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Abstract

The article analyzes the inter-Orthodox conflict in Ukraine in the context of the search for ways of reconciliation. The path to reconciliation is shown to be a fundamental Christian principle capable of overcoming serious reasons for enmity and hatred, as has been repeatedly demonstrated in history. The potential of the concept of "open Orthodoxy" in the formation of a new culture of inter-Christian dialogue and coexistence is revealed, the implementation of which can ensure Ukraine not only the unity of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, but also the unity of the Ukrainian people. The role of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations in resolving the inter-Orthodox conflict is shown in the example of its "Strategy of Participation of Churches and Religious Organizations" in the "Ukraine - Our Common Home" project. The specified strategies of reconciliation operate in the inter-religious field of Ukraine and play an important role in the further development of a high level of tolerance within its territory.
Key words: reconciliation strategies, inter-Orthodox conflict, open Orthodoxy, inter-church dialogue.

Religious conflicts have accompanied humanity since ancient times. As a rule, they reflect problems of an anthropological, social, political, cultural, and economic nature. Undoubtedly, the most crucial element in the context of any conflict, including a religious one, is the nature of the human being, eloquently expressed in the biblical story about Cain and Abel

(Gen. 4:1-8). Despite the obvious intellectual, cultural, and social development of humankind, the problem of conflict in the human environment remains unresolved. This issue has been the focus of a wide range of specialists, leading to the emergence of a new scientific field called conflictology.

The problem of conflict and division is particularly acute in the religious sphere. As is well known, schisms have affected all world religions, and Christianity is no exception, despite being a religion of love. Christianity, as taught by Jesus Christ, emphasizes unity based on love: "I give you a new commandment: Love one another! As I have loved you, so love one another! By this, everyone will know that you are My disciples, as you will have love among yourselves" (John 13:34-35). Therefore, the movement towards unity, towards unification in the faith of Christ, should logically be more natural for Christianity than hostile opposition.

It is on this understanding that the ecumenical movement was founded and is developing. At the same time, it is worth noting that history has seen cases where religious conflicts were more a result of political circumstances than purely religious disagreements. Today, as A.O. Kisly writes, "religion declares its presence in a significant number of armed conflicts, wars, and terrorist acts [which are] mostly caused by the struggle for territories, resources, political advantages, or ideological beliefs."[1] A modern example of this is the stance of the Russian Orthodox Church on the war in Ukraine. Specifically, its leader, Patriarch Kirill (Gundyaev), delivers sermons supporting the Kremlin's version of events in the Ukrainian war. He not only blesses but also urges the faithful to participate in the war, stating that it is a sacrifice "that washes away all the sins committed by a person in his life."[2]

It appears that there are far fewer instances of conflict resolution. Nevertheless, for Ukraine, these instances are inspiring and provide hope for a peaceful future. In Ukraine, which has maintained a high level of religious tolerance since gaining independence, the conflict within

[1] А.О. Кислий, “Сучасне християнство в системі політичних процесів.” [Kisly A.O. Modern Christianity in the system of political processes] *Virtus Scientific Journal*. November № 38. 2019. Pp. 16- 20. URL: https://epub.chnpu.edu.ua/jspui/bitstream/123456789/2385/1/%D0%A1%D1%83%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BD%D0%B5%20%D1%85%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%8F%D0%BD%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%20%D0%B2%20%D1%81%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BC%D1%96%20%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%96%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%85%20%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%86%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%96%D0%B2.pdf

[2] Borys Gudziak. “Russian Orthodox leader Patriarch Kirill’s unholy war against Ukraine.” Atlantic Counsil. URL: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/russian-orthodox-leader-patriarch-kirills-unholy-war-against-ukraine/

Christianity is a topic studied and discussed at various levels–theological, philosophical, religious, and state. Leaders of Christian churches emphasize the importance of reconciliation. Blessed Sviatoslav, the Primate of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (UGCC), stresses the significance of reconciling the Ukrainian Orthodox Churches. He asserts that this is a guarantee of Ukraine's European future, solidifying its status as a "developed and true democratic state of the European model."[3] An essential aspect of this model is "full-fledged freedom of all religions and the guarantee of the free development of all peoples, without exception, living in Ukraine."[4]

In this context, the example of other societies overcoming conflicts caused by tragic historical events are valuable for Ukraine. They inspire and encourage the continued search for effective dialogue between churches. One of these examples is the case of Germany and Poland. Dagmar Heller recalls that, in Germany, "since the religious peace of Augsburg in 1555, the principle of *'cuius regio, eius religio'* ('whose realm, his religion') has been in effect, according to which the corresponding suzerain (and at that time, Germany consisted of various principalities and kingdoms) determined which denomination his subjects would belong to."[5] This meant that each of the Christian denominations existing at that time in Germany (Lutherans, Reformed, Catholics) had their own territories.

