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Is There True Peace Without Truth? Ideological Roots of a Recent Statement of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches on Religion and Violence¹

Abstract

The article aims to demonstrate ideological roots of the social and theological attitude of the World Council of Churches on the example of the recent official statement of the Central Committee of the WCC issued on June 28, 2016 which regards the connection between religion and violence. Particular emphasis is put on an attempt to explain how the ideology accepted by the WCC, and present in a more or less distinct manner in the documents of this organization, influences the presentation of Christian teaching regarding peace in the said document. The article analyses the mentioned document, starting from the manner in which the phenomenon of violence has been tackled. Further, it examines those statements in which the WCC is presented as promoting the inter-religious dialogue and peace.

Keywords: World Council of Churches, violence, peace, inter-religious dialogue, ecumenical ideology.

Czy istnieje prawdziwy pokój bez prawdy? Ideologiczne korzenie stanowiska Komitetu Centralnego Światowej Rady Kościołów na temat religii i przemocy

Streszczenie

Artykuł ma na celu ukazanie ideologicznych korzeni społecznego i teologicznego zaangażowania Światowej Rady Kościołów na przykładzie oficjalnego stanowiska Komitetu Centralnego Światowej Rady Kościołów, wydanego 28 czerwca 2016 r., które dotyczy związku religii i przemocy. Szczególny nacisk kładzie się na próbę wyjaśnienia, w jaki sposób ideologia uznawana przez Radę i obecna w mniej lub bardziej wyraźny sposób w dokumentach tej organizacji wpływa na przedstawienie chrześcijańskiego nauczania dotyczącego pokoju w omawianym stanowisku. Artykuł analizuje ten dokument, zaczynając

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od sposobu, w jaki Rada podchodzi do zjawiska przemocy. W dalszej kolejności w artykule omawiane są powiązane wypowiedzi Rady, w których uznaje się ona za promotora dialogu międzyreligijnego i pokoju na świecie.

Słowa kluczowe: Światowa Rada Kościołów, przemoc, pokój, dialog międzyreligijny, ideologia ekumeniczna.

Introduction

Shortly after being chosen, on May 22, 2013 Pope Francis held a meeting with the ambassadors of those countries that maintain diplomatic relations with Vatican. In his speech the Pope raised the issues he considered the most important for the coming pontificate. He paid particular attention to social and economic issues with respect to which the Church is supposed to remind us of the teachings of the Gospel. Among the raised issues there was also the question of inter-religious dialogue, which is crucial considering the role religion plays in the life of most societies. The Pope clearly pointed out that the dialogue with Islam should become the priority. In the context of actions focused on the world peace, which should be understood not only as cessation of armed conflicts but also removal of social and economic injustice, the Pope expressed a fundamental Christian conviction: "There is no true peace without truth"². All peace-directed actions have to be based on truth. Otherwise, they will prove futile, fake and completely contradictory to the tasks that Christ gave the Christians. Besides, it seems that connecting peace and truth forms a part of a more important statement of Jesus Himself, who connects truth with actual freedom and liberation: "you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

In the context of Pope Francis's words, who connects peace with freedom, present activity of Churches and ecumenical institutions and organizations is worth considering from the theological perspective. Their stand before the task to preach the Gospel under the conditions of increasing social and cultural tensions in the world, in which large groups of people change their dwelling places due to migration, enter into contact with the representatives of other cultures and religions, experience different lifestyles and begin to function in socio-cultural conditions with dominant values that are radically different from those that they found acceptable in the past. We encounter such a situation in Europe, where further groups of immigrants arrive and where they face the socio-economic reality in which, on the one hand, they can expect material support, and on the other, they are confronted with the lives of societies whose dominant values and attitudes seem unacceptable to them, also due to religious factors. Similar

² *There is no true peace without truth*, http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1350474?eng=y&refresh_ce (10.09.2016).

phenomena can be seen in other places where the religious factor is used to strengthen the identity of a certain community by its radical separation from others. At times this religious factor can play a role in fuelling already existing social conflicts³.

