Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:

https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology

https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb

PayPal https://paypal.me/robbradshaw

A table of contents for *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_sbet-01.php

Religion, State & Society, Vol. 33, No. 4, December 2005

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Orthodoxy and the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Electoral Campaign

ANDRIJ YURASH

Religion in Ukrainian Presidential Electoral Campaigns: 2004 Compared with 1994 and 1999

Religion in general, as well as particular religious identities, are a continuing factor in the Ukrainian electoral process. They can be taken at face value or, more often, exploited or manipulated. Ukrainian electoral campaigns over the last 15 years provide plenty of evidence of this, but the latest presidential electoral campaign of 2004 is a particularly good example. It was a mixture of traditional appeals to religion and some completely novel developments.

Most prominent among the latter was the fact that one of the competing presidential candidates, Viktor Yuschenko, claimed religious neutrality, adopting a consciously secular European respect for all religions as a matter of principle, and approaching religious issues without reference to his personal religious beliefs. I call this 'European' because of the well-known predominance in Western European societies of secularism or at least religious pluralism, which means clear separation between the religious and the social spheres. The fact that most European governments are opposed to any mention of Christianity, or any other religion, in the preamble to the EU Constitution is clear evidence of this.

An alternative approach might be called the 'American confessional' approach. Candidates articulate their own religious commitment (membership of a particular faith or a record of working with one), or else draw on religious images and use religious vocabulary in their campaigns and speeches. American presidents traditionally end their public addresses with 'God bless America!'; no one could imagine an Old World political leader doing something similar. European politicians do not parade their religious beliefs, which remain a private matter; the faith of American politicians is public knowledge (Bush was a Methodist, Kerry a Catholic) and prominent in political rhetoric, where God and religious values are invoked.

In Ukraine, players on the political scene over the last 15 years seem to have followed the American pattern: the religious faith of all the presidential candidates has been clearly evident.

In the first presidential elections in independent Ukraine in 1994 Leonid Kravchuk came out unambiguously in support of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP), founded in 1992, while Leonid Kuchma's political

ISSN 0963-7494 print; ISSN 1465-3975 online/05/040367-20 © 2005 Keston Institute
DOI: 10.1080/09637490500350868

programme included cooperation with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP). Five years later, in the next presidential campaign in 1999, Kuchma came across as more moderate in religious matters, while still working most closely with the UOC-MP; his main opponent was the communist Petro Symonenko, formally a committed atheist, who nevertheless went out of his way to convince people that his full loyalty lay with that same UOC-MP, which he saw as a vital resource for victory. The Communist Party published an apology for its violent mistreatment of religion in Soviet times, but also appealed to the Ukrainian procurator about the allegedly illegal registration of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP) in 1992.

In the two previous presidential electoral campaigns, then, the so-called 'Orthodox question' was the main religious issue. One might have expected that the same issue would once again have been central in the planning and conduct of the latest presidential electoral campaign in 2004. Unexpectedly, however, virtually throughout his campaign one of the two front-runners for president, Viktor Yuschenko, pursued the hitherto unusual policy of completely refusing to give electoral or moral preference to any of the churches, and this despite the fact that large numbers of Ukrainians associated him with support for the Kiev-centred tendency in Ukrainian Christianity (either as a conscious preference on his part or as a result of the influence of social circumstances). We should remember that while Yuschenko was prime minister (1999–2001) he helped to organise and finance the visit of Pope John Paul II to Ukraine. Yuschenko was also the only top-level Ukrainian political figure to sign a special appeal from the Ukrainian government to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios, going against the line of most of the Ukrainian political elite, asking Bartholomaios to expedite the process of investigating and recognising the canonical status of the autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox jurisdictions; this move reinvigorated the discussion of this issue which had started in 1999. However, all his most recent actions (or lack of them), particularly in the context of the electoral campaign, indicate that he has been trying to avoid committing himself publicly to any particular position as far as religion is concerned. Meanwhile Yuschenko's main opponent, Viktor Yanukovych, chose the traditional electoral course, stressing collaboration with just one religious organisation, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP). Yuschenko's staff were quite vigilant in ensuring that in the year leading up to the elections their candidate gave no cause for people to associate him with any of the churches. The electoral staff of Viktor Yanukovych, who was prime minister at the time, saw the UOC-MP as the most influential church, both in Ukraine as a whole and in the regions where most of Yanukovych's support was concentrated, and therefore as the church most likely to influence the electorate. Yanukovych had worked out a framework for cooperation with the local UOC-MP diocese when he had been head of the local government in Donets'k *oblast'*.

Yuschenko's campaign brought a new approach to deploying religious issues in electoral campaigns, then; but we should note that after a year spent scrupulously observing the new line, Yuschenko's team departed from it somewhat about a week after the first round of elections. In an attempt to rally all possible electoral resources they organised a meeting on 8 November between Yuschenko and Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan), the leader of the UOC-MP, which was officially neutral but in fact neutralising in its effect, in that its aim was to demonstrate to society at large that the church with most parishes in Ukraine was just as loyal to the opposition candidate as to the incumbent. However, neither in the course of this conversation nor subsequently did Yuschenko's staff show any signs of changing their electoral

campaign strategy, which aimed at establishing equal relations with all church structures. All the press releases following the meeting with Metropolitan Volodymyr simply stressed its constructive character and the fact that the metropolitan had given a blessing to Yuschenko (Pavlyshyn, 2004). These press releases, concerning a perfectly natural, logical and indeed predictable move at the tensest stage in the electoral contest, were neutral in tone and content, but the Yanukovych team unilaterally assumed that they were an attempt to persuade the electorate that the head of the UOC-MP had given Yuschenko a special blessing to stand for head of state.

Objectively the meeting could not possibly have borne that interpretation, which was prompted by two types of factor. First, purely political factors: opposition supporters preferred to see their leader's meeting with the metropolitan as giving church legitimation or even informal church support to the whole opposition movement, or at the very least as evidence of the multifaceted nature of the largest Orthodox Church in Ukraine; meanwhile the staff of the pro-government candidate assessed their opponents' information campaign about the meeting as a threat to the myth, and indeed the reality, that Yanukovych's team had a monopoly on the so-called 'Orthodox factor' and sole call on the authority of the UOC-MP. Second, it was clear that people simply did not understand the nature of a church blessing: a blessing by any bishop, including the head of a church, is available to anyone who expresses a desire for one and is not prevented for church reasons for receiving one. A blessing of a particular individual, even if he is a political leader, does not however imply an automatic blessing on anything that individual might do, including standing for president.

In fact, then, the meeting could not have been anything more than a routine exchange of mutual courtesies, but at this stage of heightened political awareness in society it became an exclusively political and ideological issue, since it was a meeting with the head of an influential church, cooperation with which the incumbent power had made a cornerstone of its programme. In its particular context the meeting had electoral significance since it seemed to indicate a partial shift in the policy of religious neutrality pursued by Yuschenko and his staff, but in the end it cannot be taken as any sign of a basic change in this policy, which had been in place for some time and which is certainly one of the most important phenomena in the recent developments in Ukraine.

A new line on religion among candidates for head of state, then, was one novel feature of the 2004 Ukrainian electoral campaign. Another was the fact that no previous elections, including presidential elections, had demonstrated so clearly the ideological and cultural differences within and amongst the so-called 'traditional' Ukrainian churches – differences which are the foundation and cause of confessional pluralism in Ukraine.

