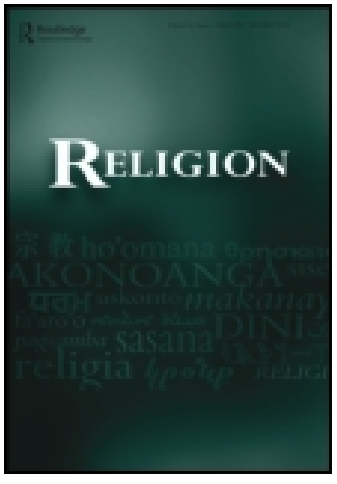

Religion
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rrel20

The city as promised land: moral reasoning, evil, and the dark side of capitalism in Ukraine

Catherine Wanner [a]

[a] Department of History , Pennsylvania State University , 217 Weaver Building, University Park, PA , 16802 , USA

Published online: 24 Jul 2013.

To cite this article: Catherine Wanner (2013) The city as promised land: moral reasoning, evil, and the dark side of capitalism in Ukraine, Religion, 43:3, 365-384, DOI: 10.1080/0048721X.2013.798165

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2013.798165

Religion, 2013
Vol. 43, No. 3, 365–384, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2013.798165

The city as promised land: moral reasoning, evil, and the dark side of capitalism in Ukraine

Catherine Wanner*

Department of History, Pennsylvania State University, 217 Weaver Building, University Park, PA 16802, USA

ABSTRACT The theological prescriptions of a believer's burden preached at a large non-denominational Charismatic megachurch in Ukraine involve transforming the city in which one lives into a promised land. The means to do so involve making money and using that money to create 'blessings' for others. The actions of a group of entrepreneurs associated with this megachurch who have put this theology into practice have led to cross-cutting indictments of evil. The controversy that ensued over the proper response of a believer to suffering and urban plight reveals how the processes of moral reasoning to determine the sources of evil can be interpreted very differently when there is little agreement over the divine or demonic providence of money and what the public role of religion should be.

KEY WORDS Pentecostalism; charismatic; morality; evil; capitalism; money; urban; secular

One of the most notable and unexpected consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 has been the development of a vibrant religious landscape.[1] Throughout the former Soviet Union religious life experienced a renaissance in the final years of Soviet rule. Religion and nationalism blended for mutually reinforcing effect to challenge the legitimacy of the Communist Party, which had so vigorously promoted atheism in this multinational federation. Although most republics-turned-states were quick to recognize a state church, in Ukraine the religious renaissance has yielded a surprising degree of religious pluralism.

Since 1991 transnational Charismatic communities have grown exponentially in spite of the fact that not only are their neo-Pentecostal styles of worship, aesthetic sensibilities, and non-denominational hierarchical structures dramatically different from those of the historic faiths of Ukraine, Orthodoxy. and Byzantine-rite Catholicism, but their attitudes toward the moral responsibilities of believers are too. Currently, the largest Charismatic Pentecostal church in all of Europe, the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations, is located in Kyiv, the capital of

*Email: cew10@psu.edu

[1]The material presented in this article is based on fieldwork conducted in the summers of 2009 and 2011. However, I have been conducting ethnographic research on religion in Ukraine, and specifically the evolution of this particular church, since 2000. For a more in-depth historical profile of religious communities in Ukraine and the founding and growth of the Embassy of God, see Wanner (2007).

Ukraine. This article analyzes why the efforts of a small group of entrepreneurs from this church, who are dedicated to building the Kingdom in the city via private enterprise, have led to cross-cutting indictments of evil that have fueled criminal charges ranging from racketeering to treason against the Church's head pastor. An analysis of these events reveals how the fabric of urban life can be remade when theologies of the street and the dynamics of capitalism meet. However, when unintended consequences emerge from this intersection, conflicting accusations of moral transgression can yield indictments of evil that often rest on perceptions of the divine or demonic providence of money.

'Let this city bow before You'

To explain how Sunday Adelaja, the Nigerian-born head pastor of the Embassy of God, came to plant his church and implant himself in Kyiv, and to understand the role he envisions for his church in transforming the city, he tells this story:

> When I first arrived in Kyiv, Ukraine, I would ride around all day on a city bus weeping. I had no natural reason to be crying, but deep inside I felt both love and pain for this city, which would become intertwined with my kingdom destiny. I would sit in the bus crying out with my soul, 'God, let this city bow before You.' At times I would go to the tallest building in town, stand on the roof, and look across the cityscape. 'God, let Your Spirit come!' I would pray. In Ukraine, I had found my promised land … Your promised land is where your love and pain intersect. When I rode the bus around Kyiv, I felt great love and great pain for all I saw. My heart was enflamed and bound up in the city's future. (Adelaja 2008: 30–31)

Adelaja's narrative is steeped in Biblical imagery. In his weeping admonition to the city to change its evil ways, he draws a parallel to the role of an Old Testament prophet. Particularly striking is his ascent to the roof of the highest building in town. Given that no single building dominates the Kyiv skyline, rather than the city's actual architectural panorama, the passage suggests Adelaja's metaphorical journey. It spatially and symbolically elevates him to a position of leadership akin to the role that Moses played to the Israelites. His gazing at the 'promised land' from the roof is a modern reenactment of Moses beholding the promised Land of Canaan from the top of Mount Nebo, while Adelaja's admonition to God to let his spirit descend on him and his people recalls Moses' encounter with God and acceptance of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. The story symbolically charges Adelaja to assume a role of divinely sanctioned spiritual leadership over his people and to take possession of the city at his feet as the promised land.

The pain and love the city of Kyiv inspired becomes the cornerstone of his views on the moral obligations of believers to link their destinies to the cities in which they live and culminates in his plan for a 'kingdom-minded church.' Pain and love are expressions of the moral complexities urbanites experience, along with the heterogeneity, intensity, and sensuous dimensions of urban life. Yet Adelaja suggests that this combustible combination of pain and love bequeaths cities an immanent power, which exists outside social institutions and structures and merely inhabits the spirit of the city, and enables believers to transform these earthly, worldly settings into the Kingdom. How to do this has been the essence of the theological message he has preached in Kyiv since 1994.

The ability of a city to trigger such strong emotions could be considered a manifestation of what Thomas Blom Hanson and Oskar Verkaaik call 'urban charisma.' They argue that urban charisma is two-fold. First, there is the 'charisma *of* the city' or the 'extraordinary acts the city enables and necessitates' thanks to the mythology that radiates from its architecture, historicity, and anonymous crowds (2009: 6). Kyiv is the historic center of Eastern Slavic culture, and the city where Eastern Orthodoxy first took root in 988. At that time Prince Volodomyr had all the residents of the city baptized in an event that symbolized the baptism of all of Kyivan Rus'. In the 13th century, the first of many raids by the 'Mongol-Tartar hordes' sacked the city, reversed its fortunes, and, in a way, martyred the city. Its history since has vacillated between periods of extraordinary religious, learned, and artistic accomplishment and tragic destruction, reaching its apex in the brutality of the 20th century. Yet, the deep historical and religious import of the city for all of Eastern Slavic civilization is fundamental to its charisma.

