

lish, German, and Latin. Despite some minor editorial mistakes, the book is a valuable addition for theological libraries. The author explains complex issues in a way that is accessible even for the common person. Scholars will find useful material in his carefully documented footnotes along with 154 figures and 20 tables.

Unfortunately, the book does not discuss the topic of presuppositions in the context of modern and postmodern theology and philosophy. This is an area that the author hopes to tackle with another future volume (p. 663ff). A noticeable omission, for example, is the fact that he does not mention Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, a classical defender of the *via negativa*. He made a profound impact on eastern and western theology, which is almost comparable to Augustine's influence.

In conclusion, Kerbs demonstrates the main thesis of this book that Christian thought in general was built upon Greek philosophical presuppositions, which in turn meant the loss of a true biblical identity. The book ably explains presuppositions that operate in the interpretation of reality as a whole, the biblical doctrines, and the biblical texts. Such concepts are especially relevant for the fields of Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology. The book should be mandatory reading for any person who wants to be loyal to the *sola Scriptura* principle.

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Conscience on Trial: The Fate of Fourteen Pacifists in Stalin's Ukraine, 1952-1953, by Hiroaki Kuromiya. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. x pp. + 208 pp + 4 pp. index. ISBN 978-1-4426-4461-8. Hardcover, US\$60.00.

The 1952 trial of the fourteen Ukrainian Adventists expertly presented in Hiroaki Kuromiya's latest book *Conscience on Trial* may seem at first to be a rather minor episode in the history of Soviet religious oppression. In reality the stories and background statistics may even be surprising to those who don't know this part of the world, but scholars conversant with this part of the world will find nothing in this volume that is startlingly new. It is common knowledge that Stalin was a communist and atheist, who believed that the sacred cause justified the most extreme measures against Christians.

Kuromiya does not exactly seek to present another panoramic shot of history, although he presents an excellent backdrop for this study. Neither is he building a case of some average, representative Soviet citizens

under Stalin. Readers seeking to find brave and heroic resistance fighters in this book will be disappointed. Yet the author's intention is unique and commendable. The book deals with the most delicate issues that few scholars dare to tackle. According to his own confession, the author attempts to show what was going on in the private life and in the conscience of those living under the atheist Stalinist regime.

Seventh-day Adventism was brought to the Russian Empire in the 1880s by missionaries to German colonists in the Crimea, Volga, and Caucasus regions. As a Protestant religion in a predominantly Orthodox country, Adventists from the beginning were treated with suspicion. Adventist missionaries targeted primarily German colonizers. Thus many of the first generation of 'Russian' Adventist converts were of German origin, but the situation soon changed. In 1906 the Tsarist government officially recognized the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Russia. The seventh-day Saturday Sabbath was a natural fit for many Slavs, since in both the Ukrainian and Russian languages the word for "Saturday" (subota) literally means "Sabbath." There were groups of people who observed the Saturday Sabbath long before the coming of the Adventist missionaries. Adventism eventually absorbed many of them and the message started to spread speedily among the Slavs. All of the accused in the 1952 trial considered in Conscience on Trial were either Russians or Ukrainians.

The situation with this particular case is complicated by the fact that all of the people accused belonged to Reformed Adventism—an illegal branch of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The history of the Adventist Reform movement dates to 1914, as World War I broke out, as Adventists in both the Russian and German Empires were torn between their loyalty to their faith versus patriotism. In Germany Adventist leaders permitted and even encouraged participation in the war for German Adventists conscripted to bear arms. The breaking of the Sabbath for the sake of the military combat operations was furthermore permitted by denominational officials. A small minority of Adventists refused to accept the Church decision and were therefore disfellowshipped.

Seventh-day Adventists in Russia similarly came to terms with the Soviet government. In 1928, deeming it necessary to "integrate themselves into Soviet society," the All-Union Congress of Seventh-day Adventists required Adventists to bear arms to protect the Soviet country. This position split the Adventist Church in Russia: seventy elders, workers and ministers, together with lay members, left the Adventist denomination and formed the Reformed Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Stalinist regime severely persecuted Orthodox people, who happened to constitute the largest religious group in Russia, as well as members of many smaller officially registered Protestant denominations. Thus members of this illegal "sects" were shown no mercy.