The Religious Element in Yanukovych's Pro-Moscow Orientation

Local Origins of the Partnership between Yanukovych and the UOC-MP

We should note that the strategic partnership between the UOC-MP and Yanukovych has quite a long history. Its general features at the national level recall the style of relations between the local secular leaders and the local church elite at regional level in Donets'k which Yanukovych initiated when he was head of the *oblast'* administration there. The Donbass model involved the local secular authorities maintaining a clear and conscious relationship with the traditional church in the region, guaranteeing its special status and supporting it financially and organisationally in all possible ways. In Donets'k *oblast'* the UOC-MP indisputably has first place among the traditional

churches, despite the visible presence and pressure of new religious organisations and Protestant churches; it has 469 religious organisations of all types. According to official statistics from the State Committee for Religious Affairs for 1 January 2004 this figure represented 39 per cent of all religious communities in the *oblast'* and 81 per cent of the total number of religious organisations for the traditional churches of the Byzantine rite, including all the other Orthodox jurisdictions and the UGCC.

This was a convincingly productive model at the level of the Donbass region, but transferring it to national level, where the church's position is different, catalysed many conflict situations and exacerbated the centrifugal tendencies among the traditional Ukrainian churches. The UOC-MP may have 81 per cent of the traditional churches' religious organisations in Donets'k *oblast'*, but at national level it has only 53 per cent (10,628 out of 19,948) (Zvit, 2005).

Why was the UOC-MP Ready to Cooperate with Yanukovych?

A very fertile line for Yanukovych to follow would obviously be to enlist the organisational and cultural potential of the UOC-MP, particularly since this church had a real popular basis and influence in society, unlike some of the other anti-oppositional tools to hand. Importantly, the UOC-MP was very ready to respond to this call for help: it was looking forward to legislative and other dividends if Yanukovych won. From 1686 the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) enjoyed several centuries' spiritual monopoly in Ukraine under all kinds of political and social dispensations. This was interrupted by the atheist Soviet regime; but since the mid-1990s the ROC had de facto reestablished its traditional status in two postsoviet states where it was in a clear majority: Russia and Belarus'. Was Ukraine going to be the only state where not only the UOC-MP, but Orthodoxy in general, did not have legal support? The UOC-MP had a real presence and influence, especially in the east and south of the country, and elsewhere too. Was it going to remain without its monopoly guaranteed, just one player in a multiconfessional state? The UOC-MP thus seized on the approach from the Yanukovych team as a unique historical opportunity and as a real chance to realise its aims for legalised monopoly which had been blocked for years by the political opposition in parliament.

The UOC-MP eagerly fulfilled its role in electoral campaigns and even agreed to become actively involved in helping to plan them. Clearly then the top leaders of the church in Kiev, as well as the archbishops of (at least) the eastern Ukrainian dioceses, were fully committed to helping the Yanukovych team, whose slogans included: 'Supporting Yuschenko means the defeat of Orthodoxy in Ukraine' (*'Podderzhka Viktora Yushchenko – porazheniye pravoslaviya v Ukraine'*) (Pidopryhora, 2004); 'The fraternal unity of the three Eastern Slav nations' (*'Bratskoye yedineniye trekh vostochnoslavyanskikh narodov'*); 'Yuschenko – agent of Uniates and Protestants' (*'Yushchenko – agent uniatov i protestantov'*).

Ideological and pragmatic considerations thus came together to shape the tactics and strategy of the UOC-MP. Supporting Yanukovych in his bid for head of state became one of the main elements in this church's political activity during the elections. The UOC-MP was planning to use this concordat as the basis for its whole subsequent strategy, which would have comprised the following features:

- Unconditional support for the UOC-MP by the government
- A restoration of ecclesiastical links with Moscow at least as close as those of the Ukrainian Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church in Soviet times

- A complete renunciation of any aspiration to autocephaly or even autonomy
- An openly repressive policy towards alternative Orthodox jurisdictions, including the use of force, similar to what happened recently in Bulgaria, where a new law declared the alternative Orthodox jurisdiction illegitimate, and its churches were seized by force and given to the official Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the only one recognised and supported by the state.

The purpose of these measures would have been to have all Orthodox jurisdictions which were not in canonical communion with the Moscow Patriarchate banned or at least completely marginalised.

How did the UOC-MP Cooperate with Yanukovych?

Obviously not all the ways in which the UOC-MP supported its candidate became public knowledge, but some of those that did well illustrate the nature of the church's involvement.

It was involved at all levels, campaigning and organising. I noted earlier the reaction of Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan), the head of the UOC-MP, to the neutrally-worded press release from Yuschenko's staff about Yuschenko's meeting with him and the blessing he gave him. The day after the press release all Ukraine-wide channels carried an announcement by the metropolitan in which he categorically denied any relationship with the leader of the opposition and made it quite clear that the only candidate his church was backing was Yanukovych. In the view of the opposition press this announcement was partly the result of pressure put on Metropolitan Volodymyr by Metropolitan Ilarion, the head of the Donets'k-Mariupol' diocese, who not only demanded that Volodymyr renounce all contacts with Yuschenko but threatened to remove him if he failed to 'follow the correct line' (Khresnyi, 2004). Ilarion heads a region where support for Yanukovych is virtually unanimous, and their close personal relationship is well known. Ilarion's vigorous support for Yanukovych is partly a response to multilateral support for the Donets'k diocese and generous financial contributions to the diocese from Yanukovych himself or his clients, but partly also pragmatic: if he had become president Yanukovych would have lobbied for Ilarion to become leader of the UOC-MP, so that men from the Donbass would have had an exclusive role in shaping Ukraine's political and ecclesiastical elite. (The question of who is to succeed Metropolitan Volodymyr has long been a subject of debate in church circles.)

Public demonstrations of support for Yanukovych organised by the UOC-MP included several 'church processions' (*'khresni khody'*) concluding with prayer services for the election of an 'Orthodox president'. During the election campaign itself church processions with the icon of the Fedorov Mother of God took place in all regions of Ukraine with the organisational help of Yanukovych's local teams and the support of the Ukrainian Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods (*Soyuz pravoslavnykh bratstv Ukrainy*), a chauvinist, ultra-conservative and explicitly pro-Russian organisation enjoying the spiritual patronage of the UOC-MP. The Union also organised a number of smaller demonstrations in Kiev throughout the electoral campaign, most importantly during the protests after the second round of voting. Daily 'church processions' in support of Yanukovych under the Union's banners in late November 2004 with a few dozen participants looked like gestures of despair, however: token actions at a time when most of society, including most of their own followers, had shown that they did not endorse the programme supported by the UOC-MP leaders and a small section of radical believers.