For Adelaja, the charisma of a city allows individuals to use the possibilities that urban life offers as a resource in not only self-making but, more importantly, as a vehicle to transform conviction into action. The action is intended to result in tangible, material manifestations of the Kingdom. Indeed, it was discovering the 'charisma of the city' in his travels around Kyiv that 'enflamed his heart,' allowed him to commune with God from the roof of the highest building, and led him to think of the capital as his own personal promised land and to encourage other believers to do so as well.

The second component of urban charisma that Blom Hanson and Verkaaik address is the quintessential personalities who are found in cities and embody 'charisma *in* the city.' These colorful urban figures, usually artists, gangsters, and other leaders, are distinguished by their ability to introduce certainty by acting decisively without fear, which on some level routinizes charisma by proposing strategies of moral action. Such figures distinguish themselves from other residents by their ability to marshal power and create solidarity in an emergent form that becomes real through performative action (Blom Hanson and Verkaaik 2009: 9). Using their concept of urban charisma, we can say that certain individuals, such as Sunday Adelaja, have been able to seize the 'charisma *of* the city' and its sensuous dimensions by translating the emotions inspired by the city and its ambience into action, which has made him a figure of 'charisma *in* the city,' in turn, capable of inspiring others through his pronouncements on morality into collective performative action.

This has been both a blessing and a curse for him. The Western Enlightenment paradigm resists accommodating the radical change that charismatic places and persons can inspire. Highly centralized, authoritarian forms of government, such as those in Ukraine today, also resent the power of charismatic figures and the radical change they potentially can produce. The unpredictable, even unknowable, ability of the charisma of the city to allow equally unpredictable charismatic figures, such as Adelaja, to arise in its midst has become of great concern to some in Ukraine today, given the sharp departure this represents from the uniformity and conformity of Soviet urban centers and elite cadres born of the command-administrative system of governance.

These days the charisma of the city not only includes Orthodox cathedrals, which are the traditional historic markers of the urban landscape. It also includes the sacred space of non-traditional faith groups that are member-, not nation-,

bound communities and their novel, improvised meeting spaces. Protestant megachurches have by and large transformed mundane Soviet-era buildings, such as former Soviet Houses of Culture, cinemas and sports centers, into religious meeting places. Indeed, the Embassy of God services were previously held in an indoor horseback-riding arena that was located in a rather inaccessible, peripheral area of the city. Having outgrown that space, the Embassy of God has now erected an enormous and highly visible tent along the banks of the Dnipro River in the center of the city as their main worship space. The tent is provisional while they amass money to build a 'religious stadium' that is slated to seat 50 000 people.

Such new communities foster different forms of lived religiosity and urban organization. The urban charisma of Orthodox cathedrals and churches creates emotional bonds of belonging and cohesion, which, along with birthright, connects believers to the nation, the land, and its history. Megachurches, such as the Embassy of God, on the other hand, create 'home groups' with 'home pastors' constituting a 'spiritual family,' and in the process delineate urban space into neighborhoods. Whereas Orthodoxy trades on a sense of national belonging, the Embassy of God strives to reinvigorate emotional attachments to the city even as it anchors believers simultaneously in their neighborhoods and in a transnational network of similar non-denominational, charismatic megachurches. So, as neighbourhood-level attachments are forged in small prayer groups and by 'home pastors' and 'spiritual families,' the local church serves as a hub for transnational connections, drawing the church community into the world and the world, in all its diversity and heterogeneity, into its church tent. This point is driven home in the Church's very name: the 'Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for all Nations.' The world is truly their parish, as David Martin (2002) noted for Latin American Pentecostal communities, and believers from around the world come to them.

Adelaja's plan to 'make the city bow down before God' is considerably more ambitious than similar efforts to evangelize the public sphere in other highly secular environments. The efforts of the British Bible Society of England and Wales aim to introduce 'ambient faith,' as Matthew Engelke (2012) terms it, into urban life as a response to encroaching secularism. Rather than confront secularists and secularism directly, the goal of the Society is to create an ambience of spirituality that permeates the urban landscape and infiltrates the consciousness of residents by sensitizing them to spiritual experiences as they walk the streets. In doing so, Engelke argues that the distinctions between public and private domains that urban residents inhabit not only crumble, but they even become interpenetrating. Just as ambient media, such as advertising, refuse to be sequestered in one sphere or the other, this group hopes to introduce Christian principles in such a way that their background omnipresence in the city will become so pervasive that they rise to the foreground in the consciousness of urban residents.

Adelaja also seeks to break down the distinctions separating secular public spheres and secular market squares from the inner spiritual life of urban residents, but in a far more strident and deliberate way. Precisely by using one's faith to be open to the enchantment of urban charisma, Adelaja argues that the ensuing emotions and insights will enable believers to bring about the necessary transformations for the city to bow down before God and the Kingdom to emerge. This is a significantly more activist stance than the Bible Society of England and Wales employs. Adelaja writes quite forthrightly:

> So in Ukraine, all our teaching and training in church are directed at helping every believer to identify and adopt a particular area of influence according to his or her passion until that sphere of life is totally permeated with the principles of the kingdom of God. The only reason they [believers] come to church is to be further imbued with the nature of God, so as to bring it to bear on their sphere of influence. (2008: 144)

In other words, it is the church in the city that will lead the way to reverse secularism, or as Adelaja would have it, 'to dethrone the kingdom of darkness' by orienting believers to faith-inspired action in worldly pursuits. In this way, the propensity to separate church from the profane world so as to make it sacred will dissolve, offering the potential to render all urban space as sacred. When believers use their faith to engage the pain of the streets and to respond to it, Adelaja claims, they usher in the love of the Kingdom, turning their city into the promised land.

Transforming the city

Theologians as far back as Augustine have wrestled with assessing the material and political implications for believers who are committed to living a Christian life. Adelaja's theologically inspired view of the future of the city as each resident's promised land has translated into a concrete plan to 'take back the city' by inducing what Adelaja and his followers see as positive, religiously inspired broad-based social change across economic and political spheres. Clerical and lay leaders of the Embassy of God encourage believers to be active and visible members of society, working for social transformation in three distinct 'spheres of influence' – entrepreneurship, charitable giving, and civic engagement – as part of their moral obligation to witness the benefits of leading a Christian life to the unconverted (Adelaja 2005). This, in essence, is the believer's burden. In other words, a profession is not just a worldly endeavor to earn money to sustain oneself. It is a 'sphere of influence' in which to deliver the Kingdom message and a platform upon which to build the heavenly Kingdom wherever one lives. Attending church assists in this process, but the ultimate point of a Kingdom-minded believer's actions should be the transformation of the profane world.

To accelerate this process, Adelaja issues very vocal and visible calls for the reformation of society through urban renewal, and reaffirms his commitment to offering 'spiritual solutions' to social ills by encouraging his followers to proselytize actively to entrepreneurs and to work steadfastly to put 'godly people' in public office. In addition to promoting faith-based charitable and humanitarian initiatives, the highly public, faith-in-action calling that the Embassy of God supports is a key feature distinguishing it from other congregations in this highly pluralistic and vibrant religious marketplace and from other neo-Pentecostal churches in the world.

