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Nataliia Kovtun

Iryna Vitiuk

Olena Polishchuk

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EDUCATIONAL AND CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES OF BAPTIST CHRISTIANS: THE EXAMPLE OF THE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS BAPTISTS, CALLED “CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY,” IN ZHYTOMYR¹

By **Nataliia Kovtun, Iryna Vitiuk, and Olena Polishchuk**

Nataliia Kovtun, Dr. of Science in Philosophy, Professor, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Political Science, Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine. Research interests: challenges and social risks of human existence in Industry 4.0., Religious aspects of human adaptation to the existential challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and military operations.

Email: miller-melnik@ukr.net

ORCID: 0000-0002-5529-8655

Iryna Vitiuk, PhD in Philosophical Sciences, Docent, Associate Professor of the Department of Philosophical and Historical Studies and Mass Communications, Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine. Research interests: Religion in the modern world, challenges to human existence in the modern world, eschatology, social eschatology.

Email: irenevik@i.ua

ORCID: 0000-0002-2998-6323

Olena Polishchuk, Dr. of Science in Philosophy, Professor, Professor of the Fine Arts and Desain Department, Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine. Research interests: challenges and social risks of human existence in Industry 4.0., Religious aspects of human adaptation to the existential challenges of digitalization, aesthetic aspects of human existence in industry 4.0. Design in conditions of digitalization.

Email: polishchuk.o.p.2015@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-1095-8031

¹ Zhytomyr is a regional center founded in 884 and located in Central Ukraine alongside Kyiv Oblast. Over the centuries, it has been subject to various political, cultural and historical influences, including the Magdeburg Law in 1444. After the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, the city and the entire surrounding region were annexed by the Russian Empire. After the collapse of the Russian Empire, Zhytomyr became part of the Ukrainian People's Republic. In November 1921, the city was finally conquered by the Bolsheviks and became part of the Kyiv oblast of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), which was part of the Soviet Union. In 1937, the city of Zhytomyr became the center of the Zhytomyr Oblast within the Ukrainian SSR. In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Zhytomyr became the center of the Zhytomyr region of the independent state of Ukraine. As a result of complex historical processes, a pluralistic multi-confessional environment was formed here, encompassing Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish.

Introduction

Charity has long been and remains a priority of the Christian church since its inception. Traditionally, it has gone hand in hand with educational work, which was primarily aimed at converting non-Christians to Christianity. The institutionalization of the Christian church and its subsequent denominational division only contributed to the strengthening of the charitable and educational work. From its very inception, Protestantism, being in opposition to the mainstream development of the church, had to prove its right to exist in society, using the whole range of possibilities, from the doctrinal foundations of the doctrine to active participation in the social and economic life of the community.

Protestantism is one of the largest religious communities in Ukraine. As of January 1, 2021, the share of Protestants accounted for 29% of the total number of Ukrainian believers, according to the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience. Baptists remain the largest Protestant denomination in Ukraine, with 3,034 religious organizations.²

The All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, an organizational platform, is a member of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO), an interfaith institution established in 1996. The purpose of AUCCRO as a special institution of church-state relations in Ukraine is to regulate interfaith dialogue in Ukraine and to promote the participation of religious organizations in social and charitable activities. Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the Union of Baptist Churches, a member of the AUCCRO, has been actively involved in protecting the rights of believers in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, “conducting consistent activities aimed at releasing from Russian captivity” prisoners of war and Ukrainian citizens who are political prisoners.³

In its social activities, in addition to Protestant ethics and social doctrine founded in the Reformation, the Baptist Union has been following the Strategy for the Participation of Churches and Religious Organizations in Peacebuilding, “Ukraine is Our Common Home,” since 2017. This Strategy has become acutely relevant in the context of war. It outlines the social challenges caused by the war in eastern Ukraine, Luhansk, and Donetsk regions as well

² Титаренко, В. “Протестантські організації та об’єднання у 2020-2021 роках: основні фактори динаміки кількісних і якісних змін.” *Аналітика*. 07.09.2021. <https://sobor.com.ua/news/protestantski-organizaciyi>. (Tytarenko V. “Protestant organizations and associations in 2020-2021: the main factors of the dynamics of quantitative and qualitative changes.” *Analytics*).

³ “Інформація про ВРЦіРО (Всеукраїнську Радку Церков і релігійних організацій).” <https://vrciro.org.ua/ua/council/info>. (“Information about VRCiRO (All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations)”).

as the annexation of Crimea, which have only grown in scope and intensity since February 24, 2022. In particular, the document addresses the presence in Ukrainian society of citizens affected by the war; the problems of internally displaced persons; the problem of releasing hostages; illegal weapons and the use of violence in the domestic sphere of human life; combating disinformation, etc. The Strategy for the Participation of Churches and Religious Organizations in the Development of Ukraine establishes the methodological basis for the activities of AUCCRO member organizations on fundamental principles laid down in the Gospels: faith in God, love of neighbor, empathy, respect for human dignity and rights, building trust, unity and solidarity, and interaction between people.

