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CLASSIFICATION OF TYPES OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

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ABSTRACT

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Relevance of the research topic. Religion plays an important role in the life of contemporary societies all over the globe. According to Peter Berger, the world is "as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever"[1]. The scholar argues that modernity gave rise not to secularization, but to pluralism — which implies coexistence of and close interaction between adherents of various value systems and worldviews within one society. Becoming particularly essential in today's interdependent and interrelated world is the task of exploring a complex of problems pertaining to the establishment of positive relationships between followers of different religions, which is usually called "interreligious dialogue".

The scientific problem of the dissertation research. Religious leaders, politicians and experts often mention interreligious dialogue in their speeches; yet, the interpretation of this notion can vary greatly. Catherine Cornille notes that the term dialogue tends to be used to cover a wide range of engagements between religious traditions, from daily interaction between believers living in the same neighborhoods to organized discussions and debates between expert scholars, and from formal or casual exchanges between spiritual or institutional leaders to inter-religious activism around social issues. The goals of particular dialogues may differ—from peaceful coexistence to social change and from mutual understanding to actual religious growth»[2]. Terrence Merrigan believes that interreligious dialogue falls into a category of terms that everyone uses but no one is able to explain4. In this regard, he writes: "dialogue" is perhaps the most ambiguous term in the vocabulary that has developed around the challenge to religions posed by globalization and pluralization. Scratch the surface of this term and a whole range of interrelated issues make their appearance, including questions about the precise aims of dialogue, the appropriate (or necessary) conditions for dialogue, the topics

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[1] Peter Berger, "Desecularization of the world: a global overview," in The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics, ed. Peter Berger (Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Center, W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1999), 2.
[2] Catherine Cornille, "Introduction," in The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-religious Dialogue, ed. Catherine Cornille (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2013), xii.

to be discussed (or avoided) during dialogue, the criteria for evaluating the success (or meaningfulness) of dialogue, and so on»[3]. He, along with many other researches, points to a problem caused by the fact that interreligious dialogue is a complex, many-faceted phenomenon.6 Hence, classification of forms of interreligious dialogue becomes an urgent research task.

The best-known attempt to devise such classification was made by the Roman Catholic Church. It highlights the following four types of interreligious dialogue: dialogue of theological exchange (theological dialogue; dialogue of study); dialogue of religious experience (dialogue of spirituality, spiritual dialogue); dialogue of action; and dialogue of life. Each of the aforementioned kinds of dialogue corresponds to the "level" at which it is carried out: "head" (using intellectual abilities for exploring another religion), "heart" (gaining insight into the perspective of another's religious experience), "hands" (undertaking practical activities), and "daily life." For this reason, the theological, spiritual, and practical kinds of interreligious dialogue are sometimes respectively called "dialogue of head," "dialogue of heart" and "dialogue of hands".

Sallie B. King offers the broadest classification, distinguishing seven types of dialogue: official, parliamentary-style, verbal, intervisitation, spiritual, practical, and internal[4]. There are other classifications of interreligious dialogue: by Eric J. Sharpe (discursive, human, secular, interior dialogue), Paul O. Ingram (conceptual, socially engaged, interior dialogue), Jeannine Hill Fletcher (activist, parliament, storytelling models of dialogue), Oddbjørn Leirvik (spiritual and necessary dialogue).

As demonstrated in the first chapter of the dissertation, the Catholic classification and other existing approaches have limitations and shortcomings and, therefore, do not provide adequate and complete description of this phenomenon.

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[3] Terrence Merrigan, "Introduction. Rethinking Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue," in The Past, Present, and Future of Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue, ed. Terrence Merrigan and John Friday (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

[4] Sallie B. King, "Interreligious Dialogue," in The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity, ed. Chad Meister (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 102. King cites Diana Eck, "What do we mean by dialogue?," Current Dialogue. December (1986): 5–15.

That is to say, the description of interreligious dialogue in a wide variety of its possible forms constitutes a scientific problem which has not lost its topicality to this day. Presented below is an approach that uses more sophisticated and delicate instruments in developing a classification of interreligious dialogue and therefore, should be helpful in providing a more versatile and detailed description of different kinds of interfaith relations.

The purpose of the research is to develop a classification of types of interreligious dialogue, which will allow to describe this phenomenon comprehensively, systematically in its entirety and consider its most important characteristics.

