

REVISITING FAITH-BASED DIPLOMACY'S EFFECTIVENESS: EASTERN EUROPEAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE 2022 RUSSO-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT

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Abstract This paper aims to address the possible role of the Eastern European Orthodox Church as an alternative channel to ensure fruitful negotiations to end the Russo-Ukrainian war that has still ongoing since 2022. As the majority religion in Russia, Ukraine, and Eastern Europe as a whole, the Orthodox branch of Christianity has a transnational influence on its followers, including prominent political figures in the aforementioned territories. Utilizing qualitative research methods, this paper is written to provide arguments about whether the Orthodox Church, with its immense presence in the belligerents' spiritual beliefs, will be able to be employed as a channel to end the Russo-Ukrainian war. In this paper, analysis is conducted through the usage of J. W. McDonald's "The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy" (2012) journal article about multi-track diplomacy and D. Johnston's *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (2003) book about faith-based diplomacy to gauge the Orthodox Church's potential as a channel of diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine. This paper finds that overall, the Orthodox Church fails to fulfil the criteria that Johnston (2003) posits; one of the most fatal is the organization's inability to reconcile the belligerents' deep historical wounds. Due to the Orthodox Church's traditional role that has always been closely tied to the Russian government, its capability to build an acceptable negotiation channel is severely impeded.

Keywords: Multi-track diplomacy, faith-based diplomacy, Russia, Ukraine, Russo-Ukrainian war.

INTRODUCTION

One year already passed since war between Russia and Ukraine started on February 24, 2022. So far, there has not been any successful attempts to reconcile the open conflict through peaceful means, with news of both belligerents insisting on keep attacking each other through the means of both military attacks (Santora, 2023) and narration bombardments through the internet (We Are Ukraine, 2022). These persistent efforts greatly contribute to the preservation and exacerbation of the conflict until today, so much so that Dmitry Peskov, a Kremlin spokesman, said that “[...] the prospects for stepping on a diplomatic path are not visible at present,” (Teslova, 2023) due to the sheer complexity of the war that is nigh impossible to be navigated diplomatically. This condition of stagnation is certainly not ideal, especially when considering that conducting Russo-Ukrainian peace talks might save lives (Chivvis, 2023).

Russian missile strikes across Ukraine



Figure 1 Russian missile attacks across Ukraine and latest Ukrainian regained territory.

Taken 22nd of March 2023. Source: bbc.com

However, one might wonder whether the answer to this conflict might lie in a familiar, yet usually overlooked aspect: religion. Both belligerents share the same majority religion, Orthodox Christianity (mostly will be referred to as just ‘Orthodox faith’ in this paper). At surface level, it seems that religion might become a potential avenue to promote peace between the two states. Religion, after all, has an enormous influence on the temporal governments’ legitimacy in Eastern Europe, including Russia’s current regime under Vladimir Putin (Wilson & Morina, 2022). However, up until now very seldom, if any, discourse that has ever tried to discuss its usage to promote peace talks, with it being absent in diplomatic talks. Thus, this paper aims to discuss about the potential role of religion, specifically Orthodox Christianity, to repair the relationship between Russia and Ukraine, specifically seen through the lens of diplomacy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are already numerous literatures that examine the role of religion in war and peace. Some of them also already touched upon the specific topics of either Russia or Ukraine separately. First, Nikolai Mitrokhin (2001), wrote in “Aspects of religious life in Ukraine” article that in Ukraine there has been ongoing schism between the Eastern and Western Ukraine, especially about their religious affiliation. Mitrokhin mentioned about how a big branch of the Eastern Orthodox religious institutions were inclined towards Russia, despite its location in Ukrainian soil. This, according to Mitrokhin, was a defining characteristic that differentiate the religious authority in Ukraine to Russia: the lack of state monopoly of Ukraine in the matters of belief.