The charitable and educational activities of the Protestant Church have their roots in Protestant ethics and social doctrine of the Reformation. As every Protestant denomination today introduces social work into its activities, helping one's neighbor is perceived as a duty of every member of a religious community. The doctrine of the Baptist Church states that the duty of every person is to perform good deeds, which are seen as evidence of human gratitude to God for salvation, as well as having the means of carrying out educational activities.⁴

A Brief Overview of the History of the Organization of the Church of the Nativity of Evangelical Baptists in Zhytomyr. Persecution of Baptists during the Soviet Period

In the city of Zhytomyr in 1909, during the period of the Russian Empire, a community of Baptist Christians was founded, organized by Baptists from German families living in the Zhytomyr region. By 1911, the group of Baptist believers in the city included more than 20 people who belonged to the Lobachevsky, Kryzhanivsky, Muravitsky, Ilchenko, Solomoniuk, and other families. This community began to operate in Zhytomyr on Malovilska Street. During the First World War in the Russian Empire, government officials and some Orthodox priests accused Baptists of anti-state sentiments and subjected them to persecution.

However, the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and the proclamation of Lenin's decree "On Freedom of Conscience" opened the way for Baptist communities to create new communities and attract neophytes. By the mid-1920s, the Baptist community in Zhytomyr already numbered up to 150 people. At the same time, the church's elder, F. Kosolapov, focused considerable attention on evangelistic and missionary work in Zhytomyr. However, in the

⁴ "Віровчення. Всеукраїнський союз церков євангельських християн-баптистів." <https://www.baptyst.com/virovchennya/>. ("Creed. All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Baptist Christian Churches.").

second half of the 1920s, the Soviet regime actively fought against religion and almost all religious organizations with mass repressions against believers and priests. These events, as well as the turbulent years of World War II, led to the destruction of the Baptist community in Zhytomyr or to the transition of its supporters into the underground.

The Church of the Nativity of the Evangelical Christian Baptists in Zhytomyr (Ukraine) began independent services in October 1961. The basis for the organization of the church was the desire of the members of the Zhytomyr Baptist Church to institutionalize their religious activities in the context of relative political liberalization during the so-called “thaw” period in the USSR, associated with Nikita Khrushchev. During this period, several Christian Baptist families returned to Zhytomyr after Stalin's repression and exile from Vorkuta.

Despite a certain liberalization of the political regime during Khrushchev's rule, the Soviet regime set itself the goal of completely destroying religious institutions in the country over the next twenty years. During this period, “many houses of worship were closed, the regime for registering new religious communities became much stricter, and atheist propaganda, often of a slanderous nature, intensified.”⁵ A direct consequence of this was a ban on churches evangelizing young people, baptizing them, and banning children from worship. This caused a wave of protests among supporters of Protestantism, particularly in Zhytomyr, because such practices contradicted even Soviet legislation on religious organizations.

The parishioners of the Church of the Nativity began gathering in Zhytomyr for regular Sunday prayers in October 1962. For this purpose, they used the apartments of their parishioners.⁶ At the beginning of its existence, the church had 30-40 parishioners, but there were many children among them due to the large Baptist families. In 1964, the first ordination of Presbyter D. Vynohradskyi took place in the Church of the Nativity. However, immediately “after the prayer of dedication, a police squad with representatives of the KGB broke into the service.”⁷ This resulted in interrogations of believers by the KGB, arrests of community members, fines, and the subsequent dispersal of services. For the next two decades, members of the Church of the Nativity were forced to continue worshipping underground in safe houses.

The situation began to change qualitatively during the years of *perestroika* initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev. As early as 1988, the Church of the Nativity petitioned the Zhytomyr Regional Committee of the Communist Party to transfer the former Lutheran church to its use.⁸

⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁷ Ibid., 50.

⁸ Ibid., 87.

On December 16, 1991, after Ukraine proclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union, the church building was transferred to the ownership of the Nativity Church of the Baptist Church of Zhytomyr.⁹ Since then, active educational and charitable activities of the priests and parishioners of the Church of the Nativity in the Zhytomyr region have been launched.

Charitable and Educational Activities of the Church of the Nativity of the Baptist Church of Zhytomyr (1991-2024)

In addition to religious worship, the Nativity Church of the Evangelical Christian Baptist Church of Zhytomyr carries out various educational and charitable activities. In 1995, the church opened a general education Christian school “*Siaivo*” (Shining).¹⁰ Significant moral and spiritual support for its development was provided by the International Association of Christian Schools, of which this educational institution became a member.

