

## NATIONAL EDUCATION IN UKRAINE: REVIVAL OF CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

**Valentina Petrovich**

Candidate of Historical Sciences, Associate Professor at the Department of Museology, Monument Studies and Information and Analytical Activities, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Ukraine  
e-mail: valyavp@ukr.net, orcid.org/0000-0003-0407-0471

**Iryna Charikova**

Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Ukraine  
e-mail: mytwins@ukr.net, orcid.org/0000-0002-50580-5216

### Summary

In Ukraine, the social life transformation period continues and manifests in rethinking the ideals and educational guidelines. The processes of democratization aimed at the development of civil society that started in the last century are taking place in the Ukrainian society at the beginning of the 21st century. These trends cause changes in priorities in social policy oriented at solving the problems of educating the younger generation and the activities of such social institutions as family and school. Spiritual principles based on Christian morality also play an important role in the implementation of the education of the younger generation. The article focuses on the study of the socio-economic, cultural, and pedagogical environment in which the child grew and developed. The authors take a deep look into the historical and pedagogical essence and content of Christian education. The research proves that in the transition of Ukraine to a democratic state system the tendencies of educating the younger generation on Christian cultural traditions spread into the education system. A significant interest in the organization of domestic education is the study and use of the best achievements of the national education system. It has been established that the use of educational potential as one of the main links in the formation of a new generation of society has been established.

**Key words:** Christianity, Ukrainian society, national education, Christian education, family, school.

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### 1. Introduction

It is youth that plays a vital and in many cases a key role in the modern life-changing stage of economic and political development of Ukraine. At the same time, youth is one of the least protected and sensitive social groups. This fact calls for continuous attention to the growing generation on the part of the government, whose task is to benefit its social adaptation and spiritual upbringing. K. Ushynskiy reasonably highlighted that «the upbringing is a constituent part of the harmonious development of youth and a significant means of preparation for future life. The upbringing should start from early childhood and last continuously and systematically» (*Ushynskiy, 1983: 192–463*). That is why the search for new forms and methods of

upbringing able to encompass the worries and demands of our contemporary as well as their spiritual abilities and hopes is still topical.

We firmly believe that democratic reforms in our society cannot accomplish unless we orient every society member to Christian values. More than two-thousand-year-old history of Christianity proved that the spiritual strength of a nation and its people depends on the depth of sincerity and order of acceptance of moral values. These values become even more significant during the periods of history when sacred grounds of human existence ruin.

Our traditions prove that the basics of Christianity have always played a special role in the spiritual life of a person. That is why today it is impossible to forecast basic social processes and political situations in the country without addressing the Christian factor, the true folk and national origin of the Ukrainian nation.

Looking into the problem of personal spiritual culture formation, we need to use the achievements of the pedagogy, the heritage of famous pedagogues of the past, in particular, who dedicated their works to the issue of the spiritual upbringing. First of all, these are the works of such national pedagogues-humanists as H. Vashchenko, O. Vyshnevskiy, V. Yelenskiy, I. Ohienko, V. Perebenesiuk, M. Pirohov, V. Sukhomlynskiy, K. Ushynskiy, and others. Their works focused on the research of the essence of the national upbringing and peculiarities of the Christian upbringing in family and at school, analyzing spiritual dimensions of the modern youth, directions of its evolution in the background of the state-forming processes in Ukraine at the end of the 20th century in the context of the complicated, and contradictory social and political phenomena.

It is worth noticing that the issue of the revival of Christian traditions in Ukraine following the long period of their elimination is complicated. So, when we start the revitalization of the national spirituality, we again address the necessity of revival of the national heritage that historically bases on the Christian norms of life and behavior. «Christianity has always grounded on the nations' revival no matter what their historical destiny is», – wrote K. Ushynskiy (*Ushynskiy, 1954: 305*). O. Vyshnevskiy also supports this conclusion noting that our sense of tradition and historical memory encourages us to do this. Before the Bolsheviks came, Ukrainian upbringing used to be Christian (*Vyshnevskiy, 2006: 22*).

