* on the past,” i.e., it is not the most correct methods that are considered most relevant, but those that are preferable to honored traditions, the relevance of which was certain in the past, and the irrelevance of which is certain now. These principles speak of the importance of trusting the younger generation of missionaries who have the task of reformulating eternal truths in a new context. An orientation towards the future will help preserve the dynamic of missiological discourse,^[15] expanding the horizons of ministry, while attention to modern people (living here and now, not during the time of cathedrals and scholastics) will show a real participation of the church in people’s lives instead of nostalgia for our personal canonical traditions.

Therefore, we need a historical synthesis of the experience of different generations, a synthesis of various missions paradigms, but at the same time this history should serve the contemporary world—missiology must be dynamic.

Fourth, it is important to see one’s mission work in a wider context, to overcome ethnocentric and narrow denominational views of the calling of local churches. We need not only contextualization of the authentic gospel for people of local cultures, but also the contextualization of worldwide missiology experience for missionaries from our churches. We cannot demand

of God special revelation in missiology for Slavic churches, rejecting the truths that have already been revealed to missionaries in other countries. God’s plan was that nations be given different gifts, and it is impossible to consider God’s gift alien and unnecessary when it is revealed through another. If we believe that the Christian God is Lord of history, then we must see this history as an indivisible whole. This should be a refreshing revelation for missionary churches of the former USSR, to feel themselves a part of global Christianity, to find their special place in the general history of the church and of missions.

Therefore, the future of missions in post-Soviet countries is tied to the formation/development of an appropriate, indigenous, authentic, effective, comprehensive missiological paradigm, which is based on biblical principles, opens up into a holistic theoretical system, synthesizes the historical experience of churches and various theological approaches, takes into account the local context, and is oriented towards the needs and issues of local communities. Each of these requirements is presented as necessary and, at the same time, remains little-thought-out and unfulfilled in the missionary practice of traditional evangelical churches. As it turns out, in the era of freedom the church cannot fulfill its missionary calling by remaining marginal in society. It is clear that completing new missions tasks is left to the new generation of Christian leaders, formed after the collapse of the USSR, and therefore open to changes in the churches and moved by the gran-

^[15] The above-quoted Scott Moreau emphasizes that a dynamic of continual development and openness to new experience is essential to comprehensive contextualization: “In times of radical cultural change (urbanization, acculturation, globalization) the process of contextualizing the faith will be a never-ending one, offering rich opportunity for the people

of God to be rethinking and living out their faith in light of the ways Scripture challenges them and their societies as they change” (Scott Moreau, “Contextualization that is Comprehensive,” *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3 [July 2006], 326.).

diose vision of the evangelical reformation in their countries, seeing beyond their own noses, beyond church walls and denominational interests, to the epicenter of community life and the fates of ordinary people,

there where God is working and where we can become participants in His mission, where appropriate missiology for Christians becomes appropriate Christianity for non-Christians.

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