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## **The Religious situation in Ukraine and its influence on the establishment and development of military-religious relations in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (1991–2017)**

### **Abstract**

The article analyzes the religious situation in the Ukrainian society, as well as its impact on the formation and development of military-religious relations in the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 1991–2017.

Religion, as one of the leading forms of social consciousness, is an important factor in the formation of civil society and in the development of channels of its communication with state institutions. The Church has traditionally played the role of an important subject of the socio-political life in the history of the Ukrainian people.

The relationship between Russian-Ukrainian relations and their impact on state-religious relations in Ukraine and its Armed Forces has been studied. The main tendencies of the development of military-religious relations in the Armed Forces of Ukraine have

been clarified. The transformation processes that influenced the change of the existing models of support of religious needs for the servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the studied period, are analyzed here/in this article.

In particular, some historical aspects of socio-political processes that influenced the formation and development of military-religious relations, and the institutionalization of the military clergy (chaplaincy) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the period under study are highlighted.

In today's conditions, military chaplains have gained significant experience of service in the war zone, have strong national and patriotic convictions, are able to withstand significant psychological and physical stress, and are ready to carry out pastoral service in any environment.

### **Keywords**

Religion, Armed Forces of Ukraine, religious situation, confessional relations, military clergy, chaplaincy, pastoral care.

## **1. Introduction**

State-religious relations play a significant role in the life of any state and society. Religion, as one of the leading forms of social consciousness, is an important factor in the formation of civil society, and in the development of channels of its communication with state institutions. In the history of the Ukrainian people, the Church has traditionally played the role of an important subject of socio-political life. It was often an active participant in the struggle for national revival, the awakener of national self-consciousness. It was especially prominent in the late 1980s – early 1990s during the modern period of national history. The state of the religious situation in the Ukrainian society significantly influenced the educational work in military formations.

The problem of the relationship between the state and church-religious organizations in the period under study is considered in the works of a number of domestic scholars. In particular, V. Andrushchenko, O. Koval, A. Kolodnyi, Y. Kryvenko, M. Mykhailychenko, Y. Figurnyi, Y. Reshetnikov, I. Prelovska and others considered the topic of state-church relations in framework of the development of religious confessions that were born (revived) in modern Ukraine over the past 30 years, as the subject of their research. The topic of formation and development of military-religious relations of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (hereinafter – the AF of Ukraine) is covered in the works of scientists and

military representatives of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (hereinafter – the MD OF UKRAINE) – S. Zdioruk, S. Yarmus, V. Tancher, V. Yelenskyi, O. Chyrkov, V. Krotkyov, R. Kokhanchuk, V. Yaremchuk, V. Mandragel, V. Chorny, M. Tsyurupa and others. Given the topic of the study, the works of domestic researchers devoted to the problem of formation of the institute of chaplaincy in Ukraine, in particular, R. Delyatynskyi,<sup>1</sup> L. Vladychenko,<sup>2</sup> O. Bilash, T. Karabin,<sup>3</sup> etc. are interesting. The authors of this article also addressed the question of highlighting certain aspects of the historical process of the development of the military clergy service (chaplaincy service) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 1991–2017 in previous publications.<sup>4</sup>

Whilst considering the European integration aspirations of the Ukrainian state and the process of reforming the Armed Forces of Ukraine with a focus on NATO standards, we consider it appropriate to study the experience of military chaplains in the advanced armies of the world. In this context, the

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<sup>1</sup> R. Delyatynskyi, *Institute of Military Chaplains in Ukraine (XX–XXI centuries): stages of development and role in the formation of the Ukrainian nation*, “Gilea: scientific bulletin. Collection of scientific works”, Kyiv 2018, 134 (7), pp. 129–134.

<sup>2</sup> L. Vladychenko, *Experience in implementing military chaplaincy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine*, [https://risu.ua/dosvid-vprovadzhennya-viyskovogo-kapelanstva-u-zbroyni-sil-ukrajini\\_n81624](https://risu.ua/dosvid-vprovadzhennya-viyskovogo-kapelanstva-u-zbroyni-sil-ukrajini_n81624) (26.09.2021).

<sup>3</sup> O. Bilash, T. Karabin, *Legal regulation of the military chaplaincy in modern Ukraine*, “Kościół i prawo” 9 (22) (2020), pp. 97–112.

<sup>4</sup> O. Voroshchuk. *Development of military-religious relations in Ukraine (1994–2000)*. Military historical bulletin. Kyiv, 2019, 4 (34), pp. 116–127; S. Sokoliuk, O. Voroshchuk *Formation of military-religious relations in Ukraine (1991–1994)*. Military historical bulletin. Kyiv, 2019, 3 (33), pp. 102–118; I. Podoprygora, S. Sokoliuk, A. Voroshchuk, V. Novikova, O. Pashkova. *Historical experience of meeting religious needs (religious support) of the personnel of the Naval Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 1992–2014*. SDirect24. Scientific Journal. Warszawa, 2020, 4, pp. 51–77. URL: <https://instytutbirm.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SDirect24-4-12-2020-dragged-4.pdf>; O. Voroshchuk, V. Novikova. *Development of military-religious relations in Ukraine (2005–2013)*. Military historical bulletin. Kyiv, 2021, 2 (40), pp. 18–35; O. Voroshchuk, V. Chorny, S. Sokolyuk. *Pastoral care in the armed formations that existed on the territory of Ukraine until 1991*. The scientific heritage. Budapest, Hungary, 2021, VOL 5, 67 (67), pp. 6–16; O. Voroshchuk. *Development of military-religious relations and institutionalization of military clergy (chaplain service) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (2014–2017)*. The scientific heritage. Budapest, Hungary, 2021, VOL 2, 74 (74), pp. 46–54; O. Voroshchuk. *Periodization of the formation of the institute of military clergy (chaplain service) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 1991–2017 and recommendations for using the experience of meeting the religious needs of servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in modern conditions*. The scientific heritage. Budapest, Hungary, 2021, VOL 2, 79 (79), pp. 64–70.

works of E. Tavalá,<sup>5</sup> T. Liuski, M. Ubani<sup>6</sup> deserve attention. They highlight the common and specific features of the institute of military pastors of different armies of the world.

