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Influence of the mechanisms of interaction between Orthodox Church, society and school on moral education of youth in Ukraine

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the characteristics of the systems of the younger generation's moral education, which are represented in historical retrospective, on the territory of modern Ukraine. The author researches a system of moral education, functioning until 1917. It was characterized by the existence of well-established mechanisms of the interaction between representatives of the society, the Orthodox Church, and schools. The article shows that after the year of 1917, with the emergence of the Soviet state, this interaction was broken according to the legislative acts of the Soviet government, which separated church from the state and school – from the church. The researcher offers the analysis of a list of Ukrainian documents, which came into existence after 1991. They regulated the possibility of solving the problems of the younger generation's moral education in connection with the spiritual formation of the personality. The article proves that nowadays there are no effective mechanisms of the interaction, promoting the creation of appropriate conditions for the education of a personality with a solid spiritual and moral values. The author makes a conclusion that the research of the experience of interaction between such educational establishments as schools, the Orthodox Church, and the society in the process of school education of the students is not only of scientific but also of a practical interest for the modern system of moral education of youth. The perspectives for further research are viewed in the analysis of the interaction between society, church, school, and its gradual implementation in the system of education.

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1. Introduction

The problem of spiritual and moral education of children and youth is one of the key challenges to the society and state. Nowadays, Ukraine faces difficulties in spiritual and moral education of the younger generation. Among the reasons of mentioned above situation, the following ones have to be emphasized:

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a lack of clear moral guidelines for the younger generation, a rapid degradation of morality in the society, a decline of cultural and leisure work with children and young people. In order to solve this problem, it is necessary to refer to the cultural heritage of the Ukrainian people, to the wisdom of the traditional Christian ideology. It has to be said that the nation, which does not know the history and culture of its ancestors, is doomed to the spiritual degeneration.

2. Objectives

This article deals with the research of the interaction between educational establishments, representatives of the society and the Orthodox clergy in the field of moral education of young people on the territory of modern Ukraine, taking into account the existing experience in the history of education. All mentioned above factors stand for the main aim of the research.

3. Methods

While carrying out a research, a complex of general and specific methods has been used: a retrospective analysis and systematization of cultural, psychological and educational literature on moral education; synthesis of scientific literary resources on ethical and moral problems, in particular, their religious aspects; induction, deduction, synthesis, comparison and confrontation of the ideas and concepts.

4. Results

In the late 19th early 20th century on the territory of modern Ukraine moral education of students was closely connected with the Orthodox Church, as a representative of the dominant religion of that time. With the emergence of *Rules for parochial schools*, in which the government obliged the clergy "to establish the orthodox doctrine of the Christian religion and morality among people, and to initiate the primary useful knowledge" as well as "inseparably from the church to inspire children with a love and worship of the church" (The highest approved Rules of parochial schools 1884). This interaction received official support from the state. The process of young people's moral education under the patronage of the clergy took place not only in the religious, but also in secular educational establishments. As the church was inseparable from the state, therefore, all public educational establishments: the church, the school and the family had one goal – the education of youth in the spirit of the Orthodox faith and patriotism. Thus, we can state that there existed well-established mechanisms of the interaction between church leaders, representatives of the society and educational establishments in the sphere of moral education of the younger generation.

Since the abdication of Emperor Nicholas II and the emergence of the decrees of Provisional Government, radical change of the priorities in the system of moral education had taken its place. With

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the adoption of the law *On Freedom of Conscience* 14th July, 1917, a long-term connection of the church and society had been broken. This document proclaimed a freedom of religious self-determination of a person from the age of fourteen. By means of this document the Ministry of Education tried to minimize the moral influence of the Orthodox clergy on the young people, as well as to make the Law of God subject an elective course, or completely remove it from the curriculum (Tsipin 1997). After the October Revolution of 1917, a new relationship between state and church was established. This situation was stimulated by such decrees of Soviet government as: *On the transfer of education and training from the spiritual ministry to the People's Commissariat of Education* December, 1917, *On Freedom of Conscience of Church and Religious Organizations* 20th January, 1918. These documents proclaimed a complete separation of church from the state and school from the church. A ban on the teaching religion was introduced, and also the right to be an atheist was given. Thus, the interaction between representatives of the Orthodox Church and the society in the sphere of moral education of students has become totally impossible, being a necessary attribute of a secular state at that time.