The biggest church-organised event, which received substantial media coverage, was the 'church procession' on 18 November, the eve of the second round of voting. According to media reports (Khresnyi, 2004) it included delegations from all the Ukrainian dioceses, for which diocesan bishops received as much as $US15,000 and parish clergy 200 *hryvni* each. Once again the most easterly dioceses were most heavily involved. Luhans'k diocese alone sent a special train with 22 carriages of believers who travelled free. One of the commonest slogans deployed was 'Our faith and hope will stop Antichrist Yuschenko winning!' (*'Nasha vira i nadiia ne dozvoliat' antykhrystu Yuschenku vyhraty vybory!'*)

Further evidence of UOC-MP involvement in the election is its unofficial, but mass-scale and effective, campaigning on behalf of the one particular candidate. On 18 November People's Deputy Yurii Karmazin told parliament that the dean of the UOC-MP church in the village of Ivankovo near Kiev had demanded that all the faithful coming up to kiss the cross must swear to vote for Yanukovych. The wide-scale distribution of leaflets supporting Yanukovych by priests in Sarny-Polissia diocese became well known throughout the country (Malyi, 2004). At a diocesan clergy meeting in the church in the town of Sarny one of Yanukovych's men gave some 200 clergy instruction in how to conduct anti-Yuschenko propaganda. He also handed out a large quantity of pro-Yanukovych leaflets, which the clergy had to smuggle out under their cassocks when representatives of the opposition candidate unexpectedly arrived. Open campaigning on behalf of Yanukovych also took place in the cathedral church in Rivne, where the faithful were given leaflets, and placards were put up warning of the dangers for the Orthodox Church which a victory for Yuschenko would mean. UOC-MP clergy often went so far as to threaten with anathema anyone who was thinking of voting for Yuschenko. If covert and overt campaigning was going on at this level in one of the most westerly UOC-MP dioceses in Ukraine, one can only imagine how blatant and intensive it was in the eastern regions, where it had the support and cooperation of the local authorities, and where supporters of the opposition bloc '*Syla narodu*' had little sway.

Use of the Media in Electoral Campaigns

The UOC-MP Media

The conscious decision by the Yanukovych team to focus on just one of the leading confessional identities in Ukraine was part of the realisation of its general strategy of maximum deployment and mobilisation of the 'Russian factor', which in church terms meant using the organisational, ideological and spiritual potential of the UOC-MP. One of the most effective resources was provided by the church media; the plan was to mount a serious assault on the minds of the faithful. The UOC-MP, with its well-developed structures in virtually all parts of Ukraine, was well placed to develop its media network and achieve significant results in this respect.

The first resource was the press. This is the most traditional basic medium for all the churches. The state requirement for registration of printed periodicals means that they can be easily monitored and also influenced in various ways. Official statistics from the state Committee for Religious Affairs show that almost a third of officially registered church periodical publications in Ukraine belong to the UOC-MP: 95 of the 323 registered newspapers and journals on 1 January 2004 (Zvit, 2005). No other denomination comes close to this figure. The UOC-KP and the UGCC have 25 registered periodicals each, and all the other religious organisations have far fewer.

Of the religious denominations it is the UOC-MP which has also succeeded in establishing the firmest links with radio and television and influencing their output. A range of evidence shows a consistent and systematic media policy on the part of the UOC-MP. First, the UOC-MP exercises general confessional and ideological influence over a number of radio and television channels, not only over local channels in regions where it has general hegemony, but also at national level, where we should note that the editorial policy of some central channels such as UT-1 (the nationwide state channel) and the 'Inter' channel – and not just during electoral contests or the recent pre-election years – closely follows this church's position and priorities. Second, the UOC-MP produces religious programmes, either on its own or as close exclusive cooperative productions, such as '*Pravoslavnyi myr*' and '*Dukhovnyi visnyk*', which are broadcast on local and national channels. Third, we should note that the UOC-MP has been highly organised in establishing close cooperation with television channels or in setting up and running its own. The most important is the 'KRT' (Kiev Rus' Television) channel which can be seen by most viewers who have cable television. Every day this channel broadcasts several hours of homilies, prayers, documentaries and other material compiled with the help of UOC-MP clergy. No other religious organisation in Ukraine has this level of systematic high-level involvement with the media in producing its own television materials. Cable channels like CNL broadcasting Protestant (mostly charismatic) worship are not really comparable since they are entirely imported from abroad and hence impinge only indirectly on the indigenous media network.

The UOC-MP has also had considerable success in developing modern electronic communication. Almost all of its 36 dioceses and a large number of monasteries, educational institutions, lay organisations (brotherhoods) and even individual parishes have their own internet resources. These not only enable users to keep themselves informed about what is going on in the church, but also directly and indirectly shape the world view of the community of the faithful, and demonstrate to a wider audience how the church sees its general identity and priorities.

Alongside its journalistic and broadcasting activity the UOC-MP also runs specialist conferences and practical seminars; the church's leaders are evidently very interested in developing the relevant methodology for media work, and the church clearly has a well-worked-out programme and convincing achievements in the media sphere. It is quite natural that Yanukovych's political staff should have reckoned on making use of this already existing potential.

UOC-MP Media in the 2002 Parliamentary Electoral Campaign

How far various individual UOC-MP publications could get involved in ideological discussion and in the electoral process itself was amply demonstrated in the 2002 parliamentary electoral campaign. All the UOC-MP newspapers and journals gave plenty of space to supporting just one of the organisations in the political spectrum, the pre-election union 'For a United Ukraine' (*'Za Yedynu Ukrainu'*), and to working out a church electoral position. The most extreme example is perhaps the publication *SOS*, 'a social and political newspaper for Orthodox believers', founded by the Orthodox Centre for Information and Analysis (*Pravoslavnyi informatsiino-analitychnyi tsentr*). It supported the official government bloc, and justified the bloc's policies from a church point of view, with overt and straightforward propaganda which shocked society and analysts alike. Over several months of pre-election campaigning all editions of this newspaper appeared with the slogan

'For a United Orthodox Ukraine' ('*Za pravoslavnu yedynu Ukrainu*'), and most of the paper's space was given over to political propaganda and agitation. Simply listing the titles of the articles in two issues of the paper (nos 5 and 6, 2002) will give an idea of the mingling of political issues with church strategy and the ideological stance of the UOC-MP.[1]

UOC-MP Media in the 2004 Presidential Electoral Campaign

In the 2004 presidential campaign too the UOC-MP used propaganda techniques from two years earlier. Its electoral media activity had the following main ideological features.

First, it chose not to abide by the general church directive that the spheres of church and politics are to be kept separate and that neither will interfere in the other's affairs, a directive firmly lodged in traditional church consciousness and confirmed in the recently-adopted 'Social Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church'. In fact all aspects of church life were politicised as much as possible, as the themes and content of its published material bear witness.

Second, it came out in unambiguous support of just one particular political tendency, supporting the one candidate who represented the political powers at the time and in particular their pro-Russian stance. The UOC-MP's publications worked diligently, but in a rather primitive and inflexible way, at promoting an idealised image of Yanukovych, meanwhile portraying the opposition leader as the all-purpose enemy and embodiment of evil.

Third, it tied its future fortunes in all fields (legal, political and administrative development and consolidation) to the putative victory of its favoured candidate. In this context it consciously spoke in exaggerated terms about how things might turn out on the political and religious scenes in Ukraine after the election, with exclusively positive predictions about developments under the current incumbent and dire warnings about social and spiritual disasters if the leader of the opposition were to win.

Looking at the ideological pressure – the ideological imperative, even – on the shaping of UOC-MP media policy during the latest election we need to note that excessive concentration on 'standpoint' issues went along with a widespread lack of proper attention to professional church journalism standards. It has to be said that the journalistic practices of the UOC-MP at the time of the elections, when political feelings in society were running at their highest, were inadequate to socio-political realities: presentation of information, style, design, even simple literacy; ignorance or abandonment of the principles of objectivity, wilful disregard for the basic requirements of journalistic ethics. These realities help to perpetuate a situation in which standards of presentation and interpretation of facts are deliberately relegated to second place; they are no longer the essence and aim of journalistic activity, but merely the means of achieving some concrete and frequently very pragmatic tasks in the area of church jurisdiction within the wider context of political and ideological aims.