The purpose of our article is to determine the impact of the religious situation in the Ukrainian society on the process of formation and development of military-religious relations in the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 1991–2017.

## 2. Religion in Ukraine on the path of revival

In the mid-1980s, there were no religious organizations on the territory of Ukraine which could compete with the Russian Orthodox Church (hereinafter – ROC) which was active in the USSR at that time. Some were destroyed in the 1920s and 1930s (UAOC) during the so-called “Militant” atheism, others were underground, in particular, the UGCC. In places where ethnic Russians were predominant (cities of southern and eastern Ukraine), the religiosity of the population was much lower than in the agrarian regions of the West and the Center, whose inhabitants are predominantly Ukrainian-speaking.

Given the expansion of the autocephalous movement, especially in western Ukraine, on October 27, 1990, the ROC granted autonomy to the Ukrainian Exarchate of the ROC, but under the management and jurisdiction of the ROC. The church was named the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (hereinafter – UOC (MP)). The Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine Filaret (Denisenko) was elected as the head. With the proclamation of Ukraine’s independence, he expressed his views on the full independence and autonomy of the UOC (MP) from the ROC. Thus, Metropolitan Filaret believed that the UOC (MP) within the ROC would not be able to promote the unification of Ukrainians to build an independent Ukraine.<sup>7</sup> This position was harshly rejected by the ROC, because with the loss of the UOC (MP) the ROC automatically lost the status

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<sup>5</sup> E. Tavalá, *The juridical status of the chaplains in European armed forces*, “Jurnalul de Studii Juridice” 3–4 (2016), pp. 23–41.

<sup>6</sup> T. Liuski, M. Ubani, *How is Military Chaplaincy in Europe Portrayed in European Scientific Journal Articles between 2000 and 2019?*, “A Multidisciplinary Review. Religions” 11(10), (2020), pp. 1–22.

<sup>7</sup> I. Prelovska, *Local Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church November 1–3, 1991: preconditions and consequences*, *Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the VI International Scientific Conference*, Kyiv 2016, pp. 432–433.

of the largest Orthodox Church in the world. At the end of 1990, the UOC (MP) had 6,505 parishes, while the ROC had only about 2,500.<sup>8</sup> With the democratization of society in the late 1980s in Ukraine, the level of religiosity of the population began to grow, there were radical changes in the Ukrainian religious environment, and the autocephalous movement increased. This all led to the revival and further activity of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (hereinafter – UAOC). In the West of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (hereinafter – the UGCC) emerged from the underground. In the Summer of 1991, the UGCC and the UAOC numbered 1.8 thousand and 1.1 thousand parishes, respectively.<sup>9</sup>

The ROC took into account the possible negative consequences of the future creation of the Unified Local Orthodox Church of Ukraine (hereinafter – UL OCU). As a result, the ROC leadership launched a campaign to discredit Metropolitan Filaret, neutralize the pro-Ukrainian clergy of the UOC (MP), and return the pro-Russian clergy to power.<sup>10</sup> For this purpose, on May 26–27, 1992, a meeting of hierarchs of the UOC (MP) took place in Kharkiv on behalf of the Synod of the ROC. As a result of the meeting, Metropolitan Filaret was removed and Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan) of Rostov and Novocherkask,<sup>11</sup> a citizen of the Russian Federation (hereinafter RF), was elected as a head of the UOC (MP). Subsequently, the UOC (MP), subordinated to the ROC, pursued an anti-Ukrainian policy, actively spreading contempt for the Ukrainian state and instead, promoting sympathy and commitment to the RF and its leaders.

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<sup>8</sup> Yu. Figurnyi, *Development of Ukrainian Orthodoxy at the turn of the millennium: ethnocultural, state-building and nation-creative aspects*, Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the IX International Scientific Conference, Kyiv 2019, p. 568.

<sup>9</sup> I. Prelovska, *Local Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church November 1–3, 1991: preconditions and consequences*, Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the VI International Scientific Conference, Kyiv 2016, pp. 434.

<sup>10</sup> Yu. Fihurnyi, *The role of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate in the consolidation of Ukrainians*, “Ukrainian Studies Almanac”, Kyiv 2018, 23, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup> Yu. Figurnyi, *Development of Ukrainian Orthodoxy at the turn of the millennium: ethnocultural, state-building and nation-creative aspects*, Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the IX International Scientific Conference, Kyiv 2019, p. 569; The incomprehensible ways of the Lord. A brief history of the Ukrainian church, [https://texty.org.ua/articles/86736/Nezbagnenni\\_shlahy\\_Gospodni\\_Korotka\\_istorija\\_ukrajinskoji\\_cerkvy-86736/](https://texty.org.ua/articles/86736/Nezbagnenni_shlahy_Gospodni_Korotka_istorija_ukrajinskoji_cerkvy-86736/) (26.09.2021); V. Baranivskyyi, *Religious problems of military and social management: a monograph*, Kyiv 2013, Zoloti vorota, p. 130.

