

Gospel Images of
Jesus Christ
in Church Tradition and
in Biblical Scholarship

Edited by
CHRISTOS KARAKOLIS,
KARL-WILHELM NIEBUHR and
SVIATOSLAV ROGALSKY

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament*

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Gospel Images of Jesus Christ in Church Tradition and in Biblical Scholarship

Fifth International East-West Symposium
of New Testament Scholars

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Edited by

Christos Karakolis, Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr
and Sviatoslav Rogalsky

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

The Fifth International East-West Symposium of New Testament Scholars was held in Minsk (Belarus), September 2-9, 2010. The symposium was a project of the Eastern Europe Liaison Committee (EELC) of *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* and took place at the *Internationales Bildungs- und Begegnungszentrum 'Johannes Rau'* in Minsk, a German-Belarusian joint venture for intercultural and inter-confessional encounter. The symposium was organized jointly by the EELC, the Institute for Theology 'Sts. Methodius and Cyril' of the Belarusian State University, and the Theological Academy of the Russian Orthodox Church in Belarus. The symposium was the fifth in a series of conferences devoted to the development and improvement of scholarly cooperation and exchange between Eastern Orthodox and Western Roman Catholic and Protestant biblical scholars. Earlier conferences took place in Romania (Neamt 1998), Bulgaria (Rila 2001), Russia (St. Petersburg 2005), and again in Romania (Sâmbăta de Sus 2007). Their proceedings have been published by Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen (Germany), in four conference volumes.¹

After dealing with methodological and hermeneutical questions, as well as with ecclesiological and liturgical topics, in the previous four conferences, the theme of the Minsk symposium was: "Gospel Images of Jesus Christ in Church Tradition and in Biblical Scholarship." The symposium was the first international conference of Orthodox and "Western" biblical scholars devoted to Jesus research. In ecumenical openness and with mutual respect for different exegetical traditions, participants discussed important historical, exegetical, hermeneutical, and theological questions about the Gospels, questions which in the past have resulted in tensions

¹ J. D. G. Dunn et al., eds., *Auslegung der Bibel in orthodoxer und westlicher Perspektive: Akten des west-östlichen Neutestamentler/innen-Symposiums von Neamt vom 4. - 11. September 1998* (WUNT 130; Tübingen, 2000); I. Z. Dimitrov et al., eds., *Das Alte Testament als christliche Bibel in orthodoxer und westlicher Sicht: Zweite europäische orthodox-westliche Exegetenkonferenz im Rilakloster vom 8. - 15. September 2001* (WUNT 174; Tübingen, 2004); A. A. Alexeev et al., eds., *Einheit der Kirche im Neuen Testament: Dritte europäische orthodox-westliche Exegetenkonferenz in Sankt Petersburg, 24. - 31. August 2005* (WUNT 218; Tübingen, 2008); H. Klein et al., eds., *Das Gebet im Neuen Testament: Vierte europäische orthodox-westliche Exegetenkonferenz in Sâmbăta de Sus, 4. - 8. August 2007* (WUNT 249; Tübingen, 2009).

and splits between the Christian confessions. The conference also dealt with various methodological approaches to Jesus research in Eastern and Western biblical scholarship and reflected upon their place and function within the divergent church traditions.

The institutions involved in the symposium considered it to be an important undertaking that demonstrates the role and significance of biblical studies within the context of modern European universities. The symposium also attests the value of biblical studies for modern European societies. Whereas in the Western European tradition theology and biblical studies have been part of the universities' curricula from their origins in the Middle Ages, such has not been the case in Eastern European countries where the majority of the population is Orthodox. In Russia, for instance, these two disciplines developed primarily at theological academies under the auspices of the Orthodox Church. After the Russian Revolution of 1917 and during Communist rule in Eastern Europe, all public theological activities were banned from the universities (East Germany being the only exception) and were restricted to church-controlled theological academies generally isolated from the international scholarly community. Since biblical scholars in Eastern Europe were able to maintain only restricted contacts with international scholarship and had limited access to basic tools for scholarly work, their biblical research could not flourish as it did in other parts of the world. As a consequence, after the fall of Communism, Eastern European biblical scholarship was in urgent need of academic, financial, and moral support in order to be able to reach the level of its Western counterpart.

