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CLERGY SOCIAL ACTIVITY DURING WAR CONDITIONS: THE CASE OF WESTERN REGIONS OF UKRAINE

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Abstract

In this article, the authors analyze the impact of Russia-Ukraine war on church-religious life and the state of public consciousness in Ukraine and identify the main trends and contradictions in public reactions to threats to their lives and spirituality.

The research focuses on religious communities of the western regions of Ukraine and their socially significant activities. The primary empirical source of the article was the study (by questionnaire survey) of the opinions of the clergy of this religious organization on the characteristics of parish life and the role of the pastor in the conditions of war.

Three defining vectors that we can identify from the questionnaire are the assessment of the importance and resolution of the issue of chaplaincy ministry; the contribution of religious communities in Ukraine to the volunteer movement during the war; the extent of the believers' need for moral and psychological rehabilitation and the ability of ministers to provide appropriate spiritual care to those suffering from war or its consequences.

The findings point to the high level of social responsibility of clergies and religious communities in the face of Russian Federation armed aggression. Individual clergymen's responses, as well as the concreteness of the decisions enshrined in documents of the Ukrainian churches and its religious leaders' statements, highlight their desire to fulfill not only missionary-soteriological and spiritual-rehabilitation tasks, but also several specific socially required functions. To begin with, the most of Ukrainian churches are now large volunteer hubs with a high level of public trust, with each congregation operating its own activities. Another major aspect of such activity is the socio-psychological and pastoral care provided to soldiers while they are on active duty.

Keywords: war, military chaplaincy, volunteering / charity, social activities of the Church, psycho-emotional and spiritual rehabilitation.

Introduction

The occupational activities and war crimes that are being committed by Russia today on the territory of Ukraine astound with their cynicism and, without exaggeration, savagery, and barbarism. They are horrible atrocities against everything that is Ukrainian—the nation, its spiritual values, cultural heritage, and so on. The deadly actions of Moscow's ruling elite and military, which, by their inhumanity, go beyond all limits of reason, caused a powerful surge of international outrage. Therefore, any justifications, claims, and excuses from the Kremlin to the international community for its provocative actions and terrorist acts, which continue to escalate, indicate only one thing: a real threat not only to Ukraine and many other states, but also to the functioning of the entire international security system. This is evidenced by loud statements and threats by Russian politicians towards certain countries, especially those that support the territorial integrity and independence of the Ukrainian state, and, in a historical retrospective, by repeated encroachments on the territories of other sovereign states, up to their partial occupation.

Religion plays an important role in this war. The most obvious reason is the knowledge that the Russian Orthodox Church's sacralizes of the ideas of the "Russian world," that dilute, level, and deny the national and cultural identity of Ukrainians, which began long before 2022, and even before the Russian occupation of Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the rhetoric of its spokesmen have become yet another source of distortion and negation of Ukrainian history and culture, as well as the implanting of pseudo-values and anti-historical intentions within the "domestic market" of Russian citizens and some Ukrainian citizens who were and perhaps continue remain loyal to the Orthodox Church led by Metropolitan Onufriy. Since the time Ukraine gained its independence, and even more so after the tragic events of the war, the Ukrainian churches continue trying to fulfill their own social function to the fullest extent. Of importance is how religious communities organize their social initiatives and aspirations. Do their socially significant activities contribute to the constructive solidarity of society, upholding the ideals of justice, or is it just manipulatively pacifying, one that distances the church from the painful realities of the life of its flock in wartime?

To find answers to these important questions, we set out to examine current patterns of socially meaningful activity by religious organizations through questionnaires submitted to clergy. It was impossible to cover all of Ukraine during this difficult period when there are active military operations in certain regions and communities, so we focused on the western regions of Ukraine. We examined the opinions of clergymen of a number of denominations, in particular: Orthodox Church of Ukraine (hereafter OCU), Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (hereafter UGCC), Roman Catholic Church (hereafter RCC), Seventh- Day Adventists (hereafter SDA), Ukrainian Church of

the Christian Faith of the Evangelical Faith (hereafter UP), All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists (hereafter AUC ECB) in relation to the specifics of the life of religious communities, and role and mission of the pastors during Russia's war on Ukraine. The survey was conducted on the Google platform (Google Forms). In order to obtain objective data, we managed to interview a large pool of respondents (from the total number of clergy in the studied regions of Ukraine), namely 436 people. The respondents can be categorized into the following age groups: 7.1% of clergy are up to 25 years old, 26.8% are 26 to 35, 35.1% are 36 to 45, 22.7% are 46 to 55, and 8.3% are 60 and over. In terms of regions, the respondents are categorized as follows: 9.6% of the total number of respondents came from Volyn Oblast, 4.1% from Zakarpattia Oblast, 23.4% from Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast, 29.8% from Lviv Oblast, 9.6% from Rivne Oblast, 14% from Ternopil Oblast, 1.4% from Khmelnytskyi Oblast, and 8.1% from Chernivtsi Oblast. This study made it possible to outline how religious communities function on a practical level in the difficult conditions of war, to learn more about the psycho-emotional state of believers who suffer from its consequences, and about the extent of their religion needs in this context, the current status of volunteer and charitable activities among believers (help for military personnel, demobilized war veterans and their families, people who became forced migrants or war victims), and to consider the clergy's inner motivation for and attitude to the significant service of chaplain ministry.

The work is part of planned research conducted by the team of young scientists from Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University for the scientific project "The Social Functionality of Religion in Conditions of Large-Scale Threats: Ideological, Theoretical and Practical Dimensions."

