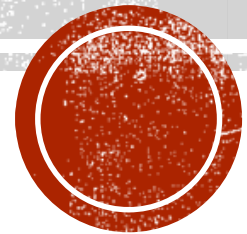


TODAY'S RUSSIA: RELIGION, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY

Roman Lunkin

Member of the Russian team of Keston Institute, senior fellow in the Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences.



PROJECT "ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN RUSSIA TODAY" AS A MAIN SOURCE AND INSPIRATION



Kostroma region, Sharya town with Orthodox priests



Kostroma region, Sergei Filatov with Orthodox priests



Gorodets town, Nizhegorodskaya oblast with Xenia Dennen and Sergei Filatov



Krasnoyarsk (Siberia), with local scholars in the University



KESTON SURVEYS: WORK IN PROGRESS



Kalmikia (Buddhist temple), South of Russia

- **1995** – the creating of idea by Xenia Dennen, Sergei Filatov and Michael Bourdeaux and first trial trips to Russian regions.
- **1998** - the launch of the All-Russian surveys and establishing of Russian team of social scientists that is working and traveling on a regular basis.
- **2000** – special edition of journal Religion, State and Society №1 (28), 2000 with articles of members of the Russian team based on the first two years of the field research.
- **2002** – publishing of the collection of articles based on a first result of surveys – Religion and Society. Essays on contemporary religious life in Russia.
- **2003-2006** – publishing of Contemporary religious life in Russia Today. Systematic description of religious movements and organizations (4 vol.)





- **2005** – the launch of Russian Review, Keston online journal that publishes article in Russian based on Keston surveys (<http://www.keston.org.uk/russianreview.php>).
- **2005-2009** - publishing of the Atlas of religious life in Russia today with characteristics of regions (3 vol.)
- **2006** – The first issue of Keston Newsletter that also giving some of its pages to the analytical articles and notes of Xenia Dennen and other members of the Keston team with their live impressions from the sociological trips.
- **2007** – Keston collection arrived in Waco, TX, to Baylor University.
- **2011** - publishing of the collection of articles based on surveys held in 2002-2009 – Religion and Russian diversity.
- **2012** - The Keston Center became part of the Baylor Libraries.
- **2014** – publishing of the new edition of regional surveys in Religious Life in Russia Today (I vol. in 2014, 2 vol. in 2016, estimated to be 7 vol.)
- **On 2017:** 11 books published, about 250 trips held (some regions twice or even three times), about 2000 interviews was taken.



KESTON AS A LIVE VOICE OF BELIEVERS



Kremlin in Novgorod the Great (Velikiy)

- Keston's statement from 1960s was an appeal from the believers, mainly Christians from Soviet and then post-Soviet states: "Be our voice".
- Xenia Dennen, president of Keston Institute:
- «When I brought back to England from Moscow in 1995 some of Sergei's first reports which focused on Russian Orthodox dioceses, Michael Bourdeaux at once recognized their value, aware at the same time that when doors to information open in Russia, they can quite quickly close again. Keston's Council of Management decided to support the project and since then we have been financing it at a fraction of what such a project would cost in the West.
- *Now that Putin's authoritarian regime is clearly closing doors, we know that we took an opportunity which may not now reappear for generations».*
- **(Keston's Encyclopaedia Nears Completion, Keston Newsletter, №1, 2006).**