In this context we can discern two approaches to political and electoral issues in the periodical publications of the UOC-MP today. The first approach is to present information about particular candidates and their political programmes in an apparently unobtrusive and formally objective way in the form of many short news items; the church's official position is thus conveyed through the selection of facts. The second approach is to present unambiguously didactic propaganda attacking the opposition; the publication does not even try to achieve balance and objectivity by publishing adequate information.

The first approach is employed by the main official UOC-MP organ, *Pravoslavna hazeta*, in conveying the church's electoral preferences. The paper did not carry any material openly promoting Yanukovych's candidacy, but aimed to convince believers by constantly reporting on Yanukovych (who was prime minister in autumn 2004) in the 'Church Life Chronicle' (*'Khronika tserkovnykh podii'*) section. In the 9 September issue, for example, there were five photographs of Yanukovych with leading church hierarchs, including Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan). There were even more photographs in the 12 October issue, which also carried a brief but significant note of gratitude to the prime minister for his help in regenerating the Sviatohors'kyi monastery in an address on the subject by Metropolitan Ilarion of Donets'k and Mariupol'.

The official church organ thus tries to present the church's official political stance without transgressing the boundaries of journalistic ethics, but the same cannot be said of a number of other publications which are openly and militantly polemical. As an example we might take issue 12 for 2004 of the newspaper *Nachalo*, published in Dnipropetrovs'k with the blessing of Metropolitan Irynei of Dnipropetrovs'k and Pavlohrad, in which several pages are devoted to material promoting Yanukovych and painting a negative picture of Yuschenko.[2]

In 2004, then, the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine followed patterns and precedents worked out in earlier electoral campaigns (for example the last parliamentary elections, mentioned above, when the UOC-MP supported just one bloc, *Za Yedynu Ukrainu*) in deciding to offer their formal and informal support to one particular political candidate; and their position was supported by the church's publications and sympathetic media in an unprecedented propaganda campaign.

Use of the Secular Media on Behalf of Yanukovych

We have already noted the role of the UOC-MP media in promoting this goal. An equally important role in this context was played by the general political media. Religious terminology – or, more strictly speaking, religiously-coloured terminology – became a vital element in all Yanukovych's speeches. He would use every opportunity to recall certain key events: how he had received the blessing of elders on Mount Athos; how he and Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan of the UOC-MP had prayed together in the holy places on Athos; how he had confessed and received communion; how he had regularly conversed with priests. He would even talk about a prophetic vision he had had: the Virgin Mary had appeared to him, pointing to two possible post-electoral Ukraines, one tragic and futureless, but the other brilliant and successful in the hands of the candidate blessed by the Orthodox Church under the spiritual leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate.

All these religious formulae, developed by members of Yanukovych's team and articulated by him, were assiduously picked up and further developed by the media. The church media played an active role, but their relatively small print-runs and limited influence in society meant that they could not play the key role in Yanukovych's electoral strategy. The main role of the church media was to galvanise the faithful; but the Yanukovych team relied mainly on the secular political mass media.

There were two strategies. The first was to wrap up religious topics in a general electoral package, so that it was one component, but not the dominant one; the language would be low-key, unlike the maximalist rhetoric we have noted in the UOC-MP press. Most publications and other media supporting Yanukovych followed this

line, providing a religious angle along with others in producing a rounded positive image for him. The second was deliberately to exaggerate the importance of the religious element in shaping the image and programme of both candidates and also to distort what they were actually saying on the subject. Relatively few publications followed this strategy, but it is worth looking more closely at them.

A typical example is the newspaper *2000*. On the eve of the elections it devoted a lot of its space to religious issues. Page six of the issue of 22 October 2004, for example, deals exclusively with religion, with several articles following the Yanukovych team line. The title of one, 'A victory for Yuschenko will mean the defeat of Orthodoxy in Ukraine' (*'Peremoha Viktora Yuschenka – porazka pravoslavia v Ukraini'*), sums up the paper's main thesis. This attack on Yuschenko resembles the partisan material appearing in the publications of the UOC-MP: 'agitation and propaganda' at work in a postsoviet framework of confessional partisanship, along with a renunciation of journalistic objectivity. Yuschenko is stylised as the 'open enemy of traditional Ukrainian spirituality'. Foreigners are named in negative terms as his sponsors and financers: Zbigniew Brzezinski and Madeleine Albright. There is a black/white presentation of rival ideologies. The programme of Yanukovych is not explicitly described, but it is made clear that his task is to defeat a man who stands for 'the Catholic-Protestant West which rejects Orthodox Ukraine' and who wants to see its principles prevail. This is the basic message of all the other articles in the paper too.

Whether deliberately or through ignorance, the author (Andrii Pidopryhora) cites inaccurate facts and distorts them in order to prove a given thesis. To take one example, he claims incorrectly that 'after we won our independence sectarians like Baptists, Evangelicals, Jehovah's Witnesses and Adventists consolidated themselves in our country'. There is an unbroken history of Baptist and Evangelical communities in Ukraine for over a century and a half, Adventists for a century, Jehovah's Witnesses since before the Second World War. The claim that the alternative Orthodox jurisdictions to the UOC-MP – the UOC-KP and the UAOC – 'were supported by the USA' is similarly unsubstantiated propaganda. There are more than a dozen such arguments and assertions in this relatively short article. However, Ukraine today is a pluralist society where citizens are learning to express their views freely; civil society is being born, and this kind of perspective is not just ineffective, but often evokes an opposite reaction in society: people reject it as unrealistic propaganda.

Another article in the same issue of the newspaper is entitled 'Christianising the state or "statising" Christianity' (*'Khristianizatsiya gosudarstva ili ogosudarstvleniye khristianstva'*). The author (Yurii Zahorii) looks at the religious views and aims of several candidates for president (Leonid Chernovets'kyi, Dmytro Korchyns'kyi, Oleksander Rzhavs'kyi, Petro Symonenko and Viktor Yuschenko) and concludes that only Viktor Yanukovych is going to be able to realise a genuinely Christian linking of state and religion. It should be clear to any outside analyst, however, that this kind of conclusion in no way corresponds to reality since Yanukovych's conception of religion and politics involves the state and just one church, the UOC-MP, involved in a special relationship with each other at the highest level, and all other religious organisations automatically denied any similar opportunity for cooperation.

The Pro-Russian Policy of Yanukovych and the Polarisation of Religious Identities in Ukraine

A range of efforts to deploy the religious factor in both practical and theoretical ways for electoral ends, involving overt or covert favouring of one church and opposition to

one or more of the others, playing up conflictive scenarios and intensifying existing differences, had been an established feature of all previous electoral campaigns. In the 2004 campaign, however, the efforts of one of the candidates (Yanukovych) in this field became very obvious, and exacerbated the differences between the Orthodox jurisdictions in Ukraine and between the wider Kiev-oriented and Moscow-oriented camps to such an extent that more than a decade's-worth of efforts to minimise the potential for conflict amongst the main groupings within traditional Ukrainian Christianity and to move towards a consensual rather than one-sided conception of religious rapprochement were pretty well nullified.