The EELC has been addressing this situation for more than fifteen years by engaging in several activities that aim at the development of better conditions for biblical scholarship in Eastern Europe. One of its projects has been the establishment of two biblical libraries in Russia and Bulgaria sponsored by various organizations and foundations in Western Europe and run by the State University in St. Petersburg and the Theological Faculty of the State University in Sofia, respectively. The EELC also created and supported teaching programs in biblical studies for future academic staff in Eastern European countries. For example, the EELC has established an Institute for Biblical Studies at the Philological Faculty of St. Petersburg State University and organized the "Collegium Biblicum Bulgaricum" and the "Association of Biblical Scholars in Romania."

Holding the above-mentioned East-West symposia of biblical scholars has been another important initiative of the EELC. The conferences first and foremost seek to foster the exchange of different methodological approaches and theological perspectives that inform Eastern Orthodox and Western Roman Catholic and Protestant biblical research. There is no "one

way” communication but a genuine exchange of opinions, from which both sides profit to the same extent. A second and vitally important aspect of the symposia – as of all activities of the EELC – is their ecumenical spirit. Protestant and Catholic scholars from Eastern Europe, who are members of minority churches in their own countries, have also taken part in all symposia. All participants have always accepted that the symposia are to be characterized by a spirit of Christian love and solidarity, even if there are a number of difficult situations and serious tensions – some of them deeply rooted in history – among the churches in these countries. We consider the symposia a valuable contribution towards creating an atmosphere of better understanding and reconciliation among churches and peoples in the European continent.

In Belarus, specifically, the symposium can be considered an important step towards the integration of Belarusian biblical scholarship into international cooperation and research projects. Its attendance by a considerable number of leading international scholars enhanced the reputation and the scientific standing of the Belarusian State University with its Theological Institute, as well as the Theological Academy of the Orthodox Church in Belarus. Beyond the field of biblical studies, several aspects of the conference and its topic have proven valuable for Belarusian society. The Orthodox Christian tradition, having the Bible at its center, has played a crucial role in Belarusian history and culture up to the present day. It remains among the most important elements of cultural, social, and ethical education. Contemporary society in Belarus, as well as in other European countries, can profit substantially from a deeper understanding of the contents and values of the Bible.

Nonetheless, the participants from different European countries, as well as from the United States, could also sense the tensions in Belarusian society. The Belarus of today is a modern country with many apparent characteristics of globalization in the lifestyle, cultural enterprises, and social interests of its citizens. At the same time, Belarusian society has to cope with economic difficulties similar to those of other countries in the process of transformation from a post-socialist state economy to the so-called “free” market economy. Furthermore, the Belarus of today is a country in which important ethnic and religious minorities coexist as integral parts of the society. Roman Catholic as well as Protestant participants from Belarus and its neighbouring countries attended the sessions and the public events of the symposium, and their presence contributed to its success by providing information about the situation of their churches, of minorities, and of political circumstances in their respective geographic areas or countries. Biblical scholarship today cannot operate in a “space void of air.” It has to reflect upon the significance of the Bible and to express its message for the

church, as well as for modern society. These endeavors must be carried out in a spirit of freedom and openness, free of any unfounded dogmatism and hierarchic or political restrictions, and at the same time, open to the spiritual, intellectual, and social needs of the people. We consider our symposium with its ecumenically and academically open character a promising event for Belarus in its present state of transformation into a modern European state.

Holding a conference in a country and in a city previously unfamiliar to most of the participants appeared somewhat adventurous to many of them. It has indeed been an adventure, though one with many pleasant surprises. The participants and organizers of the symposium were excited by the overwhelming hospitality of the Belarusian people, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the City of Minsk, as well as by the persistent support they received, especially from Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk, the Rector of the Belarusian State University Professor Ablameyko, the First Vice-Rector Professor Zhuravkov, the Head of the International Relations Office Dr. Tichonov, the Vice-Rector of the Institute for Theology "St. Methodius and Cyril," Bishop Serafim, and the Rector of the Minsk Theological Academy Archimandrite Ioasaf.

To all of these we express our sincere gratitude. We are also grateful to the IBB Minsk "Johannes Rau" Institution, and especially to its director Dr. Viktor Balakirev, as well as to the conference manager Olga Philipovich, who did an excellent job covering all our needs. The IBB provided us with outstanding conference facilities, high standard accommodations, and first-class meals.

For the financial support of the symposium, we gladly thank several institutions and foundations, in particular the "Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland" and its department for scholarships, the "Diakonisches Werk Mitteldeutschland," the Roman Catholic foundation "Renovabis" (Regensburg), the Roman Catholic Diocese of Regensburg, as well as several theological foundations and congregations of the Reformed Church in Switzerland.

