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CONFESSIONAL PROCESSES IN RUSSIA: FROM ATHEISM TO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Summary

Modern Russian society is undergoing a transition from a paradigm of communistic ideology to an ideology which gives prominent recognition to historical national spiritual institutes. The multi-religious state is entering into the world arena, democratic in its religious aspect. The legal basis of this process are the provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Civil code of the country, and the law “Concerning Freedom of Worship and Religious Associations”, as well as the regulations adopted in territorial units of the Russian Federation. Russian society includes more than sixty faiths in its religious space, the tasks and functions of which are connected with the need for spiritual education of members of society, elimination of contradictions between ethnic cultures and values, and the formation of a tolerant society. The general trend is toward the revival of religion, its organizations and associations, and a gradual release from dogmatism in world views, as well as the formation of democratic principles corresponding to the functioning of a civil society.

Keywords: Russia, religiosity, religious faiths, social transformation

INTRODUCTION

The process of globalization has impacted different countries not only in the spheres of their economic and political life, but also in terms of their values and the forms of activity connected with religious practice. In the world community this has been reflected in a new religious and mystical wave, and the emergence

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of a set of religious movements (new religions, sects and cults), with attributes corresponding to their ideas of life values in society. According to a number of philosophers (D. Bell, A. Toffler, T. Rozzak, M. Eliade), this fact is explained as a consequence of a civilizational shift in the social development of those countries which have entered a post-industrial phase of development, and also as a manifestation of a youth counterculture. In the assessments of this process there is an opinion that this is *a particular manifestation of a "spiritual transformation" of modern society, and the creation of a "spiritual supermarket" to meet individuals' needs*. [Dictionary reference, 1998: 16–17; Toffler, 1980: 310].

The manifestation of this wave in modern Russian society is characterized by a revival of traditional religious faiths, religious consciousness, and a new outlook on life by millions people. An interesting assessment of this process was offered by G. Anderson, one of leaders of the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon: "... *Someone has to take over the mission of the failed communistic empire*" [Die Curus kommen, 1990].

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN RUSSIA: PAST AND PRESENT

Modern Russian society is undergoing a swing of the pendulum in the barometer of its social life, brought about by the withdrawal from a Marxist-Leninist paradigm of a total atheistic outlook on life to a revival of traditional historical and spiritual institutions of Russia and to a multi-religious explosion. In examining this process, it is necessary to understand that in recent times, i.e. during the existence of the Soviet society, the practice of various religious faiths was substantially liquidated or significantly reduced in connection with the total promotion of atheism in communist ideology. The maxim that 'religion is the opium of the people' defined the relation of the government to religious associations, as well as other organizations in their elaborations of their political and ideological strategies for society. The Soviet powers took a hard line toward religion, since they saw it as an obstacle and opponent to Soviet plans to transform Russia and offer a *homo sovieticus* model and education. To some extent this attitude was an expression of the expectations voiced by Russian intellectuals beginning in the middle of the 19th century (i.e. much earlier than the political revolution of October 1917), espousing nihilistic views and criticizing religious life. This became especially visible after the great reforms of 1861, when it became vogue to promote the breakdown of stereotypical outlooks and ways of life among city dwellers, and in part among the country people as well. 'Advances' by mystical practitioners and the propagation of atheism became visible in society. One of characters of

a novel by P.I. Melnikov-Pecherski offered this interesting assessment: "... the truth is that people became free, and at the same time the fear of God didn't become anything" [Melnikov-Pechersky, 1963: 135].

During the decades of the total rejection of religion in the country, tens of thousands of religious centers were closed, 200,000 priesthoods were liquidated, and about half a million priests underwent repressions. It was a peculiar conflict between "fathers and children", in which a new generation of the Russian young people took part in a program of militant atheism, joining in the destruction of religious temples, the plunder of church property, and the destruction of icons and religious books, against the condemning grumbles and prayers of believers. The mass closure of churches and destruction of religious sites began in the 1920s in connection with adoption of the Decree "Concerning the expropriation of church valuables" (1922), and proceeded throughout the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s. This destructive process was designated 'the godless five-year period.' By 1941, at the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War on Russian territory, no a single orthodox temple operated in any of the 25 regions of the Russian Federation, and in another 20 regions there were no more than five operating churches.

In days of the Great Patriotic War there was an easing up of repressions on religious life. The important political act which marked a turning point in state and church relations and the Soviet attitude toward religion was I.V. Stalin's meeting on September 4, 1943 in the Kremlin with the metropolitans Sergy (Stragorodsky), Alex (Simansky) and Nikolay (Yarushevich). During this meeting the issues of the return of church officials from camps and exile, the opening of parishes, and the publication of a magazine of the Moscow Patriarchy, was resolved by the formation of a Council for Religious Affairs, attached to the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. Also, following this meeting several thousand orthodox temples were opened for "grief soothing" ceremonies concerning losses on the battlefields, and the activities of the highest-ranking monasteries of Trinity-Sergius and Kiev Pecherski were resumed, along with many others. During the war years religious processions in Moscow were repeatedly carried out, displaying the wonder-working icon of the Kazan Mother of God, esteemed among orthodox Russians. There were numerous incidents of telegrams coming to Moscow from the front containing requests to send materials with church sermons and other leading religious materials of the Orthodox Church to the front. However, after the war's end the attacks on religion were renewed [Zipin, 1994; Shkarovsky, 1999].

From the beginning of the 20th century and until the end of the 1980s tens of thousands of churches, as well as more than one thousand leading orthodox monasteries were closed in Russia. At the beginning of the process of revival of

religion in the late 1980s only 23 out of some one thousand religious temples functioned (prior to 1922, fifty-five thousand orthodox churches and Muslim mosques were functioning) [Orthodox church in the history of religion, 2004: 237–255.].

In the 1970s and 1980s Russian Orthodox Church activity was still limited, and was supervised by the government of the USSR through the Council for Religious Affairs, which supervised all issues of religious life in the country and its regions (similar councils functioned in each Republic). The obligatory presence of a representative from the religious faith was accepted at the Committee of the Fight for Peace. During the same period, the Russian Orthodox Church faced the problem of developing its position with respect to the spread of nonconventional religions (the so-called ‘new edge religions’), which began to extend into the large cities of the country. The Orthodox Church took a position of condemnation of nonconventional religions, having defined them as “terrestrial servants of Satan”. This definition of new religions reflects the aspiration to religious monopoly shown by the Russian Orthodox Church. The government defined the representatives of these ‘new edge’ faiths (Society of Consciousness of Krishna, Moon’s Unification Church, the White Brotherhood, Church of new Sacred Russia, Church of the Last Precept, AUM to Sinrika, etc.), as religious dissidents, and their associations as “totalitarian sects”. Based on such positions of the state and Orthodox Church, repressive measures were even applied against the members of these religious groups. According to the Society of Consciousness of Krishna, about 50 people from this confessional association were imprisoned in intolerable conditions, some of them losing their lives [Orthodox church in the history of religion, 2004].

