

# **RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR AND THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN BROKERING PEACE**

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**Abstract:** One of the biggest threats to world peace and human survival is violence within societies, whether or not it has any external connections. In this context, it is important to understand how religion contributes to advancing peace in society. This study evaluates the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine and emphasises the contribution of religion to sustainable peace in both nations. The research employs a literature-based analysis method, drawing upon selected extant literature to discover new relationships among existing knowledge on the subject. The study reveals that employing different theological perspectives and religious roles, including those of religious leaders, can encourage a commitment to brokering sustainable peace in Russia and Ukraine. It concludes that Religions should promote the SDG16 “sustainable peace strategy” to make significant and revolutionary changes in all nations of the world.

**Keywords:** Faith-Based Diplomacy, Just Peace, Pope Francis, Role Theory, Sustainable Peace, UN-SDG16.

## **1. Introduction**

The modern world is rife with conflict, terrorism, upheaval, and disarray, and it is coupled with the fact that humans have created several technical innovations, yet they are unable to create peace. In this study, we argue that religion can be a source

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of peace development. The attainment of sustainable development objectives is hampered by war, unrest, shaky institutions, and vulnerable people's limited access to justice and peace. In order to move towards sustainable peace, there is a need to acknowledge the worth of every person and act appropriately. The perspective put forward by Pope Francis is presented in the present discourse. We argue that the partnerships of today should be built on inclusive and pluralistic religious principles and values, as they share a common vision, purpose, and initiatives for peace that put people and the earth first. In this study, we assess the war between Russia and Ukraine and highlight the role of religion in promoting sustainable peace in those countries. Significantly, the research depicts religion as a dynamic system of variables that relies on a broad variety of historical and contextual factors that support world peace.

## **2. The Nexus between Peace and Religion**

The lack of violence or war is what constitutes a quiescent state of peace. Peace is often defined in a social setting as the absence of conflict. Christians see the term "Prince of Peace" as a messianic allusion to Jesus. Buddhists believe that peace will come about after all suffering has been eliminated, while followers of Buddha adhere to the "Four Noble Truths" in order to end such suffering and find inner peace. Religious critics, such as Ellens, Romer, and Russell, may consider religion to be out of date, detrimental to the individual, or damaging to society (Ellens 23). Additionally, Ellens (20) posits that religion could be a hindrance to human or scientific advancement, a catalyst for immoral behaviour or practices, or a political weapon for societal control.

In recent decades, religion has taken on an unusually prominent role in world events. For example, the atrocious events of 11 September 2001 were perpetrated by al-Qaeda, an Islamist extremist organisation, the cold war in Iraq, and Iran's assertiveness as a quasi-theocracy have only served to reinforce

the public's perception that religion is often at the root of modern international conflicts.

### **3. The Theoretical Underpinning**

The role theory, proposed by Linton (26) and Mead (10), holds that most daily activities act out of socially determined categories. Functionality role theory and dramaturgical role theory are the two main lineages of role theory. In functionality role theory, roles are an essential part of a strong social order, thus suggesting that consistent but unique human behaviours endure throughout social systems because they are necessary. On the other hand, dramaturgical role theory contends that humans' identities are continually reshaped as a result of their interactions with others rather than being a constant and autonomous psychological entity. Here, social interaction is examined in terms of how individuals behave in everyday situations.

Normative expectations establish roles in organisational settings by associating them with recognisable social positions. When social deviation does not fit into a preset role, role theory finds it difficult to explain it. According to role theory, a person's behaviour is influenced by how their roles develop and are established. Roles were seen as the dynamic features of social positions that were accepted by society, according to Linton (24). According to Mead (13), roles are coping mechanisms that humans develop as they interact with others in society.