With regard to the publication of the volume, the editors would like to thank the series editor of "Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament," Professor Jörg Frey (Zurich), as well as the publishing house Mohr Siebeck, and especially Dr. Henning Ziebritzki, for continuing to support the symposia by accepting their proceedings as part of this distinguished series. Special thanks go to Dr. James Buchanan Wallace (Memphis) for his language editing of all contributions by non-native English speakers. Finally, the layout of the volume was prepared by Tommy Drexel (Jena), by the help of Ionuț-Adrian Forga (Leipzig), and the index-

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Athens, Jena, Minsk, February, 2012

Christos Karakolis
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Introduction

KARL-WILHELM NIEBUHR

Biblical scholars, wherever they live and work, have to deal with Jesus as the center of the Christian Bible. Having said this, it seems all the more surprising that, as far as the organizers of the Minsk symposium knew, there had never been a scholarly symposium on Jesus attended by Orthodox and “Western” New Testament scholars. From the very beginning, this conference was aimed at more than discussing Jesus from an ancient literary or historical point of view. When we asked for “Gospel images of Jesus in church tradition and in biblical scholarship,” we also had in mind the many ways and places Jesus Christ is alive in our own time. We asked how he would be known in the twenty-first century in our societies in the West as well as in Eastern Europe.

If Jesus is known at all in our modern societies, it is the Jesus of the Bible as transmitted by the church through the centuries. Therefore, Jesus as he is known today is not, by and large, the Jesus of Bible scholars, neither the so-called “historical Jesus” of the Western academic tradition since the Enlightenment, nor the “dogmatic Christ” of Eastern Orthodox tradition since ancient times. The Jesus who is best known by ordinary people today is still the biblical Jesus Christ, the Jesus of the Gospels, the Son of God and the man from Galilee, who turned the people’s minds to God, who helped the poor and healed the sick, who went around telling wonderful stories or parables, who challenged people to lead a better life, who taught them who God really is and who they should be, and who, in the end, met his fate on the cross in Jerusalem but was resurrected by God from the dead and was exalted into his heavenly realm.

If we ask what shaped this Jesus of our time, the answer is obvious: it is the Bible, the NT Gospels in particular. Almost all that we know about Jesus comes from the NT Gospels, but there is a perpetual task for us as biblical scholars to know him better, to better understand his aims and his end, to give better explanations for what he did and what he taught and what he suffered. This was always the task of biblical scholarship from ancient times until today. This was also the main reason why many NT

scholars came together in Minsk for the symposium on “Gospel Images of Jesus in Church Tradition and in Biblical Scholarship.”

Protestants looking back to Scripture in order to better understand Jesus and the Gospels normally associate their perspective with Martin Luther and the Reformers of the sixteenth century. Even Roman Catholics may refer to a renewed interest in the Bible fostered by the reforms of the Council of Trent during the same period. But who knows about very similar efforts undertaken during this period in those parts of Eastern Europe that have remained a virtual *terra incognita* for modern biblical scholarship to this day?

As early as the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, there was a man named Francišak Skorina (1490–1551) from Polotsk, today a city on the northern border of Belarus. He came from an Orthodox family background, entered the University of Kraków in Poland to study philosophy, and went on to the University of Padua in Italy, where he became a medical doctor. Afterwards, he lived in Prague where he founded his own press, becoming one of the first publishers to use the recent technology of printing invented by Johannes Gutenberg. He also used this technology to create the first-ever printed edition of the Bible in the (Belo-) Russian language using Cyrillic letters, even before Martin Luther’s famous translation of the New Testament had appeared. Later, he returned to the region of his birth and founded a press in Vilnius (Wilna) where he continued to publish translations of biblical books and many other works. Thus, he became the founder of the literary language of the Belorussian people, much as Luther was for German. (For Skorina in the context of Russian biblical scholarship, see the contribution of Sviatoslav Rogalsky, in this volume 24–25.)

We should know more, in the West, about such figures of cultural history in the East like Skorina! Today, most people seem to know at least a little bit about Martin Luther and his influence on modern culture and theology. But who knows about Francišak Skorina? It may not be by chance that both these cultural heroes of the sixteenth century were translators and interpreters of the Bible. Obviously, both were convinced that the Bible should be read and understood by ordinary people, because from the Bible they would learn about Jesus and would find images of Jesus Christ that apply to their own lives. In this regard, Martin Luther and Francišak Skorina may be seen as paradigms for biblical scholarship even today.