By the end of the 19th century, an understanding emerged among Protestants and Catholics of the need to overcome the “Chinese wall” that they had built between themselves, each closing itself within its own territory. And by the beginning of the 20th century, the ecumenical movement was already developing in several directions.[6] However, the tragic events of the Second World War, including refugee flows and forced resettlement, led to a new religious coexistence. "Catholic refugees settled in traditionally Evangelical areas, and members of

[3] Вітальне слово Блаженнішого Святослава, Предстоятеля Української Греко-Католицької Церкви. Стратегії примирення. Роль Церков в Україні (під заг. ред. С.М. Бортника). - К.: Видавництво «Ріджи», 2021. – с. 16. [Welcome speech of His Beatitude Sviatoslav, Primate of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Reconciliation strategies. *The Role of Churches in Ukraine* (under the general editorship of S.M. Bortnyk). (- Kyiv.: "Riji" Publishing House, 2021), p. 16.]

[4] Ibid.

[5] Дагмар Хеллер. “Спільне свідчення Церков Німеччини щодо суспільних питань. Стратегії примирення. Роль Церков в Україні” (під заг. ред. С.М. Бортника). - К.: Видавництво «Ріджи», 2021. pp. 26 - 27. [Heller Dagmar. Joint testimony of the Churches of Germany on social issues. The Role of Churches in Ukraine (under the general editorship of S.M. Bortnyk). (Kyiv: "Riji" Publishing House, 2021), pp. 26-27].

[6] Василь Тучапець. “Зародження та розвиток екуменічного руху в протестантських Церквах та Спільнотах.” [Vasyl Tuchapets. The birth and development of the ecumenical movement in Protestant Churches and Communities]. URL: https://kyrios.org.ua/theology/ecumenism/1757-zarodzhennja-ta-rozvitok-ekumenichnogo-ruhu-v-protestanskih-tserkvah-ta-spilnotah.html

Evangelical communities in Catholic."[7] The marked mixed coexistence of different Christian denominations in Germany had positive consequences in the context of the ecumenical movement.

Dagmar Heller emphasizes that the implementation of many joint inter-Christian projects became possible because the Churches, after the tragic events of the early 20th century, realized that "Christian witness is credible if Christians speak in unison, that is, speak together and, as far as possible, pronounce a single position."[8] This awareness and example are important for Ukraine in the context of the search for reconciliation.

Another equally significant example is the establishment of a dialogue between Poland and West Germany after the tragic events of the Second World War, during which "the Poles suffered severe repression from the Nazis." The number of dead Poles was about seven million, and in relation to the population, Poland had one of the "highest rates of human casualties during the Second World War."[9]

Christian churches played a significant role in establishing post-war relations between these two countries. Starting in 1954, the German and Polish churches "initiated a systematic exchange of letters and memorandums, holding meetings and conferences."[10] In 1965, the Evangelical Church of Germany published the "Eastern Memorandum" (*Ostdenkschrift*), which called for abandoning the former German territories that became part of Poland after the war. These actions eventually led to the conclusion of an agreement in 1970 on the foundations of normalizing relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Poland.

These examples illustrate the considerable potential of Christianity in establishing peaceful relations, both among people within the same country and between the peoples of neighboring countries. The challenge in these processes lies in the fundamental position of the church: whether it will support the ideological or political ambitions of the government, often fostering enmity and hatred through fundamentalist theology, or if it will serve peace and humanity.