### **4. Connecting Role Theory to Religion and Peace Development**

The role theory can be explained and applied to religion and peace development from the perspective of functionalists' perceptions of religion. In this sense, the importance of religion in society is described in terms of its functions. Functionalists such as Durkheim, Parsons, and Bellah contend that religion contributes to social order (peace) and the preservation of the value consensus in human society as a whole. Religion is important because it helps individuals and society deal with the emotional stress of big events like war. Durkheim (39), in his

studies of "primitive religion," discovered that religion imposes self-discipline, which encourages people to act in a socially responsible manner rather than acting solely in their own selfish interests. Second, religion serves as the social glue in society. For example, Ottuh and Onimhawo (24) assert that religious worship brings the neighbourhood together as a unified family; hence, one of the primary purposes of religion is social cohesion. When religion brings and unites people together, peace and development are guaranteed. Third, norms, values, and ethics are seen as the core of every human society. The purpose of societal norms, values, and ethics is to ensure stability, justice, equity, and peace. Therefore, Durkheim (40) sees religious belief as a preserver of societal norms, values, ethics, traditions, and culture. Finally, religion helps remind people of their role in something far greater if they ever feel irritated or lose their faith. Religion, by regulating people's behaviours, prevents them from becoming anti-social.

Religions offer solutions to the existential questions on the meaning of life and the problem of evil and explanations for moral tests and rewards in the hereafter, offering significance to a life that could otherwise seem pointless. One can conclude that religion serves a psychological purpose by assisting people in coping with stressful or worrisome circumstances that do not promote peace. This could be seen as applying conventional religious beliefs to a political ideology to attain societal peace and development.

### **5. The Significance of Peace for Human and Society's Survival**

Peace relies on how societies maintain or develop their cultural traditions. The absence of peacefulness has a negative effect on development and economic progress in society. It is easy for cycles of conflict and stagnation to get stuck in a rut, but in an environment of peace, growth happens, which in turn helps to make society safer. Peace entails everyone's fundamental requirements being met, and there is no discrimination where justice is widely practised. There must be peace to employ resources, which are sometimes few, for development and to

meet the needs and ambitions of all segments of society. Thus, conflictual conditions exacerbate existing conflicts by fostering distrust and polarisation among different social groups. This is what makes a culture of peace different from a fixed idea of peace.

According to Smock (26), any discussion on religion in relation to international relations immediately brings up the possibility of a religiously motivated war. It is common to minimise or even ignore religion's numerous other aspects and effects. The Rome-based Community of Sant' Egidio's successful mediation to help put an end to the civil war in Mozambique is the most dramatic and widely referenced example. The area of religious peacemaking is evolving, thus reflecting its expanding experience in increasingly complex ways. Traditional diplomacy may be ineffective when community identities, especially religious identities, are major contributing causes of violent conflict. He points out elements that are conducive to faith-based intervention for peace. Hence, religious leaders may provide support, moral justification, and influence to advance reconciliation by resisting government wrongdoing.

According to Johnston and Cox (12), religious organisations and leaders may play a significant role in fostering peace and reconciliation, particularly when there is a clash between religion and politics as well as religion and national identity. Religion and development are based on Weber's (43) studies of the free connections between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism. In this vein, weighing the implications of this conception of development from a religious perspective, it may be argued that the pursuit of material success should be moderated by empathy, conscience, and concern for social justice. Appleby (42) argues, first, that peace and development professionals should work together in a systematic way to form an alliance that would help solve the structural problems that are currently plaguing both fields, and second, that religious actors and institutions should be more intentionally included in regional as well as local projects and planning. This would make

the liberal peace model more effective, comprehensive, and open-minded.

## **6. Sustainability of Peace andSDG16**

To guarantee that everyone has access to prosperity and peace, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established. In order to continue progress, Goal 16 of the SDGs promotes inclusive and tranquil communities. Respect for others and genuine communication between opposing groups are only a few of the ways that a nation and its society might achieve long-lasting peace. According to Slotin and Elgin-Cossart (25), SDG 16 negotiations were very contentious because of the exposed complex geopolitical environment of conflicting global objectives. Although physical violence is the primary focus, indicator 16.3 also mentions psychological violence. Although ideals like peace and justice appear to have a global appeal, the situation is really far more complicated. SDG 16 demands that people have the freedom to protect their rights to resources and land.

