

## **ORTHODOXY AS A FACTOR OF CULTURAL AND CIVILIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION OF UKRAINIANS**

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The article considers Orthodoxy as the most important factor in the cultural and civilizational identification of Ukrainians. It is substantiated that obtaining the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine has civilization and historical significance for the country, strengthening Ukrainian statehood and spirituality.

Religion has always had its special place in the spiritual life of the Ukrainian people. She played an extremely important role in the ethno-national development of Ukraine, acted as the spiritual existential of Ukrainian identity. Religious and religious spirituality of Ukrainians is not only a feature of their national character and mentality, but also an essential definition and form of self-determination of the Ukrainian nation.

Orthodoxy was one of the dominant features of the cultural and civilizational identification of the Ukrainian people. With the adoption of Christianity by the Old Rus state, the influence of the Byzantine Empire on the life of the Slavs in creased. Elements of the Byzantine civilization – education, book culture, Orthodox ritual, the construction of churches on the Byzantine model, the policy of unity of church and state – took root on Russian soil. However, we should not regard the Byzantine civilization as the only source of influence, moreover, to perceive Russia as a peripheral and in something a provincial branch of Byzantine civilization.

Christianization of Rus was the culmination of the formation of the Eastern Orthodox cultural and civilizational identity of the peoples who inhabited it. Overtime, the decay of the Kiev principality, the delineation of the Ukrainian people by other state-political entities transformed it into a fragment of the Eastern Orthodox civilization with a latent («dormant») cultural and civilizational identity. At the same time, the unification of the northeastern Slavs around the unfinied center by the Golden Horde model was the basis for the formation of the Russian (Eurasian) cultural and civilizational identity[1, p. 106–107].

If the adoption of Christianity contributed to the establishment of the Eastern Orthodox civilization, the confessional division into Orthodoxy and Greek-Catholicism contributed, to a certain extent, to the cultural and civilizational fracture of Ukraine. In the Polish-Lithuanian days, the Orthodox faith was the spiritual oversight, the invisible line of distinction between the Rusyns and the Poles, which archaized the cultural and civilizational identity of the Ukrainian people. The absence of such an adjacent line between Ukrainians and Russians later led to Ukraine appealing to Russia not so much for physical salvation, but for the sake of preserving its cultural and civilizational identity. At the same time, the cultural-civilizational identity within the limits of Russian civilization was determined primarily by the socio-political orientation, while the cultural-civilization process in the Ukrainian lands in the Polish-Lithuanian period was under the influence of the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, as well as the attraction to the centers of world trade, and therefore had a predominantly socio-cultural character. Of course, the Uniate Church could not identify all Ukrainians, but only the western part of it.

It should be noted that Uniate for some time was accused of destroying Ukrainian cultural-civilization being, in its Latinization and Polonization. However, objectively, it was a „window“ to Europe. Through the Greek Catholic Church, Ukraine was subjected to European cultural influences, was involved in education, and used acquired knowledge on the basis of its native culture. The Uniate Church, kind of, introduced a part of the Ukrainian people into the zone of influence of Western civilization, although its parishioners were „Catholics of the Eastern rite“, which predetermined their inferiority towards the Roman Catholics. At the same time, we consider it to be a groundless assumption that the entry of all Ukrainian people through the union to the Catholic-Protestant Europe would unambiguously determine the cultural and civilizational affiliation of Ukraine with Western European civilization with the corresponding consequences. We think that this could end with complete polonization, as it happened with the Ukrainian gentry.

The history and lessons of Christianity in Ukraine give grounds to assert that Orthodox and Uniate churches are closely connected with the cultural and historical destiny of the Ukrainian people, as well as the fragmentation of its cultural-civilizational identity. Doubtless, Ukraine's belonging to a culture that developed under the influence of Christianity is defined to much greater degree than under the influence of other religions. On the one hand, Christian faith and the Orthodox Church as the phenomena of a world scale determined the worldview and the type of behavior of Ukrainians, first of all, representatives of the political elite, and on the other, culture as an expression and result of self-determination of the will of the people had certain diversity in different lands of the Kievan state. There was also a long process of „non-acceptance of Christianity by Rus“, but the development of a new image of Christian culture as a correlation of the Kiev-rusian mentality, according to I. Bichka, revealed the alienity of the latest „Cesarean-Papist“, imperial, „universal“ motifs of the Byzantine mentality and, conversely, – communication with the Greek-Byzantine worldview in existential-personal orientations, polyphonic „sophianism“, focus on the „inner world“ of the human soul, on the „heart“, „Anteistic“ vision of nature [2, p. 306].

Being geographically in the center of Europe, Ukraine methistorically was on the cultural-civilizational breakthrough along the East-West line. On its territory, Western European and Russian (Eurasian) civilizations not only meet, enter into interaction but are refracted in the nature and fate of the Ukrainian people. At the same time, Ukrainian history is full of tragedies, the main cause of which is the boundary geopolitical position of the Ukrainian land – „on the brink of two worlds“. It is noted that the entity of the Ukrainian people on the borders of the European and Eurasian cultural and civilizational habitats did not actualize the „split“ of the Ukrainian people, as „split“ (a number of time-bound and incompatible in one perspective content) of its cultural and civilizational identity. The mythologems of East-West polarity as historically retrospective primaries continue to precipitate the contradictions and paradoxes of modern Ukrainian cultural and civilizational identity.

Thus, the cultural and civilizational identity of the Ukrainian people is a controversial multidimensional process, which simultaneously contains elements of the historical past, the specific present and multi-variational future. This incompleteness of the cultural and civilizational identity of Ukrainians is projected into the future in

its openness of a possibilities spectrum. In search of its moral and sense-oriented orientations, Ukraine will undoubtedly and in the future rely on the Christian axiological system. Although it has a very wide range of religious beliefs, but most of them lie in the bosom of Christianity, its directions and meanings. Therefore, the spiritual unification of Ukrainianness can take place in the horizons of not one or two denominations, but Christianity in general. The creation of its own Ukrainian local Orthodox Church has a historical and civilizational significance for Ukrainians. This, first of all, restores historical justice and returns to its origins. It was Kiev Rus in 988 that adopted holy Christianity from Constantinople and joined the prayer union with the entire civilized world. The creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is a significant step towards the establishment of spiritual independence and the strengthening of national unity. Unfortunately, the formation of a new Church is accompanied by a certain conflict, which has a political, legal, social, economic, property and geopolitical background.

In modern Ukraine, the toleration between interfaith relations are hampered by the excessive politicization of churches, lack of their readiness for cooperation, their indifferent or antagonistic attitude, that led to the distancing of Orthodox and reformist churches, the acquisition of dichotomous signs in interfaith relations. Religious tolerance implies mutual respect and mutual understanding between different Christian denominations, the consolidation of the ideological and civic maturity of society.

### **Literature**

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