26/01/2020

Russian Orthodox Church Official Says Serials About ‘Healthy Family Life’ Can Boost Population



A top official in the Russian Orthodox Church has recommended the state produce films and serials about “healthy family life” to help boost birthrates.

Metropolitan Ilarion told Russian state television that the population could be enhanced by changing people’s conception of family life through films and serials rather than by raising social benefits.

“I think that if we want to significantly raise our demographic numbers, then no amount of material benefits will be enough,” Ilarion said.

He said that current serials mainly showed family infidelity “and the whole plot is based on that.”

Russia is facing a demographic crisis as the number of women of childbearing age is decreasing, a result of the economic and political upheaval of the 1990s, when couples chose to have fewer children or not at all.

The country’s death rate has surpassed its birthrate the last three years, though immigration, mainly from Central Asia, has helped fill the gap.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced during his state-of-the-nation address earlier this month that the government would expand and extend a social program aimed at stimulating births by offering young families financial assistance.

The financial assistance will now be offered to a family when their first child is born. The amount available for a second child will increase by nearly one-third to more than 600,000 rubles ($10,000).

The money can only be used for certain items, like buying a home or for education, and is not given directly to the family, but rather to the home builder or school.

— Source: rferl.org