The construction of the school building itself involved the assistance of international Christian foundations, however, the parishioners of Nativity Baptist Church took an active part in the construction. The technical supervisor of the construction was Brother V. Syabrukovych, an active member of Nativity Church. During the construction process, he actively cooperated with Presbyter P. Kulbich, who was responsible for providing construction materials.¹¹ Church believers worked on the construction of the school free of charge.

As of March 2024, 272 students are enrolled in the “*Siaivo*” (Shining) school at the Nativity Church of the Baptist Church of Zhytomyr., and 25 Christian teachers work there, as well as a board of trustees and a parent committee.¹² This school, in addition to the State Curriculum in Ukraine, aims to

teaching, learning, and upbringing are subordinated to the Wisdom of the Creator and Savior of the world. Wisdom that, in addition to intellectual abilities and critical thinking skills, includes insight and discernment, the ability to see and distinguish between good and evil, to be just and prudent in practical actions, and to be in right relationship with God, other people, and the world.¹³

This goal is realized through Bible lessons, school-wide spiritual services, teaching the subject of Christian ethics in all 11 grades of the school, and the integration of biblical truths

⁹ Ibid, 89.

¹⁰ Ibid, 109.

¹¹ “Коротка історія церкви ”Різдва” євангельських християн баптистів. 50 років.” *Сайт церкви ”Різдва”*. <https://www.rizdva.church/uk/history/> (“A brief history of the Church ”Christmas” Evangelical Christian Baptists. 50 years.” *Website of the “Christmas” church*).

¹² “Сяйво. Школа при церкві ”Різдва” ЕХБ.” <https://osvitanova.com.ua/providers/10-%D1%81%D1%8F%D0%B9%D0%B2%D0%BE> (“Radiance. School at the Church ”Rizdva” EHB ”).

¹³ Ibid.

into the content of school subjects. The school takes an active part in social activities, volunteerism, and takes under its care families who need special assistance in learning and acquiring social skills.

Another important area of charitable and educational work of the Church of the Nativity of the Baptist Church of Zhytomyr is the work of the Christian Center for Social Rehabilitation of Drug and Alcohol Addicts “*Yakir*” (Anchor). The initiators of this center on April 12, 2001, were the elders of the church, I. Kostyukevych and P. Kulbych.¹⁴ This center is supported by charitable contributions from various evangelical churches. During the period from 2007 to 2010, the Yakir Center accepted more than thirty drug and alcohol addicts for rehabilitation.¹⁵ Spiritual conversations are held with them, and some of them are baptized and begin a new spiritual life.

A qualitatively new stage in the charitable ministry of the parishioners and elders of the Nativity Church of the Evangelical Christian Church of Zhytomyr began in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war that has been going on since 2014. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have flooded from the occupied territories, many of whom belonged to Protestant communities that were persecuted by the Russian occupation administration. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army on February 24, 2022, a number of harassments of religious communities, including Protestant ones, have been recorded in the temporarily occupied territories. Thus, more than 660 religious buildings were destroyed, including at least 206 Protestant ones, among them Pentecostals (94), Evangelical Christians-Baptists (60), and Seventh-day Adventists (27). All Protestant churches are banned from worshiping in the territories occupied by Russia.¹⁶

A significant number of Protestant refugees ended up in Zhytomyr in March-April 2024. To accommodate them, the Church of the Nativity used its summer recreation center near Zhytomyr. Vacations for the children of the church and the church school were canceled and the IDPs were accommodated there. Their number at the center reached almost 200 people, more than 100 of whom were children. Through the efforts of local Baptist Christians, concerned Zhytomyr residents and international charitable organizations, these people were provided with food, good living conditions, and everything they needed for life. Church

¹⁴ “Дорогою вірності. Краткая история церкви ”Рождества” ЕХБ”. Житомир: ”Полісся”, 2011, с. 134. (“By the way of loyalty. A brief history of the Church of the Nativity of the EHB”. Zhytomyr: ”Polissya”).

¹⁵ Ibid., 136.

¹⁶ Mark R. Elliott, (2024) “The Assault on Protestants and Other Minority Faiths in Russian-Occupied Ukraine,” *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 44 : Iss. 2 , Article 5. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2693-2229.2504> <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol44/iss2/5>

volunteers brought refugees by car under Russian rocket fire, risking their own lives. They were temporarily housed in the basement of the school, which also served as bomb shelters. People were consoled and reassured, given psychological aid, and provided with food, clothing, and hygiene products. The basement of the church cannot be considered a shelter, and therefore the displaced and refugees were transported by volunteer cars to the borders of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary.