Meanwhile, Larissa Titarenko’s article titled “On the Shifting Nature of Religion during the Ongoing Post-Communist Transformation in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine” (2008) also echoed somewhat similar sentiment with Mitrokhin. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Titarenko posited that there was an ongoing trend in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine that showed an increase in the importance of religion in the people’s minds and daily lives, as opposed to the Western European people that regarded the matter religion in somewhat more detached manner. However, there was one point

where Titarenko differed from Mitrokhin: she argued that such attitude of Eastern European people in regards to religion, observed through the three states used as example, was not only based on the sentimental wish to 'build bridges' with their past before the Soviet Union; religion was also used by the political elites to incorporate the conservative nature of religion into the state ideology in order to control people's state of mind.

Further down the line, there were also writings that began to link the problem of religion to Russo-Ukrainian long-standing tense relationship after the collapse of Soviet Union. One of them is Mara Kozelsky's article, "Religion and the crisis in Ukraine" (2014). Written in the same year as the Russian annexation of Crimea, this article highlighted about how religion played a significant part in said armed conflict, especially regarding Russia's strategy to occupy Crimea through religious affiliation of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) that conduct the process of spreading an agenda to 'Russify' Ukrainian and Crimean laity and spiritual space. Other than Kozelsky, the long-standing problem of Ukrainian religious schism was also addressed by Joshua P. Mulford in his article, titled "Non-State Actors in the Russo-Ukrainian War" (2016). Like Kozelsky, in this article he also echoed similar idea of how Orthodox authorities became one of the non-state actors that played considerable role in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, that already began since 2009.

However, while the previous two readings were focused on the strength of Russian religious legacy in Ukraine, Taras Kuzio in an article titled "Euromaidan revolution, Crimea and Russia-Ukraine war: why it is time for a review of Ukrainian-Russian studies" (2018) posited about the supposed slow-progressing development and paradigm change in studies about Russia and Ukraine. Instead of echoing the same perspective as literatures mentioned above in this paper, he argued instead that Ukraine, especially after the Euromaidan protests in 2014, already started solidifying its previously ambivalent national identity, creating a sense of 'Ukraine'-ness separate from the concept of 'Ukraine as Russia's brother'. This progress, argued Kuzio, also occurred in their religious thinking and practice spheres, in which various components of the protests used the ROC's signifiers in their activities, highlighting that even the Ukrainians that bear the Russian cultural and religious legacy also resisted the Crimean annexation.

This growing emergence and relevance of the Ukrainian viewpoint regarding its people's understanding of Orthodox faith is further shown through the occurrence of the faith's branching into two sides. Based on an article written by Olena Predko and Ihor Maksymenko titled "Orthodoxy in the Face of Contemporary Challenges: The Ukrainian Context" (2023), there are two main branches of Orthodox faith in Ukraine; the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. These branches have different standing regarding Russian influence in the Ukraine exerted through Orthodox faith following the commencement of Russo-Ukraine 2022 war. While those conflicting opinions bring the prospect of division of the Orthodox faith in said nation-state, Predko and Maksymenko argued that the reconciliation of those two branches are possible, citing the ability of the Ukrainian to peacefully coexist amidst religious diversity.

From those writings, it could be inferred that religion, especially Orthodox faith, is deeply engrained in both Russia and Ukraine's national identity, thus becoming one important influence in the ongoing conflict between the two countries since the fall of the Soviet Union. However, those writing failed to explain why said religion is used in such way, and whether the option to use Orthodox faith as a method of diplomacy between the two warring nation-states instead is possible. Thus, this paper is written to bridge that knowledge gaps by answering a research question:

How is the prospect of the usage of Orthodox Christianity to bridge diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Multi-Track Diplomacy

According to John W. McDonald in his writing, "The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy" (2012:66-70), the concept of multi-track diplomacy was acknowledged since 1981 and has been undergoing some development since then. The concept of the first two tracks of diplomacy was coined by Joseph Montville when he wrote a foreign affairs article. Next, in 1985 and 1989, McDonald expanded the existing two tracks concept into five tracks.

Finally, in McDonald's book, "Multi-Track Diplomacy, a systems approach to peace" (1991) jointly written with Dr. Louise Diamond, the concept got expanded into nine tracks that we currently know of, such as:

Track 1 – Government: Peacemaking through the official channels of diplomacy between governments.

Track 2 – Non-government/Professional: Peacemaking through conflict resolution, conducted through the involvement of non-state actors.

Track 3 – Business: Peacemaking through Commerce to support more peacebuilding attempts and create informal bridges of understanding.