The Kiev-oriented camp includes (explicitly or implicitly): the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP); the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC); the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC); the Ukrainian Lutheran Church; and leading Protestant church branches and subgroups, including the central leaderships of the largest and most influential: the Church of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (*Tserkva Yevanhel's'kykh Khrystyian-Baptystiv*) (CECB), the Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (*Tserkva Khrystyian Viry Yevanhel's'koi*, CCEF) and the Church of Seventh-Day Adventists (*Tserkva Adventystiv S'omoho Dnia*, CSDA). The Moscow-oriented camp includes: the UOC-MP, which has the largest number of organisations of different types (parishes, monasteries, brotherhoods, educational establishments and so on) of any religious group in Ukraine; some smaller Orthodox jurisdictions (for example the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (*Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov' Zagrantisei/Rossiis'ka Tserkva Zakordonom*), the True Orthodox Church (*Istinno Pravoslavnaya Tserkov'/Istynno Pravolsavna Tserkva*) and the Old Believers (*staroobryadtsy/staroobriadtsi*); and some New Religious Movements, for example the Church of the Mother of God (*Bogorodichnaya Tserkov'/Bohorodychna Tserkva*).

Alignment of Churches at the National Level

Conflicts arose on several levels. The main problem was that the state authorities' preference for just one church structure in a multiconfessional state was bound to provoke direct or indirect resistance from all the other churches, and especially from those churches which in the light of historical and contemporary developments have a claim to the same status or at least to equal treatment by the authorities (the UOC-KP, the UAOC, the UGCC, the Roman Catholic Church, and some Protestant churches which have more then a century's continuous presence in Ukraine: the CECB, the CCEF and the CSDA).

The general position adopted by the leaders of some churches in Ukraine just before the second round of presidential elections was a clear (if indirect) rejection of the authorities' efforts to reshape church-state relations. It was most evident in the mass protest campaign rejecting the election results announced on 24 November. Some Ukrainian churches showed moral and organisational solidarity with the opposition movement, and this was one way in which they supported their own followers, most of whom were on the side of the protestors. This was also one way of responding to the mixing of church and politics which was being actively promoted by Yanukovych's team and which seemed set to become the standard norm in Ukraine if Yanukovych won.

The first manifestation of the churches' position was the *Appeal by the Leaders of the Christian Churches of Ukraine to their Fellow-Countrymen on the Eve of the Second Round of the Ukrainian Presidential Election* (*Zvernennia kerivnykiv khrystyians'kykh*

tserkov Ukrainy do spivvitchyznykiv naperedodni druhoho turu vyboriv prezydenta Ukrainy), signed on 21 November by the leaders of five churches, calling for no falsification of the election results (Zvernennia, 2004). Formally this was a neutral and objective appeal, but in the circumstances of the time it turned into a declaration of open opposition.

The first signature was that of the head of the UOC-KP, who was very likely the initiator of the appeal, with the support of many individuals close to the opposition leader Viktor Yuschenko. Understandably, both branches of Catholicism supported the appeal, in the persons of Cardinal Liubomyr Guzar, the head of the UGCC, and Bishop Markiian Trofymiak, the deputy head of the Ukrainian Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference. Two Protestant leaders also signed the appeal: Mykhailo Panochko, bishop of the CCEF, and Leonid Padun, senior bishop of the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church (*Ukrains'ka Khrystyians'ka Yevanhel's'ka Tserkva*).

This particular document cannot be called radical or partisan, but some of its statements are as clear and categorical as anything appearing in later documents signed by these leaders: for example, the statement that politicians in positions of power who take opportunities to further evil and injustice (Zvernennia, 2004) are committing a great sin in the eyes of God, a sin 'which will not go unpunished'.

One of the most important of these later documents is the *Open Letter to the Acting President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma* (*Vidkrytyi lyst do diiuchoho Prezydenta Ukrainy Leonida Kuchmy*) published on 1 December (Vidkrytyi, 2004). In this letter the church leaders not only set out political guidelines for the nation but clearly demand that the acting president 'correctly read the "signs of the times"' and think about how his personal responsibility before God should show itself in action, in view of the fact that 'God is not to be trifled with'.

An important new signatory in addition to the five who signed the abovementioned *Appeal* of 21 November was Hryhorii Komendant, the head of the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Organisations (*Vseukrains'kyi soiuz ob"iednan' Yevanhel's'kykh Khrystyian Baptystiv*). This was perhaps a logical and natural move on the part of the head of the biggest and most influential Protestant structure in Ukraine in view of the traditional well-known pro-Ukrainian stance both of himself personally and of his organisation.

One signature was significant by its absence: that of anyone representing the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC). One would have thought the UAOC would naturally have wanted to express solidarity with the sentiments being expressed in these documents. A number of possible explanations come to mind. First, there is an internal schism in the UAOC which prevents it from taking public stances. Second, the UAOC leadership and the head of the UOC-KP have not been seeing eye to eye for quite some time, and the UOC-KP was the chief mover behind these documents. Third, we should not forget the continual rumours that part of the UAOC leadership, if not the whole episcopate, was working informally and even sometimes publicly to get the government candidate elected and had received substantial financial inducements. The government's aim, then, was to neutralise the UOAC.

The UOAC has regional influence especially in Galicia, and its strategic position means that it naturally supports opposition to any pro-Russian identification. However, the rumours about financial inducements added fuel to the traditional argument that today's UAOC leadership (or part of it, or some individuals in it) is dependent on certain state structures. The latter are said to have invested a good many resources in the UAOC's development, seeing it as a destructive factor within the Kievocentric Ukrainian Orthodox camp; as an alternative to, and restraining force on,

the UOC-KP. The UOC-KP is estimated by many experts and politicians to be an influential institution which is in fact opposing any attempt to assert the monopoly of just one Orthodox jurisdiction in Ukraine (under the aegis of the Moscow Patriarchate), and which could thus potentially thwart the policy on church-state relations pursued during the electoral campaign by the state authorities.

The UOC-MP Persists in its Support for Yanukovych

On 10 November all the television channels supporting Yuschenko broadcast a video recording of a speech given by Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan), the leader of the UOC-MP, in which he made it quite clear that the UOC-MP was bestowing its official blessing only on Yanukovych, as the candidate seen by the faithful as best able to lead the country (Lemko, 2004). In the context of this open and unambiguous promotional campaign by the UOC-MP in favour of the incumbent authorities' official candidate the abovementioned abstract concern about the outcome of the election, about possibly falsified results and miscounted returns, could hardly look like anything other than organised opposition to the political powers, whom professional analysts and ordinary voters alike saw as capable of using administrative resources for falsification and as having as one of their clear priorities to align themselves with the Moscow-jurisdiction Orthodox Church and to distance themselves from all other churches and religious organisations.

The consequences of its electoral stance became clear to the UOC-MP, and to the public in general, almost as soon as the implications of the electoral results did. Even after the second round of elections the UOC-MP continued to distance itself from any kind of common action with other religious denominations. It is true that some individuals did involve themselves – Fr Hennadii, the dean of the UOC-MP church in Yuschenko's home village Khoruzhivka in Sumy *oblast'*, for example, took part in a pro-opposition demonstration with leaders and members of the main Ukrainian religious organisations on 5 December – but such cases were neither typical nor significant since they did not reflect the position of the UOC-MP leadership. The heads of the eastern Ukrainian dioceses of the UOC-MP continued to show solidarity with, and unambiguous support for, Yanukovych as president. Metropolitan Ahafangel of Odesa and Izmail roundly condemned the opposition at a meeting in support of Yanukovych in Odesa just a few days after the second round of voting (Iyerarkhy, 2004). Metropolitan Ilarion of Donets'k and Mariupol' was just as forthright when he spoke first at a meeting of Donets'k *oblast'* council and later at a meeting in central Donets'k. Metropolitan Ioanikii of Luhans'k and Starobil's'k gave his blessing to the famous first meeting of members of the political elite from the eastern regions of Ukraine which was held in Severodonets'k. It was at this meeting that plans were announced, in the presence of the mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov and the heads of several *oblast'* governments, to move towards separating the region from Ukraine, or at least forming an autonomous South-Eastern Republic, if Yuschenko became president of Ukraine.