Church and War in Ukraine

The realities of Ukrainian social and cultural life exhibit a high level of trust in the Church as a social institution. This is confirmed by a number of official sociological studies. Data from the Razumkov Center (March 2021) is particularly relevant here. According to the survey, the Church continues to occupy one of the first positions of trust among social and political institutions, corresponding to 64% of respondents (alongside the armed forces, which 70% of respondents said they trusted, and voluntary organizations, as 65% of respondents said).¹ The challenges of the large-scale invasion of the Russian troops in the sovereign Ukrainian territory became a further

¹ Оцінка ситуації в країні, довіра до інститутів суспільства та політиків, електоральні орієнтації громадян (березень 2021р.) [Assessment of the situation in the country, credibility of public institutions and politicians, electoral orientations of citizens (March 2021)]. *Український центр економічних і політичних досліджень імені Олександра Разумкова «Центр Разумкова»*. URL: <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/otsinka-sytuatsii-v-kraini-dovira-do-instytutiv-suspilstva-ta-politykiv-elektoralni-orientatsii-gromadian-berezen-2021r> [cited: 2022 Jul 11].

testimony to the high level of social responsibility of religious communities in Ukraine. Here we should especially mention the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, and a number of Protestant denominations, which, indeed, demonstrate a high level of social concern. Unfortunately, in this context, we cannot positively assess the activities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (hereafter UOC-MP) in Ukraine. The observation of A. Kilp and D.G. Pankhurst is correct: "The influence of the Russian Church in support of the Russian government's invasion has also a dimension of evil power, that is, power exercised in service to immoral or unethical state actions such as the unwarranted invasion of Ukraine by Russian military forces."² Unfortunately, the UOC-MP regularly emulates the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), of which, as per its Statute, it was part not long ago. Changes to the Statute were made, but this process is frozen; moreover, the leaders of the UOC-MP are referenced on the official websites of the Russian Orthodox Church as hierarchs of this Church. Therefore, our negative assessment of the moral and social attitude of the UOC-MP to the war of the Russian Federation in Ukraine is based not only on the facts that, in previous years, the representatives of this community supported the ideas of the above-mentioned "Russian world," carried out cynical propaganda of anti-Ukrainian chauvinist policy among the believers and clergy of the UOC-MP, and spread separatist sentiments and collaborationist views in the society,³ but also takes into account the quite destructive social initiative of this organization as a whole, with the exception of a small number of individual congregations. This situation has caused growing condemnation in society of the activities of the UOC-MP in Ukraine. The question about the possibility of banning the presence of this religious organization in Ukraine can be heard more and more persistently on social media, at meetings of local authorities, and within individual communities and societies. Considering this, it is relevant to quote here the answers to one of the questions we asked in our survey. 94.3% of respondents are firmly

² Alar Kilp, and Jerry G. Pankhurst, (2022) "Soft, Sharp, and Evil Power: The Russian Orthodox Church in the Russian Invasion of Ukraine," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 42 : Iss. 5 , Article 2. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol42/iss5/2>.

³ Відспівував тих, на кого давав наводку: стало відомо ім'я священника московського патріархату, який корегував ворожий вогонь по Северодонецьку [Read the funeral to those he had tipped off: the name of the Moscow Patriarchate priest who adjusted enemy fire at Severodonetsk has come to light]. Інформаційне агентство «Вчасно». URL: <https://vchasnoua.com/donbass/72285-vidspivuvav-tykh-na-koho-davav-navodku-stalo-vidomo-imia-sviashchennyka-moskovskoho-patriarkhatu-iakyi-korehuvav-vorozhyi-vohon-po-sievierodonetsku> [cited: 2022 Jul 9]; Священнику УПЦ МП висунули підозру в посібництві російським окупантам [The UOC-MP priest is suspected of aiding the Russian occupiers]. *LB.ua*. URL: https://lb.ua/society/2022/04/08/512805_svyashchenniku_upts_mp_visunuli_pidozru.html [cited: 2022 Jul 10]; В Запорізькій області священник УПЦ МП представляв у церкві керівника окупаційної адміністрації [In Zaporizhzhya Region, the UOC-MP priest introduced the head of the occupation administration at the church]. Веб-сайт «Патріот Донбасу». URL: <https://donpatriot.news/article/v-zaporizhzhya-oblasti-svyaschennik-upc-mp-predstavlyav-u-cerkvi-kerivnika-okupatsiynoyi-administratsiyi-video> [cited: 2022 Jul 11].

convinced that churches/religious organizations that are part of a religious structure, the center of which is located in the aggressor country, pose a threat to the security and integrity of Ukraine. Therefore, on the basis of the above-mentioned anti-Ukrainian actions of the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate, it is possible to state a sharp change in the self-identification of the Orthodox in Ukraine during the active phase of the war. His Beatitude Epifanius pointed to this key tendency in his report during an expanded meeting of the Council of Bishops on May 24, 2022. In particular, the Primate noted that

before the open offensive, 38% of respondents belonged to the OCU, 15% – to the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine, and 22% – most of them were from the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine – called themselves "just Orthodox," while in March, 52% of respondents identified themselves as faithful of the OCU, 11% were "just Orthodox," and only 4% were loyal to the Moscow Patriarchate. That is, three quarters of those who at the beginning of this year saw the Moscow Patriarchate as their Church, rejected it in March.⁴

However, against the backdrop of statements from the Russian Orthodox Church regarding Russia's war crimes against Ukraine as loud as they are cynical, there was quite a serious confrontation among the clergy and believers of the UOC-MP. It manifested itself, in addition to numerous transfers of the UOC-MP congregations to the OCU, in official appeals by priests to their ruling bishops with strong demands for an immediate severance of any relations with the ROC and a cessation of the commemoration of Kirill (Gundyaev) during services as "their" patriarch, and even more—an appeal to the Pentarchy court to condemn Patriarch Kirill for promoting the "Russian world," the ideology of which created preconditions for a full-scale Russian war against Ukraine. This, in turn, gave impetus to at least some actions by the MP in Ukraine for the last three decades. On May 12, 2022, the Holy Synod was held in the walls of the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra under the chairmanship of Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky), which announced "a meeting with the participation of bishops, priests, monks and laity to discuss the problems of church life that arose as a result of the war and which concern us all."⁵ This caused some discontent and criticism, because the status of "assembly" does not have the authority to make serious decisions.