Aware of the social and political complexity of the world's landscape, in which numerous regions lose their ethnic, religious and cultural homogeneity, ecumenical activists feel obligated to express a united Christian stand regarding the phenomena that seem exceptionally disturbing nowadays with particular emphasis put on religion-based violence⁴. Ecumenical organizations and institutions are entitled to present such a position due to the fact that the ecumenical movement itself began in the 20th century as Christians' pursuit to overcome conflicts that were motivated by religion and to start a dialogue that is honest and based on mutual respect. However, the problem of efficiency of undertaken actions remains and these actions occasionally reveal the circumstances that are far from following Christian theology based on the biblical message.

The present article aims to demonstrate this difficulty, which also influences in a negative way the credibility of the modern ecumenical movement, on the basis of the recent official position of the Central Committee of the WCC issued on June 28, 2016 which regards the connection between religion and violence⁵. Particular emphasis is put on an attempt to explain how the ideology accepted by the WCC, and present in a more or less distinct manner in the documents of this organization, influences the presentation of Christian teaching regarding peace in the said document. This is the reason why the present article analyses the mentioned document, starting from the manner in which the phenomenon of violence has been tackled. Further, it examines those statements in which the WCC is presented as promoting the inter-religious dialogue and peace.

1. Religion-based violence

Although the document issued by the Central Committee is devoted to the connection between religion and violence, its authors do not make an attempt to determine how the acts of violence, which are condemned in the document, are

³ F. HOUTART, *The Cult of Violence in the Name of Religion*, "Concilium" (1997) 4, 1–2.

⁴ O.F. TVEIT, *Service and Advocacy: Matters of Faith?*, "The Ecumenical Review" 68 (2016) 1, 22–23.

⁵ WCC's Central Committee, Statement on Religion and Violence (28 June 2016), <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2016/statement-on-religion-and-violence> (10.09.2016). All quotations that are not otherwise attributed have been taken from this statement.

motivated by religion. Apart from very general statements repeating the conviction that the provoking factor of terrorist attacks or other forms of hurting the minorities was religion-based, the document does not present any argument supporting the hypothesis that the indicated acts of violence have, in fact, religious character.

It is difficult to unambiguously determine the reasons for this serious lack in reasoning of the authors of an official document issued by an important ecumenical body. It seems that there could be two reasons, each being ideological in nature. One of them could be the fear that demonstrating the actual religious motives of the instigators of acts of violence, whom the documents refers to, would reveal only one line of religious argumentation and would negate the proposed hypothesis that all the religions of the world are equally responsible for violence. If it were so, it could suggest that the Central Committee, for unknown reasons, promotes an idea, utterly contradictory to the facts as well as the doctrines of the largest world religions, stating that it is the religion itself that is responsible for violence committed in the name of religion. All the religious groups would be responsible and their differentiation would not be significant. On the other hand, another reason could be that, contrary to popular belief or statements issued by the terrorists themselves, the acts of violence do not have actual religious justification⁶. If it were so, it would mean that the Central Committee in its document relies on superficial media coverage which connects the terrorists with a particular religious doctrine based on their own claim, while this connection is not supported by a reliable theological analysis.

1.1. Main areas of religion-based violence

The WCC notices the connection between religion and violence which is expressed in the form of religion-based violence. While the religious character of violence remains undefinable for the Central Committee, the areas of the said violence are clearly noticeable.

The first area comprises the relations between majority groups and various minorities in a society. In this regard, the Central Committee refers to the document *The Politicization of Religion and Rights of Religious Minorities* that was adopted by the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, South

⁶ It can be most vividly seen in the actions of the so-called Islamic State, that is, jihadism, which is an ideology combining various political, social and religious elements but which cannot be considered representative of Islamic orthodoxy (J. HODGE, *Terrorism's Answer to Modernity's Cultural Crisis: Re-Sacralising Violence in the Name of Jihadist Totalitarianism*, "Modern Theology" 32 [2016] 2, 241–242, 245–246).

Korea, in 2013⁷. Religion-based violence is seen in increasing hatred, intolerance and discrimination, which are supposed to be rooted in religious beliefs.

Secondly, the Central Committee notices sexual and gender-based violence as a form of religion-based violence in “undervaluing of the contribution of women in some religious traditions”. A wider problem of sexual abuse is mentioned in this context including the abuse committed by the Church representatives.

Thirdly, religious violence takes the form of religious extremism, which is expressed both in terrorism and in making religion a key element of a political life (the Central Committee speaks about “the politicization of religion and the religionization of politics”).