In the main, the new religious movements were concentrated in the large cities, where representatives of various ethnic diasporas lived. In the territory of rural settlements they didn’t find a fertile soil for their activity, since in these settlements the long-standing, steady relationship of inhabitants to their traditional Orthodox or Muslim religious faiths remained strong. For example, in the Central part of Russia the majority of parishioners belong to the Orthodox religion, and in the territory of Central Russia and the Lower Volga Area, along with the Orthodox religion a number of parishioners profess the Muslim religion. Also, in the Lower Volga Area Kalmyks, and in Siberia inhabitants of Tuva, profess Buddhism, adjoining the Russian population which adheres to Orthodoxy.

The missionary activities of the leaders of the new nonconventional religions often took on an uncontrollable character – even to the extent of using deception, blackmail and bribery – and their actions were in violation of the laws on missionary activity in concrete regions. At present more than 350 new religious organizations are registered as nonconventional, or ‘dissident’. As a result of the

growth in the number of new religions, a change in the religious map of the country can be observed. In its some regions there is a declining trend in the number of Orthodox associations (the Far East, the Urals), a fact which has not remained unaddressed by the Russian Orthodox Church. These changes complicate the interfaith relations in society. Although the number of adherents of organizations of nonconventional religious associations is less than the number of adherents of traditional religions, their rates of growth testify to the fact that they are rapidly expanding. This causes them to be negatively perceived and assessed by many religious figures of the traditional religions –the Russian Orthodox Church, Muslim, Buddhist and Jewish organizations – as constituting influences creating radical tendencies among ethnic groups and washing out national and cultural identity.

Having the aim of establishing order in Russian religious activity and reducing the ‘interference’ from nonconventional religions and their leaders, in 1997 the Russian Federation passed a law *Concerning Freedom of Worship and Religious Associations*. Thus began the phase of a certain regulation of the new religious movements.

Today the intensity with respect to the regulation of new, nonconventional religious faiths has softened, which reflects not only the revival and frequency of such religious practices, but also the steady manifestation in the society as a whole of a trend toward religious pluralism.

In 1987, during the course of revival of religion of various confessional directions in Russia, the authorities began to gradually return the former so-called ‘cult’ buildings (churches, mosques, monasteries), which were occupied in the Soviet period and converted into economic premises (warehouses, shops, machinist repair shops, movie theatres, municipal hostels, archives and so forth) to local dioceses, with the aim of restoring them and organizing and carrying out religious practices in them. In a number of the large cities of the country however, the transfer of religious buildings and sites from party and Soviet bodies to believers and dioceses was hampered by bureaucratic regulations and obstacles. This led to protest actions by believers, with wide public support, against this red tape. While the actions were similar throughout the country, we may note the protest in Ivanovo, which received a lot of attention in both the Russian and foreign mass media. There believers, in protest against the failure to transfer a local diocese church, engaged in a sit-in hunger strike at the steps of the renowned Svyato Vvedensky (Holy Vvedenski) Temple. The conflict was solved by the accelerated removal from the temple of government services and regional archives.

In 1988 resolutions were passed throughout the country devoted to the 1000th year anniversary of the Christianization of Kiev and Russ, which stirred up the historical memory of society and led to a renewed interest in religion. In 1990 religious faiths acquired the right to form legal entities, allowing them to carry out not only spiritual, moral, and educational missions, but also to engage in economic activity.

The turning point in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was the year 2000. In August of that year a ceremony devoted to the 2000th anniversary of Christmas took place in the Anniversary Hierarchal Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church. At the Cathedral a document entitled *Foundations of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church* was accepted. This was the first official document regulating the activities of church establishments and their relationship with the state and various secular associations and the organizations (it is interesting to note in this regard that a similar document was accepted for the first time in the 19th century by the Catholic church). In its sixteen sections, the *Foundations of the Russian Orthodox Church* covered the maintenance of the relation of the Church to various aspects of Russian society, the limits of Church loyalty in relation to the state, and the conditions under which it could refuse obedience to the state [SOTsIS, 2001: 96–103].

In the multi-religious Russian society, the preferences of believers in the various religious practices carried out at traditional religious institutions were somewhat accurately defined: Russian Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christian confessional religions – Catholicism, Protestantism in its various denominations (Associations of Baptists, Evangelicals, Adventists, Jehovah Witnesses), and the Lutheran church. In addition, the practices of the Old Believer Church in its many forms (Russian Old Orthodox Church, the Old-Rite Orthodox Church, Bespopovsky, Fedoseevsky, Pomor, Begunsky, Filippovsky, Spasovsky Soglasiya and others) intensified. Also various associations appeared, declared as sectarian associations: the Dukhobor, Molokanyo, Bogorodinchoy centers, and others.

The revival of religion and spread of religious beliefs in the country, generally centers in the large cities on the periphery. As a result of this process, the number of the Russians identifying themselves as believers of various faiths is constantly growing. Selective research carried out in Moscow and a number of the big cities in the 1990s found the number of believers there to be about 40%. Now the number of believers (as determined by sociologists) exceeds 50%, and in some regions of the country is as high as 75%.

Research into the phenomenon of religious identity in the Ivanovskoye region, conducted in 2010 (on an RGNF grant) also testifies to a trend toward the distribution of religion from the city to regional suburbs. The following data testifies to the current condition of religious life in traditional Russian regions, which the Ivanovo region represents. In the region there are 185 Orthodox parishes, three Orthodox dioceses, and more than ten monasteries registered and carrying out religious practices and activities (the best known in the area (and beyond) are the Sacred Nicolo – Shartomsky, a male monastery with farmsteads in Moscow and in some other the cities, and the Sacred Nicolo-Tihon Luhskogo, another male monastery, both of which have roots going back to the Fifteenth century; while female monasteries include the Sacred Vvedensky in Ivanovo and the Sacred Uspensky in the village of Dunilov). In the city of Ivanovo alone there are eight functioning Orthodox churches, a Muslim mosque, three monasteries, and prayer centers for 30 religious faiths operating as independent, located in premises such as manufacturing enterprises, hospitals, and others. Educational and religious educational activity is carried out in the city by an Orthodox spiritual school and a theological department in the local Humanities' University. Within the city's territorial limits, the new Pokrovsk temple is in the final stage of construction, the trustee of which is the well-known Moscow lawyer I. Reznik, and the cathedral is under reconstruction. The link between the process of revival of religion in the Ivanovskoye region and in the country overall should be noted. This city and the region was the site of construction of the new atheistic socialist ideology in the Soviet period, accompanied by the destruction of many religious buildings, despite their architectural value.