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[7] Хеллер, op.cit., pp. 26-27.
[8] Ibid., p. 31.
[9] В.Бурега, «Примирення в Європі»: коротка історія проєкту. Стратегії примирення. Роль Церков в Україні (під заг. ред. С.М. Бортника). - К.: Видавництво «Ріджи», 2021. – с. 18. [Burega V. "Reconciliation in Europe": a brief history of the project. The Role of Churches in Ukraine (under the general editorship of S.M. Bortnyk). (Kyiv.: "Riji" Publishing House, 2021), p. 18]
[10] Ibid.

The longstanding confrontation between the Orthodox churches of Ukraine, lasting almost the entire period of its independence, was primarily driven by the desire of a significant portion of the Orthodox community to have a Ukrainian Orthodox Church expressing the Ukrainian spirit. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) fulfilled this role, while another faction aimed to remain loyal to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP).

It is crucial to emphasize that the leadership and theologians of the UOC-MP consistently exerted significant psychological pressure on the faithful of the UOC-KP, accused them of being schismatics, and did not allow them to receive Holy Communion in UOC-MP churches unless they first repented for attending divine services in UOC-KP churches. The notion that sacraments performed in the UOC-KP are invalid, and that joining this church is a sin, was consistently propagated in the mass consciousness of Ukrainian believers.[11]

In the last decade, the recognition of the need to address this issue prompted a significant portion of Ukrainian theologians, religious scholars, and philosophers to seek ways of reconciliation. This necessity became apparent given that, according to the monitoring of the state and trends of religiosity in Ukrainian society conducted by the sociological service of the Razumkov Center in 2018, Ukrainian society continued to be tolerant of different religions and, in general, held a negative attitude towards religious conflicts.

As in history, the vast majority of Ukrainian citizens believed that "any religion that proclaims the ideals of goodness, love, mercy, and does not threaten the existence of another person has the right to exist" (44%) and that "all religions have the right to exist as different paths to God" (31%).[12]

Among the initial steps toward resolving the conflict between the Orthodox churches, one can highlight the open support of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) for the UOC-KP. The UGCC stated that "Greek Catholics do not doubt the authenticity of the sacraments performed in the UOC-KP" and condemned the practice of re-baptism, which was

[11] УПЦ МП звинуватила грекокатоликів у визнанні таїнства хрещення у храмах Київського патріархату. РБК-Україна. [The UOC MP accused the Greek Catholics of recognizing the sacrament of baptism in the churches of the Kyiv Patriarchate. RBC-Ukraine.] URL: https://daily.rbc.ua/ukr/show/upts-mp-obvinila-grekokatolikov-v-priznanii-tainstva-kreshcheniya-04022013112500

[12] М. Міщенко, *Очікування суспільства від Церкви і міжцерковні відносини. Стратегії примирення. Роль Церков в Україні* (під заг. ред. С.М. Бортника). - К.: Видавництво «Ріджи», 2021. – с. 73. [M. Mishchenko. Society's Expectations from the Church and Inter-Church Relations. Reconciliation strategies. The Role of Churches in Ukraine (under the general editorship of S.M. Bortnyk). (Kyiv: "Riji" Publishing House, 2021), p. 73.]

carried out by the UOC-MP.[13] The Primate of the UGCC, Blessed Sviatoslav, emphasized that his Church supports "the project of building our state on the basis of protection and respect for human dignity, the common good, and solidarity. We also seek dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and aim to help our Kyiv Church discover its ecumenism, fostering forgiveness and reconciliation in its heart."[14]

Significant proposals regarding religious reconciliation were expressed by theologians within the framework of the concept of "open Orthodoxy." This concept originated among Orthodox theologians in 2014-2015 as a result of their active educational and publishing activities since the 1990s. In the "Statement of the initiative group of the Open Orthodoxy network," published on August 23, 2018, there was a call to Orthodox Ukrainians of various jurisdictions "to abandon the language of hostility and violence when addressing any issues, including administrative and property matters."[15]

It was emphasized that Ukraine needs not only the unity of Ukrainian Orthodoxy but also the unity of the Ukrainian people. This implied the need for Orthodoxy that would be "open to dialogue with society and the media, with science and education, with other religions and confessions, with believers and non-believers."[16] Supporters of the concept of "Open Orthodoxy" backed the efforts of "the President of Ukraine and other Orthodox believers, who are elected by the people of Ukraine to high government positions or are active members of civil society, to facilitate the process of obtaining the *Tomos* on the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine."[17] Indeed, the granting of the *Tomos* on the autocephaly of the Orthodox

