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MODERN THREATS TO THE RELIGIOUS SECURITY OF UKRAINIANS IN THE DIASPORA

The article is devoted to the problem of dangers faced by Ukrainians in the diaspora today. In addition to global challenges (environmental, energy, financial, resource, migration, etc.), there are specific threats to the spiritual and religious life of mankind, including and Ukrainians. Large-scale secularization and dehumanization of the world is dangerous for everyone. People are at risk of losing their cultural, ethno-national and religious identity. These processes are especially threatening for those who living outside their country of origin, in the diaspora, where the connection with the motherland is rapidly lost. The author analyzes the problems experienced by the current Ukrainian diaspora. Among them are 1) historical problems that date back to the first wave of emigration, which were only exacerbated during the next, second, third and fourth; 2) psychological, which are determined by the nature of Ukrainians; 3) socio-economic, which determine the social status of members of the diaspora; 4) political, exacerbating the heterogeneity of the Ukrainian diaspora environment; 5) cultural, which on the one hand ensure the entry of Ukrainians into global culture, and on the other – preserve them as a relatively autonomous ethnic group. But there are also religious challenges associated with the general dereligiousization of modern society. Secularized Ukrainians who migrate from Ukraine, where they have not been attached to religious traditions and have been brought up in a non-religious spirit, do not become members of Ukrainian churches abroad. The number of Ukrainian believers in the diaspora is declining. In addition, Russian Orthodox structures operating outside Russia are actively dragging Ukrainians into their communities, eroding their own Ukrainian identity. Ukrainian Greek Catholics are being denationalized and deconfessionalized too. The Protestant churches, which unite religious emigrants from the former Soviet republics, are dominated by the Russian component, which influences the original ethno-religious identity of Ukrainians. Taken together, these dangers pose a question of existential importance to Ukrainians in the diaspora – whether Ukrainians in the diaspora will survive as a valuable part of global humanity, as an integral element of World's Ukrainians, as the citizens of the respective state and the members of civil society.

Keywords: Ukrainians, diaspora, religious security, threats, diaspora religiosity, identity.

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ACTIVITIES OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS UNDER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SPREAD

The article analyzes the response of religious organizations to the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the global confessional community. Many churches and denominations have faced direct restrictions on their activities.

The author concludes that in each country these restrictions are localized and feature varying degrees of flexibility, depending on the current situation. The reaction of confessions to the corresponding restrictions and lockdowns varies as well: from understanding and collaboration with the authorities to manifesting disobedience and deliberate violation of the lockdown regulations.

The spread of the pneumotropic virus prompted religious organizations to widely implement new forms of communication with their followers. A current trend is a so-called "accelerated digitalization": communication of churches with the believers and of the latter among themselves through online technologies. This will undoubtedly make religious organizations to reconsider their established traditional forms of spiritual and cult activity going forward.

Facing the crisis situation under the fight against the coronavirus, religious organizations were able to sacrifice the most important aspect: mass public worships, which are a basic life need for believers of any confession and religion. For most of them, this constraint became a test for their general strength since the absence of joint onsite worships means the disunity of members of religious communities, the termination of the activities of individual parishes, as well as the loss of part of their income.

The religious organizations' involvement in countering the spread of the virus has shown that they are not archaic and are capable of responding to social challenges. For many of them, especially for the Orthodox ones, the crisis has posed an acute issue of developing new forms of the Christian mission and attracting the population to the church. In many countries, the pandemic has helped the development of an interfaith dialogue. The social changes caused by the coronavirus pandemic have exacerbated existing issues and accelerated the processes that have already been taking place in the internal church life.

Keywords: state-church relations, religious legislation, pandemic, coronavirus (COVID-19), Orthodoxy, Catholicism.

The COVID-19 virus spread around the globe has forced unprecedented large-scale security measures to be implemented. The restrictions touched even an area that is not always regulated by the state: religion. Unlike the secular authorities, the church in Europe has accumulated centuries-long experience in dealing with epidemics. Historically, a spread of infections triggered the emergence of a number of church hospitals, monasteries, and orders. For example, the term *lazaretto*, or *lazaret*, corresponding in current meaning to the infirmary, originated as a reference to a quarantine station for maritime travelers associated in its origin with the Catholic Order of St. Lazarus. The Vatican also used epidemics to remind the believers of pestilence as a punishment for sins and of the upcoming apocalypse. Along with helping people and organizing the first hospitals in the monasteries, the church collected large donations in difficult times (many epidemics lasted for decades).