Religion, being both a social and spiritual institution of public life and one of the early forms of ideology, carries out certain functions which impact on the consciousness of people. In the course of the revival of multi-confessional religious life in Russia, these functions of religion have gained a special importance because the majority of society, now stripped of communist ideology, hasn't yet developed a new system of values. The traditional function of religion is religious enlightenment, affecting the world-views and life-views of people; matters of life and death, explanations of events capable of being ascribed to a divine origin, and matters of self-discipline. Initially God – the basic principle of religious ideology – arose in “contemplation of death”, as a principle of control of one's actions and thoughts, inasmuch as “life after death” was connected with a divine final judgment. Through religion a believing individual attempts to understand the essence of biblical precepts and/or revelations in Islam or the basic principles of other faiths. Religious, transcendental thought connects people and makes society

predictable and steady, and the establishment of “taboos” prohibits ‘incorrect’ behaviors on the part of persons ascribing to dogmatic religious positions, as well as encourages certain actions deemed positive. This underscores the importance and function of the formation of religious outlooks, i.e. views of the world from the position of religious philosophy, where the center is God as the supreme spiritual value. Today the majority of Russian society ‘joins’ religion by means of baptism, which affirms and characterizes the individual as a confirmed and accepted member of a church, with both the right and the obligation to participate in religious ceremonies, services, etc. Examples of such relations to religion are reflected in the actions of top officials of the state, and in the political, artistic, and creative elite of society Russia’s large cities, who frequently engage in mass ceremonies with crowds of people to observe the tradition of religious processions and the worship of church icons and treasures. For example, each year in Ivanovo a ceremony takes place in the form of a religious procession carrying the icon of the Kazan Mother of God. The church has begun to actively realize the ideological function of reconciliation among Orthodox faiths, both within the country and abroad. The Cathedral of the Orthodox Church reconsidered its position in relation to the Orthodox Old Believers’ Church, recognizing its past persecutions of these religious conservatives as a historical injustice and establishing their equality in religious practice along with the official Orthodox church. As a result of this recognition, Old Believers have begun to return to Russia from other countries to which they were compelled to migrate in the 19th and 20th centuries. The meetings of the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Kirill, with representatives of Orthodox faiths of the USA also testifies to the attempt to create an association of Orthodox churches, including those in Turkey, Greece, Ukraine, China, and Japan, who recognize the predominant place of Moscow as the center of the Orthodox religion.

The activities of the Orthodox church also take on political functions by means of the establishment of contacts with other religious faiths. Thus the meeting of the Russian patriarch Kirill with the head of Catholic church of Poland was an attempt to understand the needs and resolve the problems and issues in contacts between the Russian and Polish societies.

Another important function and aspect of religion in the context of its current revival in Russian society is determination of the sphere of interaction and cooperation between the church and the state in finding solutions to social problems. Cooperative activities in this regard are very wide-ranging: “care about troops”; education in the spirit of fidelity to high moral ideals; strengthening of values in a Christian family; prevention of crime; support for a moratorium

on the death penalty; cooperation in the field of education and health care and overcoming drug addiction and alcoholism; development of a negative attitude toward abortions and homosexual relations, etc. Caesar and God, i.e. the State and the Church, have to live in a certain harmony, helping each other instead of offering wholly independent solutions to problems in society. At the same time, there has to be a certain distance in state and church relations as well, and the loyalty of the church to the state has to have limits, i.e. there must be spheres in which the church can deprive the state of its support.

THE LEGAL BASIS FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN RUSSIA

The revival of multiple religious associations on the religious space of Russia testifies to development of the phenomenon of “religious pluralism” (also sometimes called “religious democracy”). This is confirmed by the fact that more than 24,600 religious organizations and 60 religions are now active in Russia [6]. Legally, religious pluralism is set forth in Article 44 of the new Constitution of the Russian Federation, and the right to hold various world views and religious variety is guaranteed by the 1997 Act of the Russian Federation *Concerning the freedom of worship and religious associations* [Odintsov, 2005]. The rights of religious associations to carry out economic activities is established in the Civil Code of the Russian Federation (Art. 117).

The constitutional arrangement concerning the activity of various religious associations creates a dilemma for the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), which on the one hand proclaims an ideology of conciliation of churches and social unity as a central idea, while on the other proclaiming the thesis that it is tolerant in relation to other faiths. Ideas of conciliation and unity in society have to concern not only the activities of Orthodox churches, but also other religious groups, so as not to create a contradiction between the tasks and views of various faiths.

Historically, the concept of being on equal footing and the functioning of various religious associations in Russia goes back to the decree *Concerning Tolerance of Religion*, approved in 1773 by Empress Catherine II. Toleration is a characteristic feature of the Russian society and its recognition of religious pluralism based on constitutional principles about freedom of worship has put the state in special situation, whereby it should not be engaged in religious protectionism or promotion. This latter circumstance should be considered in connection with the contents of paragraph N 15 of the Recommendation 1202 *Religious tolerance in a democratic society*, ratified by the Parliamentary

Assembly of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 1993), which states: “*The secular state has to awaken respect for all recognized religious communities and should not assign any religious obligations to its citizens*” [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 1993, 2 February].

So what confessional groups function in the religious space of Russia? Within the country’s territory 24,600 religious organizations and 202 spiritual educational institutions are registered. The leader is the Orthodox church. This is related to its historical existence as the titular ‘nation’ in the country of Russian people. All told, 13,943 Orthodox parishes and 429 monasteries with farmsteads are active on the territory of Russia. In total there are 170 million people in the world registered as Orthodox. A part of Russian Orthodoxy is made up of the ‘Old Believers’ church, which resulted from the split of church in the middle of the 17th century, during the reforms of Patriarch Nikon (1652–1666). In the territory of Russia there are 303 functioning and registered Old Believer organizations, and 44 monasteries with farmsteads.