KESTON APPROACH

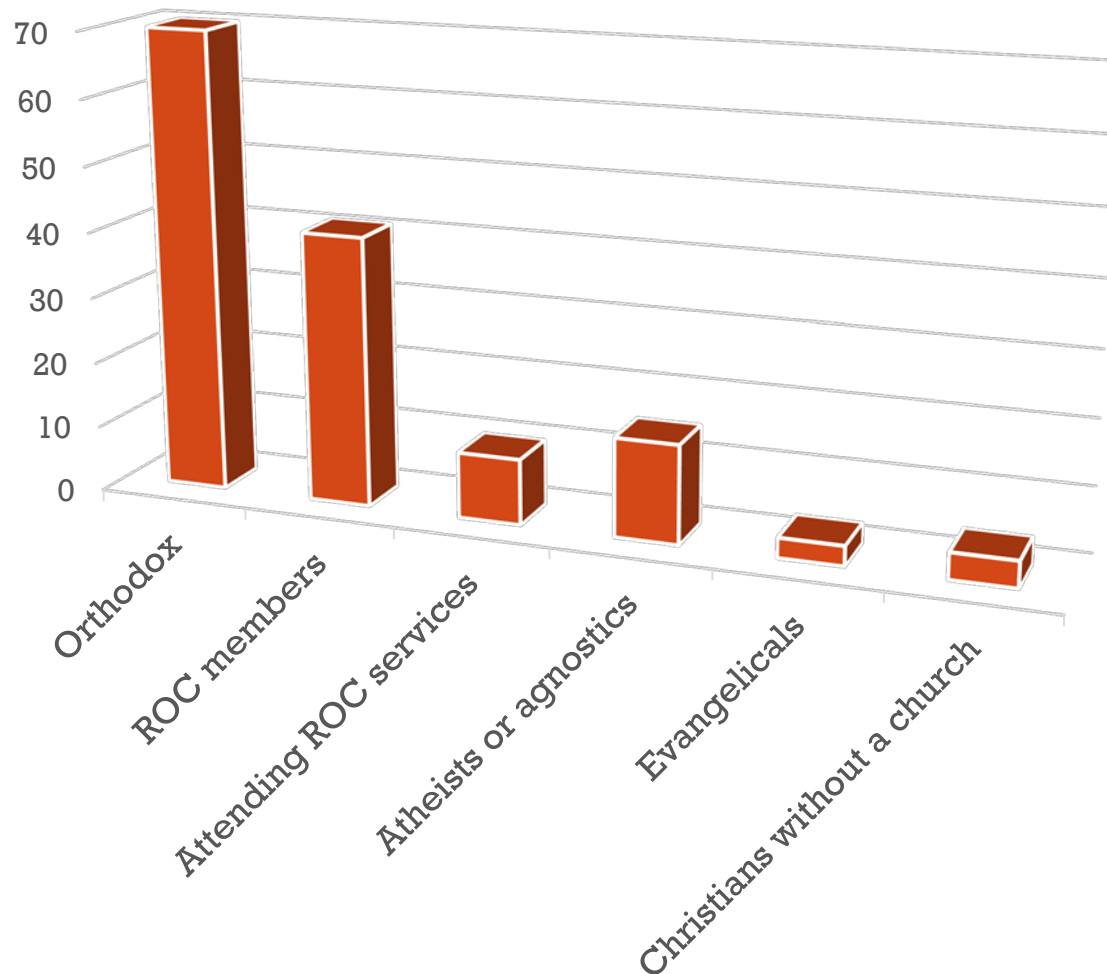


Tea party and interview with Lutheran pastor in Republic of Komi (Northern Russia)

- **Social anthropological approach with methods of field research based on in-depth sociological interviews**
- **To be up to date. The principle of ongoing monitoring of the role of the religious movements and their leaders in current life** based on two sources – the interviews from the trips and the analyzing of mass-media resources.
- **The results of the research have to be embodied in different types of texts** that describing the phenomenons of Russian religious life: Encyclopedia articles on religious life in the concrete region (spravka), brief analytics on phenomenons or bright facts from religious life (for Russian review for ex.), academic articles for journals, seminars.
- **The well-knit and faithful team required.** Every day discussions to achieve the best results in investigation of religious conflicts and finding necessary people, acting as “detectives”.
- The combination of those methods and their implementation in a field work and cabinet research creates the religious life survey that could work as perpetuum mobile.