The article aims at studying the essence and content of the national upbringing notion, and the peculiarity of the usage of Christian traditions in the national upbringing of the growing generation. In correspondence with the aim of the research task, we plan to conduct a historical and pedagogical analysis of the ways and means of the national upbringing of the person, usage of the educative potential of Christianity in the pedagogical heritage of the educators and culturalogists with the aim of using their ideas in the modern educational and pedagogical process.

The research makes use of complex of theoretical methods, namely such general scientific methods as deduction and induction, analysis and synthesis, and generalization and systematization to substantiate the essence, character, and structure of terminology, which is the object of the research and formulating of the conclusions of the scientific research; and retrospective and historical and comparative methods.

## **2. Definition of the concepts of «national education» and «Christian upbringing»**

Education as a prerequisite for the forming of the image of the modern Ukrainian has proclaimed Christian values as priorities in education and the upbringing of the future generation. These processes influence the modern realia of our national life as they are historically specified. The definition of the essence and content of the notion of «national upbringing» and «Christian upbringing» also need differentiation.

«The Conception of the National Upbringing of the Student Youth» defines «national upbringing as a system of views, beliefs, ideals, traditions, and customs has been forming for ages by the Ukrainian nation and is aimed at forming of the worldview position and value orientation of the youth realized through the complex of the corresponding measures» (*Rishennia Kolehii Ministerstva osvity i nauky Ukrainy No. 7/2-4, 2009*). National upbringing mainly corresponds with the needs of the revival of Ukraine. I. Zaichenko forms the main aim of the national upbringing at the modern stage as a transfer to the younger generation of the social experience, rich spiritual culture of the nation, its national mentality, and commonness of the worldview (*Zaichenko, 2008: 377*). Accordingly, a properly organized and scientifically national upbringing is supposed to reflect the history of the Ukrainian nation and perspectives of the future state-forming processes.

K. Ushynskiy believes that Christianity is an ideal of perfection. The scientist defines its essence and content as «an eternal light or fire post in the desert that enlightens the way for people and nations and should be followed by progress of the nation and true upbringing» (*Ushynskiy, 1983: 101–102*). The pedagogue defines the tasks of Christianity as acquisition by the personality of the rules of the Christian life and norms of the Christian behavior as «it gives life and determines the purpose of any upbringing as serves as a source of any light and truth» (*Ushynskiy, 1983: 101–102*).

Yu. Dzerovych, the pedagogue, church, educational, and cultural figure, develops traditions of the Ukrainian national Christian upbringing in his pedagogical activity and formulates the aim of the upbringing, notes that «education is corrupting and dangerous if it is aimed exclusively at the flexibility of the mind, its enrichment with information limiting its value by the framework of true, temporary life leaving behind moral consciousness and heart of a person, not revealing its ideals of kindness, beauty and nobility» (*Pastushenko, 1999: 103; Petrovych, Charikova, 2016: 229*).

Professor O. Vyshnevskiy defines the focus of attention on traditional Christian upbringing. He believes it is «a development of conscience of a person that keeps from committing evil, points to the immoral actions and warns of a sin. An example of mannerliness is a person who is used of God and Motherland, and, thus, thrives for good in the world and acts responsibly in the everyday activity» (*Vyshnevskiy, 2006: 20*). The scientist reasonably highlights that the pure «Christian strategy of upbringing is typical for the European tradition and dominates in the culture, in the relations and pedagogics of the European states today» (*Vyshnevskiy, 2006: 21*).

So, Christian upbringing is a complicated, systematic, and continuous process that grounds on the Christian foundation and favors the physical, spiritual, mental, and social formation of the personality.

### 3. Influence on the process of education of social institutions

It is impossible to solve the tasks of the national upbringing system without accounting for the experience of ancestors. Various historical epochs demonstrate typical unique traits of upbringing that make it special. Starting with Old Times, the biggest attention has gone to the life rules and emotional atmosphere in which a child lived and absorbed all the information, beliefs, views, feelings, customs, and traditions. The same important for the upbringing of a child were such social institutions as family, school, church, environment, etcetera.