In contrast to the events covered, the All-Ukrainian Orthodox Council was held on June 25, 1992. Pro-Ukrainian communities of the UOC (MP) together with the faithful of the UAOC created the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate (hereinafter – UOC KP). His Holiness Patriarch Mstyslav (Skrypnyk) was elected Primate, and Metropolitan Filaret was elected as his Deputy.<sup>12</sup>

The part/section of the UAOC clergy, supporting Patriarch Mstyslav (Skrypnyk), disagreed with the election of Metropolitan Filaret as the deputy patriarch, recalling his anti-Ukrainian and anti-autocephalous actions during the Soviet era. In June 1993, the UAOC withdrew from the UOC KP and held a Council, at which Bishop Dymytriy (Yarema)<sup>13</sup> was elected as the head of the UAOC. The formation of the UOC KP was never recognized by Patriarch Mstyslav (Skrypnyk), who died soon after in the USA.

Thus, in conditions of Perestroika in the USSR and with the declaration of independence the UOC KP, UGCC and UAOC carried out church activities in Ukraine as of 1993. These religious confessions were neither spiritually nor culturally oriented toward Moscow, but supported Ukrainian statehood, culture and language during worship services. At the same time, during 1991–2017, the UOC (MP) dominated in all regions of Ukraine (except for the West).<sup>14</sup> This church became an important tool of informational, and later – „hybrid” war of Russia against Ukraine.

### 3. Formation of military-religious relations in Ukraine

It should be noted that the transformation processes in the post-Soviet states, the presence of contradictory trends in their development, the elimination of communist ideology deepened the process of destroying the established social consciousness and created a certain ideological and spiritual vacuum. With the restoration of state independence of Ukraine, the moralization of public life, the construction of proper spiritual foundations became more acute and it (also)

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<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, <https://hram-dm-sol.jimdofree.com/наша-історія/історія-церкви> (26.09.2021).

<sup>14</sup> O. Chyrkov, *Changes in the religious situation in the light of trends in ethnocultural development of Ukraine (1985–2019)*, Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the IX International Scientific Conference “Ukrainian Church in the History of Ukrainian Statehood”, Kyiv 2019, Kyiv Orthodox Theological Academy, pp. 574–583.

became one of the most important criteria for the development of modern society, in particular the Armed Forces of Ukraine.<sup>15</sup>

The implementation of educational influence on the personnel of military formations at that time relied on the “bodies for work with personnel”,<sup>16</sup> the basis of which were former political workers. The vast majority of them took the position of atheism, formed in their minds during the reign of Soviet ideology. However, despite this, there were those among them who took practical steps towards the development of military-religious relations. They understood the inevitability of the process of “return to the cooperation of church and army.”<sup>17</sup>

On March 5, 1992, the Minister of Defense of Ukraine approved the Concept of the Social and Psychological Service of the AF of Ukraine. Among other tasks, the newly created service was to ensure friendly relations of all religious confessions, churches, organizations, equal opportunities for their self-realization and satisfaction of needs, fair treatment, self-affirmation and personal development of each soldier, employee and worker.<sup>18</sup> The Christian churches of Ukraine, in particular, the UGCC, expressed their desire to cooperate in this direction with the AF of Ukraine in various ways. For example, “an experiment was launched at the headquarters of the Precarpathian Military District: in Summer of 1992, a Greek Catholic priest, Volodymyr Sychak, was designated to a position of leading researcher of the Research Laboratory of the Social and Psychological Service of the district. He actually served as a garrison chaplain. The experiment lasted until 2000.”<sup>19</sup> The experience gained here in the organization of the chaplaincy service later formed the basis for the regulatory framework for the formation of the concept of pastoral care in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The need to meet the religious needs of military servicemen was confirmed by the results of sociological research. They testified to the constant trend of increase in believers among the military servicemen of the AF of Ukraine. Thus,

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<sup>15</sup> S. Sokoliuk, O. Voroshchuk, *Formation of military-religious relations in Ukraine (1991–1994)*, “Military History Bulletin: Collection of scientific works of the National Defense University of Ukraine”, Kyiv 2019, 3(33), pp. 102–117.

<sup>16</sup> *New structures are being created*, “Narodna armiya”, №207 (9) (1991), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> V. Dibrova, P. Kostiuk (eds.), *Triumph of the heart: popular science publication*, Kyiv 2010, Media svit, p. 69.

<sup>18</sup> The concept of social and psychological service of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, “Narodna armiya” 120 (173) (1992), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> R. Kokhanchuk, *The role of chaplaincy in the process of revival of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the early 90s of the last century*, “Viysko Ukrainy” 8 (134) (2011), pp. 20–22.

in 1996, 35.5% of conscript military servicemen considered themselves believers, 37.8% atheists, and 26.7% hesitated between belief and unbelief.<sup>20</sup> Almost 60% of officers, ensigns and midshipmen considered themselves atheists.<sup>21</sup> As a result, according to the MD of Ukraine, in the period 1992–1996, the total number of believers of all categories of military servicemen increased from 4% to 29% and had a steady upward trend.<sup>22</sup>

The positive dynamics of strengthening religious consciousness among Ukrainian military servicemen under contract was confirmed by the results of the sociological survey in 1997. In this social group, 67.7% of respondents considered themselves as believers, 12.8% non-believers, and 19.5% undecided. The vast majority of believing military servicemen (81%) were adherents of various confessions of the Orthodox Churches, namely: UOC (MP) – 58.8%, UOC KP – 10.7%, UAOC – 2.8%. 3% of respondents considered themselves faithful to the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine (hereinafter – RCC), 2.7% to the UGCC, 2.6% to Protestants, 0.8% to Muslims and 0.5% to Buddhists. 27.7% of respondents did not define their affiliation to any confession.<sup>23</sup> Thus, as of 1996, the leadership of the AF of Ukraine was forced to take into account the rights to freedom of religion of at least 2/5 of the personnel and create conditions to meet their religious needs.