Such activities of the Church of the Nativity of Zhytomyr Baptist fully comply with its Charter, which, according to clause 3.3.15, gives it the right to organize and establish charity services, charitable institutions (shelters, boarding schools, hospitals, and hospices, rehabilitation centers for people with various forms of addiction and other rehabilitation centers). In addition, based on clause 3.3.14 of the Charter, the church has the right to carry out charity and mercy by purchasing food, necessities, medicines, medical supplies and equipment for further free distribution among the poor and vulnerable categories of the population.¹⁷ It should be noted that the clergy of the Church of the Nativity provided active assistance to all refugees, regardless of their religion. Some of the church and school premises were turned into warehouses and places for the distribution of humanitarian aid. In addition, during the periods of the largest Russian bombardment of Zhytomyr, the church basement was used as a bomb shelter for all residents of the city.

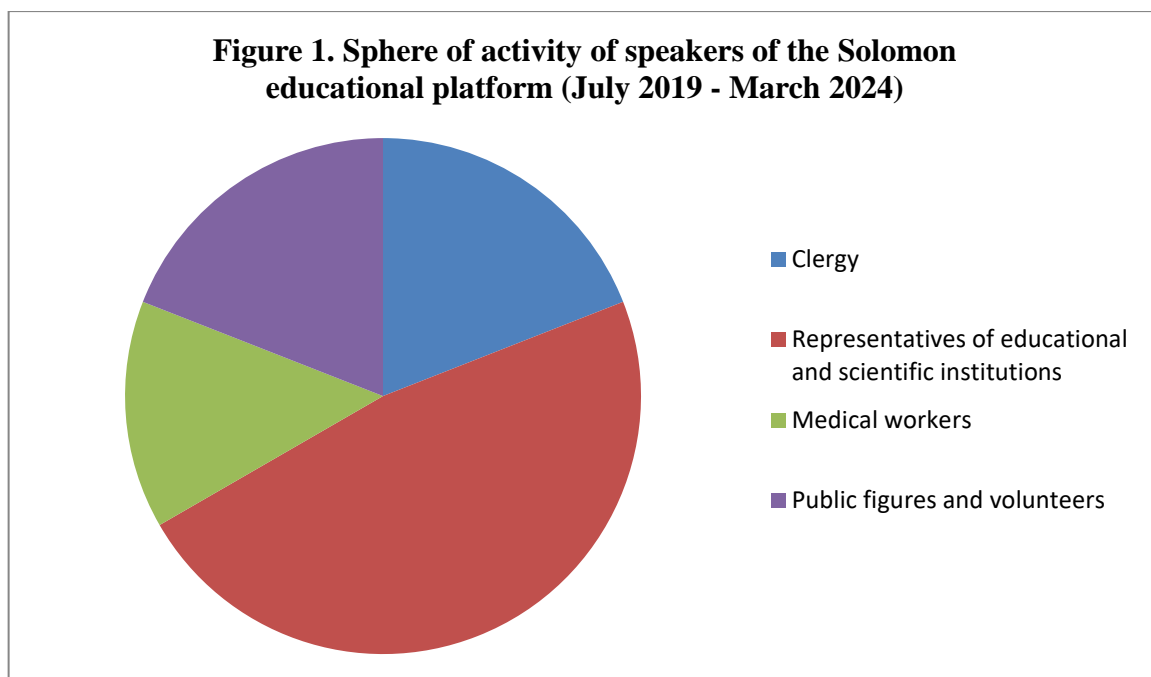
In addition to active charitable work, the ministers and members of the Church of the Nativity of the Baptist Church of Zhytomyr work closely with a number of educational institutions in the city: Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, the Professional College of Construction, Architecture and Design, and others. Church ministers are invited to give lectures, presentations, and participate in conferences and roundtables, including as speakers. In addition, there is cooperation in publishing educational and scientific literature and preparing educational programs. And perhaps the most complete expression of the church's educational work and its interaction with educational institutions is embodied in the activities of the Solomon educational platform.

Content and Topics of Reports on the Educational Platform “Solomon” at the Church of the Nativity of the Baptist Church of Zhytomyr

¹⁷ “Статут релігійної організації ”Церква ”Різдва” Євангельських християн-баптистів.” 22 листопада 2021 року. <https://www.rizdva.church/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/%D0%A1%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%83%D1%82-2021.pdf> . (“The charter of the religious organization “Christmas Church” of Evangelical Christian Baptists.” November 22, 2021).

For five years now, from July 2019 to March 2024, the educational platform Solomon, has been operating at the Church of the Nativity,¹⁸ moderated by Andriy Lavrentiuk, Doctor of Theology, deacon of the Church of the Nativity of Evangelical Christians Baptists. The platform brings together churchgoers and representatives of other religious communities (Orthodox, Muslim), NGOs, and higher education institutions. They are the speakers on the platform and active participants in the discussion of important religious, existential, and spiritual issues of modern life. All those present at the platform's meetings can join the discussion and ask the speakers and experts about relevant issues.

