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## PECULIARITIES OF CONFESSIONAL ZONING OF UKRAINE'S RELIGIOUS SPACE

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*This article explores the features of the territorial organization of the confessional space and the religious-geographical zoning of Ukraine. The role of religious activity among the population is identified as the main factor in the development and formation of the religious space in general and the confessional space in particular. The content, functions, classification features, and structural elements of religious and confessional spaces are substantiated based on sociology and geography of religion. It is shown that the territorial organization of the religious space in various regions of Ukraine is marked by heterogeneity in confessional structure, origin, and usage directions. The peculiarities of formation and zoning in the Volyn-Podilsky region, which includes Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, and Khmelnytsky regions, are determined. The influence of ethnic, religious, political, and social factors on the development of religious-geographical zoning in this area is revealed. The territorial-confessional, genetic, and functional structure of the confessional space in the region is examined, particularly highlighting its multi-scale territorial-confessional heterogeneity and the dominance of Protestant religious organizations. An analysis of the territorial organization and specificity of the confessional life of Protestant communities in the region is carried out, based on criteria such as geographic proximity, similarity in organizational structure, levels of population access to religious communities and sacred objects, intensity of religious activity, genesis, and functional orientation. It is established that since Ukraine's independence, Protestant organizations have consolidated to meet the religious and social needs of the country. By actively participating in social service, they have shown themselves to be a significant and influential component of the Volyn-Podilsky region. Overcoming contradictions and moving towards tolerance and mutual respect, Protestant communities have been able to organize joint events, projects, and participate in various organizations both to spread their ideas and to cultivate the values they consider necessary for the healthy and happy functioning of society.*

**Key words:** religious space, confessional space, confessional existence, religious identity, social uncertainty, everyday life, social values, human trials.

## ОСОБЛИВОСТІ КОНФЕСІЙНОГО РАЙОНУВАННЯ РЕЛІГІЙНОГО ПРОСТОРУ УКРАЇНИ

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*У статті досліджуються особливості територіальної організації конфесійного простору та релігійно-географічного районування території України. Обґрунтовано роль релігійної*

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активності населення як головного фактора розвитку та формування релігійного простору загалом і конфесійного зокрема. Охарактеризовано зміст, функції, класифікаційні ознаки та структурні елементи релігійного та конфесійного просторів на засадах соціології релігії та географії релігії. Доведено, що територіальна організація релігійного простору різних регіонів України характеризується неоднорідністю конфесійної структури, походженням та напрямів її використання. Визначено специфіку формування та районування Волино-Подільського регіону, який об'єднує Вінницьку, Житомирську та Хмельницьку області. Проаналізовано вплив етнічного, релігійного, політичного та соціального факторів на становлення його релігійно-географічного районування. Досліджено особливості територіально-конфесійної, генетичної та функціональної структури конфесійного простору регіону, зокрема полімасштабної територіально-конфесійної неоднорідності та переважання протестантських релігійних організацій. Проведено аналіз територіальної організації та специфіки конфесійного буття протестантських громад у регіоні за критеріями спільності географічного положення, подібності організаційної структури, рівнів забезпеченості населення релігійними громадами та культовими об'єктами, інтенсивності релігійної діяльності, тенецису та функціонального спрямування. Встановлено, що за період незалежності України протестантські організації змогли консолідуватись задля релігійних та соціальних потреб українського суспільства. Беручи активну участь у соціальному служінні, вони засвідчили, що є вагомою та впливовою складовою Волино-Подільського регіону. Подолавши суперечності та продемонструвавши толерантність і взаємоповагу, протестантські громади розробляють єдині проекти й проводять спільні заходи, беруть участь у різних організаціях як для поширення своїх ідей, так і для культивування тих цінностей, які вони вважають необхідними для здорового та ефективного функціонування суспільства.

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**Ключові слова:** релігійний простір, конфесійний простір, конфесійне буття, релігійна активність, релігійна ідентичність, соціальна невизначеність, повсякденність, соціальні цінності, випробування людини.

