

Alternatives to Secularization in the Christian Churches

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First I would like to greet you all on the occasion of this important gathering and discussion of the most burning issues which disturb not only our society but which affect all people of good will, in particular those who preach and defend true orthodoxy in Christianity. The world is developing rapidly, progressing both technically and economically. But at the same time, to our great regret, considerable regression can be observed in its moral, religious, and cultural spheres.

Secularization is a process of straying from religious teachings and directions. It is a contemporary of atheism, being one of its expressions. In the modern epoch of social progress and rapid scholarly and technical development, secularization is connected with the reduced influence of the Church on people's spirituality and narrowing of the Church's influence on social relations. The Church is separated from the state; the educational sphere is also freed from the influence of the Church. In addition, religious themes are being removed from art, and generally there is a tendency to make learning autonomous, to exclude the possibility of religious influence and presence. The human being wishes to free himself from the care of the Church, religious institutions, or certain similar symbols. As a result, a non-Christian society is being formed.

Moreover, many of those who claim to be Christians only casually accept the teaching of the Church, or do not accept it at all. This leads to a harsh violation of God's law: there is massive desacralization of marriage as a "biological cell" of

the Church; sexual life before marriage is spreading. Very often other sacred mysteries are observed by many as tradition and as something cultic, but not because of deep belief or for the sake of stable faith. The human being has started pursuing his own greatness while pleasing his disordered desires.

The counter-weight to secularization is sacralization, that is, the process of restoring the traditional religious complex of spiritual culture, the spread of religious sanctions to social institutions, relationships, forms of social and individual consciousness, as well as people's behaviour and activity.

When we speak specifically about Ukraine, on the one hand, the course for the sacralization of society is very broad, but on the other hand, certain obstacles are being placed by separate individuals or certain groups, and, in addition to this, civil legislation is very imperfect. Also we should remember that people themselves, as individuals, also set obstacles for themselves, instead of improving their religious development and consecration. People do not want to live within the best laws, God's, but they search for and offer God their own limited and imperfect plans (Isaiah 55:8). Our Church feels obliged to openly and sincerely call people to change this reality for the better, being well aware of the fact that not all will appreciate this call.

In the conditions of democratization which began with the collapse of the "evil empire," possibilities for broader participation of the Church in the political and civic life of Ukrainian society are developing. We can state that over the fifteen years of Ukrainian independence, religion has been rehabilitated in public opinion; Soviet stereotypes about the menacing, anti-national role of religion and the Church, mainly the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, have been destroyed. In academic and educational-methodological literature, the idea of the positive role of the Church in the spiritual and national revival, and in the establishment of the Ukrainian state, has been welcomed. Growth in quantitative indicators of church development, broadening of the network of religious and church institutions, publication of religious literature, and observance of the external manifestation of religiosity of our people gives us comfort. Still, we are far from craving the restoration of the pre-war