[13] УПЦ МП звинуватила грекокатоликів у визнанні таїнства хрещення у храмах Київського патріархату. РБК-Україна. [The UOC MP accused the Greek Catholics of recognizing the sacrament of baptism in the churches of the Kyiv Patriarchate. RBC-Ukraine.] URL: https://daily.rbc.ua/ukr/show/upts-mp-obvinila-grekokatolikov-v-priznanii-tainstva-kreshcheniya-04022013112500

[14] "Вітальне слово Блаженнішого Святослава, Предстоятеля Української Греко-Католицької Церкви. Стратегії примирення. Роль Церков в Україні" (під заг. ред. С.М. Бортника). - К.: Видавництво «Ріджи», 2021. – с. 16. [Welcome speech of His Beatitude Sviatoslav, Primate of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Reconciliation strategies. The Role of Churches in Ukraine (under the general editorship of S.M. Bortnyk). - K.: "Riji" Publishing House, 2021. - p. 16.]

[15] «Ми пропонуємо замість війни юрисдикцій -- мирне співіснування, співпрацю і співслужіння». Відкритий православний університет Святої Софії Премудрості. ["We offer peaceful coexistence, cooperation and co-service instead of a war of jurisdictions." Open Orthodox University of Saint Sophia of Wisdom.] URL: https://oou.org.ua/2018/08/23/my-proponuyemo-zamist-vijny-yurysdykczij-myrne-spivisnuvannya-spivpraczyu-i-spivsluzhinnya/

[16] Ibid.

[17] «Ми пропонуємо замість війни юрисдикцій — мирне співіснування, співпрацю і співслужіння». Відкритий православний університет Святої Софії Премудрості. ["We offer peaceful coexistence, cooperation and co-service instead of a war of jurisdictions." Open Orthodox University of Saint Sophia of Wisdom.] URL: https://oou.org.ua/2018/08/23/my-proponuyemo-zamist-vijny-yurysdykczij-myrne-spivisnuvannya-spivpraczyu-i-

Church of Ukraine (OCU) by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople was a crucial step in the context of reconciliation within Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

However, the final "healing" of the schism, as Archbishop Iov (Gecha)[18] of Thelmis referred to the process of granting the *Tomos*, did not occur. The primary reason for this was the UOC-MP's leadership and its theologians' inability to detach themselves from the Russian interpretation and vision of this process. This created particular challenges for the church after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Serhiy Bortnyk, a professor at the Kyiv Theological Academy of the UOC-MP, expressed the Church's official position on the church conflict in Ukraine, identifying three main aspects: "1) the impact of the conflict in Donbas on Russian-Ukrainian relations in general, as well as on the church situation; 2) political conflict at the global level between Russia and the United States; 3) a purely ecclesiastical conflict between the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow."[19] This perspective left no room for understanding the need to build Ukrainian Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Onufriy, the Primate of the UOC-MP, commented on the *Tomos* granted to the OCU stating, "I am sure that everything happening around our Church and among the Orthodox, in general, is not the path we should follow. This is definitely not the path that will lead us to unity. It is necessary to acknowledge the error of the path, draw conclusions from the mistakes, and explore alternative paths to church unity."[20]

An essential movement toward reconciliation, born in 2017 but whose fundamental concepts remain relevant for Ukraine today, is the Strategy for the Participation of Churches and Religious Organizations in Peacebuilding "Ukraine–Our Common Home."[21] This strategy was

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spivsluzhinnya/

[18] "Сподіваємося, Москва прийде до розуму". Константинопольський єпископ про українську автокефалію. BBC NEWS Україна. ["We hope Moscow will come to its senses." The Bishop of Constantinople on Ukrainian autocephaly. BBC NEWS Ukraine.] URL: https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-46069423

[19] С. Бортник. *Проблема авторитету в міжправославних відносинах. Стратегії примирення. Роль Церков в Україні* (під заг. ред. С.М. Бортника). - К.: Видавництво «Ріджи», 2021. – с. 103. [S. Bortnyk. The problem of authority in inter-Orthodox relations. Reconciliation strategies. The Role of Churches in Ukraine (under the general editorship of S.M. Bortnyk). (Kyiv: "Riji" Publishing House, 2021) p. 103.]