Track 4 – Private Citizen: Peacemaking through personal involvement such as citizen diplomacy, exchange programs, private voluntary organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and special interest groups.

Track 5 – Research, Training, and Education: Peacemaking through Learning by research, training programs, and education revolving around the subjects of conflict resolution, peace and world order studies, and cross-cultural understanding.

Track 6 – Activism: Peacemaking through advocacy through special-interest groups regarding specific governmental policies.

Track 7 – Religion: Peacemaking through faith in action, examining the beliefs and peace-oriented actions of spiritual and religious communities and such morality-based movements as pacifism, sanctuary, and nonviolence.

Track 8 – Funding: Peacemaking through providing resources, conducted through the work of funding communities.

Track 9 – Communications and the Media: Peacemaking through information by shaping public opinion through public media.

McDonald posited that the system requires all tracks mentioned above to be incorporated together, to create a sustainable peace process. Especially, McDonald noted that the transition from track 1 to track 2 is a complicated process.

Faith-based Diplomacy

Johnston et al. (2003) argues that rather than becoming obsolete like what the Western scientists like to argue, religion becomes an even more prominent factor in social science, including international politics. They posit that many policymakers already count religion into the consideration of war and peace, and each one of the policy maker's security decisions that ignores this factor has created a bad, everlasting reputation.

Johnston et al. believes that there is importance in religion, in a sense that in recent dates there is a paradigm shift caused by how religious authorities are becoming more influential in the process of determining the conclusion of conflict's outbreak around the world (2003:13-14). They listed four attributes that create that influence:

1. A well-established and pervasive influence in the community.
2. A reputation as an apolitical force for change based on a respected set of values.
3. Unique leverage for reconciling conflicting parties, including ability to 'rehumanize' relationship.
4. The capability to mobilize community, national, and international support for a peace protest.

Religious resurgence has a relation to nationalist demagogues and is one of the most effective vehicles in motivating people to go to war or to dissuade people to do that (2003:14), thus it is a double-edged sword in this regard. Faith-based diplomacy is understood not merely about conflict resolution, but rather about reconciliation between belligerents. Thus, it encourages more than the absence of conflict, but extends also to the restoration of healthy and respectful relationships between parties.

This reconciliation thus creates some 'requirement' for faith-based diplomacy to work (2003:16):

1. Unity in diversity through active acceptance of the pluralistic nature of life itself.
2. Inclusion of all parties (enemy and allies alike) in any final solution.
3. Peaceful resolution of conflict between individuals and groups.
4. Forgiveness as prerequisite for the restoration of good relationships.
5. Social justice as the appropriate basis for the right ordering of relationships.

Multiple modes of intervention in faith-based peacemaking (2003:18):

1. Offering a new vision.
2. Building bridges.
3. Healing conflict, usually through mediation.
4. Healing the wounds of history.

The usage of faith-based diplomacy is appropriate in specific cases, such as (2003:19-22):

1. Conflicts in which religion is a significant factor in the identity of one or both communities.
2. Religious leaders can be mobilized to facilitate peace.
3. There has been a protracted estrangement between two major religious traditions in a conflict that transcends national borders.
4. Third party mediation in conflicts where there is no particular religious dimension present.
5. Situations where *realpolitik* create an extended paralysis of action.

MAIN ARGUMENTATION

This paper argues that Orthodox Christianity is not fit to be the means of diplomacy for both Russia and Ukraine in this Russo-Ukrainian war. This is due to the special characteristics of the Orthodox faith and the way the Orthodox authorities are behaving that are not fit for the process of diplomacy for this problem.

METHODOLOGY

The writing of this paper is conducted through a qualitative research method that employs literature review as the primary data collection method. Thus, it focuses on the interpretative methodology of the paper and aims to provide an understanding through an ideational point of view on why the Orthodox Church authorities, both in Russia and Ukraine specifically, and around the world, are not a good fit to be one of the driving actors to conduct faith-based diplomacy for realizing Russo-Ukrainian peace. In this paper, second-hand qualitative data that revolve around these topics is used: 1) Official statements and reports of conferences, proceedings, and action in regards to how the Orthodox Church authorities existing roles and responses to the Russo-Ukrainian war; 2) News websites regarding the Orthodox Church authorities are reacting to the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war; 3) Analysis written in books and journal articles about the background history and mechanics of Orthodox Church-State relations in Slavic countries; 4) Online op-ed articles written by experts regarding the way Orthodox Church authorities are reacting to the problem of Russo-Ukrainian war.