The lectures and seminar papers given at the Minsk symposium addressed several topics and approaches to the Gospels from a scholarly point of view. They have been published here in revised versions, supplemented by several contributions that developed from the seminars. Like the symposium itself, the volume is introduced by two contributions that

highlight the role of biblical scholarship in Russia and Belarus in past and present times. The volume concludes with several reports on discussions of the conference papers. These discussions were conducted by groups of participants from different confessional and linguistic backgrounds. The final contributions also include a report on the final plenary meeting, as well as a hermeneutical reflection on these talks by one of the participants.

Three brief perspectives on Jesus from Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran points of view round out the volume. This “Epilogue” had its origins in a workshop held at the Theological Faculty of the State University in Belgrade. At the same time, it will provide an outlook for a future conference project. The three authors are members of the preparatory team for the next International East-West Symposium of the SNTS to be held in Belgrade in 2013 on “The Holy Spirit and the Church according to the New Testament.”

In his opening address to the symposium, the Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk referred to the deep and radical changes in every day life that the peoples of Eastern Europe have experienced in recent times. According to the tradition of Orthodox Christianity, the life of the Church always interacts with the external world, with the state and with secular society. The history of Christianity in Belarus, in particular, was often a time of martyrdom and confession, but nevertheless: “Orthodox values have penetrated the culture, history, and way of life in Belarus since the times of St. Euphrosinia of Polotsk (†1167)” (14). Therefore, even today theology and biblical scholarship can make a contribution to answer “questions about the purpose and meaning of human life, about personal spirituality and responsibility in human society” (13). Subsequently, the Metropolitan refers to examples of biblical studies in Belarus in the past and present (see his contribution in this volume: *Church Life and Biblical Scholarship in Belarus*, 13–17).

Sviatoslav Rogalsky, in his well-documented overview of biblical studies in Russia from the middle ages up to the early twentieth century, illustrates that biblical scholarship in Russia was always narrowly connected to the needs of church life, in particular to the task of translating the Bible (*A Historical Overview of Pre-Revolutionary Russian Biblical Scholarship*, 19–37). One of the most important Russian gospel scholars was Nicolay Glubokovsky (1863–1937), whose work can be described as “the culmination of all pre-revolutionary Russian biblical scholarship” (34). After the Russian revolution, Glubokovsky continued to pursue his biblical studies in Bulgaria, where he published his main work on the Gospels (*The Gospels and Their Evangelism about Christ the Savior*, 1932). Rogalsky offers the following as the predominant hermeneutical features of Russian bibli-

cal scholarship: an orientation to Church Tradition, an orientation to the patristic heritage, an understanding of the polysemantic character of Holy Scripture, and the Christological perspective that detects in Holy Scripture divine and human aspects, just as the divine and human natures were united in Jesus Christ.

The first four contributions of the central section of the volume, which presents the main papers of the symposium, address different approaches to Jesus in modern research. Two of them (Luz, Atmatzidis) are primarily interested in the history of research, with special attention to the methods applied. The other two (Reiser, Mihoc) deal in particular with the hermeneutical foundations of biblical exegesis in antiquity and in modern times.

In his introductory essay, *Ulrich Luz* asks how scholars, in their approaches to Jesus, have posed the theological question of speaking about God in a modern world where the separation between God and history is prevailing as a matter of principle (*Jesus from a Western Perspective. State of Research. Methodology*, 42–64). In his overview of the different “quests” for the historical Jesus from the eighteenth century until today, Luz shows that the quest for Jesus, even if carried out by using historical methods, has never been a “pure” historical task but more often than not was guided by theological interests depending on the prevailing theological convictions of modern authors. Even the last phase of Jesus research, the so-called “Third Quest,” may have indirect theological implications in that it highlights the historical and religious contexts of Jesus as a Jew of his own time.

From an Orthodox perspective, *Charalampos Atmatzidis* also gives a critical review of the quest for the historical Jesus in predominantly German-speaking Protestant research (*The Historical Jesus: State of Research and Methodological Questions from an Orthodox Perspective*, 65–91). After a sketch and critique of the “Third Quest,” he concludes his article with a reference to the quest for the historical Jesus in the Greek Orthodox tradition and with a plea for Jesus research as a meeting point for Christians from different confessional backgrounds.