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**Formulation of the problem.** Modern society, in its information stage of development, faces numerous inter-ethnic and inter-confessional conflicts that have intensified the issue of confessional peace, both globally and in Ukraine. The scientific study of the religious, and especially the confessional space, is now inevitable and demanded by society. Particularly relevant are socio-geographic studies of confessional space and zoning based on common features, as these allow clear identification of territorial differences, geopolitical consequences of changes in the religious environment, understanding of the causes of religious conflicts, and development of predictions and strategies for their mitigation.

The study of the territorial organization of the confessional space and the religious sphere in Ukraine and its individual regions has been addressed by scholars such as O. Lyubitseva, K. Mezentsev, S. Pavlov, L. Shevchuk, A. Kovalchuk, L. Klyuchko, O. Kuchabsky, V. Patyichuk, Yu. Kogatyko, I. Kostashchuk, and

L. Ataman, among others. Each of these researchers has dealt with religious zoning from the perspective of social geography. Their works justify criteria and principles for zoning territories based on religious characteristics. However, in confessional zoning, religious activity of the population – an essential factor in the development and formation of the confessional space, which is part of the broader religious and sacred spaces – is often overlooked.

**The purpose of the article** is to study the peculiarities of the territorial organization of the confessional space and the religious-geographical zoning of the territory of Ukraine.

**Discussion and results.** Analysis of existing religious-geographical zoning schemes in Ukraine. The first religious-geographical zoning of Ukraine was conducted in 1994 by O. Shablii, who identified four religious regions: Western (Volyn, Zhytomyr, Rivne, Vinnytsia, Khmelnytsky, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Zakarpattia regions), Central (Kyiv, Chernihiv, Sumy, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, and Poltava

regions), Eastern (Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, and Dnipropetrovsk regions), and Southern (Crimea, Odesa, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, and Kherson regions) [1]. Due to the confessional heterogeneity of the Western region, Shablii subdivided it further into several zones: Zakarpattia, Western Volyn, Bukovyna, Halychyna, and Podil-Volyn [1]. L. Shevchuk follows a similar zoning scheme [2]. The main criterion for this zoning is the religious activity of the population, characterized by the availability of religious communities and their confessional affiliation.

In his 1995 work "Geography of Religions: Main Tasks and Development Prospects", V. Patiychuk proposed a zoning scheme with five regions: Western (Chernivtsi, Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Khmelnytsky, Ternopil, Rivne, and Lviv regions), Northern (Chernihiv, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Cherkasy, Poltava, Sumy, Kharkiv, and Vinnytsia regions), Eastern (Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions), Southern (Odesa, Kherson, and Mykolaiv regions), and Crimean (Crimea) [3: 177–179]. This zoning is based on the number of confessions, their relative weight in the religious sphere, and the factors influencing the formation of the religious space.

The religious-geographical zoning proposed by S. Pavlov, K. Mezentsev, and O. Lyubitseva in 1998 reflects primarily the confessional structure of the population and the presence of religious communities. This scheme identifies seven religious-geographical regions: Volyn (Rivne, northern Ternopil, and Volyn regions), Halych (Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, and southern Ternopil regions), Zakarpattia (Zakarpattia region), Central (Kyiv, Poltava, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, Sumy, Kirovohrad, and Cherkasy regions), Podil-Bukovyna (Chernivtsi, Khmelnytsky, and Vinnytsia regions), Southeastern (Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and Dnipropetrovsk regions), and Southern (Kherson, Odesa, Mykolaiv regions, and Crimea) [4: 65]. This scheme considers not only administrative boundaries but also historical-geographical

regions, which is a scientifically justified approach.

