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**RELIGION AND ECOLOGICAL ETHICS THROUGH THE LENSES OF THE
SECULARIZATION OF THE MORAL SPHERE**

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Abstract: The article is dedicated to several main problems of ecological ethics and to the Christian reactions to it. The authors demonstrate that the Christian response (especially, the one of Orthodox Christianity) to the ecological crisis and to the development of moral principles for the conservation of the natural habitat and for solving the environmental problems is the result of a synthesis of environmental ethics as a secular transformation of the moral sphere and of traditional religious principles based on theological reflections. At the same time, the ecological ethics of Christianity lays down a distinct anthropological aspect, which presupposes at the same time the challenges for human nature, which is connected with the improvement of the soul. The article also analyzes the influence of secularization on moral systems and thinking (especially, Charles Taylor's conception) and the general issues of ecological ethics. Authors state that within Christianity, we can observe a kind of adaptation of the response to environmental issues to religious consciousness and their interpretation through religious categories. The Orthodox Church, which is considered to be perhaps the most traditional Christian community, does not ignore environmental issues and tries to respond to the demand for ethical solutions to environmental problems. The appeal to environmental ethics enables the Church to show its civic activism and to give its moral principles a practical dimension.

Key words: ecological ethics, secularization, Christianity, Orthodox, Church, moral system.

1. Introduction

The modern world is acutely aware of the need to solve environmental problems not only through legal or political decisions but also through the introduction of moral principles aimed at creating ethical systems directed at protecting the environment. Environmental ethics demonstrates a pure synthesis of principles of anthropology, a call to the spiritual foundations of human existence, and attempts to rethink technological development. The rejection of selfish anthropocentric and the perception of nature as a subject makes it possible to form a new world view of man, which abandons instrumental rationality and lays down value (dialogical) rationality. That makes it possible to argue that environmental ethics are a kind of rational thought of the modern moral system. It arose not through reference to tradition and authority but based on reflection and awareness of the value of nature, the relationship with which it regulates. Also, in our times the relations between human and nature are seen in the perspective of re-evaluation (Beyers 2016, 97). Thus, we can say that environmental ethics are a natural consequence of the evolution of moral systems, which occurred, in particular, under the influence of the process of secularization in modern societies.

The different religions respond to environmental crises and build their own systems of environmental ethics that are consistent with their religious ideas (see: Yaffe 2001; Chapple 2002; Wellman 2004; Sahni 2008; Narayan&Kumar 2003; Watling 2011). Christianity also responds to environmental problems and tries to present its moral solutions to overcome the environmental crisis (Morariu 2020, 133). The world of natural habitat perceives religious consciousness as the sacrament of Divine creation, and the ecological crisis as a consequence of human selfishness, which is caused by the loss of man's unity with God.

Christianity is essentially an anthropocentric religion because it contains the idea that man is at the centre of creation. However, it should not selfishly use natural habitat, rearrange creations to their needs, because in this way it destroys the order created by God and multiplies evil. The Bible, the Book of Genesis, says that every time after the act of creation, God claimed that it was good. The world of natural habitat is perfect and full of divine order and therefore has a high value. Because of this, natural habitat deserves to be respected, and when a man does not adhere to it, he violates these principles and deserves moral condemnation. In relation to natural habitat, religion teaches a person to develop the virtues of responsibility, restraint, modesty and also warns against the position of excessive consumption. Therefore, the Christian understanding of environmental issues combines theological and ethical ideas. By referring to transcendent origins of natural habitat and using the theologic way of thinking about them, religion tries to present the wider

interpretation of ecological issues. For example, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew writes “I believe that in general beauty of the natural habitat leads us to a more open view of life and the created world, somewhat resembling a wide-angle focus of a camera, which ultimately prevents us human beings from selfishly using or even abusing its natural resources. It is through the spiritual lens of Orthodox theology that I can better appreciate the broader aspects of such problems as the threat to ocean fisheries, the disappearance of wetlands, the damage of coral reefs, or the destruction of animal and plant life.” (Bartholomew 2008, 89).

