

Myroslava Rap

The Public Role of the Church in Contemporary Ukrainian Society

The Contribution of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church
to Peace and Reconciliation



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Foreword

This book addresses the issue of reconciliation in the Ukrainian context from the point of view of one of the most socially active religious communities in the country, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. The research is very topical at least in the view of the current Ukrainian-Russian crisis. Analysing the relevant official documents of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church on reconciliation, the author traces how this Church comes to terms with the burdened pages of Ukrainian history and their repercussions for the current struggling of Ukraine on the way to its constitutionalisation as a true modern state.

This monograph is a very new one and at the same time not completely up-to-date. The book captures the stance of Ukrainian society and the developments within the Ukrainian Churches till the end of the Revolution of Dignity. A number of important changes, defining the societal and ecclesial situation in Ukraine after March 2014, are not covered. Among them are, for instance, the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian relations that took place after the annexation of the Crimea Peninsula, the fluctuations within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate after in August 2014 she got a new Head, a pro-Moscow Metropolitan Onufrii, or the growing alienation between Ukrainians and Russians. However, the powerful waves of changes, which rolled over Ukraine in the last year, do not make the conclusions driven in the monograph untenable. This book has to be regarded as a background to better understand the current troubles of Ukraine and the new challenges of reconciliation. For instance, having read the paragraphs on the problems of reconciliation between the Ukrainian Churches and the Moscow Patriarchate, the reader will develop a clearer picture of the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine and how it could escalate to that extent. It is also evident that not only drawing lessons from World War II, but also coming to terms with the legacy of the current Russian-Ukrainian confrontation will be a big task for the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in the future. After the developments of 2014 the Ukrainian Churches have to reassess their role in society and their reconciliation strategies.

Obviously, this research has its limitations. I wrote this book as a Greek-Catholic. I may seem not to be critical enough with regard to my Church; however, I consider this monograph to be an important testimony

to the stance of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, a testimony which sometimes fails. In a context where this Church is not always granted the right to express her position or when this position is ignored or silenced (as is evident in the dialogue between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican), it is important that those embedded in the Greek-Catholic tradition explain the concerns of their Church. This is what I have done in my research.

This book came into life as a PhD thesis defended in September 2014 at the faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the Leuven Catholic University in Belgium. Many people came along and were helpful in various ways in the course of working on this research project; this is a proper place to name some of them. The first words of gratitude I owe to both my supervisors. I am grateful to Prof. Dr Johan Verstraeten for his suggestions concerning the scientific part of my project, for challenging intellectual discussions, and for giving me the chance to scoop from his boundless knowledge. My fascination with the topic of reconciliation I developed during the lectures of Prof. Verstraeten, when I was a Master student in Theology at the Leuven Catholic University in 2004-2006.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my co-supervisor, Dr Lesia Kovalenko, for helping me learn theoretically and come in touch practically with the social dimension of the teaching and activities of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. It is greatly her merit that I decided to engage in the adventure of that research project. I was fortunate that Dr Kovalenko was my employer at the Institute of Religion and Society in Lviv and taught me valuable organisational and analytical skills, which were of tremendous help during the work on my research project.

The long journey of the unfolding of this research project began in the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv that assisted me in looking for a scholarship and trusted in my ability to successfully complete my doctoral studies in Leuven. I am grateful to the Porticus Foundation for providing the greater amount of financial assistance necessary to make possible my residence and studies in Belgium. I immensely appreciate Dr Jos Vanachter for his patient, punctual, committed, and precise way of correcting my English. My special gratefulness goes to Prof. Dr Justenhofen, one of the scientific correctors of my dissertation, for making possible the publication of this monograph. And finally, I owe thanks to my family both in Switzerland and Ukraine for their caring support and active interest in the progress of my research.

Laufenburg, AG, January 1, 2015

Myroslava Rap

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

Gulag	<i>Glavnoye upravlyeniye ispravityelno-trudovykh lagyerey i koloniy</i> , the Main Administration of Corrective Labour Camps and Labour Settlements in the USSR
KGB	<i>Komitet gosudarstvennoy byezopasnosti</i> , the Committee for State Security of the USSR
OUN–UPA	<i>Orhanizatsiia ukrainskykh natsionalistiv – Ukrainska povstanska armiia</i> , the Organisation of the Ukrainian Nationalists – the Ukrainian Insurgent Army
ROC	The Russian Orthodox Church
SVU	<i>Spilka vyzvolennia Ukrainy</i> , the League for the Liberation of Ukraine
UGCC	The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church
UPA	<i>Ukrainska povstanska armiia</i> , the Ukrainian Insurgent Army
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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