Special attention should be paid to the religious-geographical zoning of Ukraine, conducted by A. Kovalchuk. The main criteria for the zoning he proposed are the confessional characteristics of the territory, ethno-cultural aspects, and the historical-geographical features of the formation of different regions. Based on this approach, the author identified nine religious-geographical zones: Halychyna (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and almost all of Ternopil Oblast except for its northern part); Western-Volhynia (Volyn, the north of Ternopil, and Rivne Oblasts); Zakarpattia (the only Zakarpattia Oblast); Bukovyna (Chernivtsi Oblast); Volhynia-Podillya (Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, and Khmelnytskyi Oblasts); Central-Northern (Sumy, Chernihiv, Kyiv, Poltava, and Cherkasy Oblasts); Central-Southern (Odesa, Kirovohrad, Mykolaiv, and Kherson Oblasts); Crimean (Autonomous Republic of Crimea); and Eastern (Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kharkiv Oblasts) [5: 180–182].

A thorough study of confessional zoning was conducted by I. Kostashchuk, who analyzed the religious zoning schemes of the entire territory of Ukraine and identified the main approaches and principles of zoning. According to Kostashchuk, confessional zoning is defined as a scientifically grounded territorial division of a territory into separate parts (regions, sub-regions, oblasts, etc.) that are distinguished by the peculiarities of their confessional structure, shaped by various factors, primarily historical-geographical features of the territory's formation, as well as the religious activity of the population [6: 175].

It is worth noting the significant differences between religious and confessional zoning, arising from the socio-geographical nature of religious space and the structure we propose. Religious space is viewed as part of sacred space, which is divided into confessional space, atheists, agnostics, and "akirchists" (those without church affiliation). Confessional space reflects the distribution of individual confessions and is subdivided into

subspaces (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, and pagan).

In conducting confessional zoning, which only considers confessional factors and excludes the number of atheists, agnostics, and akirchists, I. Kostashchuk suggests ranking territories based on indicators such as the index of religious mosaicism, population coverage by religious communities for each confession separately, the number of clergy, elders, and missionaries for each confession separately, and the coverage of settlements by religious communities and clergy. These calculations are also made for each confession.

By performing the necessary calculations for the confessions listed in the reports of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine and the reports of regional state administrations, we get 221 indicators (the index of ethnic mosaicism for each region and the calculation of four indicators of population and settlement coverage by communities and clergy for each confession, direction, and branch – 55 in total from the Ministry's report, yielding 220 indicators). This makes it possible to accurately determine the similarity of administrative-territorial regions based on their confessional structure and religious activity, as manifested in the provision of religious communities and clergy to the population.

The territorial structure of confessional space is considered in the quantitative and qualitative combination of all available confessions, directions, and branches on a given territory, specifically their communities. The elements used to express the territorial structure include the confessional region, confessional sub-region, and confessional province. A confessional region is a region where specific inter-confessional relations and processes are manifested, characterized by shared historical-geographical and religious development features. A confessional sub-region is part of the region and stands out due to some variations in the confessional makeup of the population. A confessional province is a clearly defined part of a region by confession that may include local territorial units – confessional areas.

As a result of calculating the territorial organization of Protestantism in Ukraine, we found that as of 2021, there were 10,734 Protestant organizations in Ukraine. This is a relatively high number, given that Ukraine is historically considered an Orthodox country. However, if we look at the percentage, Protestant organizations account for 34.6% of all religious organizations in the country. For comparison, only Scandinavian countries, Germany, and somewhat the United Kingdom have similar or higher figures in Europe.

Comparing these data with 2001, when the total number of Protestant communities was 6,899, we can say that Protestantism has been spreading and gaining greater influence. If we look at each region separately, with one exception, the trend toward an increase in these organizations is positive and continues. In fact, it has increased since the percentage of Protestant organizations in 2001 was about 27%. This shows that Ukraine is a favorable place for the spread of religious ideas, including Protestantism.