However, there are two main limitations in this research: 1) Limited scope of knowledge regarding the ‘local’ perspective on Orthodox faith’s principles and practices due to author’s inability to access literature written in Russian, Ukrainian, and Greek languages; 2) The lack of nuanced understanding about the events due to the absence of direct interviews with related actors in the subject matter. Thus, this paper is intended to be read with consideration to those limitations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Orthodox Christianity in the Eastern Europe: The Basics and Change After the Russo-Ukrainian War(?)

This sub-section will explain about how the Orthodox faith initially spread in the Eastern Europe, its main characteristics that were developed as it cemented its presence in said region, and recent yet vital changes that happened, and still happening to an extent, over the course of Russo-

Ukrainian post-Soviet conflict. This information on this sub-section will become the 'base' on understanding how Orthodox Christianity as a faith function especially in the Slavic region. This is done through observing how it spreads in the Slavs, and how local authorities teach and regulate it, and how this particular faith responds to outside change, especially in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war. Understanding these things is one important step to judge its viability as a means to conduct diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine.

About how this specific branch of Christianity spread in the Eastern Europe, Timothy Ware wrote about that specific topic in some parts of his book, *The Orthodox Church* (1997). This paper will extensively use the information from said book as a basis to this paper's understanding of the topic. In the fourth chapter of the book (Ware, 1997:69-83), Ware posits that specially for the Slavic people, their encounter with Byzantium successfully introduced an articulated system of Orthodox Christianity doctrine and a fully developed Christian civilization. Byzantium did these through appealing to Slavic indigenous language and culture, something that other religions did not manage to do and firmly placed Orthodox Christianity as the Slavic people's main religion.

After that, in the sixth chapter (Ware, 1997:99-121), he highlights about how Russia slowly yet surely became a central piece of the faith. According to the book, there are some reasons why Russia has such a massive grip on the Orthodox Christianity organizations. The first reason is the historical factor of the Orthodox regions being overtaken by foreign powers: after Constantinople was taken by the Turks in 1453 and Kiev was taken by Poland and Lithuania that followed Catholic faith, Muscovy became the last 'stronghold' of the Orthodox Christianity. This also caused the Russian Tsar to be integrated into the Orthodox Christianity's religious ceremonies not unlike how the Byzantine Emperor was in the time of Byzantium's heyday. The second reason is the successful integration of Orthodox faith not only as the upper-class religion, but also the religion of common people. This is why the integration of the Tsar to the religion is easy to happen. Then, it brings us to the third reason, that is to be observed more deeply in the ninth chapter; its special characteristic of nationalistic tendencies the faith tends to take.

Following up from the above paragraph, in the ninth chapter (Ware, 1997:166-185) the main topic is about a core characteristic of the Orthodox faith, that separates it from its Catholic counterpart. If Catholic faith is supra-national in the matter of its attitude to power distribution and way of conduct, at least until before the separation of the State and the Church in many Catholic states, then Orthodox faith is highly nationalized. Ware posits that it has been organized on strongly national line, with the initiative to do emigration of the faith usually coming from a bottom-up initiative rather than top-down hierarchy like the Catholic.

In Orthodox faith, national loyalty usually has a higher position than loyalty to the Orthodox faith, which causes a lot of fragmentation. Ethnic division, Ware posits, it is a recurring problem in the face of efforts to unify the Orthodox believers around the globe into a cohesive unit of people (Ware, 1997:169). In other words, even though culturally there has always been one dominant country standing as the main ‘bastion’ of the Orthodox Church in each age, that is, the Byzantine Empire in the past and Russia in current age respectively, each ethnic entities, and later nations, also have their own distinct small ‘modification’ on their implementation of the faith.