According to targets 16.3 and 16.9, advancing the rule of law and forging legal identities are equivalent to pursuing justice and peace. It is observed that this avoids the challenging issue of how governmental conceptions of justice and peace unavoidably favour certain actors over others. Thus, it is preferable to understand justice, peace, and related conceptions of equality as complicated and multifaceted processes that involve several players both within and outside the state and always involve trade-offs. Fairness, peace, and justice are social constructs that should be understood from the perspective of how they are established, what their objectives are, and who is considered a deserving subject of justice or equity. In certain situations, relying too much on the state to end conflict and maintain peace may have detrimental effects on human beings and society, including the assertion of state authority via the suppression of political opposition.

## **7. Religion, Development, and Peace**

Strategic thinking about religion and development requires a transformational shift in the attitudes of secular development actors, starting from simple stakeholder analysis undertaken from a presumed position of secular predominance to considerations of a level playing field based on complementarities and parity between actors. However, the work of development has always been the domain of faith-based entities. To promote this, for example, the UN must press the most powerful nations for peace in the interests of smaller, less industrialised states; hence, there is a need for new methods and initiatives for conflict resolution across the globe. This propensity causes the space required to create peace to shrink and the players and elements that fuel conflict to be ignored.

Faith-based organisations and NGOs have important roles to play in societal development, peacemaking, and resolving conflict. The three Abrahamic faiths, along with the Indian and East Asian religions, are already doing this by promoting tolerance, coexistence, and peacemaking. Past examples of societal development and brokering peace by religion include the mediation by religious leaders, including the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, Pope John Paul II's interventions in Lebanon, Poland, and Haiti, Buddhist leaders in Cambodia, and the churches and synagogues that were mobilised a generation ago over the situations in Biafra and Darfur (Shah, Stepan, and Toft 20). Many world religions emphasise soft power solutions, which offer a viable complement to the use of political, economic, and military tools to sustain lasting peace. More nuanced perspectives focus on the positive contributions that religious beliefs, organisations, and individual adherents have made to challenges such as resolving conflict, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. On the other hand, intellectuals have become more interested in religious fanaticism in developing countries in recent years. This makes it less likely that religion can give a balanced view of peace and development.

Hayman (17), who did a study on religion, peace, and development, concluded that locally-led peace brokerage by organised religions is better than internationally-led programmes for developing self-help, relevance, and sustainability. She observes that multinational organisations, unlike organised religions, are unaware of the value of local conflict mediation skills. She comes to the conclusion that only locally based, relevant religious endeavours can maintain the long-term dedication of those in need of peace and development. A ton of examples can be provided to show how local conflicts, which are often animated and mixed up with larger political projects, issues of ethnic conflict, and civil wars, are often rife with resentment and desires for vengeance, sometimes due to the lack of serious religious commitment. Religious practices of mediation and conflict resolution carry a lot of weight today because of their importance and benefits for those seeking greater human welfare in societies dominated by religion and for the security and stability of peace at the regional level.

The aspects of crisis intervention introduced in this actively sought not only peace as the apparent absence of conflict but also restitution, which means the redeployment of the perpetrator back into the community after accepting accountability and making reparation payments in a public ritual that allows all parties to restore their decency, thereby attempting to prevent cycles of retribution. According to Ottuh, Idjakpo, and Uviekovo (312), people across the globe want development, peace, and prosperity; hence, they look to their leaders (political and religious) to promote peace, fight to avert conflicts and create societies that are peaceful, fair, and inclusive. At a time like this, when many governments are weakening international rules and norms, the world needs new supporters of the sustaining peace agenda of the United Nations to make sure it has real, game-changing effects to promote world peace. For example, the African Union, Pacific Island countries, the G7+, and many other groups should back up the UN sustaining peace agenda. Thus, maintaining peace ought to be an opportunity to regain the realm of UN policy.