Besides the Orthodox churches, in Russia one finds the Catholic church (226 communities and episcopates in Moscow and Novosibirsk); Protestant churches (Baptists, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Adventists – 2,700 communities); the Lutheran church – 218 communities; Mormons – 55 communities of The Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter Day Saints; the New apostolic church, Moon Unification Church – 6 communities; Jehovah’s Witnesses – 409 communities; Shamanism – 16 communities; pagan beliefs – 4 communities; other religions – 87 communities.

Buddhism, in the form of Lamaism, operates in Buryatia, Kalmykia, and Tuva and totals 221 communities and datsans. Judaism in Russia is represented by 276 religious associations of the various types of Judaism – Hassidism, reformed Judaism, and orthodox Judaism. The international Society of Consciousness of Krishna, based in Russia since 1972, has 75 temples [Statistical collection, 212].

In terms of numbers, the second largest registered religious faith in Russia is Islam. Moslems appeared in the territory of Russia in the 9th century. Today this religious faith unites believers in more than 4,500 religious centers, and the number of adherents of Islam totals about 25 million people [Abdulatipov, 2002].

In order to explore the understanding of religious pluralism in modern Russian society we will focus our attention on one of the Orthodox religious faiths: the Old Believer’s Orthodox Church.

The ‘Old Believers’ journal carried out a sociological survey, and in response to the question – “What do you know about the ‘Old Believers’?”, the majority of Russians (48%) answered – nothing, 29% replied that it is a sect, 8% that Old

Believers are Orthodox Christians who have broken away from Church, and only 4% answered that it is the remains of the Old Russian Church [9]. Despite these rather negative results, a certain interest in the history of the split of the Russian Orthodox Church can be observed in Russian society.

The Old Believer movement arose as a form of peculiar protest in society against innovations in church life and the submission of the church to the state. Historical research data testifies to the large number of participants in this protest movement. In the 18th century this movement comprised about a third of the population of Russia, and in the 19th century around 10 million people. Today Old Believers are estimated to number between 3 to 5 million [Panchenko, 1984: 110; Taranez, 2008: 47–49]. This movement also generated a special economic mentality, according to which a special social behavior emerged, sometimes termed "... a local current of Protestantism."

Much interest in the Old Believer movement is shown in connection with research into the history of Russian business and economic ethics and their influence on the economic development of Russia. Modern researchers of this problem tend to rely on M. Weber's theoretical conclusions about the influence of European Protestantism on the development of capitalism in Europe and the USA. In this sense Old Believers can be presented, on the basis of their ethical principles, as a Russian branch of Protestantism. However, it would be incorrect to limit the influence of the economic ethics of Old Believers only to Russian economic history. In those foreign countries where communities of Old Believers settled, it is also possible to track the influence of their economic way of thinking on the development of the national economies in which they interacted.

The assessment of the importance of activities of Old Believer communities in the economic life of Russia during the period of its initial accumulation of the capital and the industrial revolution includes both hypothetical and theoretical considerations as well as actual in-depth studies. The Russian religious philosopher S. Bulgakov observed that "... any economic era has its spirit, and, in turn, is a generator of this spirit. Each economic era has a special type of "economic" person generated by the prevailing spirit of the economy." This statement can be coordinated with M. Weber's position [Bulgakov, 1991: 345–369; Weber, 1991]. Bulgakov's remark on the special spirit and type of "economic person" is also applicable to the analysis of the economic ethics of an Old Believer community.

Old Believers as a community were guided in their activities by Orthodox asceticism, which condemned ostentatious wealth. They considered wealth "as a manifestation of human arrogance and a sin." In the Old Believer communities

the spirit of ascetic, “rational” traditions of economic life prevailed. The rationalistic paradigm of behavior of these people promoted the selection and formation of stoic personal qualities and responsibility for one’s destiny. Such an alloy of spiritual and behavioral qualities gave an impulse to Old Believers to occupy themselves with business activities in difficult legal, cultural, and geographical environments. The underlying characteristics of such activities were:

- a sense of proportion, counterbalancing haste, emotion, and passion and measuring the importance of various purposes;
- practical calculation, capable of sacrificing short-term gains in order to attain the sublime goal;
- sobriety of character and will power, supporting courage and domination of the mind over rushes of feelings [Roschin, 1994].

P. Melnikov-Pechersky, a prominent researcher and astute observer of Old Believers, noted that they were ... *prudent, economical and careful in business affairs, gradually accumulating millions and, what is much more important, were able to keep them, not dissipate them ... They didn’t go bankrupt owing to ventures; they didn’t let their sons go into government service, so their children and their grandchildren weren’t transformed from merchants earning millions into depraved noblemen, with yesterday’s coat of arms and a noble diploma ...* [Melnikov-Pechersky, 1976: 207].

The similarities in the characteristics of both the moral and business attitudes of Old Believers and European Protestants allows us to draw the conclusion that their ethical principles were similar, i.e. Old Believers in Russia could indeed be considered a peculiar “local current of European Protestantism”. But at the same time there were also differences, mainly explained by the messianic importance Old Believers attached to activity. According to P. Buryshkin, the researcher of the Moscow merchant families, Old Believers as businessmen looked at activity “... not only and not so much as at a source of profit, but as performance of a task, of some kind of mission assigned by God or destiny” [Buryshkin, 1994]. The consequence of this messianic logic, S. Bulgakov noted, was the unification of the person, “*a voice of peace and its manifestation*”. Such a spiritual dimension allows for an assessment of the role and contribution of Old Believers, despite the oppressions visited upon them, as selfless activists in the course of the initial accumulation of capital in the country and, on this basis, as contributors to Russia’s transition to its early stage of industrial development.

The vigorous economic activity of Old Believer communities began to be observed following the adoption by Catherine II of the Decrees of 1762/1763 –

“Concerning the permission of dissenters to leave and lodge in Russia ...”, *“Concerning orders on the settlement of exiled dissenters ...”*. The contents of these Decrees were fixed and in her Speech of September 15, 1763 *“Concerning Old Believers”*, she publicly announced them in front of the general conference of the Synod and the Senate [Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire, 1830: 128–131 and 139–140]. According to these documents Old Believers were allowed to return to their native places, to engage in religious practices, and to be engaged in commerce and industrial activity. As a result of the Decrees a vigorous business activity by Old Believers became concentrated in Moscow, where communities were formed at the Preobrazhenskoye cemetery (bespopovets), and the Rogozhsky gate (popovskye). In these communities, capital was accumulated from grain carrying, transport and trade activities, and also retained in the community owing to the transfer of property from childless Old Believers to the community. Quite often this capital was used for the business activities of members of a community in the form of the ‘soft’, or even gratuitous, loans. These observations are confirmed by known facts concerning support in the amount of 12 million rubles from the Preobrazhenskoye cemetery community to the business activities of Guchkov’s merchant family and to the Moscow manufacturers Nosov and Egorov, while the Rogozhsky gate community rendered significant financial assistance to Yakovlev, a native of the Kaluga peasants and the ancestor of the renowned Ryabushinsky manufacturers and bankers family.