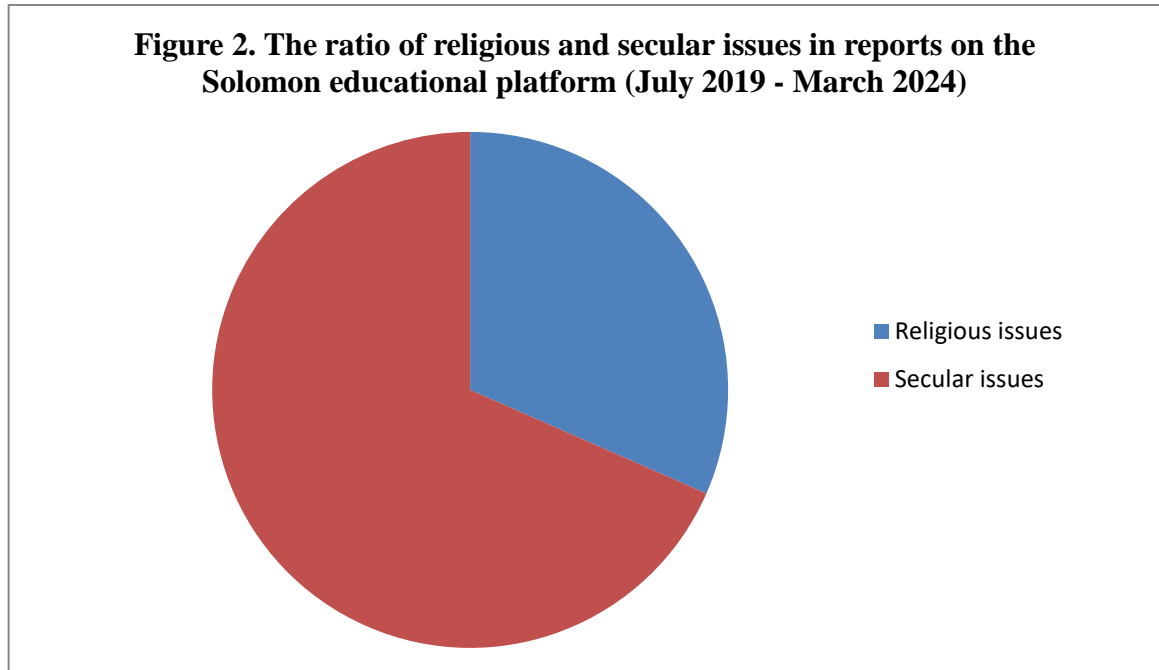
During the period from July 2019 to March 2024, 21 speakers made presentations on the Solomon educational platform.¹⁹ Of these, 14% belonged to the category of medical workers, 19% to clergy, 19% to public figures and volunteers, and 48% to representatives of educational and scientific institutions (*Figure 1*).



¹⁸ “Просвітницька платформа ”Соломон”.” <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV07LcWYvq3xDIZKTAoMPNg/about> (“Educational platform ”Solomon”).”

¹⁹ Ibid.

If we talk about the ratio of religious and secular issues in the reports on the Solomon educational platform in July 2019 - March 2024, 32% of the reports dealt with religious issues, and 68% with secular issues²⁰ (Figure 2).



The topics of the reports on the educational platform “Solomon” at the Church of the Nativity in Zhytomyr covered eight key areas in the relevant period²¹ (Figure 3):

1. *Religious dogma and religious practice.* This area of conversation included discussions of the following aspects: the essence of the Gospel, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, ecumenism, the phenomenon of mystical revelations in the Christian tradition, Armageddon and the last battle, the Earth after the flood, Easter as a triumph over death, and the power of prayer.

2. *Religion and society.* This area of reports covered the following issues: Christian and politics, the phenomenon of power and its priorities, the Law of God and secular legislation,

²⁰ “Просвітницька платформа ”Соломон”.” (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV07LcWYvq3xDIZKTAoMPNg/about> (“Educational platform ”Solomon”.”)).

²¹ “Просвітницька платформа ”Соломон”.” (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV07LcWYvq3xDIZKTAoMPNg/about> (“Educational platform ”Solomon”.”)).

secularism in modern society, manipulation in the Christian environment, the concept of world conspiracies and their role in manipulating the consciousness of a Christian, targeted advertising and the defenselessness of the human soul, the pandemic and signs of the last time (myths and reality).