It is hard to contradict the areas of violence detailed by the Central Committee, which contribute to the destruction of the social and religious life of numerous countries, even though the classification of the areas of violence as religion-based by the Central Committee can be disputable. Far more problematic seems to be that the WCC and its bodies as a habit, while discussing the areas of religious violence, avoid indicating its actual examples. Similarly, they avoid discussing the culprits and their motives apart from general and vague statements that these motives are “religious” in nature.

1.2. The instigators of religion-based violence

In the discussed position, the Central Committee points out that not only do religious extremism and violence exist but they spread in the modern world. It is difficult to find attempts to analyse the reasons of this phenomenon in the position of the Central Committee, which can be understandable considering that it would require thorough examination of every single case of violence in which the religious factor would be dominant or at least significant. Further, such examination would have to lead to both indicating the actual instigators of the acts of violence as well as their particular motives, and consequently, to indicating the religious content that motivated them to commit acts against other people’s lives, dignity and basic human rights.

Meanwhile, the position represented by the WCC is completely different. It is perfectly seen in the manner in which the said document discusses the acts of violence which, as can be assumed, directly motivated its issue.

⁷ *Statement on the Politicization of Religion and Rights of Religious Minorities*, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/adopted-documents-statements/politicisation-of-religion-and-rights-of-religious-minorities> (10.09.2016).

First of these, the closest to the issue of the document, is the attempt of a suicide attack at the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East Aphrem II Karim, committed on June 19, 2016 in the Kurdish city of Qamishli in Syria. This attack was condemned by the WCC in a separate statement. Although Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the WCC, writes: “I condemn the ideology and intentions behind this attack, and call for prayer and support for the members and leaders of all religious minority communities in the region who are increasingly threatened and attacked”⁸, he does not precisely indicate what “ideology” and what “intentions” are meant. Similarly, the discussed position of the Central Committee is limited to merely mentioning the religious motive behind this act of terror. It is not mentioned who committed this act and what religious beliefs, which justify terror, pushed the instigators to commit it.

A similar position, although also internally contradictory, is found in this document when it refers to another act of terror, that is, the shooting in Orlando (Florida) that took place on June 12, 2016. 49 people were killed and 53 wounded in the shooting. The Central Committee states that this act of terror was “apparently motivated, at least in part, by religious sentiments”. It also adds, however, that it was aimed at people based on their sexual orientation thus suggesting that the reason behind it could also be homophobia. Naturally, the document does not mention the person who carried out the attack, neither does it explain what religious motives could be behind it.

What has been said, does not mean that the WCC as a rule ignores anything that could indicate the instigators of violence. They are, however, indicated only in very particular contexts.

Such is the case with the third act of terror referred to in the document, that is, the acts of violence committed by the members of the terrorist organization *Boko Haram* of the Western Africa. Although it is stated that the WCC “condemns and denounces all such violent attacks and any religious justification or support for them”, yet again the “religious motivation” in the activity of *Boko Haram* is not specified. The authors of the document believe, however, that the victims of this terrorist organization are both Muslims and Christians.

Similarly, the Central Committee does not refrain from mentioning the instigators of violence when it discusses the crimes committed by the so-called Islamic State operating in the parts of territories of Syria and Iraq. The documents indicate that the victims of violence are Yazidis, Christians and Muslims. While classifying the actions of the Islamic State as a form of religion-

⁸ *WCC strongly condemns terror attack targeting Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II*, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-strongly-condemns-terror-attack-targeting-patriarch-ignatius-aphrem-ii> (10.09.2016).

based violence, the document does not even mention – as in other similar cases – what elements of religious doctrine could motivate the Islamic State to commit such acts that are directed, according to the WCC, also against the Muslims.

Finally, while discussing the modern religion-based violence, the Central Committee indicates one particular religious group that could be held responsible for violence. This group are Christians who “have often been complicit in systems of violence, injustice, militarism, racism, sexism, casteism, intolerance and discrimination”. This statement is by no means an isolated one in the official position of the WCC and its bodies. The Central Committee has already mentioned Christians as the instigators of evil before⁹. We find similar content in the statements of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (e.g. in the missionary statement *Together towards Life*¹⁰), as well as in the documents of the Commission on Faith and Order (e.g. in the recent ecclesiological statement *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*¹¹).

While discussing the instigators of violence and their religious motivation, the Central Committee adds two more comments revealing ideological position of this institution.