## **8. Current Russia-Ukraine War**

Russia is by far the largest country in the world and possesses unrivalled resource wealth, and for the bulk of the Soviet era, the Communist Party outright prohibited the manifestation of religion. However, in the late 1980s, the government began to loosen its restrictions on religion. Eastern Europe is home to Ukraine, which is Europe's second-largest country after Russia. As a non-nuclear state, Ukraine signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In 1999, Russia signed the Charter for European Security with other countries. In the years after the demise of the USSR, a number of former Eastern Bloc countries joined NATO. Viktor Yushchenko was allegedly poisoned during the election campaign in Ukraine's disputed 2004 presidential election (Bowen 340). It could be argued that the Russian military sees such an attitude as an effort by the United States and European powers to weaken Russia's national security and destabilise neighbouring nations. At the Bucharest meeting in 2008, Ukraine and Georgia applied for admission to NATO, but the Western European nations rejected the application and gave Membership Action Plans (MAP) in order to avoid enraging Russia, though US President George Bush advocated for their admittance. This caused a rift among NATO members. In the end, NATO declined to grant them MAPs but also said that these nations would become members of NATO. Since February 2014, there has been a conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Shortly after Ukraine's Revolution for Dignity, Russia started hostilities centred on Crimea and Donbas's political standing. Viktor Yanukovich, the president of Ukraine, was removed from power on 22 February 2014, as a consequence of the Euromaidan and the Revolution of Dignity. Unmarked Russian forces entered the Crimea region of Ukraine and seized control of key infrastructure and locations. Meanwhile, the Crimean status referendum, which Russia staged on 16 March 2014, decided that Crimea should become part of Russia (Galeotti 31). Two days following the vote, Russia formally seized the whole Crimean peninsula. The Donetsk People's Republic and the

Luhansk People's Republic were established by Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine in April 2014 with help from Russia (Galeotti 31). A sizable convoy of unmarked Russian military vehicles entered the Donetsk Oblast in August 2014 after crossing the Russia-Ukraine border (Galeotti 32). In the undeclared conflict in Donbas, Russian forces actively took part in key engagements and kept strategic reserves ready to invade Ukraine if required. By 2019, the Ukrainian government reported that Russia had temporarily occupied 7% of its territory (McDermott 112). Every three days, on average, a Ukrainian soldier was killed in action in 2017. Unfortunately, according to Galeotti (32), more than 3,000 civilian deaths occurred between 2014 and 2021, many of which happened in 2014 and 2015. In addition, there are also reported cases of sexual assault, violations of human rights, and crimes.

## **9. The Religious Dimension of the Russia-Ukraine War**

According to Russian president Putin, Ukraine is an inherent part of their national heritage, cultural space, and spiritual space. The historical records of both nations claim that Prince Volodymyr I of Kyiv converted to Christianity in 988 and founded a pious kingdom that served as the ancestor of the contemporary kingdoms of Russia and Ukraine (Galeotti (38). The leader of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine, Patriarch Kirill Alexandrovich, has said that Russians and Ukrainians came from one Kievan baptismal font and share the same historical destiny. Most Ukrainians think that both Putin and Kirill are ignoring a long history of Ukrainian independence that is important to their sense of national identity.

About 80% of Ukrainians identify as Orthodox Christians, while around 10% of the population belong to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. The Episcopal Church in Moscow declared itself the rightful successor to the sole "real" Christian Church after Constantinople was conquered by Ottoman conquerors in the fifteenth century, putting Orthodox parishes throughout Ukraine under its exclusive control. Some people campaigned for an autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church

after World War II. But because of this first assertion of Russian dominance, Ukraine has grown into a theatre of Orthodox power battles throughout the ages. Following the fall of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's declaration of independence, some voices began to call for an autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox Church rejected the patriarch of Kiev's request for autocephaly for Ukraine. However, in a show of defiance, Kiev decided to establish a separate Episcopal Church of Ukraine and lobbied parishes to switch their allegiance to the new Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Houston and Mandaville 6). In a bid to achieve the autocephaly of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, the president of Ukraine, further sponsored a complaint to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I requesting autocephaly for Ukraine, reigniting historic rivalries involving Moscow and Constantinople for control of the Orthodox world. Because of this petition, the Russian Orthodox Church broke away from the Patriarchate and became an independent church.