The business activity of Old Believers took place in various regions of Russia. One of the officials of Ekaterina’s administration, V.N. Tatishchev wrote in a letter from Ural, *“... the industrialists are all dissenters, and if you send them away there is nobody to run the plants... and at many manufactories all the food and necessities of life are supplied by dissenters”* [Baryshnikov, 1994].

Many Old Believer families lived in the commercial and industrial villages of the Vladimir, Kostroma, Yaroslavl and Nizhny Novgorod provinces.. We can find interesting data on the business activity of peasant Old Believers in reports of inspection trips to the provinces, such as the following made by a Nizhny Novgorod official, as noted by P. Melnikovy-Pecherski: *“... in Moscow and its vicinities, in the Vladimir and Yaroslavl provinces one finds a number of factories, and all belonging to dissenters”* [Melnikovy-Pecherski, 1976: 13]. Often these Old Believer serfs showed an entrepreneurial grasp and an deftness in trade affairs. Not without reason such peasants were glorified as “capitalist” peasants. The most distinguished activity of such peasants was observed in the Sheremetevsky ancestral lands, scattered throughout various provinces of the country.

The village of Ivanovo, the Shuisky district, and the Vladimir province all represented a classic type of such ancestral lands, in which there was a concentration of peasant/serf Old Believer country families, and their vigorous business activities prospered. The owners of the ancestral lands didn't interfere with this activity carried out by their serf/peasants. In the villages the families of peasants/serfs – Old Believers such as Butrimov, Grachev, Burylinykh, Sokovykh, Garelinykh, Kuvayev, Yamanovsky, Zubkov – were all allocated settlements.

Owing to their trade activities and the accumulation of considerable capital, these families were able to redeem themselves from their bondage. Grachev's family alone paid Count Sheremetev 135 thousand rubles in silver for their release from serfdom, and received all the lands, constructions and camps on which fabric was produced. As a consequence, the majority of the redeemed Old Believer serfs/peasants became big businessmen in textile production. F. Livanov, a researcher into the history of the split of the Russian Orthodox Church, wrote that: "... the owners of many factories, and Ivanov's working villages had long had a reputation as adherents of the split" (i.e. Old Believers) [Livanov, 1872: 115]. K. Shepotov, the historian and regional specialist concerning Ivanov, wrote about the concentration of peasants/Old Believers in the village of Ivanov, and their relationships with the representatives of patrimonial estate officials of the Sheremetevs were also described by P. Ekzembpyarksy, a researcher into the history of serfdom in the Sheremetevsky ancestral lands. The village of Ivanovo was characterized by them as a split (i.e. Old Believer's) nest, "... Ivanov's population at the beginning of the 19th century consisted almost solely of Old Believers of different strands" [Shepotov, 1947; Ekzembpyarksy, 1958: 79].

In this regard it is interesting to note that M.I. Tugan-Baranovsky's research, entitled "The Russian factory in the past and the present", was widely used to gather concrete information on the origin of manufacturing in the village of Ivanovo and the participation of "capitalist peasants" in this process. The rapidly growing quantity of industrial institutions testified to the business acumen of these "capitalist peasants" in the Ivanov village. Thus by the end of the 18th century 49 manufactories in the village produced 426 thousand rubles worth of goods, and at the beginning of the 19th century – about 80 manufactories were in operation and had a general production of goods worth more than 2 million rubles. In 1817 industrial output and production totaled more than 7 million rubles, and trade turnover – about 6 million rubles [Tugan-Baranovsky's, 1997:242]. By 1825 more than 120 industrial institutions functioned in the village [The Vladimir historical and statistical collection, 1869: 16–17]. The village of Ivanovo was integrated in 1871 with the Voznesensky district, creating the city of Ivanovo-Voznesensk,

which was the center of the Russian textile production. At the beginning of the 20th century Old Believers made up about 2/3 of the population in this city [Kabanov, 2010].

Old Believers also had strong roots in Kineshma, Vichuge, Shuya and a collection of villages in the Ivanovo district. The above-cited P. Melnikov-Pechersky, in his work “In the Woods”, describes his meeting with an Old Believer named Konovalov, discussing the introduction of textile-based trade in Vichuga: “... Yes, for example, take Vichuga. Until the French year there wasn’t a weaver in sight, now in three districts all you see is men at work, weaving cloths out of napkins. ... They found someone clever named Konovalov, and he opened a small weaver’s shop, and from his easy hand the cloth went out and business went forward. We should have more Konovalovs – it would be good for the people ...” [Melnikov-Pechersky, 1984:128]. In the conditions of the industrial revolution, which began in the second half of the 19th century with respect to textile production, the children and grandsons of the former “capitalist peasants” entered the arena of economic life and became representatives of new factory businesses and important Russian merchants. They went much further than their fathers in the creation of industrial businesses and banks. According to experts, by the end of the 19th century from 60% to 80% of the industrial and banking capital in what became known as ‘pre-revolutionary Russia’ was created and supervised by second and third generations of Old Believer families.

For a long time the role of Old Believers in the formation and development of economic relations in Russia was suppressed in the Soviet historical and economic literature. Historical allusions to the activity of “capitalist peasants” took place in separate sources, but without indicating that they belonged to this or that religious movement. The Soviet version of national economic history presented businessmen of the past in, so far as possible, an unseemly light. To speak objectively about Old Believers and their value in the social and economic development of Russia was considered, in Soviet society, a taboo topic. In the social literature of the Soviet period ‘Old Believers’ were referred to as a sectarian movement, “runners from revolution” as they were dubbed in socialist ideology.

