

## INTRODUCTION

The history of the Greek Catholic Church cannot be considered outside the context of the annals of the statehood and unification of Ukraine in the XX century. Moreover, thousands of its priests and millions of laymen were not only the subject of international politics, but also the subject of ethno-political, religious and spiritual development of the Ukrainian people. The clergymen participated in the pre-election rallies and directly in the activities of the Galician Sejm, were among the founders and activists of “Prosvita”, the Shevchenko Scientific Society, “Village Master”, “Maslosojuz” and other public and cooperative societies; were elected to the National Council of the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic, served as chaplains in the Legion of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, the Galician Army and the UPA; formed a religious dissidence as the part of the opposition movement of the 1940-80s. Today, the UGCC is an important ethno-cultural factor in the creation of an independent Ukraine.

Therefore, the study of the problem of the relationship between government, society and the church as a social institution in the last century is caused by a number of reasons. First, a public interest to the religion as a poorly understood socio-cultural phenomenon has increased in the last decade in Ukraine. Secondly, changes in the state and political system of Ukraine after 1991 have significantly influenced the role and place of the church in the socio-political and spiritual life of society. Most of the religious organizations, which have been granted a status of a juridical person, have already demonstrated their ability to denounce the positive moral and cultural values to the believers and non-believers, and to actively promote the national revival. Third, establishing a civilized relationship between the authorities and the church will help to promote true democracy in Ukraine. It is because both the state and state-religious structures are interested in constructive dialogue and cooperation.

In this context, a special scientific relevance is concerned with the question of the return of the historical truth about the social role of

the Greek Catholic Church, its priesthood and the believers in the state-unification process in Ukraine, especially in the era of the Liberation Competitions of the first half of the XX century, as well as in the postwar period of strengthening and collapse of the totalitarian system in the USSR-UkrSSR.

A comprehensive analysis of state-church relations will help to understand the difficult situation that arose in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the post-war period. Studying these ambiguous processes will also help to identify inter-denominational misunderstandings in the western region and the ways to overcome them. The civic unity of believers requires their goodwill, tolerance to one another, and a broad ecumenical dialogue, in which, in the opinion of the authors, this concrete work will also take part. As we can see, in addition to purely scientific interest, the urgency of the problem raised in this work is also determined by the practical needs of overcoming some interfaith estrangement and the formation of civil society.

The purpose and objectives of the study are determined by the relevance of the chosen topic, in particular they intend to identify the causes and consequences of confessional and ethnic transformation in the Western Ukrainian region, as well as to generalize the public mission of the Greek Catholic Church in the state-unification process of Ukraine over the last century.

The authors of the study set themselves the following tasks:

- to analyze the state of the scientific development of the topic and the source base of the research;

- to reveal the specifics of confessional-ethnic processes in Austria-Hungary, the nature, mechanism and consequences of the confessional-institutional transformations of Greek Catholicism in Galicia at the end of the XIX – beginning of the XX centuries;

- to show the national and state-making role of the Greek Catholic Church in the development of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic; participation of its members in the activities of the Ukrainian National Council and the State Secretariat, local self-government bodies, service of field chaplains in the Galician Army;

- to confirm the orientation of the ethno-confessional policy of the authorities of the Second Polish Republic in the Western Ukrainian lands in 1918-1939;
- to research the content and nature of the discussions within the episcopate regarding the state and political orientations of the Church in the interwar period; to show the attempts of Stanislaw Bishop H. Khomyshyn to normalize the Ukrainian-Polish relations, which provoked resistance of the majority of national-democratic forces;
- to find out the content and character of the confessional-institutive policy of the Nazis in the territory of the General Governorate;
- to show the ecumenical consequences of the decisions of the Lviv “council” in 1946, which initiated the ethno-confessional transformation of the Greek Catholics of the western region in the conditions of the underground in 1940-80’s;
- to analyze the policy of the UGCC in solving social and national-cultural problems of the people, preserving its historical memory, forming a system of moral and ethical values;
- to find out the role and place of the UGCC in overcoming interstate confrontation in Central and Eastern Europe, harmonizing interethnic relations at the current stage of Ukrainian state-building.