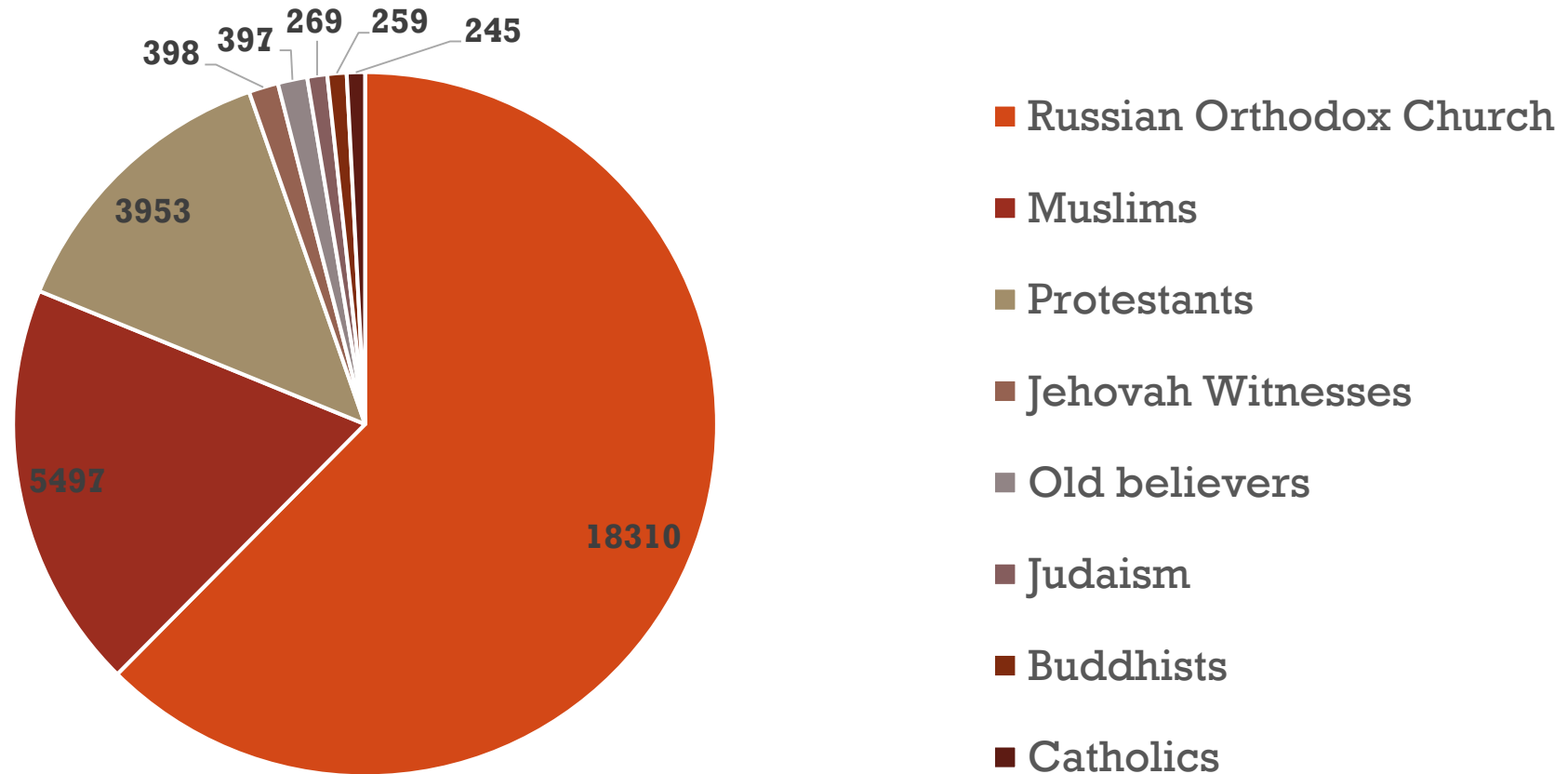
RUSSIAN RELIGION: SOCIOLOGICAL POLLS



- Up to 70% of Russian population confess Orthodoxy (about 80 million people)
- But 41% recognized themselves as the members of the Russian Orthodox Church
- 5-15% attending Orthodox church services on a regular basis (at least on great holidays, about 10 million)
- 15 % could be identified as muslims (about 20 million in general, 10% of practical believers)
- 2,5 % of evangelicals (3 million)
- 1% - Judaists, Buddhists and Hindu
- 0,5% Catholics
- 10-15% in various polls call themselves as atheist or agnostics
- 4% Christians without denomination
- Less than 1% of new religious movements
- Source: Levada-Center, VCIOM, FOM, Service "Sreda".



RUSSIAN RELIGION: REGISTERED ORGANIZATIONS



The information of Ministry of Justice of Russian Federation on 02/15/2017.



MAIN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS



President's Council meeting

- Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
- Russian Orthodox Old Believers Church
- Spiritual administration of Muslims of Russian Federation (Moscow)
- Central Spiritual administration of Muslims of Russia (Ufa, Bashkortostan)
- Russian united union of Christians of evangelical faith (Pentecostals)
- Russian Union of evangelical Christians-Baptists
- Russian division of Adventists of the Seventh day
- Archdiocese of the Mother of God of Roman Catholic Church in Russia
- Federation of the Jewish communities in Russia
- Traditional Buddhist Sangha in Russia (Buryatia, Buddhist in Kalmykia and Tuva have their own associations, also there are all-Russian association of new Buddhist communities of Karma Kagiyu tradition)



CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN RUSSIA (STRUCTURES)



Interreligious council meeting

■ President's Administration

- Department for domestic policy, the branch on religious and national associations
- Council for interacting with religious associations
- Government
- Commission for interacting with religious associations

■ Parliament

- The committee on religious associations, non-government organizations and development of the civil society
- The expert council of the committee
- The group of MP's on defending of traditional Christian values



CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN RUSSIA (STRUCTURES)