In this article, we will try to demonstrate that response of Christianity (especially, Orthodox Christianity) to the ecological crisis and the development of moral principles for natural habitat conservation and solving the environmental problems are the results of a synthesis of environmental ethics as a secular transformation of the moral sphere and traditional religious principles based on theological reflections. At the same time, the ecological ethics of Christianity lays down a distinct anthropological aspect, which presupposes not only the solution of problems with environmental pollution but also the transformation of human nature, which is connected with the improvement of the soul.

2. Secularization: the state of religion and changes of the moral sphere

In pre-modern times, religion played a constitutive role in other spheres of society. The sphere of morality is also determined by the religious worldview. The processes of secularization have greatly influenced the place of religion and transformed the system of morality that it has developed. As a rule, secularization is defined as the marginalization of religion in social life. But this process is much more complex and has many aspects that are related to social life, world view, way of thinking, and behaviour of people, their moral attitudes (Shevchuk 2018, 150-151). Sometimes the secularization is presented as a multi-dimensional concept (Dobbelaere 2002). The complicated nature of the process of secularization has a connection with the radical changes in the sphere of ethics. Sor-Hoon Tan writes: “Secular ethics locates ethical values, the source of normativity, and the means of ethical knowledge and ethical achievements entirely in this world. Secular ethical values are based on human experience and needs...” (Tan 2017, 673)

The problem of secularization is revealed, in particular, in the works of the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor. His concept of secularization allows us to demonstrate the changes in the moral sphere that have taken place in modern times and the consequences of which we are experiencing today. However, the understanding of secularization in the works of Taylor is not simplified. He writes, “secularity [...] is a matter of the whole

context of understanding in which our moral, spiritual or religious experience and the search take place. By ‘context of understanding’ here, I mean both matters that will probably have been explicitly formulated by almost everyone, such as the plurality of options and some which form the implicit, largely unfocussed background of this experience and search, its ‘pre-ontology’, to use a Heideggerian term.” (Taylor 2007, 3).

The significant aspect of Taylor’s conception is the delineation of three features of deism: the first is that which concerns the idea of the world as conceived and ordered by God; the second demonstrates a turn towards the primacy of the impersonal order; the third is the idea of genuine, primordial religion that has been eclipsed and distorted and therefore needs to be purified. He raises this issue to explain how humanism has become a worldview choice among people. Paying attention to deism makes it possible to understand the essence of the anthropocentric turn in understanding the purposes of human life, contemporary changes in understanding God and his relationship with the world, as well as the emergence of a purified religion based on reality and not requiring Revelation.

The secular century, Taylor argues, is schizophrenic: on the one hand, it seems that people are keeping a safe distance from religion, but on the other hand, people don’t care that there are such devout believers in the world as Mother Teresa. Taylor does not hide that he forms his vision of secularization from the standpoint of a believer. At the same time, he states that religious faith today exists in the space of choice, which also includes forms of doubt and denial. Nevertheless, the focus should be concentrated not only on the decline of faith but also on the new arrangement of the sacred or spiritual to the individual or social life.

Taylor notices that one of the manifestations of individualization in secular times is a consumer revolution. He also states that “[...] life in a secular age [...] is uneasy and cross-pressured, and does not lend itself easily to a comfortable resting place. This is what we see in the polemic, but it emerges also if we look at a range of concerns that are endemic to this age, those which touch on the issue of meaning in life.” (Taylor 2007, 676). In this uncertainty of secular time, people do not have a strong value system. Therefore, they need to build a system of morality that has a rational basis and reflects the concerns of modernity. In our view, one such concern is the environmental crisis, which necessitates the creation of a rational and secular ecological ethic.

Taylor writes that religious forms have been destroyed over the past two centuries. From one side, there was the decline of churches, from the other side, there was distancing not only from much of the ethics but also from the authority of churches. In this situation, there are changes in the moral sphere, which are associated with the introduction of a rational justification of moral norms. Environmental ethics is precisely the consequence of such rationalization, as it seeks to define norms that are

supported by rational arguments for solving the problems of natural habitat. Secularization also leads to the fact that there are self-reflection and self-criticism of the moral sphere. Environmental ethics can also be an example of this. As part of practical philosophy, it reflects on moral statements as to how they correspond to the pressing problems of modern societies. Noting the instrumental exploitation of nature that has undergone the secularization of “deification” (or “disengagement”, to use Max Weber’s term), environmental ethics deals with the development and rational justification of the moral principle, which establishes the possibility of regulating man’s attitude to nature and, therefore, man has to follow it. In particular, the moral principle of responsibility for natural habitat is laid down, which combines the idea of the dignity of human existence, the definition of the value of nature, and respect for it.