Houston and Mandaville (2) say that the Moscow Patriarchates were a key way for Russia to show its power in Ukraine in the years before the current invasion. With around 11,000 parishes comparable to the 7,000 of the autonomous Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the Moscow Patriarchate continues to be the most prevalent allegiance of Ukrainian parishes in Ukraine (Houston and Mandaville 4). Beginning on the day of the invasion, churches in Ukraine started deleting Patriarchate Kirill's name from the liturgy. In various parts of the nation, Ukrainian priests have made the decision to fly Ukrainian flags and preach sermons against Russian brutality. Since attacks on places of worship are prohibited under international law, populations have turned to churches for safety. There have recently been reports of Russian Orthodox congregations breaking ties with the Moscow Patriarchate throughout Europe. According to Smock (6), Dmitry Troitsky, who is a Russian businessman, tries to make a religious connection to the war, saying that the war in Ukraine is not just a matter of terrible political violence but also a struggle with a deep theological connection and meaning.

## **10. Religion and Peace in Ukraine and Russia**

Although restoring peace in Ukraine and Russia is a difficult endeavour, doing so while concentrating on religious insights might enhance long-lasting peace in both nations. Smock (6) is of the view that religion is sometimes neglected as a factor in promoting peace since there is so much focus on it as a catalyst for war. Religious groups often support certain peace-related government measures out of religious belief and affinity. Religious groups also actively resist repression and support harmony and peace. Religious leaders and organisations may arbitrate disputes, act as a conduit for dialogue between conflicting parties, and provide instruction in bringing about peace. Even in areas with the greatest levels of interreligious conflict, interfaith engagement is a good tool. Interfaith partnerships usually serve as the setting for the most significant and fruitful discussions in this way. It is disappointing that the Russian and Ukrainian governments are so ill-equipped to deal with religious matters and interact with religious players, given the significance of religion as a catalyst for worldwide conflict as well as a tool for promoting peace.

Religious leaders should teach and preach peace in order to support each person's dignity by establishing laws that ensure that empathy rises and that the most fundamental human needs—safety, health, freedom, and respect—are addressed. This is ultimately the key to achieving lasting peace in a conflict-ridden world. The cornerstones of a fair peace are measures that guarantee them for all parties in conflict. Thus, a neutral religious body leading this healing process might be used as a facilitator to attain peace. Religious leaders, who will use their influence with political, military, and economic leaders and the general populace, may generate a commitment to sustainable peace practices to broker peace. For example, religious authorities from Ukraine and Russia might participate in this endeavour.

Nearly 300 Russian Orthodox clergy have spoken out against the war, and 100,000 Russians have signed petitions calling for its termination in the name of non-violence (Houston and

Mandaville 10). We suggest an ethic of non-violence and fair peace grounded in a deep commitment to peace and a realistic knowledge of the nature of war. Non-violence is an approach to life if we acknowledge that all people were made in God's image and likeness and that we are commanded to love one another as we love ourselves. Peace can also be attained through the principle of "just peace." To achieve "just peace," political collaboration for the greater good, respect for the inherent worth and integrity of all living beings, preventing violence before it breaks out, and transforming violent conflict into peaceful solutions are all necessary. The overarching objective of Catholic social teaching has always been to bring about a fair and dynamic peace. Utilising a just peace framework enables society to perceive these possibilities, draws humans closer to God, and encourages concentration in that direction.

It is also important to broker peace using the model of Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. The encyclical promotes social friendship and fraternity to create a better, fairer, and more peaceful world. In *Fratelli tutti*, the Pope underlines that all humans share the same home and makes specific recommendations on how to rebuild the world in peace (Pope Francis 8). The encyclical continues his earlier *Laudato Si* in 2015, in which he suggested integrated ecology as a means of fostering respect and love for everyone. Pope Francis emphasised the need for fraternal love and social friendship that knows no boundaries in time or geography. He argues that the absence of conflict is not what constitutes peace but rather the presence of creative processes that help human communities become ever more skilled at peacefully settling their disagreements.