Orthodox churches usually acted in accordance with the instructions of the authorities, with priests visiting hospi-

tals, prayers services being organized, and churches closing in extraordinary cases. Later, observing the spread of diseases, people realized that they spread from person to person, from village to village, and from city to city. The first references to the prohibition for priests to come to the sick people during epidemics dates back to the beginning of the XV century. People realized that restrictive measures – quarantines – were the only rescue. Lockdowns of cities and places of mass congregation, retention of merchant ships in the ports, and closure of churches are the measures that have been developed over humankind's entire multi-centuries history.

The 2020 coronavirus pandemic has become a challenge for many churches and their ability to be useful to society and the state when secular state and local officials ceased to pay attention to the specific interests of believers and clergy.

The article aims to analyze the reaction of religious organizations and Christian churches in Europe to the 2020 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the global confessional community. Many churches and denominations have faced direct restrictions on their activities. In each country, these restrictions have their own specifics and are featured by a varying degree of flexibility, depending on the current situation. The confessions' reaction to the corresponding restriction varies as well: from understanding and collaboration with the authorities to manifesting disobedience and deliberate violation of the lockdown regulations.

The pneumotropic virus's spread prompted religious organizations to start a large-scale implementation of new forms of communication with their followers. A currently growing trend is a so-called "accelerated digitalization": communication of churches with believers and of the latter among themselves via online technologies. This will undoubtedly foster religious organizations to reconsider the established traditional forms of spiritual and cult activity going forward.

The current pandemic has also presented the churches of the world with a difficult dilemma: to take care of the believers' health or, notwithstanding anything, to stay true to established traditions.

While the European Union countries are closing their internal borders and airline traffic as well as is human communication in general is being disrupted due to the lockdowns, religious organizations serve as an example of solidarity and openness in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Christian churches have proved themselves to be an active part of civil society. Most of them promptly and actively responded to the critical situation that has developed in a number of the European countries (primarily in Italy, Germany, Spain, and the UK). Firstly, the churches have shown their importance for the society and solution of its social problems. Secondly, it turned out that church activity is, in fact, one of the cornerstones of the European unity, and Christianity is the "soul of Europe". The religious organizations' social service has long crossed their traditional boundaries and became a basis for their new social and political role in the European society.

Under the coronavirus crisis, representatives of various churches have proposed their own versions of maintaining the European solidarity.

Following the World Health Organization's (WHO) declaration of a pandemic, the European Commission issued its recommendations to fight the virus. In particular, they suggested closing religious sites, including churches, and suspending all public religious events [1]. The restrictions introduced by different countries due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic also affected the activities of the confessions. The purpose of such restrictions is to prevent mass gatherings and congregation of people that is a direct consequence of the religious organizations' cult practice. These include mass church services, prayer meetings, festive, memorial, and ritual actions, etc. The lockdown measures' strictness in each country was determined by a number of factors: the number of infected, the rate of spread of the coronavirus, the religiosity of the population, the proximity of important religious holidays, the political regime, the reliance on other countries' experience, as well as the WHO recommendations.

The Conference of European Churches, which brings together dozens of organizations of different confessions, announced the cancelation of all meetings and events. The European churches have called for joint prayer and reflection. As noted in the statement, the crisis prompts one think

about new opportunities as well as "the state of our world, the priorities of our governments and the global economy, as well as on our own personal and spiritual lives" [2].

The Commission of the Episcopates of the European Union and the Conference of European Churches, in a declaration dated April 2, 2020, praised the actions of Europeans during the crisis and called on politicians to work "in a spirit of empathy and democracy". It is noteworthy that these are the "common European values" that act as a special value in the statements of church associations [3].

The Catholic Church was one of the first to take measures similar to those taken by the secular authorities.

Pope Francis was the first one to set an example for believers: he switched to a remote worship service and a virtual reception of pilgrims. The Vatican closed for tourists St. Peter's Square and Cathedral, as well as the Sistine Chapel. Further, the Apostolic Penitentiary issued a decree according to which believers (in particular, those sick with coronavirus and medical workers) can receive an indulgence remotely. For an isolated patient with the coronavirus, an indulgence is to be received by reading the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well as studying the Bible for half an hour.

In Germany, France, Italy, and other European countries, churches immediately took emergency measures to suspend mass worships and church services. The Chairman of the German Bishops' Conference (Bishop Georg Baetzing), the Chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm), and the head of the Orthodox Episcopal Assembly in Germany (Metropolitan Augustine of Germany) issued a joint appeal entitled "Assistance, Consolation and Hope", in which the confessions' representatives explained why they had to make such a difficult decision to cancel their meetings.