During this period, both the AF of Ukraine and the Ukrainian clergy took the first steps towards each other on issues of cooperation to strengthen the moral and psychological condition of personnel, educating the military environment with knowledge about religious traditions of the Ukrainian people and army, celebrating religious holidays and so on. Gradually, the range of tasks of priests who worked with the military servicemen was outlined. The first joint events were held with the participation of representatives of religious organizations

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<sup>20</sup> Interim report on research work „*The problem of realization of the right of a serviceman to freedom of conscience and religion in the process of democratization of the Armed Forces of Ukraine*”, Kyiv 1996, Research Center for Humanitarian Problems of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Final report on research work (*Code „Provision”*), Kyiv 1997, Research Center for Humanitarian Problems of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, p. 65.

<sup>22</sup> Final report on research work “*Social mechanism of implementation of the state program of reform and development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine for the period up to 2005*” (*Code “Social mechanism”*), Kyiv 2003, Research Center for Humanitarian Problems of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, p. 172.

<sup>23</sup> V. Krotykov, V. Topalskyi (eds.), *Pastoral care in the Armed Forces of Ukraine: experience, problems, prospects (Monograph)*, Kyiv 2010, Research Center for Humanitarian Problems of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, pp. 111–112.



during the military oath, graduation of young officers from higher military educational institutions, scientific and scientific-practical conferences, and funeral ceremonies during events dedicated to the memory of fallen fighters for Ukraine. Joint services and consecrations of battle flags of military units, military equipment, and military towns were also held. Classes on the basics of the Christian faith were arranged. The first proposals to establish a chaplaincy institute in the AF of Ukraine were received from church representatives.<sup>24</sup>

From the mid-1990s, one of the organizational forms of cooperation between the AF of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Christian Churches was the creation of “inter-confessional chaplaincy associations which cooperated with the Armed Forces. Such associations in Ukraine were formed in 1994, 2000, and 2015.”<sup>25</sup> Since 1996, the heads of religious organizations have initiated the creation of church structures responsible for the pastoral care of military servicemen. Thus, the UOC (MP) created the Synodal Department of the UOC for Interaction with the Armed Forces and Other Military Formations of Ukraine, the UOC KP – the Synodal Department (later – the Department) of Spiritual and Patriotic Education in relations with the Armed Forces and Other Military Formations of Ukraine, the UGCC – the episcopate of the UGCC for chaplaincy for all types of the AF of Ukraine. In the RCC, the Auxiliary Bishop of the RCC was responsible for this area of work, and in the UAOC the responsibility was of the Bishop of the UAOC.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4. Sustainable development of military-religious relations in Ukraine

The multi-confession nature and tension in inter-church relations which took place in the 1990s threatened its spread in the military environment, with the transformation of the army into an arena of competition and confrontation

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<sup>24</sup> S. Sokoliuk, O. Voroshchuk, *Formation of military-religious relations in Ukraine (1991–1994)*, “Military History Bulletin: Collection of scientific works of the National Defense University of Ukraine”, Kyiv 2019, 3 (33), pp. 102–113.

<sup>25</sup> L. Vladychenko, T. Kozhushko, *Institution of military chaplaincy in Ukraine: emphasis on the activities of Catholic churches*, “Ukrainian Religious Studies” 91 (2020), pp. 83–109.

<sup>26</sup> S. Sokoliuk, O. Voroshchuk, *Formation of military-religious relations in Ukraine (1991–1994)*, “Military History Bulletin: Collection of scientific works of the National Defense University of Ukraine”, Kyiv 2019, 3 (33), pp. 102–113.

between different churches and religious organizations. Therefore, the activities of the MD of Ukraine on cooperation with religious organizations in that period were mainly aimed at implementing preventive measures towards the spread of inter-confessional conflicts among the AF of Ukraine. The result of this work was that “for seven years, there have been no cases of inter-confessional controversy in military units and formations located in western Ukraine.”<sup>27</sup> Ukrainian scholars tend to explain the lack of full-fledged military religious services in the first decade of Ukrainian independence by the lack of demand “due to Ukraine’s generally low military organization and inadequate attention to state security issues.”<sup>28</sup>

In the early 2000s, there was a steady trend of increasing the role of the church-religious factor in the socio-political processes of the Ukrainian state. The church gradually became one of the most important social institutions, as evidenced by sociological research. Thus, “the total number of the population of Ukraine who considered themselves believers reached 57.8% in 2000, and 71.4% in 2010. Further, during 2010–2017, the percentage of believers among adult citizens of Ukraine averaged about 70%.”<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, the number of believers in the AF of Ukraine increased. This prompted the leadership of the MD of Ukraine to take certain steps in the issues of standardization of pastoral care of military servicemen in the conditions of military service.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, in 2005, the state Ministry of Defense established an experts’ advisory group to study the dynamics of military-religious relations. The expert group included representatives of the MD of Ukraine and scientific institutions. The first important result of her work was the signing of the Directive of the Minister of Defense of Ukraine “On organizing the religious needs of military servicemen of the AF of Ukraine” № D-25 on April 21, 2006. The document

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<sup>27</sup> L. Koberskyi, *Experience of pastoral care in the troops of the Western Operational Command*, “Kyivska tserkva” 1 (12) (2001), pp. 81–85.