Activities like these thus continued even after the real political consequences of the second round of voting started to become clear. Those involved could cite in justification several communications from Metropolitan Volodymyr, the head of the UOC-MP, which appeared on 26 and 30 November. They consisted mainly of general exhortations to mutual love, arguing that 'Politics must not sow the seeds of hatred and anger in our hearts' (Blazhenneishi, 2004), but in the climate of the time they were seen as self-justificatory and temporising, revealing a stubborn unwillingness to

renounce the church's chosen position or to come into line with what was actually happening in society.

Yanukovych Persists in an Unpopular Policy

Basically the Yanukovych team's strategy was not only, or even mainly, religious in nature, but part of a general (cultural) outlook; nevertheless, waging a campaign based on the idea of a clash of two identities had to involve an appeal to religion. One identity is Ukrainian. The other is either openly Russian, or else pro-Russian with a stress on the Russian language, both at the legal (constitutional) level and at the level of general Ukrainian social awareness. The authors of a strategy whose cornerstone was to demonstrate the actual and potential influence of pro-Russian identity in Ukraine were bound to believe that there were more people who consciously or unconsciously agreed with them than were revealed in either the first or the second round of voting. The Yanukovych team saw that they were not getting enough understanding or support for their strategy, but they had neither the opportunity nor indeed the inclination to alter it. They therefore renewed their efforts, aiming to mobilise any vehicle for the success of their pro-Russian campaign. If Yanukovych were elected president with open pro-Russian and Russian support he would later have no choice but to continue relying on the Russian-speaking regions and a Russian-speaking, and even Russian, political elite (some of his support team had actually come from Russia). Yanukovych's team began trying to implicate some key figures from the opposition electoral bloc *Syla narodu* (The People's Power), led by Yuschenko, in the use of fascist symbols and slogans. They also started putting about the idea that an opposition victory would mean massive upheavals and even civil war, that it would just confirm the hegemony of Americans and foreigners, that it would lead to the influx of Catholic and Protestant religiosity hostile to real Slav Orthodoxy, and to Ukrainian Orthodoxy achieving an autocephaly which would be just the first step to a complete breach between Ukraine and Russia.

The clear rejection by church leaders of possible electoral malpractices, discussed above, turned out simultaneously to be an indirect demonstration of religious preferences. It was also a rejection of the kind of church-state relations developed in eastern Ukraine, which are very similar to the church-state relations backed up by law in Russia and Belarus', and which the UOC-MP regularly tries to introduce throughout the country.

The initiator and first signatory of the abovementioned documents was Patriarch Filaret (Denysenko), the head of the UOC-KP, and there can be no doubt that he and his church lead the formal and informal opposition to the UOC-MP, which has rival strategic jurisdictional aims and is pushing for a Russian type of church-state relationship: cooperation based on multilateral partnership at the highest level between the state and just one religious structure. There can likewise be no doubt that the polarisation of priorities in the religious sphere during the 2004 presidential campaign was a consequence of the work of Yanukovych's team, achieved with the help of Russian political experts and the support of government staff in eastern Ukrainian *oblasti*, whose standards and requirements set the electoral strategy for the whole of Ukraine. For Yanukovych and his political advisers, then, it was evidently more important to get the desired electoral results by exacerbating interconfessional tension and deliberately polarising religious identities in the political sphere than to try to preserve relative stability in the religious sphere in Ukraine, a stability which

had developed partly naturally and partly as a result of deliberate policy in the period before the latest electoral campaign.

All this indicates that political aims and judgments were more important for Yanukovych's electoral team than arguments in favour of reinforcing a homogeneous identity and outlook in Ukrainian society or stimulating interdenominational initiatives and ecumenical cooperation. The presidential campaign surely shows that Yanukovych was trying to gain recognition for a pro-Russian identity for Ukraine as just as valid as a Ukrainian identity, and to win over voters to this view, or at least the political elite.

There was certainly no doubt about the influence of Russian managers and ideologists and their pro-Russian plans. There is a good deal of evidence that Yanukovych's electoral campaign received serious support of various kinds from Russia. Moral and ideological support came in the form of constant telephone consultations and direct meetings between Yanukovych and Russian leaders in Ukraine and Russia. Just before the first round of elections President Putin himself paid an official visit to Ukraine, formally to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Ukraine from German occupation during the Second World War, but also in order to demonstrate the highest-level Russian support for Yanukovych. Meanwhile practical support was provided by hundreds of so-called 'political technologists' from Russia who helped to plan and organise Yanukovych's electoral campaign. Most of their recommendations and practical steps were aimed at consolidating close relations between Ukraine and Russia: the model was that of Belarus', involving rejection of the aim of closer integration with the West and promotion of a similar 'union' between the two states. The Moscow Patriarchate supported these efforts, conveying moral, ideological and spiritual support and justification to Yanukovych through the UOC-MP.

The Results of the Election

A close look at a map of Ukraine which divides the country into the regions which voted for each candidate reveals that those regions which voted for Yuschenko clearly coincide with the areas inhabited by ethnic Ukrainians in the seventeenth century, when the Ukrainian nation finally took shape within the Kingdom of Poland and after 1654 within the Muscovite state. Meanwhile those regions which voted for Yanukovych were those which were not yet clearly Ukrainian by the seventeenth century. These areas were colonised later, from the eighteenth century, and the colonisers were not only Ukrainians, but Russians, Germans and other nationalities. They are also the most urbanised areas, and the most denationalised; and this is true not only of the Ukrainians there: the Russians too have largely lost their distinctive Russian identity.

Ethnic self-identification, then, seems to have played the decisive role in determining how people voted. The anti-Yuschenko campaign and pressure on people to vote for Yanukovych in Sumy, Chernihiv, Kirovohrad, Poltava and Cherkasy *oblasti*, for example, were just as intensive as in the Crimea or Luhans'k, and in some respects even more so. Majority support for the opposition candidate in these areas must therefore be put down to conscious self-identification; people voted for 'their' candidate despite all the efforts to compromise and discredit him during the electoral campaign.

The majority choice of the voters in the 2004 presidential election, then, was the result of disagreement with the pro-Russian model which Yanukovych's team

supposed held sway in Ukraine. The result also turned out to be an assessment of the UOC-MP, which openly threw in its lot with the pro-Russian model, but which received the signal that it ought to pull itself into line with the outlook of most of its supporters.