Along with this, the leaders of the Embassy of God encourage believers to earn as much money as possible to help build the Kingdom and to understand the possession of wealth as a sign of God's blessing for living a moral, Christian life. In many respects, such activist values, practices of entrepreneurship, and rhetoric of empowerment go against the grain of all that has been bequeathed from socialism, which stressed collectivism, secularism, and social equality, and from religious beliefs in this part of the world that advocate prayer as a means to worldly transformation.

In an effort to make a radical break with the past, Adelaja's theology envisions a prominent and highly public role for religion and weighty responsibilities for Christians to shape the city's destiny in a country that struggled for 74 years to render religiosity invisible. In many respects the application of Adelaja's theological kingdom message is similar to the 'Christian citizenship' Kevin O'Neill (2010) analyzes in Guatemala's El Shaddai congregation. Both churches envision realizing broad social, economic, and political transformation one individual at a time. Both articulate not only the moral values by which congregants constitute themselves as citizens, but also teach the means to do so, which include fasting, praise sessions, evangelizing, and other church-based practices. A difference, however, is the emphasis placed on entrepreneurship at the Embassy of God. For example, the Embassy of God has a business pastor who ministers to business people during services that are oriented toward entrepreneurial success. Those that are victorious join the Church's Millionaires Club and the Christian Businessmen's Fellowship, a network of mutually supportive Christian businesses. Christian millionaires are meant to be instruments of change, using their wealth to bring blessings as they build the Kingdom. Yet there are unpredictable consequences to such a theological view of the divine destiny of money when it is set in the worldly context of a poorly regulated, evolving capitalist arena.

The magical and moral properties of money

Galina Lindquist (2006) has written eloquently about business people in Russia turning to magic to contend with risk.[2] Whereas magi and sorcerers were previously consulted to solve problems related to love, family, or addictions, they are increasingly called upon for protective and predictive services related to conducting business to stem feelings of powerlessness and fear. When the perilousness of making money creates vulnerabilities, she argues that instrumentalizing supernatural forces is a logical response. The magi Lindquist studied offer to 'see' the bio-energetic field around the person and 'clear' the channels of cosmic energy allowing divine force to reach the client using spells, rituals, and magical objects. When money is conceptualized as a manifestation of divine force, magic represents a mystical means of agency to access it. Lindquist (2002) writes: 'Magic in post-communist Russia partly overtook the agency-mediating role of the disintegrated welfare/trust structures. This is a role that magic shares with money and the market, and with other power structures, absorbing and managing existentially the feature of opaqueness and unpredictability'. Ultimately, she argues that magic serves as a means to 'conjure hope' and exert power in the face of the risks, distrust, and dangers of making money (2006: 43–46).

Arguing against the kind of 'instrumentalization' which Lindquist asserts, Birgit Meyer claims that turning to supernatural forces for protection and agency when making money reflects an assessment of the morality of power and struggling attempts by the disenfranchized to forge meaning when confronted with misfortune (1998: 33). Meyer contends that it is the conditions created by modernity

[2]See Wanner (2005) for an analysis of the perils of doing business in Ukraine when there is little consensus as to norms of business practice and little recourse to impartial government structures to regulate conflicts.

that give rise to certain forms of power that produce inequality and disproportionate suffering, all of which leaves little recourse for comprehension and reaction. In Ghana, occult sources are projected onto power and wealth alongside assurances from Pentecostal believers that their faith not only allows them to purify politics and power from evil, but it also draws them closer to God. Such dynamics have motivated conversion and driven the growth of Pentecostalism in Ghana, and elsewhere (Bacigalupo 2005; Geschiere 1997; Jacobson 2003; Thumala Olave 2007). In post-socialist Eurasia, for many it is unclear whether wealth is a manifestation of divine or demonic providence. Capitalism has yielded resentment of the vast fortunes of the few alongside the fear of impoverishment among the majority. The rich and poor are united only in their common awareness of their own vulnerability. Wealth alone is an insufficient source of protection against misfortune, wrath, and revenge and the rich and the poor alike search for solace.

St. Paul warned that 'the love of money is the root of all evil' (1 Timothy 6: 10) and this is accepted as a fundamental tenet in Judeo-Christian thinking. In the same breath, the capitalist pursuit of profit through trade, barter, commerce, and exchange, all largely urban phenomena, has also been fundamentally integrated into the fabric of the global economy. So, does money play a central role in creating 'the Kingdom of darkness' or the 'heavenly Kingdom?' Especially after the collapse of communism, alongside the suspicion of money's negative propensities, capitalism, private enterprise, and individual ownership are championed as 'natural' and the best form of economic organization, thereby establishing a fundamental incompatibility. Alan Macfarlane (1987) has written: 'The foundations are laid on individual acquisitiveness, the love of money and pursuit of profit. Thus, good and evil are mixed in the roots of modern society'.

The question is how to understand those mixed roots of good and evil. For Sunday Adelaja, 'good and evil' are the source of the love and pain he experienced on the Kyiv bus and can be used to transform the city into the promised land. Understandings of evil inform processes of moral reasoning among believers regarding how best to frame religious interventions as a means to build the Kingdom in modern urban settings. For others, a rhetoric of evil is explicitly used to connote a radical transgression of accepted moral norms of behavior and moral values. Evil inevitably involves issues of morality because it inherently acknowledges that individuals have choices, which can be conflicting, and the consequences of these choices can be devastating. Moral reasoning can lead one to choose a virtuous path away from evil. Or, conversely, poor moral reasoning can yield choices that produce evil for oneself and others. Understandings of evil also reveal the localized conditions of modernity created by the broad-based change triggered by the collapse of the Soviet system. Alongside tremendous social suffering, there is little in the way of consensus as to what constitutes morally appropriate behavior and morally validated belief, rendering accusations of evil instantly vulnerable to challenge. What follows are different understandings of the collapse of a company during a financial crisis, which some claim to be a manifestation of evil and others see as an attempt to stem evil.

Speculating on urban charisma

One of the casualties of the global financial crisis that erupted in Fall 2008 was King's Capital, an investment company that operated in Kyiv, Ukraine's capital

city. For several years prior to the company's collapse, it had routinely provided its satisfied investors with a 30 percent return thanks to a succession of lucrative land deals, although it promised a 60 percent return. The company's owners were hopeful they had found the most solid of investment commodities available: land. Following the fall of communism, the country's infrastructure became severely impaired as production and distribution lines were cut by new state borders. The new mandate to turn a profit meant that entire industries crumbled overnight, creating regionally concentrated unemployment and poverty. Against such challenging market conditions, the owners of King's Capital knew the historic city of Kyiv would always exert urban charisma and therefore suburban land values were likely to remain robust. IMF and World Bank loans, as well as other forms of assistance Ukraine began to receive after 1991, yielded a massive infusion of cash and cheap credit to spur individuals to borrow money to generate capital investment. Cheap credit multiplied the number of buyers of land, which became a fetishized commodity as housing, which had been a right under socialism, suddenly became a good to be purchased and traded. This is the backdrop against which King's Capital, and other investment firms, thrived.