<sup>28</sup> O. Bilash, T. Karabin, *Legal regulation of the military chaplaincy in modern Ukraine*, “Kościół i prawo” 9 (22) (2020), pp. 97–112.

<sup>29</sup> *Features of religious and church-religious self-determination of citizens of Ukraine: trends of 2000–2020*. Information materials prepared for the regular meeting of the permanent Round Table “Religion and Power in Ukraine: Problems of Relations”, Kyiv 2020, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> *Features of religious and church-religious self-determination of citizens of Ukraine: trends of 2000–2020*. Information materials prepared for the regular meeting of the permanent Round Table “Religion and Power in Ukraine: Problems of Relations”, Kyiv 2020, p. 3.

established a legal mechanism for the realization of the legal rights and freedoms of religious military servicemen and basically became the first legal act designed to regulate the activities of military pastoral care. In particular, the document gave the clergy the right to perform pastoral care not only on the occasion of celebrations. The military command was determined to monitor the number of believers among the military servicemen in military units (subdivisions), the presence of temples, chapels, prayer rooms and clergy in places of permanent location (base of ships). It was forbidden to admit to the military collectives clergymen who were participants in the inter-confessional confrontation on site. Thus, the document gave legitimacy to those processes which have been going on for a long time. This pushed the military command to take active steps to meet the religious needs of religious military servicemen and marked the beginning of systematic activities in this area.<sup>31</sup>

In 2008, the President of Ukraine V. Yushchenko initiated a series of events to promote the creation of the EP PCU and grant it with autocephaly. However, this was prevented by pro-Russian forces led by the ROC Patriarch Alexy II (Riediger).<sup>32</sup>

V. Yanukovych's rise to power was marked by an attempt to quell the autocephalous movement and force all Orthodox Christians to return to the UOC (MP), which was and remains an integral part of the ROC.<sup>33</sup> The policy of the next ROC patriarch, Kirill (Gundyaev), was aimed at strengthening a pro-Russian sentiment, minimizing Ukrainophile tendencies in the UOC (MP), and pushing aside any claims to church independence.<sup>34</sup> All this contributed to the spread of the "Russian world" in Ukrainian society.

Given the religious situation in the AF of Ukraine and in order to further develop and coordinate activities to meet the religious needs of military

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<sup>31</sup> V. Krotkyov, V. Topalskyi (eds.), *Pastoral care in the Armed Forces of Ukraine: experience, problems, prospects (Monograph)*, Kyiv 2010, Research Center for Humanitarian Problems of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, p. 142.

<sup>32</sup> *Yushchenko: In 2008, ROC Patriarch Alexiy II prevented the granting of the tomos*, <https://hromadske.ua/posts/yushenko-u-2008-roci-nadannyu-tomosu-zavadiv-patriarh-rpc-aleksij-ii> (19.09.2021).

<sup>33</sup> T. Vysotska, *Autocephaly of the Orthodox as a factor of change in the religious, ecclesiastical and socio-political life of Ukraine*, Kyiv 2020, National Pedagogical University named after M.P. Drahomanov, p. 62.

<sup>34</sup> *Yushchenko: The schism in the church must be overcome*, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/1786182.html> (15.09.2021).

servicemen, the leadership of the MD of Ukraine created a separate structural unit – the sector of work with religious organizations of the Department of Humanitarian Policy of MD of Ukraine – with the headcount of two people. On November 1, 2008, it began its activities and, over several years, prepared and implemented a number of regulations.<sup>35</sup> Thus, on November 10th 2008, a Memorandum of Cooperation on Pastoral Care of Military Servicemen of the AF of Ukraine was signed between the MD of Ukraine and the representatives of religious organizations of Ukraine. The aim of the memorandum was to deepen military-religious relations, as well as the extensive use, within the current legislation, of the potential of Ukrainian churches and religious organizations to ensure the constitutional right of personnel to freedom of conscience and religious belief, in order to strengthen Ukraine's defense capabilities.<sup>36</sup> According to Ukrainian scholars, the conclusion of this document took “the first significant steps in the aspect of relations between the state and religious organizations”,<sup>37</sup> the establishment of a “partnership between the army and religious organizations.”<sup>38</sup>

A logical continuation of such cooperation was the appearance of the order of the Minister of Defense of Ukraine №115, of April 17, 2009 which approved the Regulations on the Council for Pastoral Care at the MDO (hereinafter – CPC MDO).<sup>39</sup> The activities of the newly created organization were aimed at establishing more effective cooperation between religious organizations or to develop common approaches aimed at the gradual introduction of an effective system of pastoral care in the AF of Ukraine. It is worth noting that the historical roots of the institute of chaplaincy go back more than 1600 years. And “the presence

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<sup>35</sup> V. Dibrova, P. Kostiuk (eds.), *Triumph of the heart: popular science publication*, Kyiv 2010, Media svit, p. 119.

<sup>36</sup> *Memorandum of Cooperation on Pastoral Care of Servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (2008)*, <https://www.mil.gov.ua/diyalnist/zvyazki-z-gromadskistyru/rada-u-spravah-dushpastirskoi-opiki-pri-ministerstvi-oboroni-ukraini/normativni-dokumenty-ta-metodichni-rekomendaczi/2014/07/08/memorandum-pro-spivpracyu-u-spravah-dushpastirskoi-opiki-vijskovosluzhbovcziv-zs-ukraini/> (10.09.2021).

<sup>37</sup> T. Kalenychenko, *Formation of the image of a military chaplain in Ukraine through the prism of content analysis of the print media*, “Ukrainian Religious Studies”, 91 (2015), p. 173.

