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February 25, 2014: How Does the Secular World Do without God?

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Title: How Does the Secular World Do without God?

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2/25/2014—Here is a quote from Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev, head of the Department of external relations of the Russian Orthodox Church, Moscow Patriarchate, from a February 21, 2014 address in London: “A world without God, without absolute moral values rooted in divine revelation, the revocable he turns into the realm of the rule of slavery and lawlessness.” The question is, is there anything the secular world can appeal to in order to ground acivilization? I have before me an article from the New York Times, also on February 21, 2014, about several Alcoholics Anonymous chapters that do without the usual religion of the Alcoholics Anonymous program. For example, instead of reciting the Lord’s Prayer at the end of the session, these chapters say together, live and let live. I have nothing against live and let live. But Alcoholics Anonymous is not even an example of live and let live. It is, instead, an example of care about how others live. It is a place of intent solidarity. It is even a place of judging how others live. It is clearly better to live without alcoholism. Alcoholics Anonymous is not an organization that is neutral or relative. This comes back to the question of how to live in a world without God? Maybe that is the wrong way to think about the issue. Let us say that I do not believe something like a God conceptualized as the Bible does can exist. Do I necessarily then reject absolute moral values rooted in divine revelation? You might say I necessarily reject divine revelation, but that might only mean that absolute values unfold without regard to my opinion or without regard to the actions of humans. It may be, in Hegelian fashion, that absolute truth comes to know itself. Or, in Heideggerian fashion that being discloses itself. In any event, divine revelation need not imply a person-like supernatural being. So, maybe Alfeyev is right but maybe secular civilization has a response.