During the Post-Soviet period a certain degree of progress has taken place in research into the history of the split of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Old Believer movement. In this or that region of the country research has been conducted into the local history concerning Old Believers [Ivanov, 1997; Nagradov, 2003; Vurgaft, Ushakov, 1996]. The question of the influence of Old Believers on the economic development of the country has attracted increasing interest, and publicist and scientific editions investigating this problem have

appeared [Baryshnikov, 1994; Buryshkin, 1994; Kuznetsova, 2005; Lacheva, 1997]. In these publications we can find some as-yet-undeveloped but direct proof of the influence of Old Believers' ethical principles on economic life and entrepreneurial culture. Systematic and fundamental research on this matter is, however, yet to be undertaken. Nonetheless to some extent this problem has, in its regional aspect, been investigated, allowing us to see more accurate reference points of similar activities among certain representatives of this movement and their influence.

Research into the Old Believer movement shows that the Orthodox people in it differed in their spiritual and social activities, which was reflected not only in their production, but also in their charitable and patronage activities. This was a reflection of the spiritual and moral state of mind of these people. It is necessary to keep in mind that production, charitable, and patronage activities were carried out in the provinces to no less extent than in capital cities. Memorials of such activities remain in the museums, schools, hospitals, production units of industrial enterprises, and religious sites built by these entrepreneurs [Podshibyakin, 1997; Taranez, 2008, 2013; Pozdeeva, 1995; Berdova, 2001; Zarubina, 1998].

In days of Soviet, communistic ideology and during the repressions against the church, the Old Believer movement was sharply curtailed, considerably reducing the number of Old Believer parishes. By the time of the disintegration of the USSR, only 112 communities of the Russian Orthodox Old Believer Church existed in Russia, and there were 12 parishes of the Russian Old Orthodox Church and 171 communities of bespopovets. In comparison with the pre-revolutionary times, the number of Old Believer communities decreased by about 17 times. The area of distribution of Old Believer communities has also been considerably narrowed. Today they are present in the Nizhny Novgorod region, Udmurtia, Perm Krai, Altai, and the Kostroma and Moscow areas. Old Believer communities in what used to be traditional places for Old Believers – in the Don, Yaika, Ural and other regions of the country – have either been significantly reduced or have ceased to exist. This reduction in the number of parishioners is visible to the greatest extent in the bezpopovsky strand, and their dwindling numbers have reached a critical level in the fedoseevsky, filippovsky, spasovsky and begunsky strands as well. In many regions of Russia the Old Believers have disappeared altogether, especially in the Caucasus. [Taranez, 2008.2013].

In Ivanovo, where until 1917 Old Believers made up the majority of the population of the city, their number is now small, and they have no functioning Old Believer community or church. [Kabanov, 2010: 20].

Now the center of the spiritual life of Old Believers of the various strands has become settled in Moscow – the Rogozhsky spiritual and administrative center of RPSTs, the Preobrazhenskiy spiritual center of the pomorets and fedoseevets, and the spiritual center Russian Drevlepravoslavna Tserkvi (Church of Old Slavonic). In Moscow more than ten Old Believer temples are in operation. The Russian Orthodox Old Believer Church is the largest Old Believer association and the orthodox spiritual institution second in number after the Russian Orthodox Church. The Belokrinitsky church hierarchy alone totals about five hundred, both registered, and unregistered, Old Believer communities in Russia and abroad. By various calculations it is estimated that now the Russian Orthodox Old Believer Church totals about 1 million adherents. Old Believer orthodoxy continues to remain the alternative orthodox faith in Russia and, in some ways, is in opposition to the state, official church and public institutions. The Old Believers observe the principle of refusing a union with the government (especially with respect to the country's Europeanization), and maintain a strict observance of ceremony. The Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2012 confirmed the rights to religious activity for Old Believer communities and condemned the long-term practice of persecuting Orthodox Old Believers.

THE RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION OF MODERN RUSSIANS

The adherents and distributors of various religious beliefs in Russian society also include intellectuals of various professions and differing educational backgrounds. These 'masters of thought', generally from artistic and creative circles in Russian society, are opposed to atheistic views, but also understand that religion "isn't just religious" but also social and utilitarian, as a means to maintain moral norms and correlated with the cultural historical past.

The attitude of youth toward the revival of religion is quite interesting. This segment of Russian society is more open to new trends. It observes the crumbling of moral support at both the societal and individual levels, and the youth live according to their experience of life, and thus have a tendency and inclination toward religion. It should be noted though that this inclination is directed more to the external manifestations of religious life, its theatricality and the decorative effect of religious ceremonies, than to the deep basic principles of religion. Selective research shows that 1/3 of youthful respondents identify themselves as religious believers, but the content and values of religion for them are still far from clear.

A quite different situation was observed in 2012–2013 among youth in relation to the Russian Orthodox Church in a number of the country's cities, which captured the attention of sociological institutions. The Levada Center group in 2012 found a noticeable decrease in young peoples' trust in the ROC, which was explained by the conflicts surrounding the performances of the musical group Pussy Riot. According to same "Levada Center", 27% of respondents in different regions of the country condemn the ROC for its cruel position, and there was even a church "anti-electorate" which consolidated supporters in protest.

A quite non-standard picture of the self-identification among youth was revealed by Mchedlov M., who carried out a research request by the F. Ebert Fund in the late 1990s. He found a picture of difficult and differentiated structures and attitudes. Among the young people which he interrogated, 32.1% believed in God, 27% fluctuated between belief and disbelief, and 13.9% were indifferent to religion. The breakdown according to religious belonging was indistinct. Those fluctuating between belief and disbelief was comprised of 30% Orthodox, about 30% Muslim, and 14.3% Protestant. He also found that 6.5% of Orthodox, 6.7% of Muslims, 6.3% of Catholics, and 10.0% of Jews declared themselves to be believers in supernatural forces [Mchedlov, 1998: 107–108].

The research demonstrates that the representatives of the intellectual and the youth segments of society are non-uniform in their religious preferences. These segments of society include adherents not only of the Orthodox religion, but also of new religious movements. They can be characterized as consumers of the so-called "supermarket of spiritual goods." These segments of society also exercise their religious beliefs using mysticism (beliefs in communication with spirits, magic, sorcery, predicting the future, and astrology). The nature of similar religious beliefs and mystical preferences can be explained not only by the release of people from the totalitarian state ideology, but also as a choice of values and orientations in new religions which proceeds from the psychological profiles of people – their search for new social meaning and exploration of their emotional feelings. This may explain the behavior of certain Russians, in the majority women living in the large cities and having rather high educational and material qualifications, who recant their social positions. These people leave and go to remote places in Siberia in search of new feelings and vital beliefs, and join the ideas and movements of new gurus.