<sup>38</sup> L. Vladychenko, *Experience in introducing military priesthood (chaplaincy) into the Armed Forces of Ukraine*, “Skhid” 1 (127) (2014), p. 182.

<sup>39</sup> *Regulations on the Council for Pastoral Care at the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/v0115322-09#Text> (21.09.2021).

of the religious element *extra muros ecclesiae*, as chaplaincy in the armed forces is present all over Europe in different forms.”<sup>40</sup>

On April 22, 2011, the Order of the Minister of Defense of Ukraine approved the Concept of Pastoral Care in the AF of Ukraine (hereinafter – the Concept). For the first time, the Concept formulated the definition of a number of key concepts that are necessary both for the further formation of the legal framework and for a common understanding of these concepts by representatives of religious organizations in Ukraine. The following definitions were presented: military clergyman (priest, chaplain, pastor, imam); pastoral care of military servicemen; confession; authorized for the pastoral care of military servicemen, etc.<sup>41</sup> The Concept outlined the future prospects for the establishment of the institute of military clergy (chaplaincy).

In the period of 1991–2004 in the AF, the basis for meeting the religious needs of the personnel was, according to R. Kokhanchuk, a “secular” (etastic) model.<sup>42</sup> This model continued to exist and was further developed during 2005–2014. It has some fundamental differences from other models, in particular from the American and European models. For example, “in some countries military chaplains are part of the militia, in some they work from a parish and give formalized services to the servicemen and their families at nearby bases. While in some states military chaplains are representatives of major religious denominations, some countries such as Finland and Denmark deploy a system where the chaplains serve all the servicemen, regardless of their tradition.»<sup>43</sup> The main peculiarity of the secular model was the satisfaction of the religious needs of the personnel by priests who are not included in the structure of the Armed Forces. These priests were invited by the commanders on demand. In particular cases, religious buildings could function on the territory or near military units, in which the invited priests periodically performed rites. Therefore, in fact, the organization of activities aimed at meeting religious needs was carried out

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<sup>40</sup> E. Tävalä, *The Chaplaincy in the Armed Forces – Introductory Report*, <https://www.academia.edu/31238096/> (16.09.2021).

<sup>41</sup> The concept of pastoral care in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (2011), <https://www.mil.gov.ua/diyalnist/zvyazki-z-gromadskisty/rada-u-spravah-dushpastirskoi-opiki-pri-ministerstv-oboroni-ukraini/normativni-dokumenti-ta-metodichni-rekomendaczii/2014/07/08/konczepczija-dushpastirskoi-opiki-u-zbrojnih-silah-ukraini/> (25.09.2021).

<sup>42</sup> R. Kokhanchuk, *Pastoral care of the military*, Kyiv 2004, pp. 16–19.

<sup>43</sup> T. Liuski, M. Ubani, *How is Military Chaplaincy in Europe Portrayed in European Scientific Journal Articles between 2000 and 2019?*, “A Multidisciplinary Review. Religions” 11 (10) (2020), p. 3.

by direct commanders, who determined the time for this, invited representatives of religious organizations to the military unit or gave military servicemen the opportunity to participate in ceremonies outside it. Thus, in the conditions of a growing religiosity among the personnel, the unpreparedness of the Ukrainian society, the leadership of the AF of Ukraine and religious organizations to introduce the institution of chaplaincy, actually led to the secular model described above being chosen for the AF of Ukraine.<sup>44</sup> In parallel with its formation, the process of developing the legal framework for establishing cooperation between religious organizations and the gradual introduction of an effective system of pastoral care in the AF of Ukraine, took place. However, until 2014, this was only declarative from the side of the leadership of the MD of Ukraine.

## **5. Institutionalization of the military clergy service (chaplaincy service) in the Armed Forces of Ukraine**

The events of 2013–2014, related to the Euromaidan and Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, sharply turned the vector of the autocephalous movement in Ukraine. On its own, without the help of the authorities, it began to gain new scale in the circumstances of Russia's aggressive pro-imperial policy toward Ukraine. Given the difficult socio-political situation in Ukraine, the issue of meeting religious needs and creating an institution of military clergy (chaplaincy) becomes particularly acute and relevant. This put new requirements on the agenda for its practical implementation in the AF of Ukraine. Therefore, on July 2, 2014, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine issued an order „On the service of the military clergy (chaplaincy) in the Armed Forces, the National Guard and the State Border Guard Service.” The order instructed the relevant state structures to develop and approve, in accordance with their competence, regulations on the service of the military clergy (chaplaincy), in particular in the AF of Ukraine.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, the freelance chaplaincy movement in the Ukrainian army began before the Russian aggression in 2014. Priests of various confessions

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<sup>44</sup> R. Kokhanchuk, *Pastoral care of the military*, Kyiv 2004, pp. 16–19.

<sup>45</sup> *Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine №677 of 02.07.2014 “On the service of the military clergy (chaplaincy) in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the National Guard, the State Special Transport Service and the State Border Guard Service”*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/677-2014-%D1%80> (22.09.2021).

showed an active civic position through volunteer service, which unfolded on Maidan Nezalezhnosti during the Revolution of Dignity. This movement later became widespread in 2014–2015 during the active phase of the anti-terrorist operation in the east of the country.<sup>46</sup>

Sociological research in 2014 recorded the maximum increase in the number of believers in Ukraine – up to 76%, which is typical of a society that found itself in a stressful situation due to the difficult socio-political situation, including the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Russia's aggression against Ukraine. This figure is still the highest in all years of observation. In general, during the entire period of research from 1991, there was a positive trend in the level of religiosity in society.