Under such an existential crisis, when boundaries arise even between social institutions, a lot depends on each person. Religious leaders referred to the example of volunteers going shopping for elderly or sick neighbors, or looking after children whose parents have to go to work [4].

Caritas Germany, the Catholic charity organization, created a movement with the hashtag #StayathomeHero calling to set "home records": who will read more books, sit longer in a bathtub or a yoga pose, etc.

Representatives of various Christian denominations, as well as Muslims and Jews, almost unconditionally obeyed even the most drastic requirements of the secular authorities, expressed in a form of orders. The Church of England supported the government's actions as well.

The Orthodox churches in Europe suspended public worship as well. Finnish, Romanian, and Georgian churches took the security measures, including Communion with disposable spoons and prohibition of kissing the icons in churches.

The Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) banned onsite services with parishioners allowing only priests and church ministers to be present in the temple. At the same time, the OCU insists that church services cannot be fully suspended, and temples should remain accessible for individual visits by believers subject to compliance with the lockdown regulations. Metropolitan Epiphanius, the Primate of the OCU, stated that if need be, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine will provide premises for accommodating coronavirus patients. In March, the OCU also reported that they began producing antiseptics, primarily for the most vulnerable categories of the population. The antiseptics are made according to the recipe of the World Health Organization.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) has also announced that it is ready to provide, if necessary, all its temples as hospitals for coronavirus patients. Already in

early March, when the coronavirus spread began in Ukraine, the UGCC allowed its followers to avoid kissing the icons and attending the church services. In addition, the head of the UGCC warned against a negative treatment of those infected with or suspected of having the coronavirus.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) is also ready to give its premises for the possible accommodation of the coronavirus patients "in case of a critical deterioration in the situation, when medical institutions will not be able to hospitalize all the infected people". In addition, all dioceses of the UOC-MP were blessed to participate in measures to counter the spread of the coronavirus. The priority activities were defined as the purchase, sewing, and free distribution of medical masks.

Israel has banned group prayers in public places, including outdoors. The only exception is for the Western Wall: there, the prayer will be held three times per day with the participation of ten people.

Followers of Orthodox Judaism remain a serious issue for the Israeli authorities. Due to a certain lifestyle, they turned out to be the biggest lockdown violators and, subsequently, the carriers of the pneumotropic virus. To restore order among the ultra-Orthodox, not only the police, but also the armed forces had to be involved. Thus, in early April, Israeli troops surrounded the city of Beit Shemesh, effectively laying siege to it: restricting the entry to and exit from the city, sending the infected with coronavirus to hospitals, and taking elderly people to specially equipped hotels. Municipality workers, together with police officers, closed six synagogues in the ultra-religious Beit Shemesh area that regularly violated lockdown requirements. During that, the law enforcement officers used welding machines to "seal" the entrances to the buildings. However, even such drastic measures did not convince all the local residents.

Saudi Arabia called on Muslims to postpone the traditional pilgrimage to Mecca planned for this year. Due to the coronavirus, all mosques in the country, except for Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, have been closed to believers.

It would clearly be strange if churches would have so quickly and easily abandoned worships in temples. In the Christian community, the dissidents, not willing to fully comply with the instructions of the authorities, appeared. At the same time, it is noteworthy that, essentially, no one has been completely ignoring the lockdown regulations. The position of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Cypriot and Greek churches is the most definitive for the Orthodox churches: their Synods initially stated that the Communion could not be the way of the coronavirus transmission, but then, nonetheless, urged the followers to temporarily suspend attending the temples.

In Slovakia and Poland, both Catholics and Orthodox Christians did not want to completely suspend church services, but were forced to obey the regulations of the authorities. In Slovakia, Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini has threatened the Orthodox with harsh sanctions. After the introduction of the lockdown, Stanislav Gadetsky, the President of the Polish Episcopal Conference, proposed to increase the number of church worships on Sundays so that the number of attending followers did not exceed the sanitary and epidemiological restrictions and at the same time everyone could attend the temple.