3. Ecological ethics’ becoming.

Modernization and secularization have raised questions about the metamorphoses of the world. These changes, in turn, provide for eco-reform pathways that are a response to more active intervention in nature and the environmental crisis as a result. However, it is not only a matter of finding technical means but also of reforming our way of thinking to be able to comprehensively cover the relationship between man and natural habitat. Environmental ethics appears as a search for the principles of such new thinking. At the same time, its development reflects the evolution of modern thinking up to the introduction of postmodern principles and the principles of posthumanism and post anthropology in modern systems of ideas and values. However, the introduction of the principles of ecocentrism, on which environmental ethics is based, does not mean a complete rejection of anthropocentrism. Rather, we have a kind of revision of anthropocentrism and an attempt to rethink and supplement it. Patrick Curry states, “ecological ethics not intended to replace traditional human-centred ethics, which has a legitimate and important role in intra-human relationships. The point is rather, by adding something new, to enable ethical behaviour which more anthropocentric ethics can not.” (Curry 2006, 3). At the same time, the emergence of environmental ethics was a natural result of the evolution of modern views of nature “Western thought in the modern age has not been kind to the created world. From the exhortations of Galileo and Bacon that we subject it to violent interrogation to Descartes’ vision of the natural environment as populated with only seemingly animated robots, from the general Enlightenment concept of nature as a great machine to Hegel’s view of the natural world as Spirit in a degraded and paralysed condition, modern thought has given us a view of nature as something that is, in Max Weber’s words, thoroughly ‘disenchanted’ - drained of its power to elicit

from us wonder and a sense of transcendence glimmering through and within it.” (Chryssavgis and Foltz 2013, 1-2).

The necessity for science to control human activity and the impact of its effect on the environment has grown along with the technological progress that humanity has made. In the early twentieth century, scientists began to make the first predictions, namely, what can lead to the unlimited will of man to conquer the Earth and all living things on it.

The first works on environmental ethics date back to the 19th century and mainly describe the role of man in the system of “society-nature”. Scientists began to put forward theories that not all human actions have a positive effect on the environment. The question of progress of correlation of achievements in science and the number of technogenic catastrophes raised.

However, ecological (environmental) ethics was distinguished as a separate field of knowledge only in the 20th century by an American ecologist Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) and German-French theologian, doctor and philosopher Albert Schweitzer (1875-965). Schweitzer began to use the term “environmental ethics”, but he is increasingly experiencing biological utilitarianism.

The consequence of such measures was the formation of environmental ethics as a scientific discipline, which in the early 1970s, began to teach at the faculties of natural sciences and philosophy.

In 1972, the work of John B. Cobb Jr. was published, entitled *It's not too late. Theology of ecology* in turn, with William Blackstone in the same year, organized the first conference on ecology, entitled *Philosophy and the ecological crisis*. Thus, environmental ethics is gaining more and more publicity among scientists who publish articles, participate in conferences, which increasingly condemn the thoughtless activities of man and the harm it brings to flora, fauna, and ecology in general.

Already in 1982, the UN General Assembly approved the World Charter of Nature. It is a document where it stated that all forms of life that exist on Earth must be provided with the possibility of existence and preservation.

In the last few years, the processes of globalization and secularization have significantly influenced the change of approach. Realizing that the anthropocentric approach has negatively affected the environment, humanity has tried to find a way out in new attitudes. Thus, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, philosophers proposed several new approaches to building relationships with the environment.

Sometimes the confession of the principles of environmental ethics takes quite radical forms, which can even turn into an emancipatory project, which aims to fight for the rights of animals or other species of living beings. The emergence of such forms of environmental activism is associated with modern policy transformations. For example, we can mention such an approach to environmental ethics as speciesism. The

term was proposed by Richard Ryder in the 1970s. Among modern philosophers, this trend was promoted by Peter Singer. In the article titled *Down on the Factory Farm*, he writes “for most humans, especially those in contemporary urban and suburban communities, the most direct form of contact with non-human animals is at mealtime: we eat them. This simple fact is the key to our attitudes towards other animals, also the key to what each of us can do about changing these attitudes.” (Singer 1976, 23). There is an analogy to racism or sexism. An idea of criticizing the principle that some species of living beings are superior to others.