Ware posits that this faith also spreads through the diaspora of each nation, meaning that when a group of Orthodox believers migrate to new place, they tend to invite priest to their new living place to build a parish there. One of the prominent examples, Russian Orthodox Church diaspora specifically, four main jurisdictions have been made since the rise of the Bolsheviks, which had initially forced some of the believers to go on exile per November 20, 1920 (Ware, 1997:170-171):

1. The Moscow Patriarchate, parishes in the emigration with direct link to the Church authorities inside Russia.
2. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), also known as those ‘in exile’ from the central Russian Church authority.
3. The Russian Orthodox Archdiocese in Western Europe, also known as ‘Paris Jurisdiction’.
4. The Orthodox Church in America.

Based on the information gained through Ware's book displayed in above paragraphs, it is evident that in modern age, 'Russian' way of doing the Orthodox faith is the most 'popular' way across the world, with Russia having the biggest numbers of believers out of all countries, with 100-150 million believers in number (Ware, 1997:5). Even though culturally there are still four ancient Patriarchates that rank higher in terms of honor (Ware, 1997:5), the number alone speaks of how big the Russian power in the Orthodox world in the modern time.

However, as highlighted a few times in the literature review, it is apparent that trend is currently undergoing a change, especially in the Ukraine. Not long after the war, the Ukrainian Patriarchate declared independence from the Russian Orthodox Church authority (Marson, 2022), and the Ukrainian Government decided to facilitate the process through passing some law products to support that decision (Palikot, 2023). Not only that, but the Ukrainian government also begins a series of crackdown on Orthodox parishes and priests that still hold links with Russia (Dettmer, 2022). Other than that, there are also oppositions delivered in the form of sermons from the diaspora, for example from the Orthodox Ukrainian diaspora from Toronto, Canada (Llana et al., 2022).

However, while at a glance this is a big change from the traditionally Russia-centric Orthodox faith, at the same time these occurrences are still in line with Ware's argument about the Orthodox Church's strong national sentiment that stays alive across the territory of its believers. Moreover, this Russo-Ukrainian Orthodox faith schism is also already observed by Ware before the national conflicts between the two nation-states escalate after the fall of the Soviet Union, although at that time he posited that the divide is temporary in nature (Ware, 1997:6).

Orthodox Christianity and Its Viability as A Means for Diplomacy: An Analysis of Russian and Ukrainian Case

After delving into the history and the mechanisms on how the Orthodox Church operates as a faith and as an organization, along with the recent development in Ukraine in the previous sub-section, this sub-section is going to analyze how such characteristics influence Orthodox faith's viability as

a possible tool for diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine. The analysis is based on two conceptual frameworks provided by McDonald (2012) and Johnston et al. (2003) that were already written in the introduction section.

First, looking at McDonald's (2012), writing about nine-tracks diplomacy, it is posited by him that faith-based diplomacy is highlighted specifically to be conducted based on three main values: pacifism, sanctuary, and non-violence. By using this framework to analyze the basic tenets of the faith itself and the ongoing Orthodox Church authorities' actions, this paper is trying to assess how Orthodox faith measures up to standard by the operational sense.

Then, by looking at the first value, pacifism, it is evident that Orthodox faith authorities fail to operate based on this value, at it is evident that authorities are not fully advocating pacifism. Even though there has been news about orthodox priests rejecting violence and promoting peaceful movement like in the diaspora (Llana et al., 2022) and the churches in the Ukraine itself (Lehnen, 2022), the higher authorities are not choosing this path; they instead endorse each state's narration to wage war. One prominent example of this behavior could be observed in the speech of Patriarch Kirill from the Moscow Patriarchate, that brazenly voiced his assent of the ongoing war by framing it as an act of sacrifice that would cleanse all the sins of all that participate and fall on the battle (Reuters, 2022).

This assessment is also linked to the second and last value listed by McDonald, that is, sanctuary and non-violence. For sanctuary, it is the Greek Catholic church representative that provides sanctuary for the Ukrainians (Clay, 2023), making the role of Orthodox church less apparent in this aspect. Meanwhile, for the non-violent component, even though the church authorities from both Russia and Ukraine do not participate in the violence directly, their stances are not wholly committed to the cause of realizing cessation of conflict between belligerents. Another point no less important, McDonald also noted that multi-track diplomacy must be conducted in sync through all the nine paths if one wishes for maximum effectivity. However, in this case, even the transition from track 1 to track 2 is already a difficult task, hence why technically arriving at the 7th track of faith-based diplomacy might be proven a difficult task.