This pendulum movement in the mass consciousness of modern Russian society from one world outlook (atheism) to its opposite (religious revival) makes in particularly interesting to pay attention to the educational and professional backgrounds of believers. Research shows that religiousness is spreading among

persons with high professional standing and educational levels, although the degree of religiousness among them is still much lower than in the population as a whole.

One may ask whether the religious beliefs of these “new believers” are of great importance to them? What religious content do they put into their concept of “religion”? Sociological research shows that the majority of “new believers” consider the provisions of religion not so much as being about belief in God as in usefulness to society (from among all the respondents who called themselves believers, only 10-20% pray in church, attend sermons, or observe the Post). It’s possible that the motives of these “new believers” include a high degree of conformism, following the new “fashion”, or that their identification with religion proceeds from their sense of belonging to the cultural and religious historical society known as Russia.

The choice of religion of modern Russians is also interesting with respect to their definition of their confessional direction. According to an All-Russian poll carried out by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center in 2010, the with respect to confessional direction the population of the country was distributed as follows: those professing Orthodoxy – 79%; Islam – 5%, Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism and Buddhism – only 1%, while confirmed atheists constituted 8% of the population. This self-identification of Russians as respondents of these polls, however, often doesn’t coincide with total number of believers (the number of adherents of concrete faiths fluctuates around 70%). More often their identification seems to be based on recognition of a national way of life, with cultural accessories which seem natural to the respondents.

Turning our attention to the gender aspect of the population’s self-identification as believers and non-believers, we note that women prevail among believing Russians. In various research projects the number of believing women fluctuates at the level of about 60% of all interrogated respondents. Anyone who observes the attendees present at a church services can see with the naked eye that the female share of practicing believers dominates over the number of male practitioners.

In research conducted in 2010 in the city of Ivanovo, an initiative group of sociologists devoted their consideration to the question of the religious self-identification of Russians. During their analysis of the sociological information obtained from surveys, their thesis about the multi-religious orientation of residents was confirmed. Data concerning the registered activities of confessional associations testified to the existence of the following confessional groups in Ivanovo: Russian Orthodox Church, Old Believer association, followers of Islam, evangelical Christians, Baptists, followers of Judaism, the Ivanovskoye Christian center of “Vera Evangeliskoy (Evangelical Faith)”, Catholics, the Armenian

church, Seventh-Day Adventists, the New apostolic church, the Ivanovskoye Societies of Consciousness of Krishna center, Jehovah's Witnesses, Russian Assembly of God, Blagodat (Thanksgiving) Church, Church of Association, the city public association "Society Rerihov Svet", etc.

In answer to the researchers' question: "How is it possible to explain such a varied set of religious practices in a single urban environment?", the answers were distributed as follows: legal recognition of freedom of worship (16.2% of respondents); inflow of immigrants in an urban environment (26.1% of respondents); release from atheism (15.1% of respondents). According to the data for 1 January 2011, representatives of 112 nations and nationalities live in the city of Ivanovo, with a population of 408,000 people.

Respondents were asked how deeply they believe in their religion and given the following categories to choose from: "deeply believe", "believe", and "rather believe." Taking into account persons 18 years or older, 71.5% identified themselves as some form of believer. This is a rather high level of identification of people in the category of "religious believers" in an urban society. The greatest percent of the respondents identifying themselves as believers were in the age groups of 18–29 years (78,1%). The explanation of this phenomenon lies, on the surface, in the social life of modern Russian society, and reflects a kickback effect from the monopoly of the communistic 'religion' (i.e. atheism) to a revival of traditional historical religions and the functioning in religious movements of various sets of confessional groups.

The removal of any ideological ban on the activity of religious organizations and preachers, and the extended coverage of religious subjects in the various forms of mass media, has created a favorable environment for some – other than communist – socialization of the people. The pendulum in public consciousness has swung back from militant atheism to the religious revival of society. A slightly lower percentage of believers was identified at the over-50 age group (66.7% of respondents), which probably reflects the influence of the education received by this generation of inhabitants of the country and the city in the spirit of the Soviet militant atheism, hence it reflects a certain preservation of the Soviet way of thinking.

In the course of research into the religious preferences of Ivanovo residents it became clear that the dominant position among faiths is occupied by the Russian Orthodox Church. Even though a Muslim community operates in the city, respondents appeared to know little about this faith or its representatives. It also became clear that while respondents were aware that nonconventional religions operate in the city, they couldn't name them.

It should be noted that the self-identification of respondents with one of the “believer” categories was not made casually or under the influence of certain research design factors. During the research the hypothesis concerning the influence of inter-generational communications in a family, i.e. the impact of parents on formation of the religious outlook of children, was examined. In order to clarify this factor, respondents were asked: “What is the degree of religiousness of your parents and you personally?” Only 3.8% of respondents between the age of 18–29 years characterized their parents as deeply believing persons, and 3.7% of respondents of this age considered themselves to belong to such a category of believers. Respondents aged between 30–50 years classified their parents as follows: “deeply believing” (6.1%); “believers” (34.1%); rather believers (32.9%), while the same respondents identified themselves in these categories as follows: 10.3%, 33.3%, 26.4% respectively. Respondents aged 51 years or older couldn’t identify their parents’ degree of their religiousness. Thus the data concerning the estimates of personally interrogated respondents aged between 18–29 years and 30–50 years concerning the level of “religious belief” their parents confirms the hypothesis of the parents’ influence on the degree of religiousness of their children. This hypothesis is also supported in answers given by the respondents with respect to the basis of their formation of their religious views. Among those declaring a belief in God, knowledge of the Bible and Gospel and family teachings were the two most frequent responses.

Clarification of the depth of the respondents’ religious self-identification was also one of the important research problems. For this purpose the following group of questions were put to the respondents: 1) What is the basis of your religious view? 2) Do you know the basic principles of the religion you observe? 3) Do you read religious literature? The answers to the first question – the basis of religious views, i.e. religious sources – were the Bible, the Gospels, the Koran, the family, love for God, belief, hope of rescue, mercy, etc. While the dispersion of answers was large, religious sources, the family, and belief in God were the dominating responses. As to the basic principles, the respondents noted things such as: Christ’s precepts, belief in a single God, the principles stated in the Koran (and others). It seems that not much time is devoted to reading religious literature. The answers to this question revealed a wide dispersion of habits: read constantly – 4.3%; read sometimes – 33.4%, seldom read – 34.6% of respondents. It should be noted that more female respondents than male respondents expressed an interest in reading religious literature. The answers of the respondents can serve as evidence confirming the thesis of an interest in this or that religion, but

at the same time a too automatic self-identification of people with religion (other data of other research groups also supports this hypothesis).