Environmental ethics was formed by taking into account the basic principles of different spheres of human life. The transition from anthropocentric to biocentrism. Since human being is a part of nature, they must live and act so as not to harm the environment and only then worry about their selfish desires. The next principle is the Ecological Imperative, which was formed by A. Schweitzer in his work *Civilization and Ethics*: “That is what gives me the fundamental principle of morality, namely, that good consists in maintaining, promoting, and enhancing life, and that destroying, injuring, and limiting life are evil.” (Schweitzer, 1946). This principle resonates with the previous one and also calls on humanity to curb their will and take care of nature.

Another concept of environmental ethics is the harmonious use of modern science and traditional values. In recent years, science has developed at a breakneck pace, but religious teachings that promote taking care of nature remain relevant. As a result, there was a rethinking and desire of man to give up or reduce only to the essential material needs and strive for spiritual enrichment. That is called for by the writings of all world religions and beyond.

Proponents of the concept of holism argue that our planet is a living being, and humans are a large family living on the body of this creature. For the human race and the Earth to coexist, it is necessary to introduce a way of coexistence that does not endanger the environment. The principle of integration of all systems that exist in the world shows that societies increasingly perceive themselves not as a superstructure that transforms natural systems through technology, but as an integral part of the environment. Thus, societies reject selfish anthropocentrism, introducing the principle of biocentrism. The principle of biocentrism, in turn, is one of the foundations of environmental ethics.

Another approach that proposes to move away from established anthropocentrism is biocentrism, which focuses not on man and his values, but all living things. In the early 20th century, philosophers tried to systematize knowledge about the environment. It is evident from the book *Respect for Nature* by Paul Taylor. The author argued in favour of the life that a person should lead, by the biocentric approach and the probable consequences of ignoring it. He writes that this attitude “is to regard the wild plants and animals of the Earth’s natural ecosystems as possessing

inherent worth. That such creatures have inherent worth may be considered the fundamental value presupposition of the attitude of respect” (Taylor 1986, 71).

The process of evolution of the ecological consciousness of modern societies shows that there is a diversification of positions, the use of different philosophical systems to justify the principles of environmental ethics. Thus, it is natural that religions are also beginning to respond to today’s environmental challenges and seek justification for their positions on environmental protection, thus developing their versions of environmental ethics.

4. Orthodox Christianity toward ecological ethics’ issues

It is evident the processes of secularization and modernization of the moral sphere, and the change in the way of thinking about the relationship between man and natural habitat and the formation of environmental ethics, described in this article, focus mainly on the experience of Western societies. After all, it was in these societies that the processes of secularization and transformation of the moral sphere began. Therefore, the reaction of religion to these changes in thinking, world view and moral attitude to the environment is seen in the example of Christianity. Christianity takes these new forms of the secularized moral sphere and introduces the principles of environmental ethics into its social doctrine. Christian denominations do this differently. We will try to demonstrate this implementation on the example of the tenets and principles of the two largest Orthodox churches in Ukraine – the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine).

For the past two decades, Orthodoxy has been paying close attention to environmental problems and looking for ways to solve them. The Orthodox Churches develop environmental ethics from a theological perspective. Thus, an attempt was made to fill the secular rationality inherent in environmental ethics with modernization and rationalization. At the same time, we can say that the appeal to environmental issues and the formation of their moral principles to regulate the relationship between man and nature of Orthodoxy, which is considered one of the most traditional religions, is to some extent modernized. The reference to ecological issues is interpreted by Orthodox Christians as a renewal of the Christian faith, approaching the Creator through reverence for his creation, a manifestation of specific asceticism. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew states “People of all faith traditions praise the Divine, for they seek to understand their relationship to the cosmos. The entire universe participates in a celebration of life, which St. Maximos the Confessor described as a ‘cosmic liturgy’. We see this cosmic liturgy in the

