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Russian Orthodox Spokesman Calls on Faithful to Replace 'Cynical Elite'

By Anna Dolgov

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A Russian Orthodox Church spokesman has called for Russia's faithful to replace the current "tired, corrupt and cynical" political elite with devout leadership, news site Lenta.ru news portal reported on Sunday.

"Today, [the faithful] need to take the place of tired, corrupt, cynical elites, to exercise their civil action at the level of a village, a city, a region, of the country as a whole and of the whole world," church spokesman Vsevolod Chaplin was quoted as saying.

Russia suffers from "excessive cynicism among parts of the political and economic elite, and all this hinders Russia from making its new breakthrough," said Chaplin on Sunday while speaking at an international Orthodox Christian youth forum in Kazan, in the republic of Tatarstan.

Although the Russian Constitution classifies Russia as a secular state, the Orthodox Church enjoys special treatment from the nation's leadership, including President Vladimir Putin.

The church enjoys commercial benefits — including alleged tax breaks.

The church often bears the brunt of various popular jokes in Russia depicting Orthodox leaders riding in luxury cars and vacationing on swanky yachts.

Rather than worldly luxuries, Chaplin's appeals to Russia's religious youth focused on embracing religious ideals, Lenta.ru reported.

“Today we must show that there are people in the country who are willing to change its life, and the life of the whole world, based not on pragmatic interests, and most certainly not on sinful motivations, but precisely on those supreme values that the traditional religion gives us,” he was quoted as saying.

The church spokesman criticized the Islamic State, whose romanticized religious ideology has been attracting scores of disenfranchised young Russians recently.

Young people are “entering the suicidal dead-end,” Chaplin was quoted as saying. In addition to denouncing terror groups, he stressed that young people should have “real business placed into their hands,” he said, Lenta.ru reported.

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