

Alternatives to the Secularization of Contemporary Society: Suggestions from the Ukrainian Churches

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Ukraine is a country in which different Christian Churches exist alongside one another and share in the important task of the catechization of not only children and young people but also of adults, whose religious knowledge is frequently on a child's level. A person who is not religiously formed very often inherits what he or she sees in television, rather than what the Church teaches and what is recommended in God's law.

Today all of us live in a pluralistic society where different views of life are represented and every one may proclaim his convictions. The task of the Churches does not consist only in defending religious values, but in proclaiming them to the world. We believers are still convinced that we have to communicate faith in places of worship and that what takes place outside of them does not concern us. Yet secular views are proclaimed everywhere and by different means of "propaganda." When there is a question on a religious subject, the majority does not know how to answer it, though they declare themselves to be believers.

Secular organizations frequently do not like when laypeople defend religious values. The clergy together with the laity should organize different actions of a cultural character. It is very important for laypeople to get to know and help one another when they have similar problems with faith and morality. They need to learn how to solve them according to the teachings of the Church, and need, moreover, to defend those teachings in an increasingly secular context. Today we need to train the laity

in such a way that they – fulfilling their public functions in the state – behave as genuine Christians.

In the present ecumenical age, let us try together to search for what unites us so that it becomes easier to unite the flock of our faithful. It is worth thinking of religious and patriotic values. We have examples of the creation of such programs in other countries. Obviously there is a cost to it, but it is worth finding the funds for the future of our Church, and also for our thousand-year-old traditions upon which our Christian people depend.

In our Latin Church, different organizations manage to gather the faithful. Young people and children in summer holidays gather at so-called “Oases.” After a training in the faith, participants meet in parishes or definite places in eparchies and for the work of the apostolate, most often, teaching. They organize different performances on religious and patriotic subjects.

Families gather in the *Family of Families*, in the movement of *Nazareth Families*, in the *Domestic Church*. In such religious groups it is easier to strengthen one’s faith and then to pass it on to the others. These groups strengthen people’s faith and will not easily let the secular mass media manipulate the latter.

In addition, there are organized prayer groups, which pray for the Church, for the sick, for the clergy, for the seminaries, for the soberness of fathers and of husbands, for mothers and wives, for young people and children. Such groups support the material affairs of the Church with prayer and pray for their benefactors-sponsors.

Watching the world that surrounds us, we see a lot of moral evil in the lives of different people. We also see Christians passing on their values. These are the values about which our savior Jesus Christ spoke. They will outlive us and will not pass away, just as the words of God’s truth will not pass away. May God help us in such work so that we do not stop this mission.