The methodological basis of the dissertation. The main approach to the study of interreligious dialogue in the work was the general scientific method of classification, that is, the categorization, distribution of the types of the phenomenon depending on their common characteristics.

The basic criterion that I propose to use for the classification of interreligious dialogue is "intention," i.e. motivation which encourages followers of different religions to come into contact with each other. The existing classifications and approaches focus on the forms, in which interreligious dialogue can be expressed, and sometimes on its tasks and other aspects, while the issue of motivation by itself does not become a topic for reflection and is left aside. Religion as worldview and value system is characterized by a tendency to assert its uniqueness and is organically integral and self-sufficient. Therefore, from the perspective of religious consciousness, possible motivations for a believer to enter into dialogue with adherents of other religions are rather limited, and their clarification is essential for understanding the character of interreligious dialogue. On the basis of the intention criterion, I distinguish four major types of interreligious dialogue: polemical, cognitive, peacemaking and partnership. Using such criteria as goal (what tasks do

participants in interreligious dialogue set themselves?), principles (what principles lie behind the interaction?), and form (who participates in the dialogue and in what form is it expressed?) different kinds of each of the dialogue types can be identified and described.

Provisions for defense of the thesis:

1. The existing classifications of types of interreligious dialogue (Catholic, E. J. Sharpe, S. B. King, etc., which were analyzed in the first chapter of the dissertation) have limitations and shortcomings and, therefore, do not provide adequate and complete description of this phenomenon.

2. The approach presented here — based distinguishing and describing various kinds of interreligious in terms of the goal, principles and form criteria— provides productive instruments for devising a classification of interreligious dialogue and analysing numerous problems of interfaith relations.

3. On the basis of the "intention" criterion, i.e. the motivation that encourages followers of different religions to come into contact with each other, four major types of interreligious dialogue are "polemical," "cognitive," "peacemaking," and "partnership".

4. In the works of Western scientists, a common place is the interpretation of interreligious dialogue only as "positive", "constructive" ways of relations between followers of different religions. In this regard, when talking about the current stage of interreligious dialogue, interaction involving disputes between believers about the truth and superiority of religions (with which the conflict potential is associated) is not mentioned in many cases. However, polemical dialogue is widespread at the present time, so it must be taken into account when we consider the whole complex of modern interreligious relations.

5. There are four types of cognitive interreligious dialogue: theological, spiritual, human (Buberian), and the dialogue of truth. Also, it is important to take into account the theoretical comparative study of different religions (for example,

"comparative theology"), as well as the theology of religions, which can also be described using the criteria used in the classification.

6. When speaking about peacemaking dialogue, it is very important to note at which level it is carried out, whether it is the level of religious leaders acting as representatives of their communities, or the level of experts, or the grass root level. The level determines principles of peacemaking dialogue, which are of great significance for delineating its various kinds. Therefore, it seems expedient to consider different kinds of the peacemaking interreligious dialogue in the context of such criterion as form or level of its participants: high; expert/conceptual, and grass-root.

7. Special attention should be devoted to such practical interaction at the "high" level between heads of religious communities and other high-ranking official representatives as diplomatic interreligious dialogue. For the most part, the diplomatic interreligious dialogue can be viewed as a sort of peacemaking dialogue, for its major goal is to ensure conflict-free, peaceful and harmonious coexistence of people professing different religions. Major principles of diplomatic dialogue are: institutional character (people enter into it as representatives of their religious organisations), secular-centric discourse, state-religion relations dimension, regularity, symbolic importance.

8. There are three main approaches used at the "conceptual" level of peacemaking dialogue: focusing on the "pacifist" values of religions, emphasizing similarities (in dogmatics and/or ethics), and the "personal model" of dialogue.

9. Within the framework of partnership dialogue followers of different religions carry out various joint activities. Using the goal criterion, we can distinguish the three following areas of cooperation: human being, society, and environment. Cooperation in the first area is aimed at rendering aid to particular groups of people in need. The second area of cooperation within partnership dialogue implies religions' contribution to building up just, harmonious and thriving societies, as well as religious associations' practical interaction in social sphere. There are numerous approaches and suggestions as to what and how

religions can and must improve in the life of society. Within the third area, the cooperation between religions is carried out with the goal of resolving ecological problems. It includes protecting the environment, as well as developing ecological consciousness.

10. The developed classification takes into account and describes the vast majority of forms of interreligious dialogue, it is more representative than all existing approaches in this area.