The recently acquired staggering wealth of the 'New Rich' within a decade of the collapse of communism yielded a ring of suburban, gated communities of villas just beyond the city limits. Not only was the privacy afforded by a single-family home and land ownership attractive, so was the new possibility to establish socio-economically homogeneous neighborhoods. The Soviet-era practice of 'assigning' housing in direct relation to place of employment and position led to economically mixed districts within urban areas and increasingly impoverished and empty villages beyond city limits. A radical reorientation in housing preferences among the new class of wealthy entrepreneurs and government officials was one factor forcing swift change on the urban housing and suburban land markets. No longer did the elite universally seek an apartment strategically located in the center of the city. With this shift, the market for land around the capital exploded.

The demand for land was also propelled by a slowly rebounding stratum of middle-class professionals, who once again began to dream of a *dacha*, or summer-house, on the outskirts of Kyiv. Ownership, or at least access to a *dacha*, for summertime leisure and gardening had always been a cultural ideal of urban life in Russia and Ukraine (Caldwell 2011) and more than a decade after the collapse of communism, this became an attainable goal for growing numbers of Kyivans.

Even for those struggling financially, land beckoned. An effectively managed garden plot could deliver close to a family's entire consumption in fruits and vegetables. The underprivileged also spurred the desire for land outside the capital as brokers discovered the ability to make money purely in real-estate trading. Soviet housing was notable for its 'communal apartments,' in which multiple families would reside in a single apartment, usually located near or in the center of the city. Each family would be assigned a room or two for living and sleeping space and would share the bathroom and kitchen facilities with other families. Nearly all of the problems and tensions that one would imagine from such a housing arrangement emerged. Many brokers made a handsome living relocating people, who were often poor or elderly, out of state-assigned communal housing and other apartments in the center of the city to housing outside the city. The privacy gained made the exchange attractive. It was, of course, a successful money-making

venture for the brokers. Empty residential apartments near the center of the city constituted valuable real estate with formidable commercial potential that could now be exploited in further sales.

No matter which way the capital flowed, into the city or into the suburbs, land was at a premium. Everyone wanted it. With so many potential buyers and freely available credit, suburban land prices soared in the late 1990s. Investment firms, such as King's Capital, fed the frenzy and contributed to the ever-wilder speculation on land. As long as there were highly favorable interest rates to keep the borrowing and purchasing going, confidence remained strong that land prices, much like socialist production quotas, could only continue to rise at an impressive rate. For King's Capital, as long as there was new investment money flowing in, a handsome return could be paid out, which, in turn, kept eager investors coming with cash in hand.

In Fall 2008, when the global financial crisis erupted, unease among investors in the fragile Ukrainian economy quickly turned to panic. Not only did new customers instantly evaporate, it became impossible for King's Capital to pay a return and investors began to withdraw their money. Before long King's Capital was completely bankrupt, revealing itself to be something of a Ponzi scheme. An entire cohort of investors was left with deep holes in their pockets as over US$17 million vanished.[3] The bankruptcy of a company like King's Capital during a financial crisis in a country that is still crafting the legislative and judicial precautions to mitigate against the predatory tendencies of capitalism after seven decades of socialism would be entirely unremarkable if it weren't for one thing: the owners of King's Capital and many of its investors were members of the Embassy of God Church.[4] Some members of the church community not only lost their life savings, but became homeless too because they had mortgaged their apartments, the only assets they had, to raise money to invest. This time, however, these sour investors decided to complain.

Again, complaints from investors who have lost money, even large sums of money, and even amid charges of fraud and embezzlement, would be entirely unremarkable in Ukraine today.[5] Indeed, every Ukrainian investor, as in other parts of the world, recognizes that there is very significant risk involved in local investments given the weak and corrupt judiciary, ineffective and corrupt law enforcement, and the ubiquitous use of violence to enforce agreements. The complaints of such investors would most likely have fallen on deaf ears unless, of course, one or more of them had powerful connections to someone in a ministry with the authority to investigate. Still, the collapse of King's Capital landed in a category all its own. It triggered a swift, determined, and sustained reaction on the part of the Ukrainian government and its law-enforcement agencies. Several

[3]The sum reported was 141 Ukrainian *hyrvinia*. See http://www.segodnya.ua/regions/kiev/Segodnya-v-Kieve-budut-sudit-Sandeya-Adeladzhu.html (Accessed 8 March 2013).

[4]For various early, sensationalist news accounts of the collapse of King's Capital, see http://www.blackchristiannews.com/news/2008/12/pastor-sunday-adelaja-accused-of-supporting-investment-scheme.html; http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/news/23555-prominent-ukraine-pastor-faces-new-investigation (Accessed 8 March 2013).

[5]The volatility of the Ukrainian economy and the number of businesses that failed during the crisis is revealed by the fact that the IMF issued an emergency loan to the Ukrainian government in October 2008 for over US$16 billion to mitigate against further economic catastrophe.

factors distinguish this company from the multitude of other failed businesses in Ukraine. With angry members of the Church on the government's side, those who had long opposed the Embassy of God and its efforts to have the city 'bow down before God' by building its version of the Kingdom in Kyiv saw another opportunity in the long-standing struggle to shut the Church down and rid themselves of Adelaja.

Questioning the righteousness of building capital to build the kingdom

Ever since the Church was founded in 1994, government administrations tried to suppress the Kingdom-building initiatives the Embassy of God launched. Efforts to deport Adelaja were definitively blocked by 31 members of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet, who petitioned the State Committee for Religious Affairs three times in protest over the treatment the Ministry of Interior Affairs had meted out to him, which included 22 lawsuits for various offenses and three years of close surveillance by the SBU, the Ukrainian successor to the Soviet KGB. In the intervening years, Adelaja forged alliances with powerful and wealthy men in public office who gave him protection from the harassment of other state officials who suspected Adelaja of plotting to usurp state functions.

The aggressive actions of powerful politicians were matched by Adelaja's growing and increasingly vocal following, who took to the streets to protest the authorities' threats of deportation, their efforts to keep him from preaching, and the extensive bureaucratic delays that city officials had effectively used to block Adelaja's church from purchasing land and obtaining a building permit to construct their own church 'stadium.' By 2004 the popular protests and high-level government interventions yielded their intended results: Sunday Adelaja was granted permanent-resident status in Ukraine and the Embassy of God obtained a large parcel of land in downtown Kyiv and began construction of its hypermodern Ukrainian Spiritual Cultural Centre.[6] The bureaucratic and 'administrative resources' of the mayor of Kyiv at that time, himself a Pentecostal convert and member of the Embassy of God, were essential for this endeavor.

Initially those who criticized the Embassy of God were concerned about a black African leading an ever-growing 'non-traditional' church and his religiously inspired visions to transform his adopted homeland. Detractors became enemies with the Church's very visible participation in the Orange Revolution in the winter of 2004 and its clear endorsement of certain political candidates and specific platforms. The sizable sums of money that vanished in the wake of the collapse of King's Capital were evidence of the financial resources of some of the Church's members. It became undeniable that the Church commanded not just powerful political connections, mobilized and motivated voters, but economic might as well.