Some strange developments were also observed in the regions of Ukraine. For example, in Vinnytsia, in early March, when the coronavirus spread has already begun in Ukraine, the Moscow Patriarchate organized a procession against the coronavirus, gathering several thousands of people. In Odesa, priests of the UOC-MP traveled around the city in a minibus to rescue Ukraine from the coronavirus. In Berdiansk, Zaporizhia region, priests of the

UOC-MP poured holy water on the streets to remove the virus. And in Zaporizhia, the priests of the UOC-MP flew around the city in helicopter, reading a prayer for a rescue from the disease.

Conclusions. Facing the crisis situation under the fight against the coronavirus, religious organizations were able to sacrifice the most important aspect: mass public worships, which are a basic life need for believers of any confession and religion. For most of them, this constraint became a test for their general strength since the absence of joint onsite worships means the disunity of members of religious communities, the termination of the activities of individual parishes, as well as the loss of part of their income. In many Catholics churches, among almost all Protestants churches in Europe, and to a lesser extent among Orthodox churches, the practice of online donations, which can be made without leaving your house through a website of a religious association, is already widespread.

In general, all religions and confessions can be referred to as law-abiding. Christians, Muslims, and Jews took the necessary measures, according to the recommendations of the national authorities. The attitude towards the organization of church services and the Communion became a kind of test for religious conservativeness in various European countries. Two options were presented to solve this issue under the full or partial lockdowns: a full cancelation of any public gatherings, including church services, and a partial restriction on attending these services with an emphasis on the fact that churches cannot cancel the services altogether since that would contradict their nature and mission.

In Western Europe, mass church services were completely prohibited by the church authorities (e.g., in France and several regions of Italy), while in Eastern Europe, representatives of the churches stated that believers should have the right to pray together (e.g., Catholics in Poland and Orthodox in Ukraine). A separate discussion developed around the attitude to the Communion and the method of organizing it during the fight against the coronavirus. In the Catholic Church, followers receive the Communion only with unleavened bread, which is put in their mouths. In the Orthodox churches, everyone takes the Communion with bread and wine from one spoon and one cup. From a secular point of view, it is obvious that the Orthodox way of the Communion is more dangerous from a hygienic perspective, however, these were the Catholics who imposed a ban on holding mass church services, obeying centralized instructions from the Vatican and the appeals of Pope Francis. Orthodox churches, that are often accused of having close ties with the national authorities of their respective countries, have proved to be more obstinate with regards to the requirements coming from the state authorities.

The religious organizations' involvement in countering the spread of the virus has shown that they are not archaic and are capable of responding to social challenges. For many of them, especially for the Orthodox ones, the crisis has posed an acute issue of developing new forms of the Christian mission and attracting the population to the church. In many countries, the pandemic has helped the development of an interfaith dialogue. The social changes caused by the coronavirus pandemic have exacerbated existing issues and accelerated the processes that have already been taking place in the internal church life.

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ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ РЕЛІГІЙНИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ В УМОВАХ ПОШИРЕННЯ КОРОНАВІРУСНОЇ ІНФЕКЦІЇ

Здійснено огляд ставлення релігійних організацій до пандемії коронавірусної інфекції COVID-19. Дослідження проблеми дозволяє зробити висновок про варіативність реакції різних конфесій на відповідні обмеження в кожній окремій країні.

Поширення пневмотропного вірусу спонукало релігійні організації до масштабного впровадження нових форм комунікації зі своїми послідовниками. Сучасною тенденцією є спілкування церков із віруючими і віруючих між собою за допомогою інтернет-технологій. Це, безсумнівно, змусить релігійні організації переглянути свої усталені традиційні форми духовної та культової діяльності в майбутньому.

Ключові слова: державно-церковні відносини, релігійне законодавство, пандемія, коронавірус (COVID-19), православ'я, католицизм.

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ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ РЕЛИГИОЗНЫХ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЙ В УСЛОВИЯХ РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИЯ КОРОНАВИРУСНОЙ ИНФЕКЦИИ

Проанализировано деятельность религиозных организаций в условиях пандемии коронавирусной инфекции COVID-19. Исследование проблемы позволяет сделать вывод о вариативности реакции различных конфессий на соответствующие ограничения в каждой отдельной стране.

Распространение пневмотропного вируса побудило религиозные организации к масштабной имплементации новых форм коммуникации со своими последователями. Современной тенденцией является общение церквей с верующими и верующих между собой с помощью интернет-технологий. Это, несомненно, заставит религиозные организации пересмотреть свои устоявшиеся традиционные формы духовной и культовой деятельности в будущем.

Ключевые слова: государственно-церковные отношения, религиозное законодательство, пандемия, коронавирус (COVID-19), православие, католицизм.