symbiosis of life's rich biological complexities. [...] there is also an ascetic element in our responsibility toward God's creation. This asceticism requires from us a voluntary restraint, in for us to live in harmony with our environment. Asceticism offers practical examples of conservation." (Bartholomew 1997). The asceticism in the use of natural resources as an overcoming of the ecological crisis is also mentioned in the Encyclical Of The Holy And Great Council Of The Orthodox Church (Crete 2016). "The roots of the ecological crisis are spiritual and ethical, inhering within the heart of each man. This crisis has become more acute in recent centuries on account of the various divisions provoked by human passions – such as greed, avarice, egotism and the insatiable desire for more – and by their consequences for the planet, as with climate change, which now threatens to a large extent the natural environment, our common "home". The rupture in the relationship between man and creation is a perversion of the authentic use of God's creation. The approach to the ecological problem based on the principles of the Christian tradition demands not only repentance for the sin of the exploitation of the natural resources of the planet, namely, a radical change in mentality and behaviour, but also asceticism as an antidote to consumerism, the deification of needs and the acquisitive attitude." (Encyclical 2016).

That is the Christian reaction to the environmental issues we also have a manifestation of a dialogical turn in modern ethics. The attitude to nature is permeated by the ontological requirement of a responsible attitude to the Other. It, in the end, has an explanation, because from the very beginning the philosophy of dialogue (Martin Buber, Emanuel Levinas), which developed a dialogical attitude to the Other, was deeply connected with the religious world view on the one hand (referring to various religious traditions, including Judaism and Christianity), and laid the subject-subject attitude of man to nature (recall the famous fragment of Buber's work *I and Thou*, which deals with communication with the tree. In Orthodoxy, the connection of environmental ethics with the ethics of dialogue can be demonstrated by example words of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew "We are urging a different and, we believe, a more satisfactory ecological ethic. This ethic is shared with many of the religious traditions represented here. All of us hold the earth to be the creation of God, where He placed the newly created human 'in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to guard it.' (Genesis 2:15) He imposed on humanity a stewardship role to the earth. How we treat the earth and all the creation defines the relationship that each of us has with God. It is also a barometer of how we view one another." (Bartholomew 1997).

The reaction of Eastern Christianity to the secularization of the moral sphere has certain features. They manifested in the desire to return to the sources of the Christian understanding of the relationship between man and nature. Thus, Orthodoxy differs in this aspect from Western Christianity. "Orthodox Christianity holds a set of views that is not absent

in Western thought but that has not been grasped in their synergistic integrity outside Eastern lands and that have unhappily remained so thoroughly hidden from Western thought that it has (uncritically) adopted the Feuerbach-Nietzsche-White critique of Christianity as definitive native, either abandoning Christianity altogether for the sake of a natural environment clearly in dire straits or else jettisoning much of the Christian tradition in favour of revisionist interpretations that are thought to be more salutary for our relation to the earth.” (Chryssavgis and Foltz 2013, 3).

In Ukraine, the two largest Orthodox churches declare the implementation of the principles of environmental ethics in their doctrines. Addressing environmental issues by the Orthodox Churches demonstrates their civic activism and participation in the development of civil society in Ukraine, which is very important for post-communist countries that are on the path of democratic transformation. Thus, the introduction of the principles of environmental ethics into the social doctrines of the Churches has not only spiritual but also political consequences.

The Orthodox Church of Ukraine has been operating for a little over a year. It formed as a result of the transformation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate after the granting of the Tomos on Autocephaly by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. However, from the very beginning of the Church’s existence, Metropolitan Epiphanius in his speeches pays attention to the protection of the environment. These speeches combine the principles of secularized environmental ethics with theological content. In his speeches, we can find such questions: what will happen to climate and nature? How to not waste energy? How to learn to not harm the environment? How do we conserve resources, that is, how do we fulfil our Creator’s duty to care for nature, using its riches, rather than greedily destroying it? How to think about sustainability, look ahead to the years, and calculate your steps? At the same time, to bring the understanding of these principles closer to the people, Metropolitan Epiphanius addresses the traditional and often mythological ideas about the peculiarity (and even God’s election) of the Ukrainian land: “Ukraine with its picturesque four seasons, fertile lands, clear water, forests, and the steppes are a paradise compared to many countries around the world. How not to ruin it all, not to lose fertility, beauty, and diversity? How not to lose your land, but to give birth to land? How to live in a new way for smaller communities that will be more urbanized in lifestyle and leisure?” (Epifaniy 2020). Besides, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine seeks to incorporate the principles of environmental ethics into religious practice (for example, praying for the environment) and the daily practice of believers (recommendations for adhering to environmental principles when celebrating Orthodox holidays, such as not using plastic flowers on the graves of the dead).