Yanukovych's Failure: a Result of Misinterpretation of Evidence

When we look at the map of Ukraine after the 2004 presidential elections we can see fairly easily that the UOC-MP is the leading church (that is, it has the largest number of religious organisations) in 14 of the 17 regions where Yuschenko won (the exceptions are the three Galician *oblasti*). The anticipated and predicted effect of an intensive religious appeal by Yanukovych's team therefore did not materialise. This was not because an appeal to religion was inherently ineffective or irrelevant, but because the assumptions were wrong: they failed to take account of real confessional orientations and priorities. In fact the role of religion in the 2004 elections confirmed once again the conclusion I reached four years ago, but which has never yet been acknowledged as correct because it does not correspond to what official statistics are taken to indicate. The situation is as follows. The UOC-MP comes out on top statistically because it has the largest number of parishes, monasteries, clergy and other measurables. Nevertheless most actual and potential Orthodox in Ukraine, who together make up the majority of religious believers, identify with an Orthodoxy which looks to Kiev as its centre; some are in autocephalous jurisdictions already (the UOC-KP and the UAOC), but there are many others who may formally belong to parishes of the Moscow jurisdiction but nevertheless aspire after autocephalous status. The organisers of Yanukovych's campaign either did not know this or ignored it. They tried to use the electoral campaign to galvanise the pro-Russian faction among the faithful in Ukraine, and from the outset they overestimated the significance and potential influence of the UOC-MP and the role it could play in this. Soon they were abusing the authority and resources of this church for the sake of their electoral strategy, which was actually counterproductive: it aroused instinctive hostilities and brought all the other religious organisations into an alliance not only against this ideological vision but against the candidate who stood for it.

It was in November 2000 during discussions at the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences Institute of Sociology that we first realised that the real confessional and jurisdictional preferences of the Ukrainian population were quite out of line with statistics on the religious situation in the country. We were looking at the results of a sociological survey of people's religious choices conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation (*Fond Demokratychni Initsiatyvy*). 'The findings clearly show that general social expectations (hopes, predictions) do not correspond to the real situation in society or to the relations amongst the various Orthodox jurisdictions in Ukraine today' (Yurash, 2000, p. 11). Thus four-year-old findings from a scientific sociological investigation were fully borne out in an election campaign (de facto the largest-scale public opinion poll possible).

> Ukrainian citizens have made it clear that their religious orientation is basically Ukraine-centred, within a traditional Orthodox identity. This raises basic questions about the origins of the multidirectional religious scene in Ukraine today and is of direct relevance to discussion of the discontinuity between relations amongst the main Orthodox jurisdictions and people's individual self-identification. (Yurash, 2000, p. 11)

Possible Consequences for Religion in Ukraine as a Result of the 2004 Election Experience

What are the consequences for the UOC-MP, and more generally for the religious situation in Ukraine, of the fact that it was so heavily involved in the electoral process?

Consequences for the UOC-MP

As far as the UOC-MP itself is concerned, I find myself in total agreement with the Russian political scientist Andrei Okara, who warned in an interview ten days before the first round of presidential elections that one-sided bias on the part of the UOC-MP would have negative consequences for it.

> Sadly, I have to note that public support for Yanukovych on the part of some hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church and the UOC-MP will strike a blow at canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine whatever the outcome of the election. The problem is that hierarchs, priests and some politically active laypeople usually characterise the UOC-MP as the church for ethnic Great Russians, Russian speakers and Moscow-oriented parishioners. As a result people who identify themselves as culturally Ukraine-centred do not feel at home in it. This weakens the Orthodox world and alienates the idea of 'Holy Rus" ... Support for one presidential candidate strengthens the position of those who see in canonical Orthodoxy 'the hand of Moscow', an 'anti-Ukrainian pact' and so on. (Okara, 2004)

As noted above, during the election the UOC-MP received the clear signal that it ought to pull itself into line with the outlook of most of its supporters. There are various ways this might be done as an initiative from the centre in line with traditional Orthodox ecclesiological models. The UOC-MP could seek to obtain autocephaly, or at least autonomy; it could give up its categorical claims to exclusivity; it could initiate dialogue with the other Orthodox jurisdictions; it could develop its own spiritual values and stop endorsing current salient characteristics of the Moscow Patriarchate such as extreme conservatism bordering on fundamentalism, antiecumenism and radical mysticism. If it decides not to pursue any of these possibilities, however, the UOC-MP leadership will in effect be renouncing the goal of integrating itself into Ukrainian society. Just as in the 2004 elections, the end result will be the opposite of what the UOC-MP intended, and this time it will involve individual believers, parishes and even whole deaneries and dioceses leaving the church in order to avoid being marginalised in twenty-first-century Ukrainian religious life.

Consequences for the Other Religious Confessions in Ukraine

As far as the general religious situation and confessional identities in Ukraine are concerned, I would refer the reader to my remarks published four years before the elections: 'The situation gives us grounds for predicting swift and substantial jurisdictional shifts. The way people see the situation, both intuitively and rationally, will have an effect on bringing confessional identifications into line with reality' (Yurash, 2000, p. 11). In other words, we can expect some rapid changes in the

statistical relationship between the two main Orthodox jurisdictional camps. These will be prompted by external as well as internal factors. Among the former the most important will be pressure from the president and the government to solve the main jurisdictional problem: non-recognition of the canonicity of the autocephalous Ukrainian jurisdictions. This issue cannot be resolved positively without direct intervention by official representatives of the state. The main internal factor will be growing pressure from a majority in society, mostly members of the UOC-MP, who associate themselves with the movement for Orthodox autocephaly.

In the end the UOC-MP's unwillingness to recognise political and religious realities just helped to consolidate all the other ideologies and identities. The Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine left them no alternative but to come together in opposition to the UOC-MP's claim to be uniquely chosen and self-sufficient. The practical consequences of this situation became clear during the mass protests in late November and early December. I mentioned earlier the two appeals signed by five, and then later six, church leaders. There are many other similar examples which show that the result of the policies of the UOC-MP was to create an alliance among the other religious communities. And inasmuch as these were all more or less Kievocentric, the result was the opposite of what the UOC-MP had intended.

A number of documents and interreligious initiatives show the movement growing and gaining new members. A *Call to Prayer from Orthodox, Protestants, Jews and Muslims in Ukraine* (*Zaklyk predstavnykiv pravoslavnoho, protestants'koho, iudeis'koho i musul'mans'koho virospovidan' Ukrainy do molytvy*) (Zaklyk, 2004), for instance, was signed by leading figures from 11 religious organisations. Meanwhile throughout the protests there were daily ecumenical prayer gatherings on Independence Square (*Maidan Nezalezhnosti*), bringing together representatives of the three main branches of Christianity. These meetings were unprecedented as far as participants and duration were concerned and deserve particular attention as a unique phenomenon. Without a doubt, however, the most important event was the meeting of 5 December (mentioned earlier) on Independence Square involving religious leaders from all the main Christian denominations, Islam and two branches of Judaism. Before Yuschenko got up to speak all these religious leaders gave a short address to the crowd and prayed for peace and tranquillity in Ukraine. Thus the churches clearly legitimised Yuschenko and the whole opposition movement. The mood was openly Kievocentric and pro-Ukraine. All the religious leaders' addresses identified Ukraine as the highest religious value for believers of all confessions. All the leaders went out of their way to make their 'Kievocentrism' clear by demonstrating their ability to speak and offer prayers in the Ukrainian language. It was particularly significant that the chief mufti of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate of the Crimea read out a Ukrainian text.

All in all, then, it is clear that the use of the religious factor in the electoral strategy of both camps needs to be assessed in the context of the real religious situation in Ukraine. In attempting to use the resources of the UOC-MP, the most significant religious structure in Ukraine from an organisational point of view, in support of their candidate, Yanukovych's team made it clear that their aim was to turn the electoral campaign into a battle of ideologies, identities and orientations, a battle which they intended to win. They did not expect that the opposition would make a similar appeal to religion. However, in the final stage of the electoral process, and particularly after the first round of voting, this is precisely what Yuschenko's team did, with both informal agreements and practical action.