Thus, the fact that there was no division between secular morality and the morality of faith had become characteristic feature of the educational system till 1917. In this historical period there existed a well-established system of interaction between society and religious organizations. The emphasis was put on the execution of the biblical instructions and commandments. All public educational establishments, such as church, school, and family, had to take part in this process.

After Ukraine has proclaimed its independence in 1991, the government abolished the persecution of the church as an important spiritual public institution, thus taking a new course in the sphere of moral education of youth. At that time, Ukraine became the successor of the political regime, where the moral education of the younger generation had been based on the communist morality. Thus, the system of Soviet education considered this kind of education as the key one, therefore, the destruction of the existing at that time communist morality had led to a moral vacuum in society. There appeared an urgent need for updated approaches to the moral education of the students. Teachers and administrators of schools considered the emergence of mechanisms of interaction between educational institutions and religious organizations a new reason for moral education of students.

Nowadays, there exists a number of documents, regulating the possibility of solving the problems of moral education, combined with the spiritual formation of the personality.

Thus, the right of everyone "for freedom of thought and religion" is specified in the second section of the Constitution of Ukraine, in Article 35 (Constitution of Ukraine 1996). According to the article this right includes a freedom to practice any religion or no religion, to freely alone or collectively perform religious cults and rituals, and to carry out religious activity. However, this article stated the fact that the church and other religious organizations are separate from the state, and school – from the church.

One of the main tasks of the law of Ukraine *On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations* was to create favorable conditions for the development of public morality and humanity, regardless to the ideology or religion of a person. This document proves that parents have the right to educate their

children in accordance with their personal beliefs and attitudes towards religion. It should be also noted that this law also states that the public educational system in Ukraine is a secular one.

National Doctrine of Education Development in Ukraine emphasizes that "national education is aimed at the citizens' involvement into the deep layers of the national culture and spirituality, at the formation of children's and youth's national ideological positions, ideas, opinions, and beliefs, which are based on the values of national and world culture" (National Doctrine 2002).

The aspects of cooperation between teachers and representatives of religious organizations were partially revealed in the document *On studying ethics courses in educational establishments*. In particular, it was pointed out that these courses should be developed in cooperation with representatives of religious organizations. However, this document does not specify how the process of cooperation should be carried out, what kind of procedural aspects should be fulfilled.

The Concept of a Higher Spiritual Education of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church indicates that an important area of the research of the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is to create conditions for public recognition of the higher religious education's importance, and social integration of theological schools' graduates. The solution of the mentioned above problem is provided, in particular, by the development of the principles of joint system of higher religious education and national secular higher educational system. Regarding the educational process in religious schools, it was pointed out to the fact that the educational process in religious educational establishments is complex, it covers all aspects of the students' life, including their spiritual growth. "A personal example of the teacher and his relationship with the students occupy an important place in education. Teaching the rules of Christian piety should be carried out by the teachers who have a living faith and efficient sincere, and selfless love for God and people" (The Concept 2013). But this document hasn't specified the effective mechanisms of the interaction between Orthodox Church leaders and representatives of the society in the sphere of moral education of students.

So, we have found the implemented principle of consistency of the spiritual and secular education systems in the concept of a higher spiritual education of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The areas of the activity and pedagogical requirements for a teacher, who is involved in the spiritual and moral education, are also mentioned. But, at the same time, this concept does not define the peculiarities of the process of moral education through the interaction of the public, teachers and religious leaders.

According to the Constitution of Ukraine, the church is separated from the state, and the school – from the church. So, mentioned above documents are mainly secular. They do not clearly define a nature of the interaction between the Orthodox Church leaders and representatives of the society in the sphere of younger generation's moral education. But at the same time, almost all the documents acutely call for the creation of the appropriate conditions for the education of a person with strong spiritual and moral values.

Serious problems in the system of moral education of the youth in modern Ukraine have stimulated a necessity of scientific knowledge integration and activation of the mechanisms of the interaction between the society and religious organizations.