The principles of environmental ethics are embodied in the Prayer for the Environment and published by Georgy Kovalenko on August 30, 2019. It clearly shows the combination of theological understanding of nature with contemporaries of ecological ideas. In particular, prayer is for: us to stop thoughtless use that pollutes the land, air, and water, and causes disease and global warming; be able to preserve all the richness of natural diversity, protecting vulnerable species from extinction; stop plundering and polluting the land, put an end to reckless deforestation, destruction of natural environments and depletion of non-renewable subsoil; we could overcome the cruel keeping of cattle and all rage against animals; to distribute the goods of the earthly borders justly to all peoples, rejoicing in the unity of the human race and our kinship with all creation; recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in all creatures restored in the person of Christ (Kovalenko 2019).

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine) presented its attitude to environmental issues in the Social Doctrine. In particular, this doctrine emphasizes the relationship between anthropology and ecology. It claimed that today the world is experiencing two crises at the same time: spiritual and environmental. These problems are defined as those caused by social existence, because in modern society man sometimes loses awareness of life as a gift of God, and sometimes the very meaning of being if it is reduced only to physical existence. The surrounding nature with such an attitude to life is no longer perceived as a home, much less than a temple, but becomes only a “living environment”. (Social’na kontseptsiya UPC 2000).

Church hierarchs and parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine) express the conviction that a complete overcoming of the ecological crisis in the conditions of a spiritual crisis is impossible. This statement does not mean that the Church calls for the abolition of environmental protection. However, it connects the hope for a positive change in the relationship between man and nature with the desire of society for spiritual rebirth. The anthropogenic basis of environmental problems shows that we change the world around us according to our inner world, and therefore the transformation of nature must begin with the Transfiguration of the soul. In particular, concerning this provision, the doctrine refers to the Rev. Maximus the Confessor, who argued that man could turn the whole Earth into paradise only when he has heaven in itself. (Social’na kontseptsiya UPC 2000).

The combination of a secularized moral system, which contains norms and values that govern the relationship between man and nature, with religious values and norms is realized in Orthodoxy quite organically. Based on the understanding of the world as a creation of God, Christianity finds a fundamental basis for the interpretation of environmental

problems in a world that demonstrates the fluidity of value systems and moral relativism. Of course, it is difficult to call the Church an expert on environmental issues. But how it responds to environmental problems, allows a believer to develop a responsible attitude towards nature and to form behaviour that would implement it.

5. Conclusion

The problem of the development of environmental ethics and the reaction to its principles on the part of religion is vital, as it provides an understanding of the evolution of moral systems in contemporary conditions, as well as the implementation of moral principles solutions to current challenges of the globalized world. Religion has traditionally been a source of moral values. However, since modern times, it has gradually lost its role, instead of the traditional substantiation of moral principles, secularized and rationally substantiated systems of morality were introduced. It changes people's thinking and behaviour, which further undermines the role of the Church in social life. In the 20th century, the ecological crisis further exacerbated the need to rationally justify a moral attitude towards nature. Thus, there is an environmental ethic, which takes various forms.

Modern religions (particularly Christianity, which has been the subject of this article) must not avoid these problems. Within Christianity, we can observe a kind of adaptation of the response to environmental issues to religious consciousness and their interpretation through religious categories. The Orthodox Church, which is considered to be perhaps the most traditional Christian community, does not ignore environmental issues and tries to respond to the demand for ethical solutions to environmental problems. It was demonstrated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and we also presented this with the example of Ukrainian Orthodoxy. In the appeals and doctrines of the Orthodox Churches in Ukraine, we can observe the substantiation of ecological principles and principles of environmental ethics through their synthesis with theological ideas. It allows us to present references to the foundations of the Christian life, which are perceived by believers as fundamental principles. At the same time, the appeal to environmental ethics enables the Church to show its civic activism and to give its moral principles a practical dimension.

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