⁴ Український церковний вісник «Помісна Церква»: журнал [Ukrainian Church Bulletin "Local Church": The Magazine]. К.: Офіційне видання Київської Митрополії Української Православної Церкви (Православної Церкви України), 2022. №3 (30), квітень-травень. С. 5. URL: https://www.pomisna.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ptsu_2022_0330_web-1.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2qec8MomEajjxUBehi65AnyAI4m89bA4fzMgoyTHb5-HhoSAvptBpnYM [cited: 2022 Jun 18].

⁵ Заява Священного Синоду Української Православної Церкви від 12 травня 2022 року [Statement of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of May 12, 2022]. Офіційний веб-сайт Української Православної Церкви: Синодальний інформаційно-просвітницький відділ УПЦ. URL: <https://news.church.ua/2022/05/12/zayava-svyashhennogo-sinodu-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-vid-12-travnya-2022-roku/> [cited: 2022 16 Jul].

Regardless, on May 27, 2022, on neutral territory for known reasons—in the Cathedral of the St. Panteleimon Women's Monastery in Kyiv (Feofaniia area)—the planned "assembly" still took place. This meeting brought many "surprises," not only for the opponents but also for the UOC-MP clerics, because it is on this day, in addition to the planned "assembly," that a number of meetings of the highest governing bodies of the Church were held—an extraordinary meeting of the Holy Synod, the Bishops' Council, and the Local Council. However, the adopted decisions, which seemingly declared a complete severance of relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, as Ukrainians would have hoped, have not eliminated the painful points, but, in our opinion, have exacerbated the situation both in Ukrainian society and within the UOC-MP.⁶ Without going into the details of the decisions made, which are not the subject of our study, we just say that the ruling top of the MP in Ukraine made another attempt to manipulate information. However, it is important to mention something different here. On July 5, 2022, the first informal but public meeting of the clergy of the OCU and the UOC-MP took place on the territory of St. Sophia of Kyiv. It was facilitated by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience and the National Conservation Area "Sophia of Kyiv." According to priest of the OCU Andriy Dudchenko, who took part in the meeting, it was clear that "we have much more in common than what divides us."⁷ Moreover, at this meeting the clergy of both denominations signed the "Declaration of Understanding."⁸ Certainly, all this gave rise to new hopes for many for a solid platform to begin a real and productive dialogue between the Orthodox churches in Ukraine. But, unfortunately, the leadership of the UOC-MP immediately repudiated the initiated meeting, stating that the priests had no permission to negotiate with the OCU.⁹ However, we are convinced that no matter how much the adherents of the "Russian world" may try to justify themselves and resist, resorting to various manipulations, it is safe to say that pro-Ukrainian

⁶ «Історичне» засідання синоду УПЦ: Московський патріархат в Україні йде у фарватері «русского мира»? ["Historic" meeting of the Synod of the UOC: the Moscow Patriarchate of Ukraine goes in the wake of the *Russian world*?]. Інтернет-видання «Радіо Свобода». URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/zayava-synod-upts-russkyy-my/31848560.html> [cited: 2022 Jul 16].

⁷ У Києві відбулась перша неформальна зустріч духовенства ПЦУ та УПЦ МП [The first informal meeting of the clergy of the OCU and the UOC-MP took place in Kyiv]. Релігійно-інформаційна служба України «RISU». URL: https://risu.ua/u-kiyevi-vidbualas-persha-neformalna-zustrich-duhovenstva-pcu-ta-upc-mp_n130657 [cited: 2022 Jul 23].

⁸ Декларація порозуміння УПЦ та ПЦУ [Declaration of Understanding of the UOC and the OCU]. Веб-платформа ETHOS. URL: <https://www.ethos.org.ua/deklaraciya-porozuminnya-upcz-ta-pczu/> [cited: 2022 Jul 23].

⁹ В УПЦ МП заявили, що не давали дозволу священникам на перемовини з ПЦУ [The UOC-MP said it had not given its priests permission to negotiate with the OCU]. Веб-сайт «Релігійна правда». URL: <https://religionpravda.com.ua/?p=82882> [cited: 2022 Jul 24].

sentiments today have become *irreversible* and will develop solely in the direction that is beneficial to Ukraine and its people.

The other Orthodox religious community, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, exhibits completely opposite social intentions and initiatives, and other kinds of values. Even the titles of official documents adopted by the highest governing bodies of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), chaired by His Beatitude Epiphanius, are quite eloquent. Here are some of those for the year 2022: Resolution of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church of Ukraine) No 23 of March 7 "On changes in liturgical practice with regard to the war in Ukraine"¹⁰; Resolution of the Holy Synod №24 of March 21 "On the use of weapons"¹¹; Statement of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of May 16 on the decision and statements of the Metropolitanate of the Moscow Patriarchate in Kyiv¹²; Resolutions of the Extended Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church of Ukraine)¹³ of May 24¹⁴; Address by the Bishops' Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (OCU) to the hierarchs, clergy and faithful in the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine,¹⁵ etc.

¹⁰ Постанова Священного Синоду Української православної Церкви (Православної Церкви України) від 7 березня 2022 року [Resolution of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church of Ukraine) of March 7, 2022]. Офіційний веб-сайт Православної Церкви України. URL: <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/document-post/postanova-svyashhennogo-synodu-vid-7-bereznia-2022-r/> [cited: 2022 Jul 16].