As of 2021, the largest Protestant organizations in Ukraine were Baptist organizations, with 3,055 communities. Close behind them were Evangelical Christian communities, with 3,052. The third-largest group of Protestant communities were charismatic organizations, with 1,597. Seventh-day Adventists followed with 1,084 religious organizations. Next are Jehovah's Witnesses, numbering 928, although they are more aligned with other Protestant-origin religious organizations, of which there are 1,377 in total (excluding Jehovah's Witnesses: Mormons – 34, Christians of the Sabbath Day – 7, Methodists – 10, Molokans – 4, Nazarenes – 26, Mennonites – 10, Presbyterians – 63, Anglican Church – 2, Salvation Army – 11, Church of Christ – 119, New Apostolic Church – 53, and separate Protestant-origin religious organizations – 110). Evangelical Christians account for 388 religious organizations. Reformists and Lutherans are represented by 134 and 87 religious organizations, respectively [7: 270].

After conducting relevant calculations and creating a ranking of the regions of Ukraine based on indicators of population and settlement coverage by religious communities, as well as the religious mosaic index, we obtain an indirect indicator that reflects the religious activity and denominational structure of the region. If we take a regional dimension and divide Ukraine into five areas (or regions), for example, as follows: Eastern (Luhansk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Sumy, and Dnipropetrovsk regions), Southern (Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, and part of Kirovohrad regions), Central (Khmelnyskyi, Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, Poltava, and part of Kirovohrad), Northern (Chernihiv, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Rivne, and Volyn regions), and Western (Chernivtsi, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, and Zakarpattia regions). The Northern area has the highest representation of Protestant organizations – 2,829, largely thanks to the Kyiv region and the capital, where, surprisingly, more organizations are concentrated than anywhere else. Next is the Eastern area, with 2,247 religious organizations. In third place is the Western area, with 2,021 religious organizations. The Central and Southern areas follow with 1,968 and 1,678 religious organizations, respectively (Kirovohrad region was split between them to maintain a balance in indicators; even without this, the Central region still had a higher number of organizations across four regions – 1,839, compared to 1,807 organizations in the Southern area, including all of Kirovohrad). Thus, we can see that Protestant organizations are relatively evenly distributed across the territories of Ukraine, with the North having a slight advantage due to Kyiv as the capital.

Taking into account the principle of territoriality, which is one of the key principles in the development of territorial zoning schemes, and based on the rating indicators, I. Kostashchuk conducted denominational zoning of Ukraine, identifying the following denominational regions and subregions:

1. Western denominational region, including Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Zakarpattia, Ternopil,

Khmelnyskyi, Volyn, and Rivne regions. It can be divided into four subregions: 1) Volyn – Volyn and Rivne regions, as well as Kremenets, Shumsk, and Lanivtsi districts of Ternopil region, where Orthodoxy of both branches – UOC MP and UOC KP – dominates; 2) Galician – Lviv, Ternopil (excluding Kremenets, Shumsk, and Lanivtsi districts), and Ivano-Frankivsk regions, with a predominance of UGCC, UAOC, UOC KP, and RCC communities; 3) Podillia-Bukovyna – Khmelnytskyi and Chernivtsi regions, where UOC MP communities dominate, with noticeable UOC KP and Protestant denominations; 4) Zakarpattia, which includes Zakarpattia region, where UOC MP, RCC, and UGCC communities hold a significant share in the religious sphere.

2. Volyn-Podillia denominational region, including Zhytomyr and Vinnytsia regions. Its feature is the predominance of Orthodoxy – UOC MP and UOC KP, with noticeable shares of RCC and Protestant denominations.

3. Dnipro-Capital denominational region – Kyiv and Cherkasy regions, and the city of Kyiv. This region is characterized by vibrant religious life, explained by the gravitational pull of Kyiv, the predominance of Orthodoxy, and the presence of communities of all religious organizations registered in Ukraine. There is also a significant share of new religious movements and denominations.

4. Central-Black Sea-Crimean denominational region – Odesa, Kirovohrad, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia regions, and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, where Orthodoxy (UOC MP) dominates, with a significant share of Protestant communities, although the overall number of religious communities of various denominations is relatively low. The Crimean subregion stands out with a significant proportion of Muslims.