At the same time, the number of adherents of one or another confession changed periodically, depending on the political course of the state leadership. However, most believers were still supporters of the UOC (MP). Thus, in 2010, with the victory of pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych in the presidential election, the UOC (MP) increased the number of its faithful to 34.5% (in 2000 – 14%). However, in 2014, with the beginning of the Russian aggression and the active phase of the anti-terrorist operation in the east of the country, the number of followers of the UOC (MP) decreased to 24.8%, and in 2019 it was only 11%. At the same time, the indicators of trust of Ukrainian citizens in the Primate of the ROC Patriarch Kirill (Gundyaev) decreased: in 2013 – 38%; 2016 – 19%; 2017 – 15%.<sup>47</sup> Such dynamics proves the negative attitude of Ukrainian citizens to the position of the UOC (MP), which did not condemn Russian aggression against Ukraine, did not recognize Russia as an aggressor state and did not distance itself from the ROC position, creating risks of using its network to promote “Russian peace” ideology. Instead, the number of patriotic believers of the UOC KP was constantly increasing, which was already 29% in 2017 (whereas in 2013 it was only 18.3%). The number of UAOC faithful remained insignificant, fluctuating around 1%.<sup>48</sup> In addition to the Orthodox Churches, the mosaic of church

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<sup>46</sup> T. Kovtunovych, T. Pryvalko, *Chaplains. In the service of God and Ukraine*, Kyiv 2019, Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> *Features of religious and church-religious self-determination of citizens of Ukraine: trends of 2000–2020*. Information materials prepared for the regular meeting of the permanent Round Table “Religion and Power in Ukraine: Problems of Relations”, Kyiv 2020, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Features of religious and church-religious self-determination of citizens of Ukraine: trends of 2000–2020*. Information materials prepared for the regular meeting of the permanent Round Table “Religion and Power in Ukraine: Problems of Relations”, Kyiv 2020, pp. 4–5, 15.

and confessional affiliation of Ukrainians during this period was represented by Muslims, Jews, Protestants and others. Accordingly, the same distribution was observed in the AF of Ukraine. Due to such a multi-confessional nature of the Ukrainian society, the developers of different laws on the chaplaincy service have faced the problem of the distribution of ministers in divisions according to their religious affiliation.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the preservation of the secular model, in the early 2000s the preconditions for the foundation of military clergy (chaplaincy service) in the AF of Ukraine began to take shape. Compared to the early 1990s, the level of Ukrainians' trust in the Church as a moral authority has increased significantly. At the national level, after the events of 2014 related to the aggression of the RF, the introduction of the institution of military chaplaincy in the Armed Forces was supported by 64% of citizens, and 68.2% in 2017, while in 2010 it was 55.9%, and in 2013 it was 52% of respondents.<sup>50</sup> The growing level of religiosity of the Ukrainian society has become an important factor in the institutionalization of chaplaincy. «For “practicing chaplains,” 2014 also became a milestone, dividing the development of chaplaincy in Ukraine from one which was in a peaceful life to the second – in real hostilities».<sup>51</sup>

The legal basis for the establishment of the institute of military clergy (chaplaincy service) in the AF of Ukraine was the entry into force of the order of the MD of Ukraine “On approval of the Regulations on military clergy (chaplaincy) in the AF of Ukraine” № 685 as of December 14, 2016. The recruitment of military chaplains for regular civilian positions of employees of the AF of Ukraine in military units (subdivisions) began.<sup>52</sup>

The introduction of the military clergy service (chaplaincy service), in particular the involvement of regular civilian positions of military chaplains in the AF of Ukraine, determined the change of the model of pastoral care of military

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<sup>49</sup> R. Kokhanchuk, T. Kalenychenko, *Be nearby: The basics of military chaplaincy for the military and volunteers*, Kyiv 2016, Kyiv Epiphany Brotherhood, p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> *Features of religious and church-religious self-determination of citizens of Ukraine: trends of 2000–2020*. Information materials prepared for the regular meeting of the permanent Round Table “Religion and Power in Ukraine: Problems of Relations”, Kyiv 2020, pp. 9, 34.

<sup>51</sup> O. Bilash, T. Karabin, *Legal regulation of the military chaplaincy in modern Ukraine*, “Kościół i prawo” 9 (22) (2020), pp. 101–102.

<sup>52</sup> *Order of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine “On Approval of the Regulations on the Service of the Military Clergy (Chaplaincy Service) in the Armed Forces of Ukraine” of December 14, 2016 № 685*, [https://www.mil.gov.ua/content/mou\\_orders/685\\_nm\\_2016.pdf](https://www.mil.gov.ua/content/mou_orders/685_nm_2016.pdf) (26.09.2021).



servicemen from secular (estatistic) to European. However, the institute of chaplaincy in Ukraine is somewhat different from its counterparts in the European Union. For example, “in contrast to the legal status of chaplains in the Czech Republic, where they are officers, in Ukraine chaplains are employees of the Armed Forces, but their status differs from that of a serviceman. As in the Slovak Republic, chaplains hold positions in the relevant military units.»<sup>53</sup> At the end of 2017, 110 vacancies of military chaplains were introduced into the staff of combat units of the AF of Ukraine, 73 vacancies of which were hired.<sup>54</sup>

Until 2014, the UOC (MP) was the leading religious organization that provided pastoral care for military servicemen of the AF of Ukraine. With the beginning of the military aggression by the RF against Ukraine, the number of supporters of this Church, which did not recognize the RF as an aggressor state and did not distance itself from the position of the Moscow Patriarchate, decreased significantly. This testified to the negative attitude of Ukrainian citizens to the official position of the UOC (MP). On November 20, 2018, the General Headquarters of the AF of Ukraine issued an Order №417 “On Approval of the Regulations on Spiritual Centers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.”<sup>55</sup> In accordance with the requirements of the order, it was forbidden to admit to spiritual centers (military units, institutions and establishments of the MD of Ukraine) representatives of religious organizations with headquarters located in the aggressor countries, whose activities may cause inter-confessional conflicts in the military environment, as well as negatively affect moral and psychological condition of personnel. Therefore, the activity of UOC (MP) representatives in the AF of Ukraine was banned. Instead, after a thorough inspection by the Security Service of Ukraine, the positions of military chaplains were filled by representatives of patriotic religious organizations.