¹¹ Постанови Священного Синоду Української православної Церкви (Православної Церкви України) від 24 березня 2022 року [Resolutions of the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church of Ukraine) of March 24, 2022]. Офіційний веб-сайт Православної Церкви України. URL: <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/document-post/postanovy-svyashhennogo-synodu-vid-24-bereznia-2022-r/> [cited: 2022 Jul 17].

¹² Заява Священного Синоду Української православної Церкви (Православної Церкви України) від 16 травня 2022 року [Statement of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church of Ukraine) of May 16, 2022]. Офіційний веб-сайт Православної Церкви України. URL: <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/document-post/zayava-svyashhennogo-synodu-vid-16-travnja-2022-r/> [cited: 2022 Jul 17].

¹³ This Church was officially registered with these two names as equal. They use both in official documents and information. The reason is that the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople's tradition is that all Orthodox Churches are called like Orthodox Church of Romania, Orthodox Church of Bulgaria, etc. This means that all these churches are a part of a united World Orthodox Church. But national traditions have the tendency to use the national name as adjectives (Romanian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian). These names are more usual in people's understanding. That's why OCU was officially registered with these two names as equal. Web site of OCU, where official documents are placed is <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/tserkva/dokumenty/> (in Ukrainian).

¹⁴ Постанови Архієрейського Собору Української православної Церкви (Православної Церкви України) від 24 травня 2022 року [Resolutions of the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church of Ukraine) of May 24, 2022]. Офіційний веб-сайт Православної Церкви України. URL: <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/document-post/postanovy-arhierejskogo-soboru-vid-24-travnja-2022-r/> [cited: 2022 Jul 18].

¹⁵ Звернення Архієрейського Собору до УПЦ (ПЦУ) до ієрархів, духовенства та вірних в юрисдикції Московського патріархату в Україні (24 травня) [Address by the Bishops' Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (OCU) to the hierarchs, clergy and faithful in the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine of May 24, 2022]. Офіційний веб-сайт Православної Церкви України. URL: <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/document-post/zvernennya-arhierejskogo-soboru-ups-ptsu-do-iyerarhiv-duhovenstva-ta-vernih-v-yurysdyktsiyi-moskovskogo-patriarhatu-v-ukrayini-24-travnja-2022-r/> [cited: 2022 Jul 18].

The decisions adopted by the OCU contain extremely important points, which evidence a rather constructive and timely response of the Church to the most difficult challenges of our time, given the extraordinary circumstances of wartime, the threat to the lives and safety of Ukrainians from the actions of the aggressor. In addition, we know that the OCU, concerned with the mental and physical safety of people during Russia's criminal war in Ukraine, constantly monitors the situation in the country, sending appropriate messages to the flock through sermons and instructions during worship services, electronic platforms of information dissemination (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and the "My Church" app for smartphones on two major operating systems, iOS and Android), frequent video messages, print publications, in particular, the newspaper "My Church" and the magazine "Local Church," and the like. It is important to emphasize that these constructive decisions made by the OCU are and continue to be an effective means of countering the enemy and maintaining a proper psycho-emotional state in society in general, and among its faithful in particular. And this, indeed, is extremely important under the most difficult conditions of martial law. In view of this, let us quote one of the important resolutions of the above-mentioned Council of Bishops of the OCU (May 24, 2022), which clearly reflects the position of the Church, which is Ukrainian not only by name but, first of all, by its essence, every day sacrificially defending the Homeland and constantly caring for its people. The statement of this resolution, which is addressed to the pro-government forces of Ukraine, says the following:

To call on the state to continue to fulfill its duty to protect the religious community and the entire society from hostile foreign influence, from attempts from abroad under the guise of religious activity to interfere in the internal affairs of Ukraine, to destroy it through the imposition of neo-imperial ideology. This duty is especially relevant in light of the involvement of religious instruments in Russia's hybrid aggression against Ukraine.¹⁶

The fact of religious life in Ukraine is a fairly tangible social resonance of its events in society, as well as the specific impact of the religious narrative on the practices of communities and individuals and the citizens' views, because Ukrainian society delegates substantial trust to religious leaders, who are perceived as opinion leaders, as well as to the social institution of the Church as a community, which should not only be relevant at the level of education, but also with regard to the specifics of its own diaconate in service to the flock that is experiencing the severe shocks of war. Therefore, it is important not to lose focus on the constructive or destructive actions

¹⁶ Український церковний вісник «Помісна Церква»: журнал [Ukrainian Church Bulletin "Local Church": The Magazine]. К. : Офіційне видання Київської Митрополії Української Православної Церкви (Православної Церкви України), 2022. №3 (30), квітень-травень. С. 3. URL: https://www.pomisna.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ptsu_2022_0330_web-1.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2qeoce8MomeEajjxUBEhi65AnyAI4m89bA4fzMgoyTHb5-HhoSAvptBpnYM [cited: 2022 Jun 18].

of religious leaders and communities. After all, the signatories of "A Declaration on the *Russian World* (*Russkii Mir*) Teaching" rightly noted:

We affirm that Jesus calls his disciples not only to know the truth but to speak the truth: 'Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No," anything more than this comes from the evil one'. (Matthew 5:37) A full-scale invasion of a neighboring country by the world's second largest military power is not just a "special military operation," "events" or "conflict" or any other euphemism chosen to deny the reality of the situation. It is, rather, in fact a full-scale military invasion that has already resulted in numerous civilian and military deaths, the violent disruption of the lives of over forty-four million people, and the displacement and exile of over two million people (as of March 13, 2022). This truth must be told, however painful it may be.¹⁷