Thus, such Ukrainian scientists as Vasyl Zhukovsky and Ludmyla Moskalyova emphasize that modern Ukraine is characterized by a spiritual crisis of culture and society, its moral and ethical standards are far from traditional Christian norms. "The very Christian values stand for the principles that will lead the Ukrainian nation to a new level of economic and social life, on condition of a radical replacement of social standards and stereotypes, inherited from the communist atheistic system" (Zhukovsky and Moskalyova 2013). The authors consider the underdeveloped mechanisms of the interaction between teachers, society and the state a reason for a lack of effective means of the national education of the younger generation. According to Vasyl Zhukovsky, due to a lack of activity of the church and passivity of the society, the school and teachers should take on the function of spiritual and moral education of youth. Author proposes to fulfill this task with the help of such optional courses as *Basics of Christian Ethics*, *Ethics: spiritual principles*, *Christian Ethics in Ukrainian culture*, *Biblical history and Christian ethics*, which were firstly introduced in the regions of Western Ukraine and now have spread all over Ukraine

Thus, these authors have revealed the mechanisms of the interaction between teachers and schools in the field of moral education of the younger generation, which is realized in the systematic and purposeful pedagogical work with students, in inculcation of values and norms, based on Christian morality.

Ekaterina Nikitskaya has researched such social institution as a Sunday school, which plays a significant role in the religious and moral education of the students. The opportunity to revive the Sunday schools, as centers of moral education, had appeared only at the beginning of the 1990s. However, while developing this activity, Orthodox Church has faced several challenges, including a lack of correspondently trained teachers. According to Ekaterina Nikitskaya, Department of Religious Education and Catechesis was created in early 90-ies. Its main task was to develop the necessary normative, methodological and informational base for Sunday schools' activity. This scientist considered the interaction between the family, church, orthodox and secular organizations, as an inseparable part of the educational system, a vital condition of moral education of children and young people. Author views family as a natural environment for spiritual and moral education of the younger generation. She calls it a "small Church", which potential is aimed at the development of the spiritual and value orientation of the personality, at the creation of the conditions for successive transmission of national traditions (Nikitskaya 2012). Such forms of education as a joint prayer, reading spiritual literature, participation in worship, pilgrimages, and personal example of family members, which stands for the most important thing, contribute to the development of primary forms of moral education and Orthodox religious education. According to the author a temple, as a special place for the person's communication with God, is the second most important environment for the Orthodox education. This place certainly has a pedagogical influence, teaches people positive moral qualities, such as self-sacrifice, gratitude, love for one's fellow

creature. The third component is represented by educational establishments, cultural and educational centers, Orthodox clubs, youth organizations, sisterhood and brotherhood, Sunday schools, and others. These types of organizations are of great educational value, as they contribute to the formation of the younger generation's moral Christian qualities.

It can be said that this author researches the mechanism of the interaction between family, society and church in the field of child's morality formation. She also emphasizes a positive influence of the religious factor on the moral formation of personality. However, these mechanisms deal only with the organization of pedagogical work of Sunday schools, as educational establishments, which function only in the limits of parish activities.

5. Discussion

The matter of dispute, concerning the mechanism of the interaction between the educational establishments, church, and society in the field of moral education of students, is partially represented in recent researches (Kolyada 2004, Mishchishin 1998, Nikitskaya 2012, Stepanenko 2002, Zhukovsky and Moskalyova 2013).

At present day the process of moral education of young people is a complex and controversial one, as there exists an urgent need for educational ideals and values (Stepanenko 2002, Kolyada 2004). Education has become a trivial one, as the emphasis is put on its technical side, but not on ethical aspects, as a result, the moral and spiritual alienation among people take place. Nowadays, the political, social, cultural status is more important than a moral transformation, moral or aesthetic development (Purpel and McLaurin 2004). It should be noted that the formation of personality and its moral qualities is influenced by many factors, and religion stands for one of the main ones (Mishchishin 1998, Nikitskaya 2012). Despite the fact that nowadays the church is separated from the state, it is not separated from the society. However, there are no effective mechanisms of cooperation between representatives of church, schools and society (Zhukovsky and Moskalyova 2013). The research of spiritual traditions in the historical or contemporary context is realized in the fact that a person feels the relationship between the generations, which forms the moral principles, being the main pedagogical goal of education (K. Erriker and J. Erriker 2012). There exists a need to understand the basics of traditional folk culture, a millennial experience of cultural space's exploration, mechanisms of its transfer to future generations, the revival of the national character.

6. Conclusions

Nowadays, while solving the mentioned above problems, there exists a need for close cooperation and the development of the effective mechanisms of interaction between religious organizations, educational system, and representatives of the society. As a result, there is a need to fill comprehensive

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knowledge with a spiritual and moral context. Close cooperation between schools and churches, as important educational establishments, enhances the moral component in the school system. Giving knowledge on the religious culture plays an important role not only in expanding the educational horizons of the children and young people, but also will contribute to the formation of a worthy personality, ready for intercultural and interconfessional dialogue.

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