When a new anti-Orange government assumed power, following the bankruptcy of King's Capital Adelaja was accused of fraud and embezzlement for having abused his clerical authority by purposefully encouraging his parishioners to

[6]In one of his most popular books, *ChurchShift*, Adelaja states that the mayor of Kyiv, at that time the owner of a bank with assets estimated at over US$400 million and a member of the Embassy of God, announced that the city would give this land to the Church for free. The land, Adelaja writes, was worth US$5 million. (2008: 26). Is this gift a blessing? Or is it the return on investment from a profitable relationship with a powerful and corrupt politician?

invest in a dubious company, funneling the money to a 'bank' he owned in Nigeria, and then declaring bankruptcy and massively enriching himself and his conspirators who masqueraded as church members. His passport was confiscated and he was forbidden to leave the country. A vigorous criminal investigation began in January 2009. It failed to turn up definitive proof of Adelaja's involvement in the actual management of King's Capital, let alone that he personally profited from the company's collapse. The 'bank' in Nigeria turned out to be the GS Microcredit Association, a credit cooperative that grew out of Bill Clinton's Global Initiative to combat poverty in which Adelaja was invited to take part. Adelaja's only association with the GS Microcredit Association was that he lent his name to the Board of Directors and his endorsement to the development projects the Association supported in Nigeria. Adelaja maintains that he is the victim of unfounded indictments and illegal searches motivated by political revenge. Efforts to ruin his reputation to compromise the growth and activities of his Church led certain government leaders to link him to King's Capital. In response, Adelaja sued the Ministry of Internal Affairs for 'unlawful accusation and libel' when they refused to actually charge him with a particular violation after the investigation.

Unwilling to let the matter drop, in Spring 2009 Adelaja was accused of 'high treason' for trying to overthrow the government to create a 'Christian state.' They cited his commitment to 'Christian values' in government and his determination to put 'godly people' in office. Indeed, one of Adelaja's 'kingdom principles' is: 'When believers occupy every sphere of life, the government can't do much. By promoting kingdom principles, we also keep our foot in the door of power, lest the door close' (2008: 145). Adelaja adamantly maintains that his Church, with its thousands of members engaged in 'realizing the Kingdom,' has simply become a threat to some government leaders because they have understood that it is nearly impossible to get elected in Kyiv without the support of the Embassy of God. Although he does not use his pulpit to endorse particular candidates and specific political parties, other leaders and members of his church are quite vocal during home prayer groups and other church activities in articulating which candidates they think would be best in terms of furthering the church's mission of 'transforming' Ukrainian society.

The charge of 'treason' changed the tenor of the debate by garnering the attention of numerous human-rights groups that are now following the case. Should the government actually press such charges, it could set a dangerous precedent in a region of the world where a powerful state-sponsored official church has historically dominated. Conflating treason with religious dissent could potentially create a legal back door by which a state could repress its critics, be they religious, political, or some combination of the two.

Such high-level criminal charges have generated a barrage of negative, and even blatantly racist, publicity for Adelaja, and by extension for his Church and all Protestant groups. The Internet and media have been filled with compromising and degrading film clips of Adelaja, for example, working with his interior decorator to furnish his villa, suggesting evidence of his staggering wealth illegally begotten and the illegitimate luxury in which he lives. Appeals to racism and the inferiority of people of color are represented, for example, by a film clip of Adelaja swinging on a forest vine, photos of him holding bananas, or newspaper articles with cartoon depictions of Adelaja as a 'primitive,' clad in a loin cloth and replete with nose ring.

Reactions at the megachurch

Months after the first round of charges stemming from the collapse of King's Capital had been levied I traveled to Kyiv again in 2009 to hear the reaction of members of the Embassy of God. Upon entering the sports arena where the Church services were held at the time, I was instantly taken aback by the teeming crowds of worshipers, larger than any I remembered except for anniversary celebrations. One of the first people I asked, a well-dressed middle-aged man with a brief case, explained the bursting crowds in a very simple, yet entirely convincing, way. He said: 'Because Pastor Sunday cannot travel [his passport had been confiscated], we always know that he will be here to preach. So, more people than ever come to hear him.' Indeed, in years prior, as the Church expanded and as Adelaja's notoriety grew, he was increasingly preaching abroad or traveling to other Embassy of God churches in Ukraine. His absence had become even commonplace and one of the several deputy pastors, which include his wife and several other women pastors, would lead the services in his place.

In 2011 I was further amazed to see that the Church relocated and had made some progress on the construction of the Ukrainian Spiritual Cultural Centre. A bank of temporary offices and an enormous tent for services, although set back from a major highway and nearby thoroughfares, were nonetheless highly visible given their location on the banks of the Dnipro River, which bisects the center of the city. Bold banners signaled that this site had been staked out and construction was progressing on the 50 000-seat stadium. There was no denying that the church and its members were marching on.

As construction progressed, so did the legal case against Adelaja. In 2010, government officials settled on charges that the Embassy of God constitutes a 'totalitarian sect,' not a church, and Adelaja was charged with 'fraud' under Article 190 and creating a 'criminal organization' under Article 255 over the King's Capital bankruptcy. Court proceedings began in February 2013. Should a guilty verdict be rendered, it will mean 12 years in prison for Adelaja. One side steadfastly maintains his guilt and is hoping justice will finally be rendered when he and his sect are purged from Ukrainian society. The other side is also vowing to see justice through by clearing Adelaja's name and the name of the Church, and by restoring a belief in the fundamental value of faith as a positive driving force in public life.

Diverse ontologies of evil

How can we explain both the tremendous hostility toward Adelaja and the determination to condemn him as well as the burgeoning crowds that come to his church to hear him preach and the progressive expansion of his church? The ruthlessness of the attacks against him and the fierce defense mounted by his followers can be explained, I believe, by analyzing how each side reasons morally to conclude what constitutes evil. Those who consider Adelaja an agent of evil and those who see him as a warrior against evil both anchor their positions in terms of diametrically opposed understandings of the providence of money and the forces that produce it.

Accusations of evil here do not address theodicy in the traditional Christian sense of the concept. There is no attempt to explain how a benevolent and omnipotent God could allow innocent people to suffer, or, in this case, to lose their life savings. Moreover, the charge of 'evil' is not meant to indicate the opposite of good. Rather, the

rhetoric of evil is used to evoke a sense of transgression and the moral implications of that transgression. Those who call Adelaja and the Embassy of God 'evil' do not do so uniquely because they understand traditional faith groups as 'good' and the appearance in the city of non-traditional groups as 'bad,' or Ukrainians as 'good' and foreigners as 'bad.' Rather, they see no place for the Embassy of God and Adelaja on this good–bad spectrum because they both have transgressed the boundaries of moral rules, ethical systems, and cultural norms to such a degree that the Embassy of God must be considered 'evil' and Adelaja a 'charlatan.' In the same vein, supporters of Adelaja criticize the government for policies that have spurred economic dislocation, despair, and an indifference to suffering, driven by corrupting forms of self-enrichment that pass as governance, which are so egregious and unashamed that the actions of the state and its leaders also transgress the good–bad spectrum and must be considered 'evil.' Zygmunt Bauman (1993: 13) argues that moral convictions are readily recognizable by the bodily reactions they trigger. The embodiment of morality in corporeal reactions distinguishes it from ethical and other beliefs that are far more cognitively experienced. Indeed, accusations of evil from both sides are sparked and sustained by feelings of revulsion for the moral values that have inspired actions each side deems transgressive.