5. Eastern denominational region – Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions. It is characterized by low religious activity, with Orthodoxy (UOC MP) prevailing, and a noticeable share of Protestant communities in the denominational structure.

6. Northeastern denominational region – Chernihiv, Sumy, and Poltava regions, where Orthodoxy dominates, but religious activity is quite low, as evidenced by the relatively small number of registered religious communities [6: 180–182].

Thus, as a result of the denominational zoning of Ukraine using the developed methodology, we identified six regions, two of which are subdivided into individual subregions.

It is worth noting that this scheme of denominational zoning of Ukraine differs from previous zoning schemes. Its advantage is that it takes into account not only the administrative-territorial boundaries but also the historical-geographical lands. A distinctive feature of this scheme is that it is based not only on the data of denominational ratios but also on indicators of religious activity, which were practically not highlighted in the previous schemes we analyzed. The main principles of denominational zoning that we identify are denominational mosaicism, religious activity, territorial proximity, and the specifics of interdenominational relations, manifested by the level of conflict.

Ukraine is a fairly large country in terms of territory, where many religions and various movements find their place. Protestantism is no exception, having found its expression in every region of this country. At this stage, this Christian branch has spread significantly and gained substantial importance in the religious landscape of our state, actively participating in cultural, social, economic, and political life.

Protestant communities are numerous, though their number varies across different regions. This is due to various historical circumstances and even political factors in certain regions. Therefore, it is worth analyzing the territorial organization of Protestantism in Ukraine today and comparing it over the past 20 years to identify trends and peculiarities.

We obtained the statistical data from the report on the network of religious organizations in Ukraine as of January 1, 2021, prepared by the State Service of Ukraine on Ethnopolitics and Freedom of

Conscience [8]. It should be noted that the report did not include the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, as this region is currently occupied by the Russian Federation, making it impossible to objectively determine its denominational diversity at this time. Also, regarding Donetsk and Luhansk regions: parts of these regions are also occupied by Russia, so the statistical data provided for these regions are incomplete, representing only the information that can be determined at this stage. Additionally, materials from the "Religious Information Service of Ukraine: RISU" on the statistics of churches and religious organizations in Ukraine as of January 1, 2001, were used [9].

In our research, we will use the religious-geographical zoning of Ukraine conducted by A. Kovalchuk. For the analysis of the denominational representation of Protestant religious organizations, we have selected the Volyn-Podillia region, which represents Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, and Khmelnytskyi regions.

Vinnytsia Region [8]. There are 188 Baptist religious organizations here. They organize two spiritual educational institutions: a higher and a secondary one. Many communities also have Sunday schools, totaling 113. Half of the communities are served by official clergy – 92 individuals. Additionally, there is one periodic publication (electronic). In the region, there are only 10 Evangelical Christian organizations. Two of them have Sunday schools, and 10 communities are served by 9 clergy members.

The largest number of Protestant communities in the region belongs to the Evangelical Faith Christians – 156 organizations. They have one higher spiritual educational institution. Officially registered schools number 34, all of which are Sunday schools. Notably, there are many clergy among them: there are 158 priests for 156 communities. This is indeed an impressive figure. They also have one audiovisual publication (radio and television).

The Vinnytsia region has 106 Adventist religious organizations. Adventists run 73 Sunday schools and one general

educational school. There are 86 clergy members among the Adventists.

Lutherans are also represented in the Vinnytsia region, with only 2 Lutheran religious organizations: one is the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ukraine, which has one Sunday school and one clergy member; the other is the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. There are also charismatic religious organizations, totaling 51. They have 12 Sunday schools and 40 clergy members.

Other Protestant religious organizations (of Protestant origin) total 36. The existing organizations include one New Apostolic Church in Ukraine, 11 Nazarene organizations, one Molokan organization, 21 Jehovah's Witness organizations, one Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and one separate Protestant religious organization. These Protestant organizations have a total of 5 Sunday schools and 62 ministers.