3. *The existence of a modern person in the world.* The issues of this area of discussion were limited to discussing such topics as the nature and criteria for achieving freedom, the influence of the environment on the individual, the volitional foundations of social activity of modern man, the social risks of human existence in the context of robotization and digitalization of various spheres of production, the problem of hunger and poverty in the modern world, and the causes of modern man's sickness.

4. *Ethical life of a person.* Within this area of reports, the following topics were discussed: the problems of choosing moral guidelines, ethics of social relations, ethics of the day of judgment, the role of conscience in human life, love as a way of coexistence with the Other, tolerance and its reasonable limits, humility (blessing or weakness) were discussed.

5. *Human cognitive practices in the modern information society.* This area of discussion allowed us to consider the following issues: what is truth and what are its features, what is the power and meaning of words in the modern world, intuition as a way of perceiving and knowing the world, critical thinking and its role in the post-truth period, how not to lose a person in the post-truth era, fakes and how not to become part of the conveyor belt of lies and manipulations, cynicism of an enlightened person in the interpretation of P. Sloterdijk.

6. *Spiritual life of a person.* The topics of this area of reports were limited to discussing the following aspects: human spiritual powers, personal motivation, the relationship between spirit, soul, and body, harmony with nature and human spirituality, problems of spirituality and the transformation of school education in Ukraine in the twentieth century, the psychology of spirituality, Christianity and psychology, Easter holiday and Ukraine's exit from spiritual slavery, emotionally close communication as a form of interaction, love and hate in times of upheaval, religious philosophy of Blaise Pascal and the spiritual being of man, reflection of eternity in the visual arts, the cult of death in European cultures.

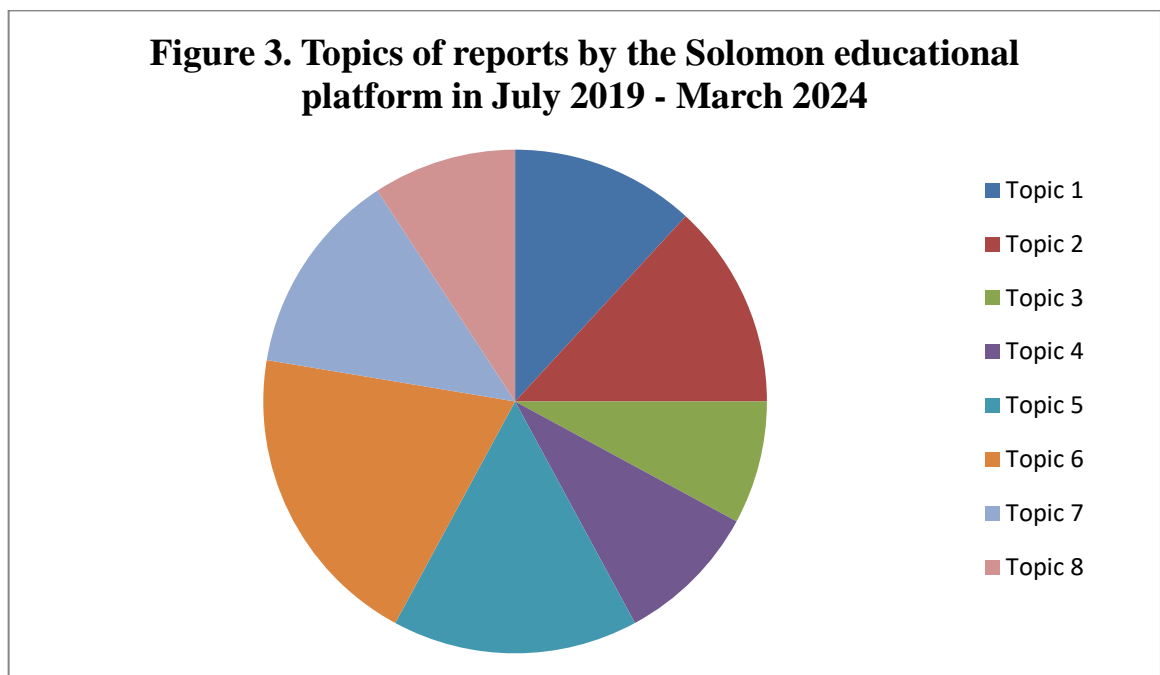
7. *State history, law and the formation of civil society.* This area of discussions and presentations covered the problems of using the World War II narrative in social mythology and propaganda, the problems of the resistance movement in Ukraine during the Second World War, the nature of nationalism and its extreme manifestations, the political nature of ethnic conflicts, the phenomenon of obsession with power, the nature of slavery and its manifestations

in the modern world, the theory of natural and positive law, and the conceptual foundations of the formation of civil society in Ukraine.