[20] Блаженніший Митрополит Онуфрій Президенту Петру Порошенку: "Це не той шлях, який приведе нас до єдності". Українська Православна Церква. Синодальний інформаційно-просвітницький відділ УПЦ. [His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufriy to President Petro Poroshenko: "This is not the path that will lead us to unity." Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Synodal information and educational department of the UOC.] URL: https://news.church.ua/2019/03/22/blazhennishij-mitropolit-onufrij-prezidentu-petru-poroshenku-ce-ne-toj-shlyax-yakij-privede-nas-do-jednosti/#2024-01-28

[21] Стратегія участі Церков і релігійних організацій у миробудуванні «Україна – наш спільний дім».

developed and adopted by the Commission on Social Service of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations on November 22, 2017.

The Strategy underscores that while religion can be used as a destructive weapon in conflict, "the common task of all faiths is to demonstrate their doctrinal and practical commitment to peace and realize their peacemaking potential to the best of their abilities."[22] According to the concept's creators, wars could be "much bloodier without the influence of religious peacemakers, as they are often more trusted by conflicting parties due to the religious motivation for peace, awakening trust in many people."[23] Although this statement is not unequivocal, citing the example of the Russian Orthodox Church's position on the war in Ukraine, which has escalated the conflict rather than reducing it, the call to churches to utilize their peacemaking potential remains important and relevant.

The Strategy highlights that peacebuilding work is pleasing to God, urging participation in all aspects of life: "in your family, workplace, community, [and] through active citizenship."[24] The primary task for religious figures and believers of various denominations is to strive for a common goal of "achieving peace, ensuring that our common home is a comfortable and safe place for everyone, [and] embracing diversity in nationalities and languages, religions and beliefs, professions, and callings."[25] To achieve such a lofty goal, the creators of the Strategy identify three main requirements: "Hear! Understand! Act together!"[26] Blessed Sviatoslav emphasizes the need to listen to others but also to defend one's beliefs with dignity.[27]

An important aspect of the mentioned Strategy is the emphasis on eliminating stereotypes. It underscores that

> our perception of the interlocutor, a specific social group, religious denomination, or community directly depends on our understanding of it. Superficial awareness, lack of specialist knowledge, and the use of secondary sources of information often lead to

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Всеукраїнська Рада Церков і Релігійних Організацій. [Strategy for participation of Churches and religious organizations in peacebuilding "Ukraine is our common home". All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations.] URL: https://vrciro.org.ua/ua/documents/uccro-peacebuilding-strategy - ukraine

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Вітальне слово Блаженнішого Святослава, Предстоятеля Української Греко-Католицької Церкви. Стратегії примирення. Роль Церков в Україні (під заг. ред. С.М. Бортника). - К.: Видавництво «Ріджи», 2021. – с. 16. [Welcome speech of His Beatitude Sviatoslav, Primate of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Reconciliation strategies. The Role of Churches in Ukraine (under the general editorship of S.M. Bortnyk). (K.: "Riji" Publishing House, 2021), p. 16.]

> trusting myths and interpretations rather than facts. This, in turn, results in extremes of perception, giving rise to bias and erroneous assessments.[28]

The ultimate danger of myths and stereotypes lies in their closed nature. On one hand, myths and stereotypes "feed on propaganda and information manipulation," and on the other hand, they "become the source of such propaganda."[29] Recognizing the above and implementing this call could lead to understanding between the UOC-MP and the OCU.

Crucial points in the mentioned Strategy include: the need to popularize the culture of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence in the diversity of languages, nationalities, religions, and respect for the dignity and rights of other people, regardless of views and differences; to educate high moral values based on religious teachings such as love for one's neighbor, tolerance, mutual respect, care, and trust; to popularize interfaith and other forms of public dialogue at the national and local levels as a means of understanding, resolving conflicts, and fostering cooperation; to engage in "people's diplomacy" by initiating and maintaining a permanent dialogue directly between different groups of citizens living on different sides of the contact line in the east of Ukraine and in the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea; to support socially vulnerable segments of the population (the homeless, orphans, the elderly and disabled, the seriously ill, etc.) and to take measures aimed at overcoming poverty and ensuring access to work, particularly through the development of social entrepreneurship programs; to provide spiritual, psychological, material, financial, and medical assistance to persons who suffered as a result of the war in the east of Ukraine, helping them recover material losses and healing both mental and physical wounds; to create a culture of ecumenical and interreligious cooperation in society for the benefit of all fellow citizens, encouraging positive initiatives, and celebrating the positive experience of cooperation; to pray for peace in Ukraine, healing, and overcoming social rifts, the restoration of justice, and the rule of law.[30]