Family is the most significant and valuable unit of society where an example of parents, their worldview, and the activity of a child was and still is a school of life for a child. The scientist and pedagogue Jan Amos Komenský studies the issue of family in the upbringing of a

child. He defined a family as the first level of studying naming it «a maternity school» for a child from the day of birth until the age of six. He considered the basic purpose of this school a protection from harmful influences and the formation of a solid basis for the whole system of future education and upbringing. This school determined the content, organization, methods of upbringing in the family, and responsibilities of parents (*Komenskyi, 2008; Istoriia pedahohiky: leksii ta khrestomatia, 2007: 16*).

A pedagogical system of K. Ushynskyi, who is a founder of a new «folk school» placed a focus on the purpose of upbringing determining it as preparation of a person for life and work, formation of the sense of duty in relation to people as well as cultivation of patriotism and love for Motherland. The scientist wrote «Every nation has its own unique system of upbringing» where the focus of attention is the upbringing of children in the family (*Ushynskyi, 1983: 192–463*), and «every living nation is the most beautiful God's creature on Earth and the upbringing should draw from this rich and pure source» (*Ushynskyi, 1983: 43–103*). That is why the first duty of a citizen and parent is the upbringing of citizens valuable for society (*Ushynskyi, 1974: 149*).

In Kyiv Russ state, a church was particularly important. After the introduction of Christianity in 988, it started to influence the development of the Old Russian culture, organization, and development of the school and upbringing based on Christian dispensation. It is worth noting that a specific feature of upbringing in Ancient Rus' was the involvement of a person in Christianity from childhood. V. Bidnov highlights that churches and monasteries became centers of folk Christian upbringing and education and churchmen and monks spread primary education among all the layers of the population (*Bidnov, 1993: 197–221*). Church was a school of salvation in spirit and a kind of teacher's training college where parents studied. Later they shared their knowledge with their families and brought themselves and their families to God.

We totally agree with the statement of T. Zinkevych, who notes that «orthodox Christian faith and churches have always played an important role in the life of Ukrainians. From the times of the introduction of Christianity on our lands, they have become a spiritual foundation for the development of Russ-Ukraine and a guarantor of its civilized progress. Christian faith and Church in Kyiv Russ were important and integral factors of Ancient Russ state-formation» (*Zinkevych, 2019: 15*).

In the 11th – 12th centuries, specific textbooks on family upbringing appeared. They were in the form of lectures that parents perceived as instructions for upbringing. For example, «Lecture for Children by Volodymyr Monomakh» is a significant public, educational and religious monument of literature of Kyiv Russ dated 1117. Volodymyr Monomakh is an outstanding representative of Kyiv Russ ruling elite dynasty of Rurikids. Grand Duke believed that positive examples of parents and grandparents should educate children. Teaching children, the duke gives various educational advice and recommendations grounding on Christian values. At the time, The Lecture became an example for other families in terms of the upbringing of children. It read about Christian virtues and highlighted the necessity to follow them throughout life. In particular, The Lecture tells that «Three good deeds can do away with sins and help not to lose the Kingdom of God through confession, tears, and charity. Be not arrogant either in mind or heart... Be not lazy... Do not forget about the needy... Do not kill either guilty or non-guilty and do not let to kill even those who deserve death... Respect both old and young... Take care of the ill, and always greet and say kind words to all... Do not forget what you know and learn what you do not know... Do a good deed; do not be lazy to do good deeds first of all for Church... May not sun meet you on your deathbed... My dear children, be not afraid of death, war, beast but act as God instructs» (*Volodymyr Monomakh, 1989: 457–458, 462*).

Another social and emotional responsibility in terms of a child's upbringing is their environment. Godparents who are spiritual relatives of a newborn child bore special responsibility. In different historical epochs, they were the same important as biological parents as they were answerable for the religious upbringing and well-being of a child in God. On the day of the christening, they took responsibility to support a child and help it grow up in God's love. L. Kostiuk writes that godparents are accountable to God and parents for the spiritual upbringing of the godchildren; bring them to school and wedding crown...» (*Kostiuk, 2013: 260–265*).

Jan Amos Komenský also wrote about the ideal of the Christian upbringing. The scientist particularly focused on good morals of upbringing. He noted that all Christians should generously share with others the amenities given to them as the true laws of humanity teach. It also teaches all Christians to be loyal, sincere, and gracious (*Komenskyi, 2008; Snisarevska, 2014: 180–181; Sannikova, 2000: 482–488*).