As additional evidence, in our survey, the answers to the question, "Do/did you address the problem of military confrontation in Ukraine in your sermons?" are quite important. The largest number of respondents (60.8%) reported frequent reference to the problems of war in sermons; 31.7% of priests claim that they cover the issues of war during sermons from time to time; and for 5.7% of the respondents, for one reason or another, it was difficult to answer this proposed question. Quite insightful are the indicators regarding the appropriateness of clergymen's statements about Russia-Ukrainian war outside liturgical practice. For example, 79.8% are convinced that, given the social significance and ethical potential of the Church's teaching and the high level of trust of Ukrainian citizens in it, clergy cannot avoid making such statements. A significantly smaller percentage (14.7%) of those surveyed talk about the war, but always try to point out in such conversations that they are speaking primarily as citizens of the country. 4.8% found it difficult to answer the question, and only 0.7% of respondents believe that such statements are inappropriate and contradictory for a clergyperson, and therefore they avoid them. And so, there are indeed grounds for asserting the importance and necessity of clergymen's references to problems/issues of war both during sermons and in private conversations or public speeches. Such appeals are quite an important signal, because: first, they disseminate reliable information among people; second, they contribute to a positive dynamic of influence on the psycho-emotional state of people, and, along with this, accelerate the process of their rational adaptation to the existing circumstances; and, third, provided the right approach during the preaching/speech, they awaken in people an indestructible spirit, solidarity, a desire for self-organization and sacrifice, and a mighty urge to the creation of good for the sake of common victory. It is also important to emphasize that 96.5% of respondents are convinced that, since the Church plays a significant role in society, it should

¹⁷ "A Declaration on the 'Russian World' (*Russkii Mir*) Teaching," *Public Orthodoxy*. Bridging the Ecclesial, and the Academic, and the Political. The Orthodox Christian Studies Center of Fordham University. URL: <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2022/03/13/a-declaration-on-the-russian-world-russkii-mir-teaching/>

support the people in every possible way, especially during wartime, while remaining within the framework of spiritual rather than political forces.

In addition to the awareness of this position, apart from the statements of religious leaders and truthful preaching to the faithful, there is also, in our opinion, an understanding by clergymen of their pro-active responsibility for such important areas of social service in war as chaplaincy (spiritual support of the military), volunteering and charitable activities, and a readiness for psycho-emotional and moral-spiritual support and rehabilitation of soldiers and their families, and all those affected by war. Our survey was designed to identify these trends among clergymen of major religious organizations in Ukraine.

The Institution of Military Clergy (Chaplaincy) as a Security Phenomenon

It is known that today an important role in the efficient provision of spiritually oriented socio-psychological rehabilitation of servicemen, demobilized combatants and their families, people who became victims of Russia-Ukraine war, belongs to ministers of different denominations, military chaplains. Currently, we can differentiate three typical areas of chaplaincy ministry, which often intertwine and complement each other, namely: pastor, psychologist, and volunteer. It is evident that the role of a pastor for a military clergy is and remains the key one, because it embodies their main mission of spiritual guidance and preaching, meeting religious needs, and providing constant spiritual support. As for the second role, from the very beginning of the open armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, it is the clergy who have become the psychologists, through whom the soldiers, both believers and non-believers, have the opportunity to find answers to painful questions, share their emotions and experiences, and the pastors, in turn, constantly monitor their psycho-emotional state. The third group is volunteering. The main directions of this activity are the collection and delivery of necessary resources to the combat zone; provision of medical assistance to victims of hostilities; assistance to internally displaced persons; search for missing persons and release of prisoners, etc.¹⁸ Therefore, it is clear that such activities of volunteer clergy constantly require not only the willingness to give and availability of free time, but also frequent abandonment of their own life plans and interests. In the practice of real chaplaincy ministry, these three roles are closely intertwined and complement each other, and sometimes are supplemented by other forms of ministry that arise situationally during the unfolding of dramatic war events, such as driver, medic, cook, etc. Chaplains are also moral "tuners" for the military and

¹⁸ T. Kalenychenko, "Changing focus on Military Chaplaincy: Religious-Spiritual Counseling and Care in Ukraine." *Religious-spiritual Counselling & Care*. 2016. Pp. 321-342.

Ukrainian society in general. T. Kalenychenko rightly points out, "Chaplains found themselves in a particular social niche, at the turn of national and religious identities. They have to contribute to the formation of a new identity and values of Ukrainian society."¹⁹

In the above context, the results of our survey are significant, as it indicates a high percentage of pastors serving in the ranks of the institute of military chaplaincy, as well as those who have had previous experience of such ministry, which is 12.4% of the total number of respondents. If these figures are shown in the context of the denominations we surveyed, they are as follows: the OCU represents 16.5%, the UGCC represents 2.1%, the AUC ECB represents 0.7%, the RCC represents 0.5%, the SDE represents 0.5%, and the UP represents 0%. It is also important to note that another 9.6% of the PCU clergy and 0.9% of the UGCC are planning to join the ranks of chaplains, which together with the first figure (12.4%) amounts to 22.9% of those who are active today in this very important ministry. However, despite the high rate (69.3% of all respondents) of those who are not military chaplains, 43.3% are convinced of the need to obtain additional knowledge and competencies for possible chaplaincy ministry. Along with this, no less indicative here is the percentage of clergy (20.0%) who declare the sufficiency of their knowledge and experience for such ministry, which in total with the previous indicator is 63.3% of those who can, if necessary, join the ranks of the institution of military chaplaincy. At the same time, 36.7% of the respondents found it difficult to answer the question posed. Given this, it is appropriate to refer to the reasoning of V. Mikhalevich, who in his scientific research emphasizes the importance and necessity of the presence of military chaplaincy in the military structures:

That is why the cause of military chaplaincy is if not a priority, then, nevertheless, important in the activities of the Church. Modern pastoral care among the military can not be "on occasion," it requires the constant presence of chaplains who not only understand the life of the military, but are able to help them implement the best ideals of Christianity in their real life.²⁰

This state of affairs undoubtedly leads to the need for appropriate services (military chaplaincy or military clergy) in the Ukrainian army. This, as time and experience have shown, on the one hand contributes to meeting the religious needs of military personnel and, on the other hand, has a positive ideological impact, regardless of the ideological orientation of each soldier and the psychological training of the troops.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.336.