As already noted above, the official position of the leadership of the UOC-MP regarding these movements was quite conservative, and any projects aimed at overcoming the schism faced its open or hidden resistance. However, the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine

[28] Стратегія участі Церков і релігійних організацій у миробудуванні «Україна – наш спільний дім». Всеукраїнська Рада Церков і Релігійних Організацій. [Strategy for participation of Churches and religious organizations in peacebuilding "Ukraine is our common home". All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations.] URL: https://vrciro.org.ua/ua/documents/uccro-peacebuilding- strategy
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

prompted a certain part of the clergy of the UOC-MP to openly condemn the Moscow Patriarchate's promoted doctrine of the "Russian world" and to seek ways to "address pressing issues of the Church's development."[31]

One of the important events aimed at reconciliation and understanding was the meeting of representatives of the clergy of the UOC and the OCU on July 5, 2022. As a result of this meeting, a Declaration of Understanding[32] was published, which laid the foundation for further development of inter-Orthodox dialogue. Protoiereus Igor Kovrovsky noted that the meeting became "the beginning of a dialogue 'from below' and even influence[d] the decisions of certain government bodies."[33] In particular, "after the gathering of the clergy on July 5, the Rivne City Council changed its approaches from banning one of the churches to the chance for reconciliation and unity and appeals to the leaders of the OCU and the UOC, as well as to laypeople, with a call for unity."[34]

The development of this reconciliation movement lead to the emergence of new ideas and proposals aimed at overcoming destructive tendencies in Orthodox coexistence. In particular, the task of uniting Orthodox believers, regardless of their affiliation to the UOC-MP, OCU, or other Local Churches, was set by the newly created public organization "Sophia Brotherhood."[35] The main goal of the brotherhood is to promote inter-church dialogue towards achieving unity of Orthodoxy in Ukraine. One of the important directions of the "Sophia Brotherhood" activities is enlightenment. In this context, the brotherhood plans to organize cultural and educational events, develop educational and research programs, publish its own printed materials, expose the true essence of the "Russian world" ideology, its anti-church and anti-Ukrainian orientation, and overcome its negative influence on Ukrainian Orthodoxy.[36]

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[31] І.Ковровський Протоієрей. Від руху до Братства: віхи становлення. Софійське братство. [Kovrovsky, I. Protoiereus. From Movement to Brotherhood: Milestones of Formation. Sophia Brotherhood.] https://www.sofiyske-bratstvo.org/vid-ruhu-do-bratstva-vihy-stanovlennya/?fbclid=IwAR1VkaZ2-VCqEDuxnbeY_mfWlouuVH7KjR7807tmtyVk8trm7mWtjCJ_1dk

[32] Декларація порозуміння УПЦ та ПЦУ. Голоси з України, July 6, 2022. [Declaration of Understanding between the UOC and the OCU. Voices from Ukraine, July 6, 2022.] URL: https://www.ethos.org.ua/deklaracziya-porozuminnya-upcz-ta-pczu/

[33] Ковровський, op/cit. Available at: https://www.sofiyske-bratstvo.org/vid-ruhu-do-bratstva-vihy-stanovlennya/?fbclid=IwAR1VkaZ2-VCqEDuxnbeY_mfWlouuVH7KjR7807tmtyVk8trm7mWtjCJ_1dk

[34] Ibid.

[35] У Києві засновано Софіївське братство для об'єднання православних. Християни для України. [Sophia Brotherhood Founded in Kyiv to Unite Orthodox. Christians for Ukraine.] URL: https://c4u.org.ua/u-kyyevi-zasnovano-sofiyivske-bratstvo-dlya-obyednannya-pravoslavnyh/?fbclid=IwAR3xHl7OwXOlbIJHuY-3D-GUyUWjV-fTfqmYBkwf3Z6_SBATttL-UAI8dJc

[36] Ibid.