A third and deeply critical look at the history of research since the Enlightenment is given by *Marius Reiser* (*Jesus-Research from the Enlightenment until Today*, 93–113). Reiser, in his essay, challenges the dogmatic principles of a rationalistic approach to Jesus, founded by Hermann Samuel Reimarus in the eighteenth century. These principles, according to Reiser’s view, “determine the larger part of modern Jesus research to this day” (97). After reviewing critical reactions to Reimarus by Johann Gottfried Herder and Matthias Claudius, he deals with the approaches of David Friedrich Strauß and Ernest Renan in the nineteenth century. Then he turns to the twentieth century and deals critically with several Jesus books that,

more or less, follow in the hermeneutical footsteps of Reimarus. Quoting Albert Schweitzer, he ends up with a rather critical judgment of most of the recent Jesus research, which time and again tries “to picture Him as truly and purely human, to strip from Him the robes of splendor with which He had been appareled and clothe Him once more with the rags in which He had walked in Galilee” (111).

Vasile Mihoc, in his essay (*How Did the Church Fathers Understand the History of Jesus?*, 115–152), starts by defining the basic principles in the Fathers’ approach to Jesus. The Holy Scriptures form a perfect unity, with their harmony, their unquestionable trustworthiness, and their authority, and they point as a whole to Jesus. These convictions also remain valid for the four Gospels and their distinctive views on Jesus: “there is always a way by which we can harmonize the differences” (119). Concentrating on the early Church Fathers (Apostolic Fathers, Acta Pilati, Julius Africanus, Irenaeus of Lyon, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea), Mihoc demonstrates how these principles are applied in ancient exegesis, dealing primarily with passages that exhibit an explicitly historical interest.

The next two contributions cover exemplary christological conceptions developed in different gospels. *Ekaterini Tsalampouni* first turns to Luke, whom she regards not only as a historian but as a theologically interested author who based his message about Jesus on history (*Jesus in the View of Luke*, 153–180). After giving an overview of recent studies on the Christology of Luke’s Gospel, she aims to “present the major Christological themes and ideas of the third gospel, ... search for a possible interconnection between them within the narrative and theological structure of the Gospel, and ... discuss the role of Jesus within the overall theological scheme of the Gospel” (155). As a result of her reading of the gospel presentation, she concludes: “Luke preserves and utilizes the divergent Christological material at his disposal, while at the same time he does not seem to promote one particular idea or motif as an overarching concept that integrates all others. On the contrary, all his major Christological notions are present throughout his story, although they either come to the foreground or stay in the background in each part of the story” (174). Moreover, there is a specific Lukan interest in the role of the Holy Spirit intertwined throughout various parts of the gospel and the Book of Acts. The idea that the Scriptures are fulfilled in the person of Jesus and in his proclamation of God’s Kingdom serves as another guiding principle for Luke-Acts.

In the next contribution, *Reimund Bieringer* treats the Gospel of John as a well-known example of a so-called “high Christology” (“... because the Father is greater than I” [John 14:28]). *Johannine Christology in Light of the Relationship between the Father and the Son*, 181–204). Based on a

detailed exegesis of John 14:28 (“... because the Father is greater than I”) in its context of the farewell discourse in 13:31-14:31 as a key to the Johannine presentation of Jesus, Bieringer concludes that there is no indication in this phrase of a hierarchical or subordinationist meaning. Rather, the sentence reviewed in its context “has a very specific meaning pointing to the Father’s guarantee that death will not have the final word when Jesus suffers a violent death on the cross” (203).

The last two essays of this section deal with a rather explosive case of Jesus research, in particular with regard to the history of interpretation of the Bible in Orthodox, as well as in “Western,” traditions. The quest for Jesus the Jew has been one of the most exciting projects of recent Jesus research conducted not only by Christian biblical scholars but also by Jewish or “non-confessional” academics. It has also been experienced, however, as one of the most challenging aspects of modern NT scholarship for Christian theologians from all confessions. This seemingly “historical” question of the religious background and context of Jesus is inevitably intertwined with the theological problem of the “two natures” of Jesus Christ according to the christological dogma developed in the ancient church, a dogma which forms the confessional basis for most of the Christian churches even today.

First, *Konstantinos Zarras* explores the state of research on ancient Judaism, including the availability of new sources (Qumran!), since the second half of the twentieth century (*Beyond Jesus the Jew: Old Visions Meet Modern Challenges*, 206–233). These recent developments allow a much better and more nuanced view of the Judaism of the time and region in which Jesus lived. Zarras in his contribution moves from the periphery to the center and then back again. He first describes the political and religious environment of Jesus. Next, he examines the person and some aspects of his life and work as a Galilean Jew, “display(ing) nearly all the characteristics of a typical, faithful, observant Jew” (218). Zarras does not, however, overlook the harsh conflicts Jesus had to face with other Jewish groups and authorities of his time. Here, he also refers to rabbinic sources, being well aware of the problems of dating and evaluating this material historically. Finally, he cautiously evaluates the results of his sketch for a more nuanced theological description of the relationship between Jesus, the Son of God, and Israel, the elected people of God: “At least in my mind, Jesus’ act of coming to Israel, as an Israelite, indicates and emphasizes Israel’s specific significance” (226).