²⁰ В. Михалевич, "Духівництво у військових структурах: історичний досвід і сучасність." *Збірник наукових праць "Волинь і волинці у Другій світовій війні"* [Clergy in military structures: historical experience and present day. Collection of scientific works "Volyn and Volynians in World War II."]. 2012. С. 131. URL: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/153584137.pdf> [cited: 2022 Jun 20].

Charity and Volunteering Under Martial Law

Ukrainian volunteers who help the military and families who are affected by war amaze the world with their unity and efficiency. Religious communities play a major role here, as, during the war, each individual religious community became a volunteer headquarters. For religious organizations, volunteering and charity is a "living sermon" of kindness and compassion. This has been aptly noted by researchers of religious volunteering V. Kuryliak and M. Balaklytskyi:

Volunteering is, while somewhat amateurish and idealistic based on the mood of a volunteer, nevertheless accompanied by the belief that even a small effort of one person can change the world for the better. Also, religious volunteering, including Protestant, in addition to helping in this life, tries to instill the dream of heavenly realities, which will inevitably await a person who lives according to the norms of biblical morality on earth.²¹

In conditions of war, this format of social service is not only a practical confirmation for clergy and religious leaders of the truths proclaimed by the ethical teachings of all humanistic religions, but also the evidence of the ability of religious communities to be a real environment of cooperation and solidarity on the path of creating good and restoring justice. It is all the more important to study this block in our questionnaire.

When asked "Do you and your parishioners participate in charity (volunteering) to support soldiers (or their families) who are defending the borders of the native land as well as forcibly displaced people?" the largest proportion of respondents (36.7%) indicated that they definitely participate in charitable activities in every way possible, but on a non-permanent basis. A positive indicator in this context was the 35.4% of respondents who participate in charity on a permanent basis. 26.8% reported that they do not organize such actions themselves but are actively engaged in the initiatives of other communities or organizations. Only 1.1% of respondents stated that they do not participate in such activities. As can be seen, the charitable work among the denominations we surveyed has 98.9%, a very high rate. We also wish to give the results of the survey on the forms of inter-confessional cooperation and mechanisms of interaction between the Church and the State in helping/caring for war victims in Ukraine, which show high rates in this area of work as well. Thus, as for the forms of inter-confessional cooperation, 42.2% of respondents noted that they know about such cooperation from their own experience. Somewhat fewer respondents (30.5%) were informed about it by

²¹ Valentyna Kuryliak, and Maksym Balaklytskyi, (2021) "Armed Conflict and Protestant Volunteering in Eastern Ukraine," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 41 : Iss. 4 , Article 20. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol41/iss4/20>

the media but did not participate themselves. For 27.3% of clergypersons, such information was not known at all. However, when asked, "Do you consider the mechanisms of cooperation between the Church and the state to be sufficiently well-regulated in terms of helping the victims of Russia's war against Ukraine?", the responses divided as follows: 49.4% of clergymen answered "probably yes," 37.0% "probably no," 8.4% "no, not at all," and only 5.2% "yes, fully regulated." In all, together with the first indicator, 54.6% of those surveyed are convinced of the effectiveness and productivity of the work of religious and secular institutions for the benefit of the people and country. Given the above indicators, we can see the increased social cohesion in the activity of religious communities in the face of large-scale threats, and at the same time, a clear understanding of the importance of charity in aiding those in need and in supporting victory over the aggressor. Specific forms of volunteering among faith-based communities and organizations can become the subject of a special religious studies research.

Challenges of War: Spiritually Oriented Social and Psychological Rehabilitation

Due to the prolonged armed military conflict, which entered an active phase in 2022 with the full-scale invasion of the aggressor country, a significant number of soldiers, in addition to physical injuries, have psychotraumas and other psycho-emotional disorders that can negatively affect not only the quality of their lives, but also have a devastating impact on their families. This situation requires immediate rapid assessment and appropriate support and rehabilitation strategies. In their work, O. Kokun, N. Agayev and others, who thoroughly cover the issues of psychological work with military persons, emphasize: "The peculiarity of the system of medical and psychological rehabilitation of combatants, along with the detection and treatment of mental disorders, is the focus on the restoration of combat efficiency during the conduct of hostilities and working ability when returning to peaceful life."²² Religion offers the potential for spiritual rehabilitation in a variety of ways, and means to provide aid and support, and pastoral care is just a basic capability. After all, the doctrinal systems of most religions contain specific recommended practices that can restore spiritual health, psycho-emotional harmony, and renew stability of faith in the future. O. Marchuk, a researcher of the Christian concept of spiritual health, insists:

²² О.М. Кокун, Н.А.Агаєв, І.О. Пішко., Н.С.Лозінська, and В.В.Остапчук *Психологічна робота з військовослужбовцями – учасниками АТО на етапі відновлення: Методичний посібник* [Psychological work with soldiers with the ATO experience during the recovery phase: Methodological guide]. (Kyiv.: НДЦ ГП ЗСУ, 2017).pp. 6-7. URL: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/84274034.pdf> [cited: 2022 Jun 28].