Thus, the Vinnytsia region has a total of 549 Protestant organizations of various types, which constitutes 5.1% of all Protestant communities in Ukraine. In comparison, in 2001, the Vinnytsia region had only 216 Protestant organizations of various types [9]. Therefore, over 20 years, the number of communities here has more than doubled.

Zhytomyr Region [8]. There are 155 Baptist religious organizations in the Zhytomyr region. They organize two secondary spiritual educational institutions and 28 Sunday schools. There are 127 clergy members.

There are no Evangelical Christian organizations in the region; however, there are 152 Evangelical Faith Christian organizations that organize four secondary spiritual educational institutions and 49 Sunday schools. There are 84 clergy members and 3 printed periodic publications. There are 35 Adventist organizations represented by the Ukrainian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which have 13 Sunday schools and 33 clergy members.

There are 6 Lutheran organizations: one German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ukraine and 5 Ukrainian

Lutheran Churches. There are 3 Sunday schools and 3 clergy members. There are 70 charismatic organizations in the region. Among them, there are 16 Sunday schools, 57 clergy members, and 2 printed periodic publications.

There are only 9 other religious organizations of Protestant origin. This includes one New Apostolic Church in Ukraine, 7 Jehovah's Witness organizations, and one Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). They have 11 clergy members.

Therefore, the Zhytomyr region has a total of 427 Protestant organizations of various types, constituting 4% of all Protestant communities in Ukraine. Twenty years ago, the Zhytomyr region had 248 Protestant organizations [9]. Thus, this region is also experiencing a trend toward growth.

Khmelnyskyi Region [8]. Baptists are the most represented here, with 170 religious organizations. They have organized one secondary spiritual educational institution, 19 Sunday schools, and 4 periodic publications: one printed and 3 electronic. There are 118 clergy members working here.

There are 9 Evangelical Christian organizations, with 9 clergy members and 5 Sunday schools. Evangelical Faith Christians represent 144 religious organizations. They have one higher spiritual educational institution, 61 Sunday schools, and one general educational school. There are 180 clergy members. They also have 4 periodic publications: 2 printed and 2 electronic.

The Khmelnytskyi region has a significant number of Adventist organizations – 43, among which there are 12 clergy members. The region also has Lutherans and Reformers: each has 3 religious organizations. Among the Lutherans, there are 2 clergy members, and among the Reformers, there are 3, who also have one Sunday school.

Charismatic Protestants are represented to a lesser extent, with only 22 religious organizations. However, they have two educational institutions: one higher and one secondary, as well as 2 Sunday schools. Among them, there are

15 clergy members. There are 39 other religious organizations of Protestant origin. Among them, there is only one Sunday school, but they employ 350 clergy members. Thus, the Khmelnytskyi region has a total of 433 Protestant religious organizations, which constitutes 4% of all Protestant communities in Ukraine. This is, of course, a greater figure than it was in 2001 in this region, which had 251 organizations [9].

**Conclusion.** It is noteworthy that the process of institutionalizing Protestantism during Ukraine's independence had its peculiarities. Due to the unique worldview formed among Ukrainians during the Soviet Union, this process was not straightforward. However, on the other hand, the religious vacuum and emotional emptiness allowed Protestant ideas to quickly find their supporters in various cities of Ukraine. Certainly, the groundwork for this was there, as Protestantism did not emerge from a void. But the growth rates

among Protestant organizations over the past 2-3 decades have been impressive. From a small and unremarkable "group", Protestant communities have transformed into a significant social "unit", increasing their numbers several times – practically to the first ten thousand.

Baptists and Pentecostals are the most represented in Ukraine, each having around 3,000 religious organizations. This is, of course, expected, as historical realities confirm this. Similarly, the majority of Protestant organizations are in the eastern regions of the country. However, the northern part of Ukraine, particularly the capital, leads in this regard. It is worth noting that, overall, Protestantism is fairly evenly distributed throughout the territory of our country, which demonstrates their activity and search for new methods of proselytism, as well as their consolidation and unity in their work and in addressing the challenges facing Ukrainian society.

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