Much of the current condemnatory rhetoric of the Embassy of God trades on Soviet-era tropes. Pentecostals throughout much of the Soviet period were called 'dangerous totalitarian sects' and today many state leaders – and even the population at large – consider Pentecostal communities to be 'cults,' meaning that the leadership readily uses techniques of 'brainwashing' to 'zombify' members. Many assert that these techniques are used to manipulate members into slavishly following a rigid set of moral codes, rules, and regulations to regulate their behavior and interaction with others. This effectively compromises their agency by eliminating their ability to consider the *consequences* of their actions, obliging them instead to rely exclusively on given moral prescriptions when making decisions. During the Soviet period, Pentecostal leaders were also accused of being agents of foreign governments who sought to undermine the Soviet Union by corrupting the minds of its citizens from within. Although political leaders today might not endorse such an ideologically Cold War interpretation, the rise of Charismatic 'cults' are still widely considered emblematic of all that has gone wrong in this so-called transition to capitalism.

The moral reasoning of Pentecostal and other Protestant leaders in assessing the collapse of King's Capital, and a possible role Sunday Adelaja might have had, is different from that of government officials, but initially at least they reached an equally condemnatory conclusion. In the USSR, Protestant believers experienced state power in such a way that they felt that they were engaged in a daily dispensationalist, apocalyptic, dualistic struggle between good and evil. Their premillennialism, otherworldliness, and evangelism led to an apoliticism that resisted the Soviet project to create a collectivist, this-worldly, heaven-like existence on earth decisively without the assistance of believers or of religious institutions. They overwhelmingly chose to live in rural areas, beyond the reaches of urban charisma.[7]

[7]Many lived in not just rural, but remote areas. At one point in the early 1960s, nearly half of the political prisoners in the Gulag during the reformer Nikita Khrushchev's tenure were Protestant religious dissidents, primarily Pentecostals and Baptists (Applebaum 2003).

Although they practiced their faith at their peril, the sense of a gentle David of God-fearing believers in struggle with the cruel repression of a Goliath-like Soviet state, whose rulers were thought to be in service of the devil, lent meaning and purpose to their lives and ultimately strengthened their conviction by making them martyrs for the faith (Wanner 2007: 66–74).

Such a moral paradigm for understanding and responding to evil and suffering retains currency today and helps to explain why Adelaja's enthusiasm for capitalism and the plethora of 'blessings' in the form of money and material goods that it will deliver, let alone his strident political agenda to reform society and remake cities, is met with recoil on the part of most Protestant clergy. Although the Communist Party as an all-purpose source of evil is no longer held responsible for suffering, many believers continue to contend with incomprehensible injustices and a desire for change. Taking inspiration from the Eastern Orthodox tradition, their response to evil and the 'pain' the city induces has been withdrawal from a fallen world and immersion in prayer.[8] In short, these believers subscribe to an entirely different moral code than the members of Embassy of God do. The code of the more conservative Evangelicals proposes an entirely different range of possible responses to suffering for a person who seeks to be moral. This is why they understand Adelaja's Kingdom message and charismatic, decisively worldly engagement in profane activities to be a form of 'casino Christianity.' In their view, he has transgressed the accepted moral code of a proper believer. Because the actions of the believers associated with King's Capital were not in keeping with their moral code, they were at first deemed immoral.

A group of senior clerical leaders of Ukraine's evangelical denominations representing nearly 3000 congregations issued a dramatic statement of condemnation in December 2008 – only to be later recanted – in which they 'disassociated' themselves from Pastor Adelaja. They asserted that he was 'an inspirer and spiritual patron of parachurch financial structures' and that he had succumbed to 'the false doctrine of prosperity' and 'the sin of love of money.' In sum, they concluded that Sunday Adelaja had fallen from 'pure evangelical doctrine and is currently in spiritual seduction and error.' The only recourse for church leaders, they suggested, was to 'abstain from brotherly fellowship with Sunday Adelaja.'[9]

Unable to foresee the consequences of their statement or the subsequent actions of government officials, these clergy misjudged the degree to which popular opinion in this Eastern Orthodox land would lump all Protestants together. The failure to delineate Mennonites from Methodists from Charismatic neo-Pentecostals has meant that even though their intention was to 'break association' with Adelaja, the result of their statement has been to lump them altogether. In

[8]The split between Soviet-era Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals has echoes of splits among Evangelicals in America that took root as early as the Second Great Awakening, when revivalism and Christian activism coincided in a reform movement that likened individual salvation to salvation of the society as a whole. Christian interventionism to solve the moral ills of urban life triggered a counter movement, founded on fundamentalist principles of separatism, a dispensationalist orientation, and the conviction that humanity is incapable of redeeming itself. This plurality of moral visions to transform society, which Omri Elisha (2011) calls 'moral ambitions,' are still in evidence in the fissures among evangelicals in the U.S. today.

[9]The entire text of the statement can be found on the Religious Information Service of Ukraine at 'Ukraine Evangelicals "Dissociate" themselves from Sunday Adelaja' posted 31 December 2008. http://risu.org.ua/eng/news/article;26698 (Accessed 8 March 2013).

various news reports, Protestant religious groups were suddenly referred to in the singular as suspicious, duplicitous, and purveyors of alien values and practices, and even more so after they recanted their statement.

Evil as complacency

At the Embassy of God, understandings of evil shape other moral pronouncements relating to wealth, kingdom principles, and transforming the city. Here is how Adelaja, prior to the collapse of King's Capital, spoke of money and the moral obligations of believers: 'In God's eyes, if there is something that is in your power to do to help people and you don't do it, it is evil. If you are a person who fills people's needs you will never be unhappy but you will always shine! You should sow money to the people in need, not to the people who are already rich. Do good all the time. You don't do it for people you do it for God. It is equal to evil in God's eyes when you withhold good from people in need. What God gives to you is not only for you.'[10]

This is one of his many attempts to impart a shared moral code that evokes a discourse of evil and a repertoire of practices to combat evil. For Adelaja, evil is above all evidenced by complacency and indifference to the suffering that one encounters on city streets. The way to be a moral person and a good believer in God's eyes, he contends, is to resist complacency by choosing a 'sphere of influence,' becoming successful, making money, and then using that money to create 'blessings' for others which will transform the city into the promised land.