- **Moscow Patriarchate**
- Interreligious Council of Russia (only four “traditional religions”)
- Christian interconfessional consulting committee for Baltic states and CIS (for “foreign confessions”)
- **NGOs**
- Russian Association of Religious freedom (former branch of International Association of Religious freedom, now under control of President’s Administration and activists from Moscow Patriarchate)
- **Regional structures**
- Councils for interacting with religious, national associations and NGOs in governor’s offices
- The advisers on interacting with religious associations in administrations
- (there is no obligatory institutes that are responsible for religious policy)



Plenum session of the Interconfessional Council



RELIGION AS A POLITICAL INTEREST

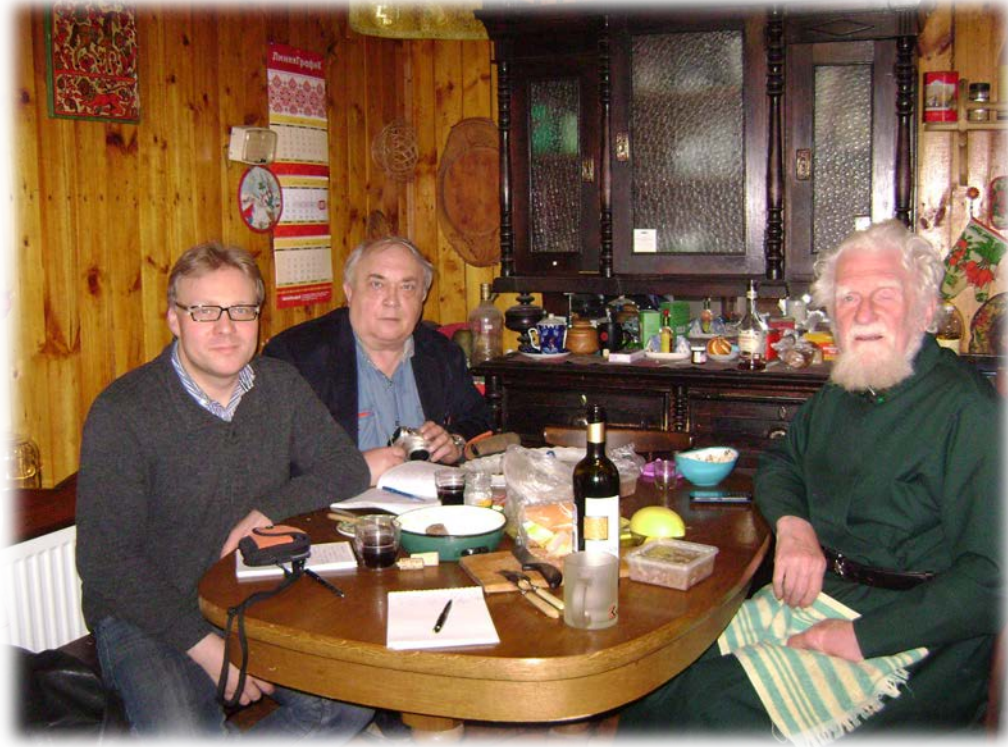


Novosibirsk. In Siberian Lutheran Church with clergy and activists

- There are several reasons that push forward Christian churches in Russia in civil life.
- **-Religious institutions began to play the key role in the society** where NGOs are under control of authorities or frightened and weak.
- **-The big role of Orthodoxy in Church-State relations** forces other Christian confessions and Islam to be permanently active to avoid the discrimination.
- **-In the lack of public political activity church initiatives and movements inside churches help in needs, express social hopes and political interests** (liberal, democratic or conservative, loyalty or opposition to the state policy). The people are not ready to pray but they are ready to discuss religion, Orthodox Church demanding democracy not in the state but in the Church, namely politics through religion.
- **-The raise of religious fundamentalism** and the aspiration to use the religious motivation, the increasing number of people committed to religious principles and religious motivation.



SURVEY INSIGHTS ON RUSSIA AND RELIGION



Kostroma region, with famous orthodox dissent priest Fr Georgi Edelshtein

- **1. The religious life could provide the examples of both – the most democratic and the most authoritarian ways of building of community activities.**
- **2. Church-State relations build up on a political contradiction of secularity and idea of national monopoly for one religion – Orthodox Christianity.**
- **3. Russian identity after the fall of the Soviet Union naturally became inconsistent.** The big role of religion and raising demands of the Orthodox Church go together with ignorance of the religious practices and fears about the danger that could proceed from religion as such.
- It is a question – whether or not democratic Christianity will bear a part in a everlasting endeavor of Russia for democracy on a new turns of a history.