The influence of biblical and patristic health anthropology is defining for modern Catholic and Orthodox "therapeutic theology," "agiotherapy," "Christian psychotherapy," within which there is a synthesis of traditional knowledge and practices with modern psychology and psychotherapy. This synthesis is made possible through the use of existentialistic philosophy and theology as a methodological basis for modern health theology.²³

Analyzing the answers to the question about the availability of centers, establishments, and institutions in the regions, including in parishes, that provide spiritually oriented social and psychological rehabilitation for soldiers, discharged combatants and their families, and people who are war victims, it is worth noting that the vast majority of respondents (58.3%) state that such institutions are active in the area where they live or perform their pastoral ministry. Quite a high percentage, which is 14.7%, indicate the effective functioning of these institutions in individual religious communities, and 12.6% of respondents state the prospects for the implementation of this activity in their church communities; only 14.4% of respondents indicated the absence of any establishments of such kind. However, we assume that the latter group of respondents includes clergy of either the older age category or from the villages remote from the district and regional centers, who most likely do not know or have no interest in such information. Given the extremely difficult conditions of war and the constant growth in the number of war veterans, which is one of the priorities of our country's social policy today, it is unlikely that there are no institutions providing psychological rehabilitation in any particular region. Therefore, we can say that the level of provision of such much-needed aid has a positive growth trend and, according to the results of our study of the opinion of the clergy of the mentioned denominations, is prioritized by 85.6% of the clergy in general. Thus, speaking of the rehabilitation of soldiers and the normalization of their moral and psychological state, let us again turn attention to one of its most productive components, spiritual therapy. Here, answers to the following question are important: "How often have you, as a clergyman, been approached by military personnel (or their families) for pastoral counsel or consolation in connection with the events of the war itself and their aftermath?" As predicted, the percentage of those who turned to clergymen for spiritual advice or help because of the negative consequences of the war is extremely high, confirmed by 87.9%. In the context of answers: 46.6% of respondents report frequent conversations with victims and 41.3% state that it occurs only within the framework of liturgical practice. A considerably lower figure (12.1%) indicates the absence of any appeals from people who became victims of war crimes or conversations with them. In view of this, what is relevant here are the indicators related to the initiatives of the clergy, in particular

²³ О.Т. Марчук *Концепція духовного здоров'я в антропології східної патристики* [The concept of spiritual health in the anthropology of Eastern patristics]. Дисертація на здобуття наук. ступ. канд. філос. н. 09.00.11 – релігієзнавство. (Київ : Нац. пед. ун-тет ім. М.П. Драгоманова, 2017). р. 178.

the organization of meetings with combatants and volunteers to find effective means of diagnosis and provision of spiritually oriented rehabilitation. The highest rate (29.1%), according to the results, indicates the meetings of this type were held only a few times. Somewhat fewer respondents (19.3%) indicate such meetings are held regularly. Another group of them (20.9%) rely on rehabilitation centers operating in the region, and, therefore, see no urgent need for such activities on their part. 26.4% of respondents report the absence of such initiatives for some reason, and 4.3% consider such meetings inappropriate because they do not have sufficient experience and training themselves. There is a need to substantiate such, in our opinion, relatively high indicators of providing spiritually oriented social and psychological rehabilitation, initiatives, organizing, and conducting meetings and discussions, etc. It is important to note that this primarily indicates a large number of both those taking part in hostilities today and those who have actively participated in confrontation with the enemy in previous years. Other indicators of our survey also indicate this: 77.1% of the clergy reported that their parishioners include both combatants and war veterans. 10.1% of respondents do not have such information and the rest (12.8%) indicated that there are no people with military experience in their communities. Given the current circumstances, we can only state that, unfortunately, depending on the situation at the front, the percentage of combatants will change.

Quite significant and noteworthy is the respondents' assessment of the psycho-emotional state of believers in wartime conditions. The results of our study convincingly show that people who lead an active spiritual life adapt more easily to different types of threats, in contrast to those who do not maintain such a lifestyle or do not follow any religion. This is confirmed by specific comprehensive studies, one of which clearly summarizes:

This review showed, in almost every study, that religion in general, religious training, spirituality, faith, prayer, religious community and worship were associated with reduced anxiety (stress). These effects were observed in both healthy individuals and in various patient populations. In addition, a number of studies demonstrated that religious based treatment intervention was helpful in the treatment of anxiety.²⁴

That is why it is difficult to overestimate the role of social activity of religious organizations in spiritual support and rehabilitation of Ukrainian citizens in the conditions of the war horrors, as well as the need for further development of specific functional programs and missions in this direction.

²⁴ W. C. Stewart, M. J. Wetselaar, L. A. Nelson and J. A. Stewart (2019) "Review of the Effect of Religion on Anxiety." *International Journal of Depression and Anxiety*. 2019. Vol. 2, Issue 2. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b0ea/adabfa469da3a3fb615a66a833cb51598dba.pdf>

The Question of Defense of the Homeland and Religiously Motivated Pacifism

The analysis of this issue in the perspective of the dichotomy "War and Religion" implies an explanation for the engagement in armed confrontation of people who identify themselves as believers. Consequently, the issue of depriving another person of life, which inevitably arises in the course of a military conflict, can trigger a variety of problems in a civil society that will have religious overtones – first of all, the question of the compatibility of religiously determined pacifism and patriotism or duty to the state or, in a broader perspective, the permissibility of killing another person by a convinced believer.²⁵