Adelaja and his supporters reject the characterization of their views as 'prosperity theology' and claim that theirs is a 'Kingdom message' and justify its worldly engagement by saying: 'You can bring kingdom principles to the public sphere in a secular package and receive a far wider hearing' (Adelaja 2008: 145). Regardless of how one frames and labels such views, they are particularly attractive to individuals who are living in post-socialist societies. Some people have become fantastically wealthy seemingly overnight, which only reaffirms the powerful urban charisma of the capital city. It seems as if only supernatural forces could deliver such wealth and radical self-refashioning so quickly. By placing God as present during transactions and profit as a 'blessing,' the market becomes enchanted and yet still ruled by a benevolent, mystical force to which one can appeal. By calling the convulsive change that has allowed poorly regulated market capitalism to rob 'good Christians' of the fruits of their labor 'evil,' money is placed within a spiritual symbolic arena where protective patterns of religious practice can be mobilized and religious concepts can be used to understand and respond to the ravages of the market. Having suffered under socialism where the wealthy were by definition morally suspect because of their assumed collusion with a resented regime, individuals want to believe that it is possible to earn a living honestly. Belief and strong conviction are more within reach for most than marketing, capital accumulation, and financial acumen. The Kingdom message of the Embassy of God amounts to an alternative and seemingly viable path to wealth and transformation for urban residents.

[10]http://www.kingdomcenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=77:sunday-service-in-god-embassy-kiev&catid=1:kingdom-center–events&Itemid=7 (Accessed 8 March 2013).

Although Adelaja stresses the need for education, hard work, and saving as a means to the blessings of wealth, people with little experience in market-based investment and risk assessment can believe that wealth will magically multiply – especially when it is in the hands of godly people. When it does not, the liabilities, namely, disillusionment and anger, as in the case of King's Capital, are particularly damaging.[11]

The history of the dualistic battle between good and evil, believers and the state, allows some, like Svitlana Avila, a member of the Embassy of God, to understand the travails of Sunday Adelaja as follows: 'Through this trial – of the Ukraine Church, not Pastor Sunday – we are seeing who lives by Godly principles and who has been harbouring secret hatred, secret jealousy and other evils of the heart. It is not Pastor Sunday alone who now discovers who his friends truly are. It is the entire global church now discovering who are our friends and the nature of the hearts of some in leadership positions.'[12] She understands this conflict to be part of a cosmic battle between believers fighting to uphold 'godly principles' and build the Kingdom against those with evil in their hearts.

Adelaja despairs that other evangelicals have yet to develop a moral conscience and the embodied disposition that would motivate them to be socially engaged Christians for whom the cities of the world are future promised lands and spaces of missionary intervention and witnessing. Of those believers who criticize him for encouraging his followers to inspire transformation, he says: 'You are afraid! How will your voice be heard? How will the country be changed? You are here to change this country! To influence the country positively. And if you say that I shouldn't go out, that we are going to have trouble, or we're going to be persecuted, that means that you are believing more in persecution rather than in God's ability to save.'[13] Such words go against the grain of the moral teachings of other believers. They positively inspire fear and suspicion among government leaders. There are few other organizations in Ukraine today that have as many motivated members led by such a visionary authority capable of combining his charisma in the city with the charisma of the city to inspire entrepreneurial and political action.

It is clear that Adelaja recognizes the danger he is in. He began to preach only once a month, and it was never announced in advance. He tries to live in such a way that no one can predict his movements or whereabouts, thanks to, among others, the nationalist group UNSO, which has organized demonstrations where they chanted, 'Give him to us!' as they held machetes. The indictment of King's Capital as a 'criminal organization' is buttressed by the assertion that Adelaja represents a 'national security threat.' Adelaja explains the fears he inspires by saying: 'A country that has gone through revolution knows what a small group can do.'[14] In this there is surely a measure of truth.

[11]Tellingly, O'Neill (2010) titles his concluding chapter, 'Disappointments' in an acknowledgement of the elusiveness of the 'Christian citizenship' mission these Guatemalan neo-Pentecostal believers have taken on and the inevitable disappointment he, but presumably also some believers, feel at the lack of intended results.

[12]http://www.blackchristiannews.com/news/2008/12/pastor-sunday-adelaja-accused-of-supporting-investment-scheme.html, posted 31 December 2008. (Accessed 8 March 2013).

[13]Interview with the author, May 2009.

[14]Interview with the author, May 2009.

Moral reasoning

Since David Parkin's early collection of essays on the anthropology of evil (1985), little work has been done on evil unless it was connected with discussions of sorcery, magic, and the occult (Geschiere 1997; Lambek 1993; Meyer 1999). However, evil has been addressed in a variety of ethnographic accounts that analyze aspects of conversion and activism in the unstable social and cultural environments created by the transition to capitalism (Caldwell 2004; Humphrey 2002; Luehrmann 2012; Metzo 2008; Ries 2002; Wanner 2005; 2007; Zigon 2011). To better understand what is at stake in these debates over what constitutes evil, it is helpful to consider the processes of moral reasoning that precede judgments of evil.[15]

Joel Robbins (2010) draws our attention to two different, and largely distinct, ways moral judgments can be made, which he distinguishes as 'deontological and consequentialist.' A deontological means of moral reasoning would be to deliberately follow a moral code to assess a course of action. By having thoughtfully followed the shared moral code, one could avoid accusations of moral failings. A consequentialist approach dictates consideration of the consequences of one's actions and is judged in terms of the effects of such actions, and not just by how closely those actions conform to a set of rules or principles. Thus, depending on the *outcome* of actions, which can sometimes be difficult to predict, a person who takes into account factors beyond the moral code to make decisions is always potentially vulnerable to moral indictment.

Given that most Pentecostals clearly advocate a deontological approach to moral reasoning, Robbins suggests that this is potentially a key factor explaining the magnetism of Pentecostalism and its stunning growth over the course of the 20th century. In many parts of the world, and especially in the post-Soviet space and in the Global South, social life is characterized by great unpredictability and instability, making the consequences of one's actions difficult to predict. In much of the West, law and established social institutions introduce a greater measure of stability, transparency, and certainty, which minimizes some of the risk and danger involved in making money. The same cannot be said of societies mired in 'transition' to capitalism. Without reliable contracts, courts, and tax law to help ensure success, for example, one is left to appeal to magic spells or praying for 'blessings' in the form of a salary for work performed to help bring about a measure of predictability and assurance amidst confusion and corruption.

However, when a moral judgment is made based on an evaluation of the *consequences* of certain already performed actions, and not on the context, motivations, and reasoning that preceded those actions, a moral verdict can be rendered that is different from one that evaluates the processes of moral reasoning based on a deontological evaluation of thoughtful and conscientious fulfillment of agreed-upon moral principles. This is what happened in the case of King's Capital. There were at least three different means of moral reasoning to judge the morality, and even the criminality, of the consequence of a bankruptcy that led to investors losing money.

[15]See Zigon (2008) for insightful illustrations of anthropological approaches to the study of morality, what theoretically constitutes morality, and how it differs from ethics.

For members of the Embassy of God, Kingdom principles empower believers to make money to reduce poverty, their own as well as that of others. By deontologically using these Kingdom principles and the emotions and bodily dispositions they encourage – referring back to the love and pain the city inspires – to govern their actions and develop a religious conscience, believers live their religion as moral citizens. Such a code will never preclude mistakes, moral or otherwise, that result in bankruptcies. In contrast, most non-Charismatic believers in Ukraine subscribe to another moral code, a different set of moral prescriptions, centering on contemplation and prayer over deliberate, transformative action as a means to yield virtue. Those believers propose that when each person engages in such practices, a moral outcome will emerge in the form of a Christianization of culture and public piety. And finally, much of the general population posits the existence of universal, albeit largely unarticulated, moral understandings of right and wrong, which are enshrined in law, and when used alongside consideration of anticipated consequences to make decisions, will likely yield a positive, moral outcome.