The **scientific novelty** of the study lies primarily in the fact that an original classification of interreligious dialogue has been developed. For the first time, the classification makes it possible to describe the types of interreligious dialogue comprehensively and systematically in all its variety of forms. A number of research results obtained during the system analysis of different types of dialogue are also distinguished by scientific originality .

The dissertation consists of an introduction, six chapters, eighteen paragraphs, conclusions, appendices, and bibliography. The appendix contains tables that allow you to get acquainted with the main results of the study[5].

Classification criteria.

Criterion	
1. *Intention*	What encourages followers of different religions to come into contact with each other?
2. *Goal*	What tasks do participants in interreligious dialogue set themselves?
3. *Principles*	What principles lie behind interfaith the interaction?
4. *Form*	Who participates in the dialogue ("high," "middle" / "conceptual," "grass root" levels), what is its form of expression?

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[5] For more details, see: Melnik S. Types of Interreligious Dialogue // Journal of Interreligious Studies. 2020. №31. Pp. 48-72. URL: https://irstudies.org/index.php/jirs/article/view/499

Types of Interreligious Dialogue.

1. Polemical dialogue *(Who is right?)*	3. Peacemaking dialogue *(How can we live peacefully together?)*
2. Cognitive dialogue *(Who are you?)*	4. Partnership dialogue *(What can we do to make the world a better place?)*

Kinds of Cognitive Interreligious Dialogue

Title	Goal	Principles	Form (Example of realisation)
Theological dialogue	Cognition of another religion	Ability to "listen" to the dialogue partner, respect, competence, openness to changes in the perception of another religion by acquiring new knowledge, rejection of proselytism	*Handbuch christlich-islamischer Dialog* (2014).
spiritual dialogue	spiritual and personal growth, enrichment	involvement of the "heart" in the dialogue, striving to share to some extent another religion's experience. C. Cornille: "epistemological humility," "commitment," "interconnection," "empathy," "hospitality"	Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, "Gethsemani Encounter."
human (Buberian) dialogue	establishment of personal contacts with representatives of other religions	I-You relations (Martin Buber). Respect for unique identity of the dialogue partner	"storytelling model" of interreligious dialogue
dialogue of truth	search for truth	creation of the space for free expression of opinions and beliefs, objective discussion of problems facing participants in the dialogue	Nicholas of Cusa *On the Peace of Faith*

Kinds of Peacemaking Interreligious Dialogue

Title	Goal	Principles	Form
Peacemaking initiatives at the "high level" (the most widespread kind is diplomatic dialogue)	To use the authority and administrative resource of religious leaders for conflict settlement and promotion of peace	Demonstrating positive relations between religious leaders as setting an example for ordinary believers, reference to pacifist religious values, demonstrating solidarity on various problems	Large-scale interfaith international forums (for example, the Congress of the leaders of world and traditional religions, held regularly in Kazakhstan)
Peacemaking at the "conceptual" level	To develop concepts that can serve as the foundation for peaceful coexistence between believers of different faiths	Revealing and emphasising similarities in religious worldviews, showing the peacemaking potential of religions	open letter "A Common Word between Us and You" (2007)
Peacemaking at the "grass root" level	To promote mutual respect, understanding and harmonious relations between ordinary believers of different faiths	Intensifying constructive communication between believers, gaining knowledge of each other's religious worldviews and way of life, rejecting false stereotypes and prejudices, appealing to religions' pacifist values, promoting trust by means of personal meetings	"intergroup interreligious dialogue" between students

Kinds of Partnership Interreligious Dialogue

Title	Goal	Principles	Form
Cooperation in the area of "human being"	To render aid to particular groups of people in need	Values of mercy and compassion as common for different religions	Rendering aid to people in hospitals, to indigent people
Cooperation in the area of "society"	To contribute to building up just, harmonious and thriving societies	One of the examples: strengthening of traditional moral values in society and opposition to the ideology of moral relativism and permissiveness and to undermining public morality are a common task for different religions.	Anti-abortion statement of the Interreligious Council of Russia "On the Protection of Unborn Children"
Cooperation in the area of "environment "	To resolve ecological problems	Awareness of humanity's responsibility for nature, which is God's creation; rejection of consumerism in the attitude towards nature; appeal to religious values as the basis for environmental friendliness	Interfaith Rainforest Initiative

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