

**RELIGION AND CHURCH IN UKRAINE AS SUBJECTS OF POLITICAL
PROCESS: TRANSFORMATIONS DURING AND AFTER THE
REVOLUTION OF DIGNITY**

The political subjectivity of religious organizations exists due to two factors: the first one is related to the performance of the most important functions of a religion – storage and maintenance of the established values in society; the second one – to the need to strengthen the ideological influence of its believers to the political processes in the country and increasingly involve other members of society to their religion and to active religious activities.

Worth mentioning that religion as an important social institution capable of maintaining the system of social values, that unite its believers, provides outlook for their fans by their metaphysical foundation, whose degree of requirements can vary greatly depending on the culture or the individual. But the human tendency to seek specific factual basis for its obligations seems to be almost universal. It is the human faith in its involvement into the world of the supernatural, defined by religion as the true reality, makes believers of a certain confession be copartners of one truth and one world. Man in general, as a God in general, can not exist, because God - is the one who sees from the "top", from the "inside", where people can not see themselves. This is a horizon of semantic universe where a person identifies their integrity and the truth of their being.

Let's note that political activity is an area which is not separated from the influence of religion. After all, the source from which predicates are drawn to legitimize the power of political leaders is a symbolic system. The most powerful and most durable sources of the power's justification are the religious symbolic systems that have the means of legitimation, putting political power beyond social criticism and giving it an extraordinary value. For example, the use of Christian statement that "Let every soul

be subject to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rome.13) is a vivid illustration of this approach.

Of course, statesmen and politicians, public figures affirm a "religiosity" the way they understand it. And most of the population approves a consistent behavior of the church for many socially important issues, resulting in a high degree of confidence that the Church holds among all other social institutions. Thus, according to the latest survey of Razumkov's Centre, the credibility of the Church showed 66% of respondents, and only 22% of respondents do not trust it. So when it comes to politicians who manifest their religiosity, one thing is clear – they believe not only in God, but in the fact that the electorate would not support an atheist candidate.

It is difficult to clearly demarcate a line between the situation in which religion strengthens the established social order, and when political leaders use religion for their own benefit with violations of this order. The religious factor is also present in politics in cases where due to the specific circumstances of most believers, members of mass movements turn to religion to justify their own actions and for ideological justification of their interests.

So the role of religion in modern society proves that in ideological and institutional manifestation it can perform and actually successfully performs the functions of social and political consolidation. At the same time we understand that the ability of religion to mobilize politically active people makes it be a potentially conflict factor of a social situation. Thus, we can conclude that the Christian churches in Ukraine will not go beyond political life.

Another important task of the interaction of religion and politics is a reflection from a religious point of view of the civil society formation process, which is extremely important for Ukraine. Iconic points of this process were two Ukrainian Maidans of 2004 and 2014. The Dignity Revolution of 2014 as well as the Orange Revolution gave a powerful impetus to the formation of civil society in our country. Both Maidans were not only social or political events, but also religious phenomena. Especially this made Maidan of 2013-2014 different, which expressed itself through religious symbols and appealed to ethical axioms in strict religious terms. In most

European countries the formation of civil society took place without the participation of churches, and sometimes even in spite churches. Ukraine became an exception in this respect. Here the church actively supported Maidan and thereby contributed to the development of civil society. It appears that the Churches can and must continue to play an active role in this process. They, as an example, could significantly contribute to the formation of new principles of social ethics Ukraine.

In the events of Maidan the Church actually sided with Ukrainian society that used mass actions of civil resistance. Rebels in support of the government's actions and the actual of President Viktor Yanukovich were heard only from individual bishops. In general, the Church strongly condemned the use of force against peaceful Maidan. Monasteries and temples of Kyiv provided shelter, protection and assistance to protesters. During the force operations clergymen became a living shield between the conflict parties, calling the uniformed employees not to perform criminal orders and not to use weapons against protesters. All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and religious organizations did their best to establish a dialogue between the government and the opposition and Maidan. Thus, the Church in the events of Maidan revealed itself as a powerful and coherent civil society able to protect the interests of citizens from arbitrary power.

Through its interaction with the political aspects of society Church can help this society not only to treat causes, but also symptoms of social and political disease. Against such social causes and symptoms of diseases, that threatened the very life of Ukrainian society, Maidan rebelled. Overcoming of these diseases is possible through the cooperation of the Church and society.

An external intervention joined to the acute social and political conflict in the country: Russian Federation, which from the beginning of the 2000s struggled to organize and support pro-Russian movements in Ukraine, came to the open aggression and promoted separatism in some Ukrainian regions. This fact created a real threat to the integrity of Ukraine, Ukrainian society in general and in particular – the church and religious environment, as one of the largest Orthodox churches in

Ukraine is under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, which didn't condemn Russia's aggressive actions and generally supported the policy of its leadership.

In this context there is also the root of conflict in the east of Ukraine where the system of various vices lodged deeply in the minds of people, and where it is presented as almost a special civilization code of a "Russian world". In fact, the system being defended by separatists is based on the greed of local "elites" and their pride that prevents them from establishing the communication with the rest of the country and its people. From the side of the people this flawed system is based on a Soviet-style paternalism. It also has all of the abovementioned sickly symptoms, including lack of basic common sense, means of social mobility built on meritocracy and justice. And, of course, the system could not exist without a comprehensive corruption.

Admittedly is that the Church today is the most stable, structured, powerful and widespread institution of civil society among all the functional ones. It is clear that institutions such as political parties or NGOs are much less common, have less influence and credibility in the community. One of the public figures said such words about the impressions of Maidan: we used to think that the Church is the mediator between me and God – I came to the church, put a candle and prayed, and this is the mission of Church in my life. At Maidan we realized that the Church can play an important social role, we saw another church on the Maidan.

Ukraine, where a society is still religious, even in the highest forms of civic consciousness, as it was on the Maidan, demonstrated that the Church can not be a hindrance, but a catalyst for the formation of civil society. So, civil society built on Christian values, is possible. But it does not happen automatically. We need a radical rethinking of the Church's place in society and the development of new paradigms of cooperation between them. In particular, Ukraine by its example may offer a new model of the relationship between church and state, that is to move from two-dimensional "symphony" of church and state to the three-dimensional triangle "Church, society and state" - and in this specific order.

So, after the Revolution of Dignity it becomes increasingly clear that the key factor that will determine the role of churches and religious organizations at the present stage of the Ukrainian nation formation, will not their activity in consolidation of the nation on the basis of shared beliefs, customs and symbols, but ability to take the vanguard in deep social and moral transformation. In this case, the role of religion for the future Ukraine possibly will be extremely important. Also, in our opinion, current philosophy of the church's interaction with the outside world should be changed, they should become more open and communicative. This will be one of the most important steps towards the European system of values of the Ukrainian society.

Анотація

Проаналізовано специфіку функціонування релігії і церкви в Україні як суб'єктів політики, а також їх роль в період Революції 2013-2014 рр. та зміни, що відбулися після неї. Окреслено діяльність церков і релігійних організацій України в контексті взаємодії з політичною сферою життя суспільства, а також їх внесок у формування громадянського суспільства в Україні. Зроблено висновки, що ключовим фактором, який визначає роль релігії і церкви на сучасному етапі формування української нації, є не лише їх діяльність з консолідації нації на ґрунті спільних вірувань, а й здатність (лише в окремих випадках – відверте небажання) йти в ногу із громадськими і моральними перетвореннями у суспільстві.