8. *Self-awareness of Ukrainians in the situation of genocidal war.* Within this area, the following issues were addressed: the main causes of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the concept of “Moscow - the Third Rome” as the basis of Russian imperialism and expansionism, russism as a fascist ideology of aggression and violence, the “dehumanization” of the image of a Ukrainian in Russian propaganda as the basis of war crimes of the Russian army, the transformation of forms of human alienation in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, lessons of the Russian-Ukrainian war, forms and ways to preserve humanity in inhuman conditions.

Figure 3. Topics of reports by the Solomon educational platform in July 2019 - March 2024.

- Topic 1. Religious dogma and religious practice – 9 (12%).
- Topic 2. Religion and society – 10 (13%).
- Topic 3. Human existence in the world – 6 (8%).
- Topic 4. Ethical life of a person – 7 (9%).
- Topic 5. Human cognitive practices in the information society – 12 (16%).
- Topic 6. Spiritual life of a person – 15 (20%).
- Topic 7. State history, law and the formation of civil society – 10 (13%).
- Topic 8. Self-awareness and self-identification of Ukrainians in the situation of genocidal war – 7 (9%).



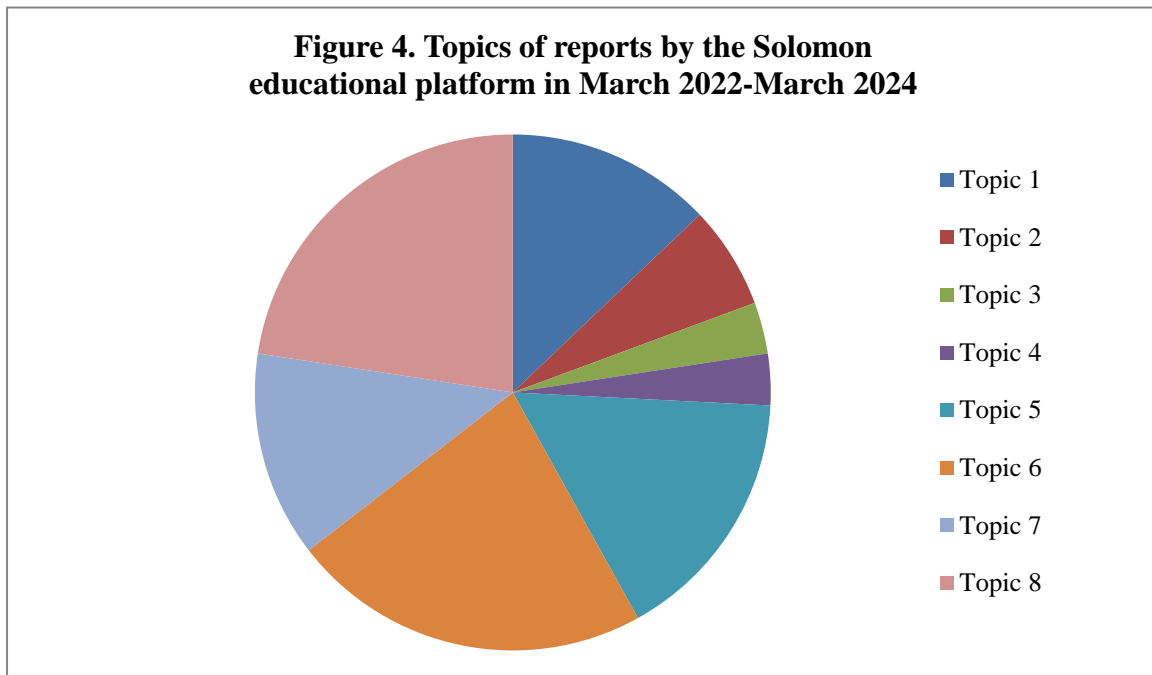
In order to analyze in more detail the ability of the Christian Baptist religious community and the public involved in the work of the Solomon educational platform to adapt to the challenges of martial law, to the situation of daily existential choice between death and life, we sampled the topics of reports on the platform in the context of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army from March 2022 to March 2024²² (*Figure 4*). Based on the comparison, it was found that during this period, the interest of speakers and participants of the educational platform in reports related to the issues of self-awareness and self-identification of Ukrainians in a situation of genocidal war and mechanisms of human adaptation to the daily threat to their existence increased from 9% to 23%.

Figure 4. Topics of reports by the Solomon educational platform in March 2022-March 2024.

- Topic 1. Religious dogma and religious practice – 4 (13%).
- Topic 2. Religion and society – 2 (6%).
- Topic 3. Human existence in the world – 1 (3%).
- Topic 4. Ethical life of a person – 1 (3%).
- Topic 5. Human cognitive practices in the information society – 5 (16%).
- Topic 6. Spiritual life of a person – 7 (23%).