Hiroaki Kuromiya draws mainly on the newly discovered documents from the Soviet court archives, which contain numerous investigations and first-hand accounts thanks to the attentive and interpretative skills of the author. One of the more impressive tomes was a two-volume case file with 852 leaves of all sizes, many of which were written on both sides. These records constitute a unique set of nearly complete trial records from preliminary investigations to trial proceedings, including the final sentencing of the accused. The author had to decipher handwritten phrases that appear to be almost indecipherable, not to mention broader interpretative aspects such as trying to ascertain any evidence for motif by either the executioners or victims.

With regards to the actual victims, two doctrinal issues in particular concerned the Soviet government: keeping the seventh-day Sabbath and pacifism. Both stemmed from the principles of the Law of God, which represented a challenge to Soviet practices from the perspective of Soviet authorities during the criminal charges. Some of the strongest passages of the book come from transcripts of interrogations. One typical passage, an interrogation of Vasilii Belokon, helps to illustrate this point:

"Q: When did you become a member of the illegal, anti-Soviet sectarian organization of 'Reformed Adventists?'

A: In 1932, while living in the village of Mohyilivka, Zhmerynka District, Vinnytsa Oblast', I heard from my fellow Adventists that the Congress of Seventh-day Adventists had adopted a resolution which permitted the Adventists to serve in the Soviet Army and bear arms in defence of the Soviet state and also permitted the members to work on Saturdays. I disagreed with the decision, because it contradicted the Fourth and Sixth Commandments of Christ. Because of this, in 1932 I joined the Reformed Adventists."

Another valuable feature of this book are the pictures of all fourteen victims. Their faces represent simple and hard-working people. Each person has a biography. Now, many decades later, it seems more than obvious that these people surely could not have been a threat to the Soviet regime. They wished above all else to be left alone.

A valuable aspect of the book is that it reveals some of the hidden mechanisms of political repression and provocation by the secret police. One of the most disturbing discoveries that the author observes is their planting provocateurs among believers as a common practice during that time. Their purpose was not only to seek out and arrest alleged leaders of the "sects," but also to produce mistrust among believers and undermine their ability to witness. The author outlines the roles played by Soviet prosecutors, defense lawyers, and judges whose sole goal was not justice, but rather, to eliminate dissent.

The author demonstrates that in spite of the pledge by some Seventh-day Adventists of loyalty to the government, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was destined by the Soviet authorities for extinction. Thousands of Adventists were arrested during the time of Stalin. Many perished in the Gulag. Virtually no organized activity was possible because of strict police surveillance. Yet police agents and provocateurs were afoot to entrap even those individual believers who held their faith deeply private, as was the case with these fourteen arrested in Bila Tserkva in 1952.

Perhaps the most disturbing revelation after reading this book is that the author observes that the Soviet regime was violently opposed not only to open dissent, but was unable to tolerate even private dissent from the individual lives of such obscure individuals. People, living on the margins of Soviet society, without any influence, and who furthermore did not attempt to actively disseminate their views were actively sought out and persecuted. Their private diaries (attached to case files) reveal sincere sympathy toward the Soviet regime. The not so subtle message of *Conscience on Trial* about this trial is that the Soviet regime simply did not tolerate any deviation from its core atheistic agenda.

Each person from this trial was poor, barely literate, and living in the lowest underclass of a supposedly classless socialist society. Yet these "little people" whose lives are now remembered thanks to this author are real people whose pure and humble lives despite their demise cannot leave the reader unmoved. Unlike other historical narratives that have focused on the more sensational episodes of Soviet history, Hiroaki Kuro-miya's book presents a vivid portrayal of one episode in one of the darkest periods of Soviet history. The book thus provides an intimate attempt to look into the minds of non-conformist believers.

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Salvation Accomplished by the Son: the Work of Christ, by Robert A. Peterson. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. 565 pp. + 10 pp. appendix + 12 pp. bibliography + 13 pp. general index + 19 pp. scripture index. ISBN 978-1-4335-0760-1. Hardcover, US\$29.17.

Robert A. Peterson is a professor of systematic theology at Wheaton Theological Seminary. Hence the author writes from the perspective of a Calvinist and as an Evangelical. The purpose, he states, is "to show something of the profundity, massiveness, and magnificence of the