The religious self-identification of respondents/citizens is closely connected with the degree of intensity of their participation in religious practices. Respondents were asked to answer the following questions: 1) Are you a permanent member of a religious community? 2) How often do you visit the center (site) of your religious community? 3) Do you support a religious community? 4) In what actions of a religious community have you taken part? As has already been mentioned, the level of religiousness in Ivanovo is rather high for an urban environment. However, having declared themselves as believers, only every fifth respondent (21.0%) identified themselves as a permanent member of a religious community, while about 50% of respondents answered that they were not. With respect to the frequency of visits to a religious center/site, the answers were distributed as follows: no respondent answered 'every day'; 2.6% visit several times a week; 5.1% visit at least once a week; 2.1% visit several times a month; 8.5% visit several times a year; and 2.1% of respondents visit less than several times a year. It is interesting to note in this regard that according to the 2010 All-Russian poll of the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center, 75% of Russian Orthodox declared that they regularly visit church, while only 4% take the sacrament. [Bases of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2001: 3]. As concerns the respondent-residents of Ivanovo we can note that there is a high degree of probability that the 21% of the respondents identifying themselves as permanent members of a religious community are those who declared themselves as "true believers", while the other respondents who declared themselves as "believers" may not be characterized as church-going people, but rather as persons who are not indifferent to belief in God and religious culture.

The vital issue of the real self-identification of people with a particular religious faith is reflected in the question of rendering financial support to a religious community. There are a number of examples of representatives of business, or simply wealthy Russians, rendering financial support for the restoration of religious sites in the cities and on the periphery, as well as in rural areas. As the research demonstrated, respondents who have such opportunities do render such help. Hence help is rendered regularly by about 60% of those respondents who defined themselves as "deeply believing"; while about 62.5% of those who defined themselves as "believers" also provide some assistance, and also about 60% of those who identified themselves as "rather believers" also offered assistance. This can be explained by various reasons, but in large measure it can be a reflection of the low standard of living of parishioners.

Participation in the life of a religious community is an important and at the same time necessary sign of belonging to this or that religious faith. Through communication and participation in religious ceremonies of a parish community, solidarity between the brothers-and-sisters-in-faith is formed, pulling them together. In order to clarify the extent of participation in the life of a religious community respondents were asked the question: "In what community actions have you taken part?" Many orthodox respondents answered traditionally: in Sunday services, Easter services, annual religious processions in honor of the icon of the Kazan Mother of God, Christmas ceremonies, sermons, help in the restoration of temples (repair, restoration, cleaning, etc.). Muslim respondents cited services in mosques, participation in the religious holiday Eid al-Fitr, Kurban Bairam (Muslim Easter), observance of the post Ramadan, and also in competitions among readers of the Koran on their knowledge of texts.

The religious self-identification of modern Russians is closely connected with the values people represent and realize in everyday life. What these value representations are is defined by the extent to which they (the values) influence the everyday behaviors and lifestyles of the respondents. Hence the respondents were asked to choose the three most important values from a list of fourteen values. There was a wide distribution among the choice of lifestyle and behavioral values selected. From among the range of value parameters concerning lifestyle and behaviors the three most important were: moral (16.4%), spiritual (15.6%), and family (10.0%). Other values ranged as follows: desire to help other people (9.1%), tolerance with respect to other cultures (8.0%), memory of ancestors and visits to their gravesites (7.4%), geniality and empathy (6.8%), respect for the elderly (6.7%), justice (5.9%), vital optimism and patriotism (3.8%), related feelings (2.4%), and diligence (2.1%).

Thus, it is possible to note that in terms of the lifestyles and behaviors of modern citizens, the religious and secular norms that enrich the lives of people overlap and intertwine. Hence the thesis about the dominant influence of religion on peoples' behavior and lifestyles seems hardly well-founded. Despite that, however, the respondents gave religious norms considerable preference and considered them as defining (38.0%), even though civil norms and rules after all prevail in peoples' lives.

CONCLUSIONS

This review of religious faiths and movements in a historical retrospective testifies to the fact that today Russian society, considered in its religious aspect, is non-monolithic. Many faiths have varying prospects for development, and people have the freedom and possibility of transition from one religion to another. In terms of the trends in religious mobility, according to researchers an interest in Catholicism is observed, while interest in Protestantism, which according to M. Weber better defines the “spirit of capitalism”, is much more modest. Interest is also observed among youth in Buddhism and Hinduism. Possibly in the future Russia will become a religiously pluralistic society, in which an atheistic world outlook and an atheistic minority of the population will also remain part of society. Russian society will be gradually exempted from both atheistic and religious dogmatism, and develop in line with world trends and the world outlook of tolerance and eclecticism.

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¹ For each item, the Russian title is rendered into English.

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Vyatcheslav P. Stolbov

**PROCESY PRZEMIAN WYZNANIOWYCH W ROSJI: OD ATEIZMU
DO RELIGIJNEGO PLURALIZMU**

Streszczenie

Współczesne społeczeństwo rosyjskie przechodzi przemiany świadomości społecznej od paradygmatu ideologii komunistycznej do ideologii głęboko zakorzenionej w tradycyjnych narodowych instytucjach sfery duchowej. Heterogeniczne pod względem religijnym państwo wprowadza demokratyczne zmiany w wymiarze światopoglądowym. Podstawą prawną tego procesu są postanowienia Konstytucji Federacji Rosyjskiej, prawo „Swobodnego zrzeszania się i stowarzyszeń religijnych”, jak również regulacje przyjęte przez podstawowe jednostki administracji terytorialnej Federacji Rosyjskiej. Aktualnie w społeczeństwie rosyjskim istnieje ponad sześćdziesiąt wyznań religijnych, których zadania i funkcje skoncentrowane są na potrzebach duchowej edukacji, eliminacji napięć pomiędzy różnymi kulturami i systemami wartości i kształtowaniu tolerancyjnego społeczeństwa. Obserwujemy generalny trend w kierunku odnowy religii z jej organizacjami i stowarzyszeniami oraz stopniowe odchodzenie od dogmatyzmu i formowanie demokratycznych zasad korespondujących z funkcjonowaniem społeczeństwa obywatelskiego.

Słowa kluczowe: Rosja, religijność, wyznania religijne, społeczna transformacja