The first of these is the view that in the context of modern forms of violence, particularly terrorism, it becomes obvious that all main religions (the document mentions Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity) contain forms of religion-based violence, both in their history and in modern times. Although the Central Committee refrains from any attempts to prove these statements, it feels obligated to call upon religious communities to thoroughly examine those doctrinal elements that instigate violence.

The second remark, even more controversial, is the warning of the Central Committee for individual religious groups against searching for justification to distinguish themselves from other groups that instigate violence. According to the discussed document, the search for differences among religions regarding the issue of religion-based violence and particularly demonstrating that not all modern religions are today the source of acts of terror and hatred, cannot be considered a right answer to the modern plague of violence¹².

⁹ E.g. CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, *Who Do We Say That We Are? Christian Identity in a Multi-Religious World*, “The Ecumenical Review” 66 (2014) 4, n. 24.

¹⁰ COMMISSION ON WORLD MISSION AND EVANGELISM, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, “International Review of Mission” 101 (2012) 2, n. 98.

¹¹ COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper 214), Geneva 2013, n. 60.

¹² A statement of Clare Amos, who is the WCC’s programme executive for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, means that it is a significant trend in the inter-religious dialogue undertaken

2. The WCC as a promoter of peace

The presentation of the problem of religion-based violence based on the Central Committee's document and sketched above forms the background to present the actions of the WCC directed towards counteracting violence and promoting peace. The authors of the document evoke the context of establishing the WCC in 1948, that is, the time not long after the end of World War II. Although, despite what the document seems to suggest, the WCC was not originally established as an ecumenical Christian response to the atrocities of war, it is true that the events of the years 1939–1945 as well as the arms race after the war presented new challenges for Christianity. The extent of violence never encountered before, genocide and even the threat of nuclear destruction of the world could not leave Christians unmoved; especially given that their participation in the violence of the World War II cannot be denied. That is why the WCC has accepted the ruthless fight with social injustice and counteracting armed conflicts, arms race or the production of weapon of mass destruction as its priorities since the very beginning.

In the opinion expressed in the document these actions were not merely politically or socially inspired. The discussed document claims that the main motivation behind such an orientation of the WCC was the Christian faith. The document expresses an opinion that in its mission the WCC follows the lead of “Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace”. A similar view is also expressed by the Commission on Faith and Order, although it seems to justify this hypothesis in a more reliable way by pointing out that the Christians' mission is acting towards peace by removing the reasons for wars and the defence of human life and dignity¹³.

Meanwhile, the position taken by the Central Committee may raise doubts because Jesus's attitude towards the sin deviates from the way of analysis of the violence issue done in the document. In particular, Jesus never avoids a clear indication of instigators of the sin, injustice, harm or oppression (e.g. Matt 16:6); He uncompromisingly presents their motives, including false religious motivation, in situations in which the evil-doers think that their behaviour is justified by religion or even is pleasant to God (e.g. John 8:39-47, Matt 7:21-23). Jesus does not condemn the abstract evil but particular behaviour of particular people (e.g.

by the WCC. Amos says: ‘not all religious traditions find it easy to acknowledge their own religion could be complicit in violence. The tendency is to try and protect the religion itself from such an accusation by suggesting that those who commit acts of violence are not really authentic representatives of that particular faith tradition’ (*The Relationship between Religion and the Public Square: Freedom of Religion in the Public Space*, “The Ecumenical Review” 68 [2016] 1, 35).

¹³ Among the reasons for war the Commission mentions ‘economic injustice, racism, ethnic and religious hatred, exaggerated nationalism, oppression and the use of violence to resolve difference’ (COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, n. 64). Meanwhile, the discussed document of the Central Committee also adds the issue of injustice and gender-based discrimination as significant areas of ecumenical interest.

Matt 23:13-33). In Jesus's message not only do we find an appeal to evil-doers to come to their senses and convert (e.g. Matt 3:7-12), but also a clear reminder of the responsibility for one's actions, which leads to the announcement of unavoidable punishment unless one converts (e.g. Matt 5:20.25-26, 13:41; John 5:37-47). In Jesus Christ's teaching promoting peace and objection to evil is expressed, on the one hand, in preaching the Gospel regarding God's love and mercy. On the other hand, which cannot be ignored if one does not want to falsify the words and mission of Jesus, they are expressed in strong and clear condemnation of the evil-doers, being fully aware of their identity, motives and consequences of their actions (e.g. Matt 15:7-9). Most of all, Jesus's position regarding sin, injustice, oppression or violence is based on liberating truth (John 8:32). If the WCC considers itself a follower of Jesus as far as the activity towards peace and counter-acting violence (including religion-based violence) are concerned, the question arises whether the actions undertaken by the WCC agree with Christ's instructions in this respect. The discussed document, by reminding us of the WCC's involvement towards ensuring peace, allows us to formulate an answer to this question. Which elements, therefore, of the WCC's activity towards peace does the document consider crucial?