In this context, the survey included several questions that should somewhat reveal the vision of the clergymen from the western regions of our country of various aspects of this problem. The respondents were offered to answer an open question: "What, in your opinion, does it mean to be a 'defender of the Homeland' according to Christian teaching?" Given the large number of statements, it will not be possible to list all of them, and therefore we will only cite the most striking ones, in particular: "To protect your people, your God-given land not only from invaders, but also from all kinds of false and harmful information that contradicts the teaching of Christ," "To defend the Homeland by all available means with faith in God in your heart," "To be ready to give your life defending your Homeland as a gift from God," "Patriotism. Sacrificial love for your neighbor. Faith," "To be a defender of your people, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. To be ready to lay down your life, because 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:13, KJV)," "Who truly loves his homeland, will undoubtedly defend it," "Love your homeland, language and people!," "To serve with love for your homeland, each in their place, without violating the laws of God," "To defend your country and the Church from external and internal enemies, to serve with honor," "It is necessary to prevent wars and conflicts by all means. Therefore, everyone should understand that peace between people depends on whether people will be at peace with God," "A just war is one that can be started only to defend your homeland from attackers. Therefore, the defender of the Homeland is the one who protects their country without encroaching on foreign territory," "Do not lose God's gift to live in your country, to pray in your church in your native language," "You can be a defender of the Homeland in different ways. One of them is volunteer assistance, when a person devotes their time and contributes to the common good. Also, by all means enveloping your Homeland with your prayer

²⁵ І. Горохолінська *Постсекулярність: богословські та філософські інтенції сучасної релігійності* [Post-secularity: theological and philosophical intentions of modern religiosity]. (Чернівці: Черн. нац. ун-т, 2019), p. 328.

as well as its defenders who are near you on the battlefield," "It is necessary to defend the Homeland both physically and spiritually," "To love, respect and honor everything connected with Ukraine. To be a sacrificial and conscious Ukrainian, a true and faithful son of my people," "To defend the truth and freedom of my people and my own family," "To defend the interests of the state that do not contradict the Bible and the Church's teaching," "To love God, my Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, to pray for all people, soldiers and volunteers who work, protecting us from the Russian invasion," "The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep," "First of all, to pray for those who are on the front line and the authorities of the country, secondly, to provide spiritual and psychological (pastoral care) to soldiers and their families, thirdly, to assist (financially and materially) the military and refugees in various ways, fourthly, if necessary, to be on the front line alongside the military," "To put the future of your country above your own interests, to protect the dignity and life of your fellow citizens at all levels (physical, mental, spiritual, cultural), depending on your own abilities and capabilities," "The understanding that you are defending the world (i.e., land, culture, language, family, soul and everything that brings you joy) given to you by God from another person (system, state, ideology) who wants to destroy it all under the influence of ideas inspired by the evil (devil)," "First, it is the fulfillment of the Fifth Commandment of God; secondly, to be a defender of the Homeland means not only engagement in the military or at the front, but also the promotion of your culture, language, traditions and, thirdly, to be a defender of the Homeland is to be devoted to your people," "To defend the Homeland is to preserve peace in our country, no matter how paradoxical it may sound, but with the help of weapons. The main thing in my opinion is that the war against the enemy should not become a pleasure for the soldier. This is what we must first of all control as chaplains: to protect the defender from turning into a cold-blooded killer" and the like.

Within the framework of the above discussion, the answers to the question we posed about the Church's attitude toward the use of weapons by military and civilian citizens against invaders are quite significant, given that the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue warns: "Thou shalt not kill!" As the results of the questionnaire showed, 89.9% of respondents had no doubt: the Church then blesses the use of weapons by the population against invaders. For 8.3% of respondents, it was difficult to give an answer to the question offered. 1.8% believe that the Church is totally against the use of any weapons, even against invaders, and that the settlement of the problem should be carried out exclusively through diplomacy.

We certainly share the position of those who take a rational approach to the overly complicated issue/task of self-defense of their sovereign country – the use of weapons. Here it is important to understand the fundamental difference between *intentional killing*, which the Lord

God warns against in the Sixth Commandment (see Exodus 20:13), and *unintentional killing* because of one's self-defense against the attack of an enemy or criminal. This is how the Bible describes it: "*If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him*" (Exodus 22:2, KJV). Being aware of the global nature of the questions that addressed the problem of religiously motivated pacifism, we believe that the relevance and effectiveness of pacifism as an ideal of peaceful coexistence, life according to the commandments of love, is evident. But when these ideals are flouted by others, the problem of protecting life and the values you postulate arises. Of course, the Christian religion sees the perfect state of social life as one that overcomes the negative phenomenon of military aggression: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4, KJV). But war, according to the Christian worldview, is a fruit of sin: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye not be troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matthew 24: 6-7, KJV), and therefore: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18, KJV). But if peace is not possible because it was not you who broke it, then "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13, KJV). After all, the Holy Scripture says the following about the "false call for peace": "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:13-14, KJV).

Conclusions

In light of the above, we can conclude that today the Church and the state face extremely difficult tasks, which, in our deep conviction, can be defined by the following key messages: first, an understandable and balanced position on the events that have significantly influenced and radically changed the priorities of the development of Ukrainian society; second, strong military support in both material and spiritual directions; third, constant support of the military clergy (chaplaincy service), which is today a serious lever to improve the moral and psychological training of military personnel, contributing to the high spiritual, patriotic and combat potential of the troops; fourth, the constant provision of spiritually oriented social and psychological rehabilitation for soldiers, demobilized combatants and their families, and people who became victims of Russia-Ukraine war; fifth, and perhaps most importantly, the Church and the state should always

be with their people and hear their "cry for help." In the end, current events testify to a serious aggravation of problems not only in a particular region or country, but, above all, at the global level, causing an ambiguous impact and posing a severe threat to international peace and stability. Therefore, it is the rational decisions and the sound approach of both church and secular leadership that will determine how constructive the changes in society will be and how difficult problems, such as the end of the war and the return of peace in Ukraine, will be solved.

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