

effort for those who continued to live, though in eventually shrinking numbers, amid Islam.

Christian Martyrs under Islam is meticulously researched and documented. Sahner's readings of the sources reflect great skill and care for sound methodology. As a result, the book is a welcome contribution to studies focusing on medieval Christian communities and their relationships with Muslims. Scholars have long known how other types of literature such as disputational texts served to nourish beleaguered religious communities who faced the press of new rule. Martyrologies are often ignored for what they might contribute to this knowledge, but readers of Sahner's book, scholars and students alike, will be rewarded by his bold approach.

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Cyril Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church: Towards Poststructural Ecclesiology*

(Cambridge: James Clarke/Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), pp. xiii + 262. £22.50/\$33.00.

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On 5 January 2019, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople signed the 'Tome of Autocephaly' (constitutional charter) of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In the preceding months, the Patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople initiated a series of debates and diplomatic missions reaffirming their views on their respective jurisdictional claims over Ukraine, with the Moscow Patriarchate unilaterally breaking communion with Constantinople and the issue of autocephaly resulting in a regrettable schism. *Scaffolds of the Church* could not be a timelier publication since it introduces the reader to the historical and canonical background necessary to understand the tension, its reasons and its outcome. Though the book's scope is much broader, discussing eastern Orthodox ecclesiology from a socio-cultural perspective, the 'case of Ukraine' is a substantial part of the fourth chapter of the book and an integral part of the argument. For anyone seeking an in-depth knowledge of the state-of-affairs in the Orthodox Church, this book is a very good place to start.

The argument is laid out in the introduction and conclusions: hierarchy, understood *per definitionem* as 'a super-structure that encompasses other ecclesial structures' (p. 7), does not belong to the nature of the church, but is the product of history (pp. 1–2, 181–3). The initial church was egalitarian, communitarian and animated by a sacrificial spirit of service. As the church was exposed to Graeco-Roman culture, however, it gradually imported hierarchical structures from the outside. This led to 'dramatic transformations' (pp. 62, 79, 159) of the original ethos of the church: hierarchy came to replace egalitarianism and ministry became a distinct ecclesial stratum (*ordo clericorum*), while the laity was now treated as a separate category, inferior to the clergy. As a result,

the church became stratified, though ‘there was a time in the history of the church when there were no hierarchical strata’ (pp. 7–9).

The focus of the book is on eastern Orthodox ecclesiology. The argument proceeds in seven chapters beginning with (i) terminological distinctions – namely, false dichotomies – between the ideal and the real, the visible and the invisible, the sacred and the profane, the universal and the particular, as applied to the church. The discussion then moves on to the fundamental ecclesiological principles of territoriality and sovereignty, leading to the birth of autocephaly, and the institution of primacy as the pinnacle of the threefold hierarchical structure of the church (diocese – metropolis – patriarchate). The narrative is completed with the historical development of the threefold ministerial structures (deacon – priest – bishop) and a discussion of the limits of ecclesiology. Meanwhile, the reader is introduced to topical issues in ecclesiology, such as a survey of the field; the recent Pan-Orthodox Council; the institution of pentarchy; the church under the Ottoman rule; East–West and inter-Orthodox territorial disputes; the history of the autocephalous churches, including Ukraine and the United States; ‘eucharistic ecclesiology’ (with some anti-Zizioulan overtones) and a critical review of its underlying pseudo-Dionysian (‘Neoplatonic’ or ‘Proclean’) underpinnings; and the ambivalent stance of the eastern churches toward the ecumenical movement.

The narrative feels close to ‘the methods of social analysis employed in critical theory’ (p. 184). This methodological choice is a welcome contribution to the field, though it might turn out to be a double-edged sword. Hierarchy or structure is defined from the outset from a pejorative perspective as the result of social routine, inequality and class division. Applied to ecclesiology, hierarchical structures introduce authoritarian relationships to the church (episcopacy over priesthood, priesthood over laity), signalling the ‘routinization’ – or denaturation – of the initial gifts of the Spirit. By contrast, ‘the initial logic of ministry was non-hierarchical’ (p. 146).

One may wonder whether this is the only possible ecclesiological construction of hierarchy. Building on different premises, for example, and working with different definitions, one may discover that not every form of ecclesial structure is incompatible with the sacrificial spirit of the first Christian communities. Only forms of hierarchical denaturation and abuse are. Indeed, the author makes several allusions to ecclesiological sin (pp. 182, 188, 192–4) and distinguishes, in the introduction and conclusions, healthy forms of hierarchy from their falsifications. The distinction between good practice and abuse is expressed through a series of terminological variants or ‘-isms’: hierarchy vs. hierarchism, institution vs. institutionalism, jurisdiction vs. jurisdictionalism, etc. (pp. 2, 10, 188–94). It would have been a helpful addition to the many merits of the book if the author had clearly followed the distinction throughout the narrative. For example, the tension between a positive and a negative assessment of pseudo-Dionysian ecclesiology could have been avoided by distinguishing between an initially openly construed ecclesial hierarchy and its subsequent mutation into authoritarian hierarchism. Further reflection upon the distinction would have also helped situate the argument against the backdrop of wider discussions, like the ecclesiological problem of evil (Trakakis), constructions of the church as truth and participatory event (Yannaras) or more positive evaluations of the interaction between church and state (Papanikolaou). Even without such contextualisation, however, the fact remains that *Scaffolds of the Church* offers a rich, insightful and innovative analysis of contemporary issues in eastern Orthodox ecclesiology seen from a social – ‘post-structural’ – perspective.