This poor performance of the Orthodox faith in those aspects is not just a sad coincidence. Further down the line, when analyzed using framework posited by Johnston et al. (2003), it is evident that considering the background on how the Orthodox Church operates, it is not a suitable vessel to conduct faith-based diplomacy. Johnston et al. already laid out a rigorous set of conditions and mechanisms to assess whether faith-based diplomacy is the suitable tool to resolve certain conflicts. And by the looks of it, faith-based diplomacy is indeed unsuitable to use in the effort to foster negotiation between Russia and Ukraine, as explained below.

First, Johnston et al. listed four points that would create the influence that religious institutions would need to be a suitable bridge to conduct diplomacy (2003:13-14): 1) A well-established and pervasive influence in the community; 2) A reputation as an apolitical force for change based on a respected set of values; 3) Unique leverage for reconciling conflicting parties, including ability to 'rehumanize' relationship; 4) The capability to mobilize community, national, and international support for a peace protest. Based on those four requirements, the Orthodox Church only managed to fulfill two of them: the influence in the community and the capability to mobilize the masses. The nature of the Orthodox Church that is more nationalistic than cosmopolitan, makes it lose the unique leverage to reconcile that only cosmopolitanism can provide.

Other than that, more importantly, the nationalistic tendencies of the faith also remove the possibility of the Orthodox Church having an apolitical standing, as each branch would inevitably support each national government they are affiliated with. Even the recent expression of disappointment from Orthodox authorities from the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the most ancient, most senior Orthodox Patriarchate center from Constantinople (*Orthodox Times*, 2022) has little influence on the Russian Patriarchate standpoint.

Second, looking at Johnston et al. (2003)'s listed requirements for faith-based diplomacy to work and possible nodes of intervention for faith-based peacemaking, which mostly center on the values of forgiveness, two-way communication, and healing the wounds of history through recognition of the painful memories by the belligerents, Orthodox faith,

especially the authorities in Russia and Ukraine, also fail to do this. It is evident that both, especially the Russian Orthodox counterpart, is treating as if the Ukrainian Orthodox are their ‘brothers’, refusing to acknowledge the recent historical wound of war atrocities that they have been doing in Ukraine (Karelska, 2022).

Third, Johnston et al. also listed five points in which faith-based diplomacy is appropriate to use in resolving a certain conflict (2003:19-22): 1) Religion holding significant factor in the conflict; 2) Possibility to mobilize religion leaders to facilitate peace; 3) The existence of a protracted estrangement between two major religious traditions in a conflict that transcends national borders; 4) Third party mediation in conflicts where there is no particular religious dimension present; 5) Situations where *realpolitik* create an extended paralysis of action. Out of all these five preconditions for the effective usage of faith-based diplomacy, the second precondition is very difficult to fulfill, if not impossible, due to the tendency of Orthodox religious authorities to side with the national identity, rather than the cosmopolitan value of non-violence that are more pronounced in another major religions.

Another factor that makes this difficult to achieve is the strong grip Russian and Ukrainian governments have on the religious community, that get even stronger as both belligerent’s governments continue the war. Religion becomes the symbol of each nation’s national identities. One evident example of this state of mind is the ‘reclaiming’ of a Kiev cathedral by Ukraine from the local Russian Orthodox Church administration, that was framed as a national achievement in the war time (Arhirova, 2023). The absence of viable third-party mediators in the Russo-Ukrainian war so far also makes it harder to make faith-based diplomacy to take off in this conflict.

CONCLUSION

From research conducted in this paper, it is evident that the prospect of using Orthodox Christianity to foster diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine is very slim, if not nigh impossible. This is mainly due to the Orthodox faith's tendency to grow within the national line; meaning that it has strong national belonging that tends to make it difficult to unite across countries and to be apolitical. This also makes the Orthodox faith more susceptible to government influence, especially in times of crisis. This is what happen in both Russia and Ukraine, as both states use the church authorities to further legitimize their goals in the war.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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