In the last contribution to this section, Joel Marcus gives an overview of more recent research (mostly in English) about Jesus the Jew (*Jesus the Jew in Recent Western Scholarship*, 236–249). One of the main implications of his discussion is that Judaism in Antiquity was a highly heteroge-

neous, almost pluralistic phenomenon, and it is therefore almost impossible to determine a “center” or to speak of the “margins” of Judaism in the time of Jesus (and beyond!). In the second part of his essay, Marcus looks at the use of the term “Jew” for Jesus in previous European scholarship (undertaken by Christians as well as by Jews) and demonstrates that this use does not predetermine a positive or negative evaluation of Jesus. By distinguishing between the different perspectives of Mark and Matthew on the one hand, and looking for a comprehensible background and understanding of Jesus’ own attitude on the other, Marcus gains a nuanced solution to the frequently asked question of the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish Law. In the third part of his paper, Marcus deals with the topic of Jesus and the Gentiles. The pericope of the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24–30//Matt 15:21–28) may show a development in Jesus’ own view from a rather “chauvinist” position to one more open to Gentiles. He arrives at the following conclusion: “Our investigation of Jesus’ Jewishness, therefore, has ultimately led to a renewed appreciation for his humanity; and that is fitting, since the former is an essential part of the latter” (249).

Seminars during the Minsk symposium examined three important topics belonging to the main areas of recent Jesus research. These seminars met for three sessions and were co-chaired by one Orthodox and one “Western” exegete. Some of the seminar leaders have been willing to elaborate their seminar papers in order to publish them here.

Armand Puig i Tàrrach begins his contribution by critically reviewing the recently published *Kompendium der Gleichnisse Jesu* (ed. *Ruben Zimmermann*), which consciously refused to engage the quest for the “historical Jesus” when dealing with the parables (*Interpreting the Parables of Jesus. A Test Case: The Parable of the lost Sheep*, 253–289). In reaction to this approach, he then develops his own, using the parable of the Lost Sheep (Matt 18:12–14; Luke 15:4–7; *Gos. Thom.* 107:1–3) as an example, by formulating seven steps that articulate the process for interpreting Jesus’ parables: (1) transmission analysis, (2) sociohistorical analysis, (3) semantic-field analysis, (4) narrative analysis, (5) situation analysis in the context of Jesus’ ministry, (6) Jesus-tradition analysis, (7) the history of interpretation up to present-day readings of the text. In conclusion, he points out: “The concept of polyvalence as applied to research into the parables of Jesus cannot exclude the historical question. The meaning of a narrative should not be completely separated from the question of its origin, its first transmitters, and its subsequent readings” (285).

Predrag Dragutinović, in his theological approach to the parables, highlights the patristic hermeneutics of the parables (*The Parables: A Theolog-*

ical Approach. Reading Parables in the Context of Today's Orthodox Church, 291–312). After a critical review of earlier research on the parables and (according to his judgment) “the inadequacy of the Orthodox biblical scholarship to engage this research” (291), he offers a short presentation of the main features of patristic hermeneutics of parables, including the general hermeneutical orientation, as well as the Church Fathers’ christological and canonical perspectives. Then he focuses on the question of how patristic hermeneutics could influence interpretations of the parables today. He concludes with an evaluation of the christological dimension of the parables and their importance in a canonical framework.

Carl R. Holladay contributes two articles to the documentation of the seminar work of the symposium. His first contribution is a critical review of Albert Schweitzer’s reconstruction of Jesus’ Galilean ministry (*Jesus and His Followers in Galilee: Albert Schweitzer’s Reconstruction*, 313–336). One of the more important topics is the quest for Jesus’ messianic consciousness. According to Schweitzer’s reconstruction, “Jesus possessed a much more open-ended sense of his messianic vocation. Rather than unfolding in robotic fashion, Jesus’ messianic identity interacted with historical reality, underwent change, and responded to God’s own intervention in history. It is a more dynamic process, in which Jesus’ own actions and sense of vocation unfold, develop, and change within the contingencies of human history. But at the end, in the final stage of his life, his messianic vocation became crystal clear, even fixed, as he took control of events in Jerusalem” (336). In his introductory seminar paper (*Jesus’ Ministry in Galilee in Matthew 8–10*, 337–347), Holladay first gives an overview of the different perspectives on Jesus’ ministry in Galilee according to the four Gospels. He then concentrates on Mt 8–10 to show how Matthew utilized the traditions at his disposal to reshape this portion of Jesus’ Galilean ministry to achieve his own literary and theological purpose. “Ever the evangelist, Matthew in chs. 8–10 gives us another panel of his messianic mural, presenting Jesus as a figure who embraces both past and present . . . These stories report what Jesus did; they also prescribe what the church should do. Through Jesus’ pronouncements and discourses, the church listens to his living voice.” (343)