The works of Jan Amos Komenský pay special attention to school, which is a vital institution for the upbringing of the younger generation. He points out that the main feature of every Christian state is «schools for the young of both genders without any exceptions; where they can study sciences, perfect in talents, enrich with godliness thus studying all good important for the present and future life» (*Istoriia pedahohiky: leksii ta khrestomatii, 2007: 86*).

One of the basic principles of pedagogic views of I. Ohiienko was the implementation of Christian ideals in the educational process. The scientist defines such main features of spiritual development of the Ukrainian youth as Christian godliness, fairness, and diligence (*Ohiienko, 1991: 84*).

Professor H. Vashchenko, the founder of the Ukrainian educational system, made use of the best of the past and created a bright example of the educational ideal. The scientist took the Christian ideal as a basis for national pedagogics. The pedagogue considered the upbringing of the young Ukrainian generation should encompass the spirituality of the nation, that has always based on faith in God. Namely, he wrote «Service to God and Motherland demands, first of all, high intellectual skills. To serve God and Motherland, one should possess a corresponding worldview, professional qualification, and highly developed intellectual skills» (*Vashchenko, 1994: 183*).

H. Vashchenko believes it is impossible to educate Christian morals without teaching religion at schools, and without Christian morals, one cannot have freedom, love, and fairness. H. Vashchenko insisted that the Christian ideal should serve as a basis for the pedagogical systems of all European nations (*Vashchenko, 1994: 83*).

#### **4. Revival of national historical Christian values**

Today, all the prospective forces of mankind believe in the necessity of the revival of historical Christian values. At present, we continually come back to the Christian educational ideal substantiated by H. Vashchenko.

A. Halchevska analyzed the works of K. Ushynskyi concerning Christian and national upbringing and reasonably noted that «revival of Ukraine is impossible without wakening national consciousness of the Ukrainian people. That is why the special concern is that most of the Ukrainians do not consider themselves part of the nation and do not bring their activity into correlation with the interests of the nation» (*Halchevska, 2015: 89*). So, grounding on the point of view of N. Pastushenko, we agree that correlation of the family, state, and church is topical for upbringing under current circumstances. These institutions should act in concord and make each other stronger. The scientist devoted her research to the works of Yu. Dzerovych analyzes

the tasks he allocated for each of the abovementioned institutions. Yu. Dzerovych believes that a family should educate individually, a state – nationally and socially, and a church – religiously and morally. A school is a unique link in the chain of a family – a school – a church (*Pastushenko, 2011: 15*).

Today, a smooth upbringing guarantees the development of a personality in all spheres of our life. Upbringing based on Christian traditions is an educational activity of a school and a family aimed at forming moral qualities on the basis of behavior norms (*Mikheieva, 2004: 68*).

T. Ilina reasonably points out that the Christian upbringing of children is a means of preventing evil in a human. It is not limited by family but continues at school, among relatives, in communication, and is complemented by the church, the army, at work, and in marriage (*Ilina, 1996: 24*).

## 5. Conclusion

Summarizing the abovementioned, we should highlight that the issue of national upbringing formed historically and its basic framework shaped together with the development and establishment of the Christian traditions, namely greatness of soul, formation of the emotional and moral needs, thrive for self-perfection and neighborly charity.

The modern system of national upbringing focuses on the idea that a person should be educated in the system of Christian values as their potential is not just a complex of individual views, but a new life and a new person demonstrating new feelings, emotions, and thoughts.

Ukrainian society reexamines a system of values on which our life-sustaining activity has been based for many years. This process is quite natural. Social institutions are busy searching for educational ideals acceptable to the current situation. The ideal cannot be found in the future, but its trace should be somewhere in the past, namely in the history. When Ukrainian nationhood is forming, a family, school, and environment should organize their cooperation to make full use of the potential of Christian morals, which have always played a vital role in the life of the Ukrainian people. Active national revival happening in our society now even more catalyzes the process of the formation of the national upbringing system using potential of the national and universal human values.

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