Thus, the interaction between religious organizations of Ukraine and the AF of Ukraine has become complex and systemic. The result of this work was

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<sup>53</sup> O. Bilash, T. Karabin, *Legal regulation of the military chaplaincy in modern Ukraine*, “Kościół i prawo” 9 (22) (2020), p. 104.

<sup>54</sup> *Military chaplains will work in all combat units from May 15*, [https://risu.ua/viyskovii-kapelani-zapracuyut-u-vsiih-boyovih-chastinah-vzhe-z-15-travnnya\\_n84428](https://risu.ua/viyskovii-kapelani-zapracuyut-u-vsiih-boyovih-chastinah-vzhe-z-15-travnnya_n84428) (20.09.2021).

<sup>55</sup> *Order of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine dated 20.11.2018 №417 “On approval of the Regulations on spiritual centers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine”*, <https://dovidnykmpz.info/zagalni/nakaz-heneral-noho-shtabu-zbroynykh-syl-ukrainy-vid-20-11-2018-417-pro-zatverdzhennia-polozhennia-pro-dukhovni-tsentry-zbroynykh-syl-ukrainy/> (15.09.2021).

the completion of the formation of the institute of military clergy (chaplaincy service) of the AF of Ukraine. Summing up the work, the head of the Main Department of Moral and Psychological Support of the AF of Ukraine, Major General O. Gruntkovskiy, noted that the introduction of military clergy and the introduction of staff positions of „military priest (chaplain)” strengthened the protection of freedom of outlook and belief of military servicemen. The activities of military priests (chaplains) improved the morale of the troops, and reduced the negative impact on the morale of the participants in the anti-terrorist operation. Military chaplains have gained considerable experience of service in the zone of combat activities, strong national and patriotic convictions, and are able to withstand significant psychological and physical stress, as well as being ready to carry out pastoral service in any environment.<sup>56</sup>

## 6. Conclusions

Thus, the analysis of the religious situation in Ukraine in the period of 1991–2017 and the experience of meeting the religious needs of military servicemen of the AF of Ukraine in modern conditions allows us to conclude that the growing religiosity of the population and the associated gradual increase in the number of believers among military servicemen (from 4% in 1991 to 75–80% in 2017) led to the formation and development of military-religious relations and the beginning of activities to meet the religious needs of the personnel of the AF of Ukraine.

During 1991–2004, the AF of Ukraine established military-religious relations in the form of a “secular” (“estatistic”) model, which was established in the armed forces of almost all post-Soviet states. During 2005–2013, this model continued to exist, but the vector of its transformation was directly dependent on the political positions of the top political leadership of the state.

During this period, the MD of Ukraine pursued a balanced policy on military-religious relations, but was in a state of uncertainty over the introduction of the institution of chaplaincy. The experience of former Eastern European countries, in particular those that have already become members of NATO and have military

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<sup>56</sup> *General Oleh Gruntkovskiy, Head of the Armed Forces of Ukraine: A set of army psychologists includes chocolate, cigarettes, hot tea*, <https://novynarnia.com/2018/12/21/gruntkovsky/> (21.09.2021).

chaplains in their armies, has continued to be studied for a long time. However, despite the presence of a broad theoretical basis for the functioning of the institute of chaplaincy, as well as the implementation of certain steps towards deepening military-religious relations between the MD of Ukraine and religious organizations, the attempts to create an institute of military clergy (chaplaincy service) in the period of 1991 – November 2016 failed. The introduction of the military clergy service (chaplaincy service) in the AF of Ukraine in 2017 changed the model of pastoral care of military servicemen from secular (etastitic) to European.

The development of Russian-Ukrainian relations influenced the religious needs of the personnel of the AF of Ukraine. In particular, during the aggravation of the Russian-Ukrainian political confrontation, preference in the spiritual support of military servicemen of the AF of Ukraine was given to nationally oriented religious organizations, in contrast to the time of warming bilateral relations with Russia – UOC (MP), which contributed to the spread of Russia's information and psychological influence on both the population and the personnel of the AF of Ukraine. The religious needs of military servicemen were realized mainly in the system of moral and psychological support of the AF of Ukraine, although they have never been a part of it.

The main trends in the development of military-religious relations in 1991–2017 were:

- preservation of the secular model for a long time, adherence to the principle of separation of church and state and, in this connection, the use of the opportunities of freelance pastoral care of religious military servicemen;
- growth of public support for the introduction of the institute of military clergy (chaplaincy service);
- a gradual transformation of the model of military-religious relations from secular to European using the experience of the functioning of the institute of military chaplaincy of the AF of the world's leading countries.

In today's conditions, military chaplains have gained significant experience of service in the war zone, have strong national and patriotic convictions, are able to withstand significant psychological and physical stress, and are ready to carry out pastoral service in any environment.

Thus, since the establishment of the AF of Ukraine in December 1991, military-religious relations have come a long way in their development, and have acquired more defined features and legal standardization. In our opinion, this process deserves a separate comprehensive study.

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