The last two of these contributions stem from the seminar sessions on the Passion narrative. *Tobias Nicklas* in his introductory paper concentrates on the Christology of the Gospel of Mark (*The Crucified Christ and the Silence of God: Thoughts on the Christology of the Gospel of Mark*, 349–372). He identifies two central christological questions in the Gospel of Mark to be answered: “how or in what manner Jesus has to be understood as the Christ or Son of God”, and: “how far can what is said by or about Jesus be understood as gospel, ‘good news?’” (351) According to

Nicklas, both of these questions “can only be answered if the final text of Mark is understood as a sensibly arranged unit in which the various intra- and intertextual links are taken seriously” (ibid.). After such an analysis of the gospel text, he concludes: “The Gospel of Mark can be read as a narrative solution to the problem of how the crucified Jesus of Nazareth can be understood as the Christ and Son of God” (370).

Contributing to the same seminar on the Passion Narrative in the Gospels, *Dominika A. Kurek-Chomycz* gives an overview of references to the passion story in the Pauline letters (*Performing the Passion, Embodying Proclamation: The Story of Jesus’ Passion in the Pauline Letters?*, 373–402). In her first part, she takes into consideration passages that may reflect or allude to passion traditions. In the second part of her paper, the author includes passages in which Paul interprets his own hardships in terms of the suffering and death of Jesus. In so doing, Paul uses his own body as a vehicle for his proclamation of the gospel of Christ crucified.

I Biblical Scholarship in Russia and Belarus

Church Life and Biblical Scholarship in Belarus

An Opening Lecture

METROPOLITAN PHILARET OF MINSK AND SLUTSK

Dear participants, organizers, and guests of the Symposium! Dear colleagues! Let me cordially greet all of you at the Fifth International East-West Symposium of New Testament Scholars, which has as its theme, “Gospel Images of Jesus Christ in Church Tradition and Biblical Scholarship.” The Symposium takes place this time in Minsk, the capital of the Republic of Belarus. It is not only a great honor for us; it is also a testimony to the increasing popularity of our Theological School in the European scholarly community.

In recent times, the citizens of East European countries have experienced great changes in their life, changes which have been deep and radical, and often rather painful. These changes in people’s life and mentality have raised questions about the purpose and meaning of human life, about personal spirituality and responsibility in human society. Similar changes have also taken place, however, in West European countries. Therefore, the elucidation of the Christian perspective on the process of modern social formation in Europe is extremely important and could be named as the first task not only for scholars, but also for every Christian.

Carrying out the evangelical mission in the world, the Church through its ministry addresses every human person, and through them, all humankind. Being both a divine and a human organism, the Christian Church has not only a mysterious but also a historical essence that interacts with an external world, with the state and with a secular society.¹ For over two millennia, Christianity has proved an essential and defining influence on the development of European society, its outlook, and culture. In Belarusian national history, Christianity in the Orthodox tradition has had crucial importance. During the process of historical development, Orthodoxy in

¹ *Основы социальной концепции Русской Православной Церкви (The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church)* (Moskau, 2000), 9

Belarus have always cooperated with the Western Christian confessions, from time to time entering into intense dialogue and even rigid opposition.

Today, we thank God for the opportunity to carry on the dialogue with other religious representatives on the basis of equality and mutual respect, and we are blessed by the spirit of Christian love.

I would like to accompany these general statements with some facts about the latest history of the Orthodox Church in the land of White Russia. Orthodox values have penetrated the culture, history, and way of life in Belarus since the times of St. Euphrosinia of Polotsk (†1167), St. Cyrill of Tourov (†1183), and St. George Konissky (†1795). The value of this centuries-old spiritual heritage was never belittled, for it has truly and invariably inspired national revival.