## **11. Encyclical and the Ukraine-Russia War**

Viewed from the encyclical's perspective, popular leaders are individuals who comprehend the emotions, cultural dynamics, and important social trends of a group of people. But when people use a people's culture for their own personal gain or to maintain their hold on power, this can turn into dangerous populism. Economic expansion is necessary for eradicating

inequality since it may unlock the potential of each region and ensure long-term equality. Pope Francis (10) makes the case that labour is a crucial aspect of social life in a well-developed society. In this sense, work is a vehicle for self-expression and personal growth in addition to providing a living. Individualistic liberal methods typically reject the idea of a people, which implies a favourable view of community and cultural ties. For Pope Francis, the love of neighbour is tangible and wastes none of the resources required to effect historical change that can help the underprivileged and needy. All these components might be included in a genuine charity's care for others. It can achieve this by utilising all the resources that a well-run, free, and innovative society can produce. According to Benedict XVI (650), there is no one answer to the problems plaguing the globe; rather, humans must recognise the necessity of altering their prejudices, attitudes, and ways of life. The greater risk stems from how they are utilised, not from any particular items, physical reality, or organisations.

According to Ottuh and Jemegbe (37), the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the fragility of global institutions has shown that market freedom is not always the best way to tackle problems. A paradigm of social involvement is required to revitalise local, national, and global governance systems and integrate popular movements. They contribute to holistic human development that goes beyond the notion that social policies are policies for the disadvantaged. It appears that solutions put out globally in the wake of the financial crisis encouraged more individuality, less integration, and more freedom for the genuinely strong. One practical strategy to restrict power is the effective distribution of political, economic, defence-related, and technical power among a variety of subjects. The sovereignty of each member should serve as the legal foundation for the international community. Numerous organisations, including civil society, contribute to making up for the international community's shortcomings. Multilateral agreements between states should be preferred because they ensure the advancement of a truly global common good. Without a healthy political life,

advancing towards social harmony and universal fraternity is impossible. In the same vein, economics without politics cannot be justified since it would be difficult to support alternative strategies for dealing with the many facets of the current problem. There may be alternative options if the economy is a key component of a political, social, cultural, and popular agenda that promotes the common good. In this regard, Benedict XVI encourages people to view politics with a fresh sense of awe as a noble calling and one of the finest kinds of charity (240). The social theory of the Church is derived from charity, which, according to Jesus' teaching, is the summation of all the law (Matthew 22:36–40). Every healthy and open society is built on the foundation of charity, but in modern culture, it is readily discarded as unnecessary for understanding and giving direction to moral obligation.

Politicians and political leaders in Russia and Ukraine are urged to perform acts of kindness, encouraging people to build more reliable institutions. Political charity is practised with a welcoming attitude toward everybody. The successful eradication of hunger must be one of the most important and urgent aims of global politics that should be practised by Russia and Ukraine. In the current war between Russia and Ukraine, tons of food is wasted as millions of people struggle with hunger and pass away from it. Food is a fundamental human right, and hunger is illegal. Russian and Ukrainian leaders should be prepared to hear opposing views and accommodate everyone in order to maintain peace. The suffocating effects of uniformity contribute to cultural decline. The Pope and other religious leaders should urge the designers of world policy to promote a culture of tolerance in this respect. In his sermon on tenderness, Pope Benedict XVI (242) argues that politics must allow for a compassionate love of people. It is more vital to take care of the inhabitants of this planet than it is to consistently achieve exceptional outcomes, as this is not always attainable. When viewed in this light, politics is something higher than media propaganda, posturing, and marketing. These only cultivate gloomy pessimism, discord, and division.

Dialogue between adherents of other religions does not just occur for the sake of thoughtfulness, tolerance, or diplomacy. Christians, for instance, are certain that when an effort is made to eradicate God from society, that society ends up worshipping idols, and humans quickly become lost. Over and beyond its humanitarian and educational efforts, the Church, for instance, has the public responsibility of brokering peace in Russia and Ukraine. At this time, the Church should seek to enhance global solidarity and just peace in Russia and Ukraine. It should offer itself as a family among families, not as a rival to worldly authorities. The gospel of Jesus Christ is, for many Christians and the Church, the source of human dignity and brotherhood in the world. The common good and the advancement of the impoverished must be the focus of believers' actions in the present situation in Russia and Ukraine. The Church's core religious beliefs do not support violence; instead, they work for peace and unity. Pope Francis (27) restates that genuine and humble worship of God bears no fruit in prejudice, wrath, or violence. Pope Benedict XVI (263) appeals that religions must never inspire conflict, vile attitudes, animosity, and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the loss of blood.