For members of the Embassy of God, the owners of King's Capital were acting with reason for the greater good in a volatile context of economic instability. Therefore, they advocate situating the judgment of their motivations and actions deontologically, within the ongoing act of making decisions, rather than judging them uniquely based on the outcome of their actions. If not, presented with the bankruptcy of King's Capital and the loss of individual investor savings as an undeniable consequence, the moral indictment of the company leaders was a foregone conclusion. By dispensing entirely with a deontological approach of evaluating the motivations and context of the actions, consequentialist moral reasoning led to the verdict that money was stolen and that the Embassy of God is 'an evil that we all have to fight.'

Rejecting these charges is meant to restore the moral underpinnings of the Kingdom message and the moral reasoning that is used in the Church's efforts to reverse evil and suffering through faith-based action designed to transform the city. In a shifting religious landscape, efforts to practice a form of religion outside of a religiously sanctioned space – the city streets – and not in a religiously sanctioned way – by combining divine empowerment, entrepreneurship, and urban transformation – one becomes especially vulnerable to charges of radical transgression, moral violation, and evil. With multiple moral codes in play, there is little consensus as to what the principles of a moral code should be, let alone how urban plight and poverty should be reduced and if there is even a need to reverse pervasive secularism. This precludes a broadly shared deontological approach and places the burden of reaching a moral judgment on the consequences of the actions. A rhetoric of evil refers to radical transgression and violation of established norms when in fact there is little agreement as to moral norms or as to who is responsible for responding to the 'pain' urban life inflicts.

After the fall of the USSR, the fortunes of individuals and of cities were so precariously attained, and misfortune so randomly assigned, that power was (and continues to be) perceived as fickle. How can one explain staggering wealth and extreme disadvantage among those who do not deserve it? A theology, such as Adelaja's Kingdom message, that gives a central place to prosperity as a means to transform lived space, offers a double-edged sword for assessing the providence, divine or demonic, of the enchanted properties of money and what money can do.

As the trial progresses, vanishing money means that Adelaja remains locked in the prison cell of his suburban villa in his adopted homeland awaiting judgment from secular authorities on his divine vision to transform their capital city into the promised land.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to James Bielo for organizing the panel at the Society for the Anthropology of Religion that led to this collection of articles. During many years of research in Ukraine, I have accumulated many debts of gratitude. Here I offer, as always, special thanks to Svitlana Shlipchenko and Yuryi Mykytenko. Lastly, I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for *Religion* who offered helpful comments and suggestions.

Catherine Wanner is Professor of History, Anthropology, and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University. She is the author of *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (Penn State University Press, 1998) and *Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism* (Cornell University Press, 2007).

References

Adelaja, Sunday. 2005. *Grazhdanskaia Pozitsiia* [Civil Responsibility]. Kiev: Fares.

Adelaja, Sunday. 2008. *ChurchShift*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House.

———. 2009. *Money won't Make you Rich: God's Principles for True Wealth, Prosperity, and Success*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House.

Applebaum, Anne. 2003. *Gulag: A History*. New York: Random House.

Bacigalupo, Ana Mariella. 2005. The Creation of a Mapuche Sorcerer: Sexual Ambivalence, the Commodification of Knowledge, and the Coveting of Wealth. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 61/3: 317–336.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1993. *Postmodern Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Blom Hanson, Thomas, Oskar Verkaaik. 2009. Introduction: Urban Charisma: On Everyday Mythologies in the City. *Critique of Anthropology* 29/1: 5–26.

Caldwell, Melissa L. 2004. *Not by Bread Alone: Social Support in the New Russia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2011. *Dacha Idylls: Living Organically in Russia's Countryside*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Elisha, Omri. 2011. *Moral Ambition: Mobilization and Social Outreach in Evangelical Megachurches*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Engelke, Matthew. 2012. Angels in Swindon: Public Religion and Ambient Faith in England. *American Ethnologist* 39/1: 150–165.

Geschiere, Peter. 1997. *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Humphrey, Caroline. 2002. *The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies After Socialism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Jacobson, C. Jeffery, Jr. 2003. 'Espiritus? No. Pero la Maldad Existe': Supernaturalism, Religious Change, and the Problem of Evil in Puerto Rican Folk Religion. *Ethos* 31/3: 434–467.

Lambek, Michael. 1993. *Knowledge and Practice in Mayotte: Local Discourses of Islam, Sorcery and Spirit Possession*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Lindquist, Galina. 2002. Channels of Agency: Money and Magic in Contemporary Russia. Paper presented at the Fourth Nordic Conference on the Anthropology of Post-Socialism, April.

Lindquist, Galina. 2006. *Conjuring Hope: Healing and Magic in Contemporary Russia*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Luehrmann, Sonja. 2012. A Multi-Religious Region in an Atheist State: Union-wide Policies Meet Communal Distinctions in the Postwar Mari Republic. In *State Secularism and Lived Religion in Soviet*

Russia and Ukraine, ed. Catherine Wanner, 272–301. New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Oxford University Press.
Macfarlane, Alan. 1987. *The Culture of Capitalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Martin, David. 2002. *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
Metzo, Katherine. 2008. Shamanistic Transformations: Buriat Shamans as Mediators of Multiple Worlds. In *Religion, Morality and Community in Post-Soviet Societies,* eds. Mark D. Steinberg and Catherine Wanner, 215–246. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Meyer, Birgit. 1998. The Power of Money: Politics, Occult Forces and Pentecostalism in Ghana. *African Studies Review* 41/3: 15–37.
———. 1999. *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
O'Neill, Kevin Lewis. 2010. *City of God: Christian Citizenship in Postwar Guatemala*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Parkin, David, ed. 1985. *The Anthropology of Evil*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Ries, Nancy. 2002. 'Honest' Bandits and 'Warped People': Russian Narratives about Money, Corruption and Moral Decay'. In *Ethnography in Unstable Places: Everyday Lives in Contexts of Dramatic Political Change,* eds. Carol J. Greenhouse, Elizabeth Mertz and Kay Warren, 276–315. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Robbins, Joel. 2010. On the Pleasures and Dangers of Culpability. *Critique of Anthropology* 30/1: 122–128.
Thumala Olave, Maria Angélica. 2007. Notions of Evil, the Devil and Sin among Chilean Businessmen. *Social Compass* 54/4: 613–632.
Wanner, Catherine. 2005. Money, Morality and New Forms of Exchange in Ukraine. *Ethnos* 71/4: 515–537.
———. 2007. *Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Zigon, Jarrett. 2008. *Morality: An Anthropological Perspective*. Oxford: Berg.
———. 2011. *'HIV is God's Blessing': Rehabilitating Morality in Neoliberal Russia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Submitted: April 23, 2012
Revised version submitted: December 24, 2012
Final version submitted: March 31, 2013
Accepted: March 31, 2013