

# WHAT RELIGION HAS TO DO WITH THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Understanding the "Russian World" Ideological Impact on the Conflict today

## Historic Events

## Contextual Impact

\*Click on underlined text for sources

988

### BAPTISM OF VLADIMIR THE GREAT

Marks the beginning of Kievan Rus' from paganism to Christianity

~1050

### IZIASLAV I OF KIEV COINS "RUSSKIY MIR"

"Russian World" signifying social totality associated with Russian culture

**Kievan Rus:** Nationalism didn't exist until the 19th/20th century. Rather, a people identified their principality with its royal leader.

Current-day Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus were all part of Kievan Rus, the first Slavic state centered in Kyiv, ruled by Vladimir the Great.

Vladimir Putin argues Vladimir the Great's baptism predetermined the overarching civilization and culture that unite Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

The "Russian World" ideology goes on to, directly and indirectly, justify political, cultural, and economic strategy for generations - including Russia's invasion of Ukraine today.

1223

### MONGOLIA INVATES KIEVAN RUS

After Kievan Rus falls to Mongolia, it kicks off centuries-long colonization, persecution, and suppression of the Ukrainian people.

1863

### UKRANEAN LANGUAGE OUTLAWED

Russian Tsars continued the denial of Ukrainian identity and from 1863 to 1905, it was illegal to own anything printed in Ukrainian - reinforcing a unified Russia within the "Russian World."

1918

### WORLD WAR I ENDS

Ukraine declared independence after WWI, but it only lasted a short while before being split between neighboring countries, including the Soviet Union.

1932

### HOLODOMOR

Stalin's starvation of Ukraine

Between WWI & WW2, Ukraine was one of the most dangerous places on earth for the threat of being killed.

Knowing Ukraine wanted independence, Stalin broke the peasantry's back by requisitioning all the harvest of all the farmers, starving the population, and killing 4 million Ukrainians.

1939

### WORLD WAR II BEGINS

Stalin starts killing and exiling any religious authorities that don't join the state-aligned church.

1989

### FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION BEGINS

Ukraine Orthodoxy divides

The 'Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Moscow Patriarch' (UOC-MP) remained tied to the Moscow Patriarchate, while the 'Orthodox Church of Ukraine' sought independence.



Russian Orthodox Church

Claims jurisdiction over Ukraine

1991

### FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION COMPLETE

Ukrainians vote for independence

Through the UOC-MP, the Russian Orthodox Church maintained Russian power and influence in Ukraine post-independence.

Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Broke Away

Orthodox Church of Ukraine

1999

### PUTIN BECOMES PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA

Boris Yeltsin resigns appointing Putin

The "Russian World" ideology was popular among the Russian Orthodox Church's older generation that wanted the restoration of the Soviet Union.

2001

### PUTIN WINS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Officially becomes elected by the Russian people

The "Russian World" became a more official political strategy for Putin, and he started pushing toward economic, military, political, and cultural integration.

Ukrainian people are fed up with autocratic control and want to join the European Union. Putin sees this as a threat to Russian control and pressure is put on the Russian-aligned Ukrainian president.

2014

### REVOLUTION OF DIGNITY

i.e. The Maidan Revolution



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Ukraine pulls out of EU talks because of the Russian pressure, and Ukraine explodes into protests for months - climaxing in the police killing of over 100 protesters. This was known as "The Revolution of Dignity" and resulted in the ousting of the president.

Putin sees this as a virus of liberty and immediately begins to re-exert control over the "Russian World" by annexing Crimea. On March 18, 2014, Putin gives his "Crimean Speech" in which he justifies the annexation through the "Russian World" ideology.

This kicks off the current-day Russo-Ukrainian War.

2019

### ORTHODOX CHURCH OF UKRAINE RECOGNIZED AS INDEPENDENT

When the Patriarch of Constantinople recognized the Orthodox Church of Ukraine as independent, it is formally releasing it from the Russian Orthodox Church's authority and thus further minimizes Russia's influence in Ukraine - hindering one piece of Putin's "Russian World" strategy.

2021

### RUSSIAN MILITARY BUILDUP

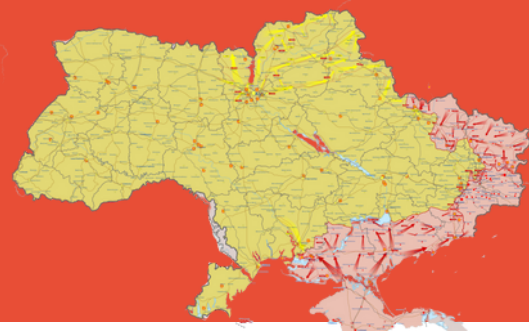
Russia began a major military buildup on both the Russian and Belarus border of Ukraine.

2022

### RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

On February 24, 2022, the war escalates and Russia invaded Ukraine. Putin's patience for more "subtle" moves to unite the Russian World came to an end, and he resided to invade it by force.

The conflict is more than any one factor. Rather, it's a multi-faceted strategy by the Russian leadership to (re)attain authority in the ancient Kievan Rus part of the world. Whether it's ideology justifying military action or the other way around, the two are interlinked and must be understood when analyzing the conflict today.



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