Many decades of the previous century became for Belarusian Orthodox people a time of martyrdom and confession. In 1917, there were about 78,000 Orthodox parishes in the country, but in the summer of 1939, the last church in eastern Belarus, situated in the town of Bobruisk, was closed.² The clergy was persecuted everywhere; more than two thousand clergymen were killed or died in prison.

During the Second World War and in the post-war period, the situation changed for the better. The number of Orthodox communities increased to about one thousand. Very soon, however, this process stopped, and many parishes were closed again. In the sixties, the process of church formation and theological education was interrupted for more than two decades. By the end of the seventies, there were no more than 360 Orthodox communities in the territory of the Soviet Byelorussia.

However, further changes created the possibility of reviving the Minsk Theological Seminary in 1989, and then of opening, one by one, eleven historical dioceses in the territory of Belarus. In 1993, the Theological Department was founded in Minsk. Three years later, in 1996, the Minsk Theological Academy was opened in Zhirovichy.

At that time, close interactions were developed with leading theological schools, where theological education had not been interrupted. Cooperation with them was the starting point for further development of Belarusian Orthodox theological education. In this context, research on the Holy Scripture was especially important for us because the whole of Christian theology is based on such study.

Studying, understanding, and keeping the Christian spiritual treasure is a necessity, for this is the way to life in the Church. Through study of Scripture, we confirm our continuity with the apostolic tradition and maintain the unity between the past and the future. This continuity demands that

² Th. Krivonos. *Белорусская Православная Церковь в XX столетии (The Belarusian Orthodox Church in the Twentieth Century)* (Minsk, 2008), 71.

we remain, according to the words of the Apostle Paul, "... knit together in love ... fully assured of understanding, reaching the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden" (Colossians 2:2–3).

In order to underline the depth of biblical texts and how they are saturated with meaning, St. John Chrysostom said, "Καὶ οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν κατὰ δύναμιν τὴν ἑαυτῶν τὰ ἐντεῦθεν νόματα ἐξήντησαν, καὶ οἱ μεθ' ἡμᾶς πάλιν τοῦτο ποιῆσαι ἐπιχειρήσουσι, καὶ οὐδὲ οὕτω κενῶσαι δυνήσονται τὸ πᾶν, ἀλλ' αὐξεται τὰ τῆς ἐπιρροῆς, καὶ ἐπιδίδωσι τὰ νόματα."³ This prophecy, I think, comes true in the revival of theological scholarship in the Belarusian Orthodox Church.

According to the well-known Russian biblical scholar Archimandrite Iannuary Ivliev, Holy Scripture has the concrete texts, accessible not only for judgment and discussion, but also suitable for scientific research.⁴ We cannot deny that "textual criticism means studying a particularly human aspect of the Bible's composition, and here we have a lot of room for reflections, guesses, assumptions, conclusions, which could be obvious or not."⁵ For this reason, understanding the Scriptures through the Church Fathers' tradition is of vital importance. Our duty is to use it in the process of modern biblical research and interpretation. In so doing, we continue on our path of developing Orthodox Belarusian biblical scholarship, though our achievements are still quite modest. In this context, I would like to mention the following examples of doctoral research by our Belarusian scholars: the doctoral thesis, "The Doctrine of the Apostle Paul about the Relation of the Human Being to the Created World," by Seraphim (Belonozhko), Bishop of Bobruisk and Byhov;⁶ the study of Archpriest Alexis Vasin devoted to the History of interpretation of the words from Psalm 109(110):3, "... From the womb of the morning, You have the dew of

³ John Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen. 3.* (PG 53:32); "our forebearers drank from these waters to the limit of their capacity, and those who come after us will try to do likewise, without risk of exhausting them; instead the flood will increase and the streams will be multiplied," St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis 1–17* (trans. R.C. Hill; FC 74; Wachington 1999), 39.

⁴ I. Ivliev. "Библистика в Русской Православной Церкви в XX веке" ("Biblical Scholarship in the Russian Orthodox Church in the Twentieth Century"), in *Материалы богословской конференции Русской Православной Церкви «Православное богословие на пороге третьего тысячелетия»* (*The Materials of the Theological Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church "The Orthodox Theology on the Eve of the Third Millennium"*) (Moskau, 2000), 30.

⁵ A. Sorokin, *Введение в Священное Писание Ветхого Завета (Introduction to the Holy Scripture of the Old Testament)* (Kiew, 2003), 28.

⁶ A. Belonozhko, *Учение апостола Павла об отношении человека к тварному миру (The Doctrine of the Apostle Paul about the Relation of the Human Being to the Created World)* (diss.; Zhirovichy, 2001).