The first of them is promotion of dialogue, which is supposed to solve international conflicts and ultimately lead to the rejection of war as a means to solve them. An indispensable part of this dialogue is the inter-religious dialogue because according to the WCC, religion can be a strong and lasting basis for promoting and sustaining peace. Nonetheless, this dialogue, in the way it is understood by the WCC, is supposed to aim to promote peace in a broad sense. The document states that "recognizing the inherent God-given dignity of every human being, it has worked for protection of the human rights of every person regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation". Such directing of the dialogue inspired by the WCC indicates the cultural and philosophical difficulties, which might question the possibility and efficiency of the dialogue; particularly, if it were supposed to include more traditional or conservative religious groups (such as Orthodoxy in Christianity and among other great religions of the world Islam, for example). In a broadly understood ecumenical movement and beyond confessional divisions, the necessity of inter-religious dialogue is noticed. The dialogue that serves, on the one hand, to bear Christian witness and on the other, is a form of common concern of people inspired by faith regarding the fate of the world and humanity¹⁴. Meanwhile, in the ecumenical movement concentrated around

¹⁴ COMMISSION ON WORLD MISSION AND EVANGELISM, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, n. 93–96; E. CHIA, *Inter-religious Dialogue in EG, TTL, and CTC*, "International Review of Mission" 104 (2015) 2, 272–275.

the actions of the WCC, the issue of gender-based justice and fight with gender-based oppression and discrimination gain more importance¹⁵. The position of the WCC reflects the emphasis put more and more often, in the theological reflection and in the activities of numerous denominations, on noticing and addressing the violence against women or groups excluded from the society and Church on the base of their sexual orientation¹⁶. This issue of concern for the WCC was placed at the same level as discrimination based on racial, ethnic and religious criteria, which makes the dialogue with many religious groups difficult; particularly those that represent a traditional approach to human sexuality and define the family and social roles of men and women accordingly. Moreover, while sharing the concern of the WCC regarding human rights in all areas mentioned in the document, one could question how the concern, which is understood in such a way, could be considered “following Christ” (and this is what the Central Committee often refers to) if the references in question are difficult to find in His own words.

The second area of the WCC’s concern regarding promoting peace and countering violence, especially that religion-based, which the document mentions is the actions carried out by this organization, especially the “Decade to Overcome Violence” (2001–2010). The authors of the document claim to have carried out this action worldwide but refrain from discussing particular results, especially when it comes to “overcoming violence”. Instead, there is the talk about the summary of the Decade, which took place during the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation held in Kingston, Jamaica, in 2011. At this gathering the commitment to search for “the means to address violence and to reject war in favour of «Just Peace»” was made. Although the WCC’s involvement in its concern for peace and countering violence, which is presented in numerous papers written by its bodies or local and regional ecumenical organizations, should be appreciated, one should ask whether these actions and issued statements are subject to any form of scrutiny, which could demonstrate their actual impact. If the WCC considers itself a follower of Jesus, it is worth noting that Jesus Himself pointed out the importance of such scrutiny with respect to all human’s activities, including those supposedly inspired by religion based on achieved results (Matt 7:16-20).

The third area of the WCC’s activity mentioned in the discussed document is the plan for world peace. It is connected with the abovementioned initiatives such as the “Decade to Overcome Violence”. It can also be added that other activities of the WCC that were socially and politically oriented – such as the “Ecumenical

¹⁵ P. PARHIALA, G. SIMANGO, *Diakonia and Human Dignity*, “The Ecumenical Review” 66 (2014) 3, 337.

¹⁶ F. HOUTART, *The Cult of Violence in the Name of Religion*, 55–56; M. MAKANT, *The (dis)-engendering of violence: Towards an eschatological understanding of being male and female*, “Theology Today” 72 (2016) 4, 413–414.

Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women” (1988–1998)¹⁷ – formed a part of the realization of this aim. This plan for world peace promoted by the WCC since its 10th Assembly in Busan has been called a common “pilgrimage of Justice and Peace”¹⁸. The discussed document reminds us of the position taken by the Assembly called “The Way of Just Peace”. In this position the member Churches of the WCC were obliged to undertake a “common pilgrimage” aimed to achieve the desired peace and justice. According to the WCC, the way to peace is “a journey into God’s purpose for all humanity and all creation”. Such a broad definition makes it difficult to understand what is its relation to violence and injustice, which are, in fact, being experienced nowadays by men and women in numerous countries. Perhaps, however, the subject of this ecumenical “pilgrimage of Justice and Peace” will be elaborated on in the near future as it forms an element of further reflection of the WCC¹⁹.

The instructions mentioned in the document, including those of inter-religious character, refer to this planned activity. In the context of ideological conditions behind the Central Committee’s position, it is worth paying attention to two of those instructions. Firstly, it is emphasised that Christians cannot limit themselves to helping other Christians suffering from religion-based violence. Moreover, ecumenical activists admittedly show more concern about preaching Christian love to all the people than to help the suffering. Secondly, for the WCC an important element of the fight against violence is work focused on “healing the memories” of the victims. The first instruction continues already observed content of the document which warns against singling out Christians while discussing the Christian help towards the suffering. The second instruction, however, is difficult to interpret; it is not clear whether it is an appeal to the victims to forgive those that hurt them or it is convincing the victims to forget the suffering they experienced. An appeal to forgive would, of course, be the realization of Christ’s teaching although forgiveness removes neither responsibility nor consequences of the done evil, both in this reality as in the perspective of the Last Judgement. On the other hand, “healing the memories” by convincing the victims to forget about the experienced trauma or to reinterpret the painful events seems to miss Jesus’s teaching. Jesus strongly emphasised the connection between the deeds and the consequences so forgiveness for the sins in the Christian interpretation

¹⁷ A. GNANADASON, *Violence against Women Is Sin*, “The Ecumenical Review” 64 (2012) 3, 243–246.

¹⁸ O.F. TVEIT, *The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*, “The Ecumenical Review” 66 (2014) 2, 123–124.

¹⁹ Although the discussed document does not analyse the results of already performed actions, O.F. Tveit points out that the Council took part in the peace talks in Sudan, in organizing conferences devoted to the situation of Christians in the Arab world and it took part in the works of political and economic bodies, which were devoted to social justice and ecology (*ibid.*, 131–132).

is not considered equal to their non-existence. Perhaps the work of the WCC planned for the year 2017 will clarify this doubt.

Conclusions

The analysis of the Central Committee's position on the issues of religion and violence shows that the WCC remains fairly consequent in its statements, particularly as far as the manner of approaching significant violence-related elements such as the instigators' identity and motives are concerned. Numerous remarks in the document should be considered valid, particularly where they point to the complexity and many-sidedness of the problem of peace, which cannot be limited to the area of international relations devoid of using armed forces. The Central Committee rightly points out that the real peace also requires social, economic and political structures as well as the removal of violence not only from the international relations but also from the lives of individual societies and religious groups.

Having appreciated all this, one has to note that the discussed position is highly ideological. The requirements of political correctness, which prevent the Council from clearly indicating the evil-doers unless they are Christians and make it hide the motives of the instigators, seem more important than the Christian theological analysis of the issue of world peace and the possible religious motivation behind violence. This is the reason why for the Central Committee the evil of religion-based violence has mostly anonymous instigators who are motivated by unclear religious ideas. Perhaps, such a position of the authors of the document aims to avoid provoking conflicts based on religion or fuelling already existing conflicts. Nonetheless, such a position, by avoiding raising the most important issues (such as the relations between the instigators of religion-based violence and their religious communities, the issue of "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy" of the terrorists who commit evil acts in the name of faith, the attitude of individual religious communities towards the instigators that identify with said communities) does not allow the document to convey any significant message from the point of view of religion and peace. Ideology that covers theology in the statements of the WCC rids them of significance in a common, inter-faith effort to reject and counteract violence. It seems, therefore, that the discussed position confirms the thought of Pope Francis mentioned at the beginning saying that "there is no true peace without truth".

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