²² <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV07LcWYvq3xDIZKTAoMPNg/about> “Просвітницька платформа ”Соломон”.” (“Educational platform ”Solomon”).

Topic 7. State history, law and the formation of civil society – 4 (13%). Topic 8. Self-awareness of Ukrainians in the situation of genocidal war – 7 (23%).



Conclusions

Protestant religious communities in Ukraine are actively involved in the educational and social activities of Ukrainian society. In fact, every Protestant denomination, including the Evangelical Baptists, considers helping one's neighbor as a key duty of every member of the religious community. The activities of this Protestant denomination in the field of charity and education have intensified in recent decades in Ukraine.

An eloquent example of the active social and charitable position of Christian Baptists is the activity of the elders and parishioners of the Church of the Nativity of Evangelical Christians Baptists (ECB) in Zhytomyr (Ukraine), which has been operating in the city since 1961. For almost three decades, the church's activities were accompanied by persecution by the Soviet authorities, repression, and imprisonment of its clergy and parishioners. It was only with the proclamation of Ukraine's independence in 1991 that the Nativity Church of Zhytomyr was able to hold free worship and other forms of social service.

The educational and charitable activities of this church are concentrated in several areas. The first important area of charity and social service of the parishioners of the Nativity Church of the Evangelical Christian Baptist Church of Zhytomyr was the work of the Christian Center for Social Realization of Drug and Alcohol Addicts “Yakir” (2001), which made it possible to

accept and rehabilitate dozens of drug and alcohol addicts, some of whom were eventually baptized in this church.

The second main area of charitable service of the parishioners and elders of the Church of the Nativity of the Baptist Church of Zhytomyr was their volunteer work to help refugees from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. After the active phase beginning on February 24, 2022, the Church of the Nativity used its summer recreation center near Zhytomyr to resettle 200 refugees. The church provided refugees with food, clothing, and hygiene products, transported refugees to relatively safe places in Ukraine, or provided volunteer vehicles to transport them to the borders of Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary. At the same time, part of the premises of the Nativity Church of the Evangelical Christian Baptist Church and the *Siaivo* (Shining) School were turned into warehouses and places for the distribution of humanitarian aid, and the basement of the church was used as a bomb shelter for all residents of the city.

The educational activities of the Church of the Nativity of the Baptist Church of Zhytomyr are also concentrated in two key areas. The first of them is related to the educational activities of the Christian school “*Siaivo*” (Shining) (1995) at the Church of the Nativity of the EBC of Zhytomyr, which is aimed at forming and developing children's intellectual abilities, a wide range of knowledge in various academic disciplines, critical thinking skills, and the development of such qualities as insight and prudence, the ability to see and distinguish between good and evil, to be fair and reasonable in practical actions, and to be in a faithful relationship with God. This is achieved through Bible lessons, school-wide spiritual services, and the teaching of Christian ethics to students in all eleven grades.

The second important area of educational activity was the close cooperation of the ministers and congregation of the Church of the Nativity of the Baptist Church of Zhytomyr with a number of educational institutions in the city: Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, the Professional College of Construction, Architecture and Design, etc. It is most fully embodied in the activities of the educational platform Solomon, which unites both church members and representatives of other religious communities (Orthodox, Muslim), public organizations and higher education institutions.

It was found that among the speakers of this platform, who focused on important religious, existential, and spiritual issues of modern man, 14% were healthcare professionals, 19% were clergy, 19% were public figures, and volunteers, and 48% were representatives of educational and scientific institutions.

Over the five years of the Solomon educational platform's operation (July 2019 - March 2024), 32% of the speeches were on religious topics, and 68% were on secular socially significant issues. In terms of content, the reports on the educational platform focused on eight key topics: religious dogma and religious practice, religion and society, the existence of a modern person in the world, the ethical life of a person, cognitive practices of a person in the modern information society, the spiritual life of a person, the history of the state, rights and the formation of civil society, and the self-awareness of Ukrainians in the situation of a genocidal war.

Based on a comparative analysis of the topics of speeches on the Solomon educational platform, an increase in interest from 9% to 23% of both speakers and participants of the educational platform in the period after the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, in the issues of self-awareness and self-identification of Ukrainians in a situation of genocidal war and mechanisms of human adaptation to the daily threat to their existence was established. This was embodied in the topics of reports and discussions related to clarifying the main causes of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the role of the religious concept of “Moscow - the Third Rome” in the imposition of Russian imperialism and Russian expansionism, and the understanding of russism as a fascist ideology of aggression and violence, studying the methods and forms of “dehumanization” of the image of Ukrainians in Russian propaganda as the basis of war crimes of the Russian army, transformation of forms of human alienation in the conditions, awareness of forms and ways to preserve humanity in inhuman conditions of genocidal war.

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