Despite the emergence and development of the reconciliation movement within the circles of the UOC-MP, the official position of this Church remains unchanged. H. Khristokin explains this position as a misunderstanding "between structures with different symbolic interests."[37] His opinion is that "the main thing for the UOC is to preserve corporate unity, retain all its resources and presence in all territories–the fate of society and the state is secondary to it. The dominant narrative in the UOC of 'canonicity' is intended to oppose the OCU, which is not considered a Church by the UOC leadership."[38] Such a theological position is potentially conflictual.

Existing strategies of reconciliation operate in the inter-religious field of Ukraine and play an important role in ensuring the necessary level of tolerance within its territory. This is particularly significant in the conditions of Russia's war against Ukraine, where pain, grief, and death intensify the religious feelings of the population. New trends are emerging in the religious environment of Ukraine; in particular, Churches are becoming active participants in the humanitarian front. Collaborating with authorities, international charitable associations, and volunteer movements, they are contributing to solving urgent problems related to the improvement of society's vital activities.

It is important to note that the main areas of activity for the Churches are:

> providing the population affected by the war with the most necessary items (food, clothing, hygiene products, etc.); providing shelter for internally displaced persons (accommodation in their own locations, assistance in finding housing, participating in the construction of temporary housing); - support of the Armed Forces (procurement/production and supply of military equipment, tactical equipment, ammunition, motor vehicles to relevant combat units); logistic support in the field of health care (delivery of medical equipment, machinery, special equipment, essential medicines from abroad); carrying out information and communication activities (maintaining the moral stability of society, mobile response in complex humanitarian situations, strengthening international partnership in the context of resistance to Russian invaders, forming a true image of Ukraine among the world community).[39]

[37] Г.Христокін, "Подолання православного конфлікту в символічному полі українського суспільства. Софійське братство". [H. Khristokin, Overcoming the Orthodox Conflict in the Symbolic Field of Ukrainian Society. Sophia Brotherhood.]: https://sofiyske-bratstvo.org/podolannya-pravoslavnogo-konfliktu-v-symvolichnomu-poli-ukrayinskogo-suspilstva/

[38] Ibid.

[39] Державно-церковні та суспільно-релігійні відносини в умовах війни Росії проти України : аналіт. доп. / [С. І. Здіорук, В. В. Токман] ; за ред. С. І. Здіорука. – Київ : НІСД, 2023. – с. 8. [State-church and socio-religious relations in the conditions of Russia's war against Ukraine: analyst. add. / [I. Zdioruk, V. V. Tokman] ; under the editorship S. I. Zdioruka. (Kyiv: NISD, 2023), p. 8.]– https://doi.org/10.53679/NISS-analytrep.2023.07

It is also worth noting that in the conditions of a full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine, the wrongly chosen path of Church development by the leaders of the UOC-MP led to its loss of position among the population. In particular, there is an increase in the number of parishes transitioning from the UOC to the OCU. During 2022, 200 parishes transferred to the OCU, and in 2023, In 2022, 200 parishes transferred to the OCU, and in 2023 there were 600 religious communities who changed their sub-ordination. Also in January 2023, there were 1700 UOC-MP parishes who joined Metropolitan Epiphany's church after receiving the *Tomos.*[40]

In conclusion, it should be noted that the characteristic features of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, encompassing all its currents, are the joint search for ways of reconciliation, the aspiration towards unity, and the peaceful and tolerant coexistence with the state and social movements. As international experience shows, particularly in the example of Germany, reaching an understanding is much easier within the borders of one nation. The same is observed in Ukraine. Churches that are united by a common national idea develop inter-church dialogue much more actively and work more diligently on finding common concepts of peaceful coexistence. The church's service to ideological mythologists alien to its people will inevitably lead to the decline of its role in the life of the nation.

In a situation which echoes that of WWII Germany and Poland, the role of the Church in establishing relations between the aggressor state and Ukraine remains a matter for the distant future. The passive stance of the UOC-MP regarding the processes of forming and developing the self-awareness of the Orthodox Ukrainian's faithful has deprived this Church of the opportunity to act as a peace-making institution and, on the contrary, has created for it the image of an adversary.

[40] Ibid.

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