## **12. Theological Perspectives on Peace in Russia and Ukraine**

Perspectives that promote peacemaking may be preserved through the formation of theologies. Theological clarification may, however, also be used to persuade believers to hold unwise views. Gehlin (20) argues that theological methods or principles that emphasise the inclusive and tolerant aspects of religious holy texts are necessary tools for peace development. Such theological tools could also support the development of theoretical methods for conflict analysis. According to him, they could make significant contributions to the debates on resolving intercommunal and international disputes. International diplomacy has so far been unable to make use of these religious viewpoints and theological tools. If such tools are impacted by a tranquil mind in Russia and Ukraine, many facets of religious life may contribute to the development of peace in those nations.

Amid the quest for direction in murky political and ethical circumstances, believers' minds in Russia and Ukraine may be profoundly influenced by theological texts and concepts. In this sense, the underlying motivations behind acts of violence and peace may be revealed through the study of such religious texts, symbols, myths, and traditions, for instance, the crucifix, the Bible, the Eucharist, and God as the father of all humanity among others.

Russians and Ukrainians can acquire the full, well-rounded, and multidimensional knowledge they need from theological education to comprehend the challenges and opportunities for peacebuilding inherent in religious life. It could be argued that at theological schools and universities, academics and aspiring religious leaders may sharpen and improve their capacity to formulate peaceful theologies. Religious groups in Russia and Ukraine may conduct theological education that fosters peace. The establishment or activation of already existing faith-based ecumenical movements in Russia and Ukraine offers theological solutions to the current Russia-Ukraine war. Ecumenical movements, for example, have been involved in peacebuilding efforts for more than a century. Periods of protracted international warfare have defined its history since the turn of the century. For instance, during the two world wars, pioneers worked to promote peace by encouraging Christian responsibility across international boundaries. Resistance to violence inspired by religion and participation in interreligious dialogue can now define an ecumenical peacemaking agenda - organising ecumenical worship service, prayer for Christian unity and spiritual growth seminars. The World Council of Churches is a good example of this. Another theological paradigm for peace brokerage in Russia and Ukraine is the adoption of faith-based diplomacy, which would increase political understanding of the need to use religious dynamics for peace. It seeks to transform religious actors into valuable and dependable partners in the sphere of conflict resolution. We argue that faith-based diplomats work to create peace by encouraging conflicting parties to engage in self-reflection and

discussion. We contend that in order to counteract religious or political violence, religious duty and commitment foster religious teachings that place a priority on concepts of relationality and reciprocal accountability. The cornerstone of the growth of peace between the two countries is the ecumenical commitment to grow toward a goal where differences are acknowledged and valued.

### 13. Conclusion

In this research, we make the case that religion contributes to the emergence of peace in society. The study utilised the role theory to demonstrate how religion's function or role can contribute to sustainable peace in Russia and Ukraine through its protective, supportive, prophetic, and preservative roles. In doing this, the research from the encyclical perspective shows how love, good political leadership, unity, charity, the common good, freedom, human dignity, brotherhood, tolerance, diplomacy, compassion, and care can help broker peace in the present Ukraine-Russia war.

We posit that all global religions should strive for fair and sustainable peace, and religious leaders should mediate peace by exerting their influence on military, economic, and political leaders. By so doing, religion will promote a nonviolent peace ethic that is motivated by a genuine wish for sustainable peace, including encouraging social camaraderie and the universal brotherhood of humanity. The United Nations should de-emphasise championing state institutions through technocratic and passivity-based strategies and instead advocate for and promote SDG16—sustainable peace.

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