Yanukovych's party aimed to win by deliberately polarising identities and setting them up against each other. Their initial calculations and concepts were however

based on a scenario which did not correspond to reality. What is more, they tried to impose a pattern (inter alia by manipulating and falsifying the vote) which reflected the geopolitical interests and calculations of the Russian political technicians who set the pace in the Yanukovych camp, at least until the second round of voting. These were interests of a general political and national kind as well as specifically religious. Yuschenko was branded an American agent, in contrast to Yanukovych, who constantly presented himself as the guardian of the traditional uninterrupted centuries-old spiritual, economic and even political ties between Ukraine and Russia.

Meanwhile the Yanukovych team failed to take into account ethnic Ukrainian self-awareness; indeed, many doubted that it was of any significance or even that it existed at all. However, this self-awareness did indeed emerge as a factor, and not just in certain regions (western Ukraine, for example), but everywhere; as a national and indeed general social force (bearing in mind its influence on the whole of society, not just ethnic Ukrainians) it was just as much of a universal imperative as in other national political communities with longer and more firmly-established histories of independent statehood.

Notes

1 Each article is at least a page long. From no. 5: 'Are holiness and politics compatible?' (*'Sovmestimy li svyatost' i politika?'*); 'The courage to be oneself, or Volodymyr Litvin's three aspects of freedom' (*'Muzhestvo byt' soboi, ili tri grani svobody Vladimira Litvina'*) (Volodymyr Lytvyn was the head of the Supreme Rada); 'Time to repay debts' (*'Vremya vosvrashchat' dolgi'*) (an article supporting one of the candidates); '"Dislocations" in our ethnic politics' (*'O "vyvikhakh" v otechestvennoi etnopolitike'*); 'Orthodoxy is the heart of the world' (*'Pravoslaviye – eto serdtse mira'*) (an interview about the political situation in the country with the paper's editor-in-chief Serhii Tsyhankov); 'Is Spizhenko's pre-election mite pleasing to God?' (*'Ugodna li Bogu predvybornaya lepta g-na Spizhenko?'*) (an attack on one of the candidates); 'While the film was being shot we sensed anathema' (*'Vo vremya s"yemok my chuvstvovali anafemu'*) (a negative review of the film *'Mazepa'* by Yurii Il'enko); 'The werewolf' (*'Oboroten"'*) (an extremely critical assessment of the political position of Vitalii Zhuravs'kyi, leader of the Ukrainian Christian-Democratic Party (*Ukrains'ka Khrystyians'ko-Demokratychna Partiia*). From no. 6: 'The church and politics' (*'Tserkov' i politika'*); 'God is helping them' (*'I Bog pomogayet im'*) (an apologia for Volodymyr Lytvyn, the head of the Supreme Rada); 'The hero inheritor: will the candidate Vyacheslav Mis'kov inherit the mitre of False Patriarch Filaret?' (*'Nasledny geroi: unasleduyet li kandidat v deputaty Vyacheslav Mis'kov kukol' lzhepatriarkha Filareta?'*); 'Helping the people: this is his calling' (*'Pomoshch' lyudyam – yego prizvaniye'*) (supporting one candidate, Valentyn Savyts'kyi); 'The son of lieutenant Shmidt' (*'Syn leitenanta Shmidta'*) (attacking Savytsk'yi's main opponent, Yurii Spizhenko of the 'Our Ukraine' (*'Nasha Ukraina'*) bloc); 'What kind of "spirituality" is the "Yuliia Tymoshenko Bloc" fighting to regenerate?' (*'Za vozrozhdeniye kakoi "dukhovnosti" ratuyet "Blok Yulii Timoshenko"?'*); 'It's your choice' (*'Vybor za vami'*) (an unambiguous comparison of two candidates for people's deputy, with a clear call to support the one who openly declared that he belonged to the Moscow Patriarchate); 'Is "root and branch" the answer? "Churchifying" the Ukrainian language' (*'Nado li "razrushat' do osnovaniya"? K voprosu o votserkovlenii ukrainskogo yazyka'*).

2 Article titles are significant: 'I'm not going to Independence Square' (*'Ne poyedu na maidan'*); 'Why did the Ukrainian Orthodox Church support Yanukovych?' (*'Pochemu Ukrainskaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov' podderzhala Yanukovicha?'*); 'Why do Protestants support Yuschenko?' (*'Pochemu protestanty podderzhivayut Yushchenko?'*); 'Rumour has it ... but it's difficult to believe' (*'Svezho predaniye ... da veritsya s trudom'*) (a list of facts purporting to demonstrate an aggressive attitude to the Moscow Patriarchate on the part of supporters of the opposition).

References

Blazhenneishi (2004) *Blazhenneishi mitropolit Kiyevsky i vseya Ukrainy Vladimir i Svyashchenny Sinod Ukrainskoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi obratilis' k narodu*, http://www.mospat.ru/text/news/id/8144.html.

Iyerarkhy (2004) *Iyerarkhi Ukrainskoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi prizyvayut lyudei k miru i blagorazumiyu*, http://www.mospat.ru/text/news/id/8142.html.

Khresnyi (2004) 'Khresnyi khid za Yanukovycha', *Postup*, 18–24 November.

Lemko, I. (2004) 'Sviatyi otche, mozhe vy partiinyi?', *Postup*, 16 November.

Malyi, S. (2004) 'Tserkvu vykorystovuiut' proty Yuschenka', *L'vivs'ka hazeta*, 18 November.

Okara, A. (2004) Interview with Andrei Okara, *L'vivs'ka hazeta*, 21 October, p. 11.

Pavlyshyn, A. (2004) 'Tserkovnyi rubikon', *L'vivs'ka hazeta*, 9 November.

Pidopryhora, A. (2004) 'Pobeda Viktora Yushchenko – porazheniye pravoslaviya v Ukraine', *2000*, 22 October.

Vidkrytyi (2004) 'Vidkrytyi lyst do diiuchoho Prezydenta Ukrainy Leonida Kuchmy', *L'vivs'ka hazeta*, 1 December.

Yurash, A. (2000) 'Pytannia konfesiino-tsyvilizatsiinoi oriyentovanosti ukrains'koho sotsiumu u konteksti ob"yednavchykh protsesiv v ukrains'komu pravoslav"i', in *'Relihiinyi vybir naselennia Ukrainy: za danymy opytuvannia hromads'koi dumky': kruglyi stil* (Instytut sotsiolohii NAN Ukrainy), 6 November, pp. 10–14.

Zaklyk (2004) 'Zaklyk predstavnykiv pravoslavnoho, katolyts'koho, protestants'koho, yudeis'koho ta musul'mans'koho virospovidan' Ukrainy do molytvy', *L'vivs'ka hazeta*, 6 December.

Zvernennia (2004) 'Zvernennia kerivnykiv khrystyians'kykh tserkov Ukrainy do spivhromadian naperedodni druhoho turu vyboriv prezydenta Ukrainy', *L'vivs'ka hazeta*, 15 November.

Zvit (2005) *Zvit pro merezhu tserkov ta relihiinykh orhanizatsii v Ukraini stanom na 1 sichnia 2004 roku. Forma 1. Ofitsiini statystychni dani Derzhavnoho Komitetu Ukrainy u spravakh relihii.*

(Translated from the Russian by Philip Walters)