

## **JUST WAR THEORY AND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract.** The study investigates *the comprehensive theological opposition; Church-State relations; legislative jurisdiction; the influences of the Law of Jihad; the Slavic cultural influence; nationalism and patriotism; the Canon Law's Ambivalence on the Use of Force; the dilemma of Military Intervention, and the Feminine Defense Paradigm* illustrating the lack of consensus within Orthodox Christianity.

**Keywords:** Church, State, Byzantine Canon Law, theology, history, liturgy and ecclesiology

### **Introduction**

Christian theologians generally agree that the Orthodox Church does not share a Just War theory in the Western sense, drafted from the perspective of the decretist principles of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*<sup>2</sup>. While abhorring war, historical records indicate that the Orthodox Christians have often been involved in brutal military enterprises, cases in which, on the public square, the Orthodox Church failed to remain loyal to the pacifist principles of the Gospel and early Christian martyrdom. Concerned both with preserving its reputation of a martyr church, as well as with the creation of a public image of an anticipatory Samaritan, the Orthodox Church made concessions to the State by occasionally endorsing its authority to use lethal force against internal and external aggression. These concessions were broad in nature and were only made out of a conscious strategic interest of both Church and State, as to protect the defenseless against any form of abuse.

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<sup>2</sup> Frederick H. Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1975, p. 55-126.