POLITICAL IMPACT OF RELIGION: CONTROVERSIAL STORY



Penza (Volga region). The Pentecostal Church “Alive Faith” sending the humanitarian aid to the Eastern Ukraine

- **Consensus around Putin’s statehood**
- Russian Orthodox Church distanced from democratic movement and supports Putin after scandal with pop-dance in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow with the song: “Mother of God, kick away Putin!” in February 2012. Every next scandal force ROC to rely on authorities.
- Evangelical churches and their leadership became more patriotic in supporting of Russian statehood after Ukrainian maidan and the threats of political repressions because of their closed ties with Ukrainian Protestantism and antisectarian campaigns.

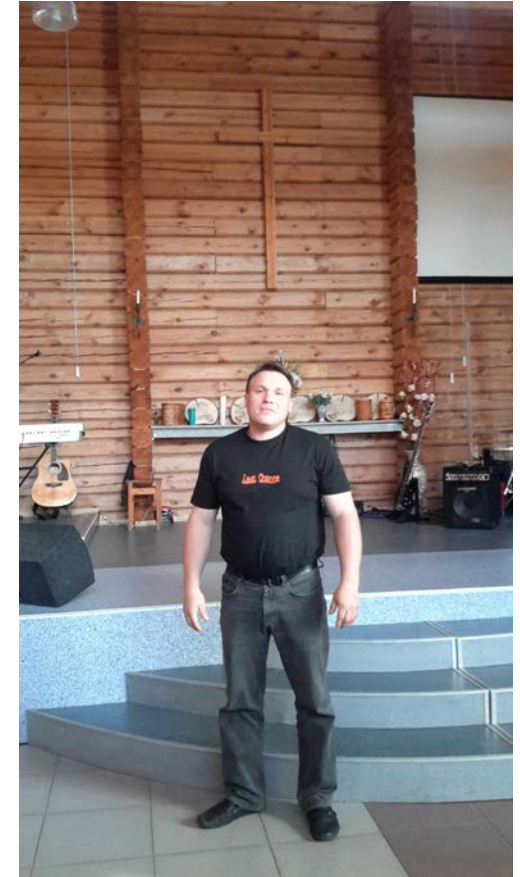


THE BREAKDOWN OF THE AUTHORITARIAN REGIME FROM THE INSIDE



In the Siberian diocese of the Russian Catholic Church with bishop Joseph Vert

- Orthodox social and missionary projects on the parish level are based on young generation of lay activists as well as priests. Orthodox “hipsters” come from democratic rules in their work and neglected political loyalty of the bishops.
- Democratic uprising in the evangelical communities: Pentecostals, Baptists, Adventists and many others promoting the ideal of the active citizen that have to create the society of freedom and respect around himself. Every protestant church has social service, the network of parishes and informal movements express the need for civil activity in Russia.



The pastor of national evangelical church of Komi people in Syktyvkar



RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION IN RUSSIA

- **The limiting of the missionary activity by the Anti-evangelism Law of summer 2016** with amendments to the Law on Religion of 1997 (the Anti-extremism Law since 2002 was used mainly against muslims and since 2009 against Jehovah Witnesses and still in force):
 - - fines for illegal mission outside the church buildings without special permission from the registered church for persons (50.000 roubles - \$ 800) and for legal entities (1 million roubles – \$ 16.000).
 - - religious groups forced by authorities to be registered because only in that case they could provide special permission from the registered church (the same practice already exists in Central Asia).
 - Domestic church groups are at stake because they invite non-believers and under that Law is prohibited to carry the missionary activity in private apartment.
- **Social hostility based on the anti-sectarian and xenophobic campaigns.**
- **Expulsion of non-Orthodox churches from the public space – media and social institutions.**
- **The politically motivated religious persecutions in Crimea seized by Russia that is in fact controlled by the Russian authorities since February 2014.**



THE DECLARATIONS OF THE STATE AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP REFLECT THE CONTRADICTION OF PRESENT RUSSIAN IDENTITY AND COULD BE TREATED IN SEVERAL OPPOSITE WAYS.



Patriarch Kirill is against democracy but have to provide democratic policy to the national churches outside Russia



President Putin formally builds democracy but in reality uses totalitarian methods. He destroyed the “Russian world” of Patriarch Kirill separated from it the Ukraine



DISCUSSIONS ON THE IMAGE AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH (POSITIVE)



Russian society is interested in discussions on the role of the Church in society rethinking the monolith lifeless image of Orthodoxy in negative or positive directions.



DISCUSSIONS ON THE IMAGE AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH (POSITIVE)



Patriarch Kirill visiting people during the floods in the South of Russia. The orthodox volunteers service "Miloserdie" (Mercy) help to patronize aged.



DISCUSSIONS ON THE IMAGE AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH (NEGATIVE)



At first time from the Soviet period appeared cartoons and they are not with atheistic context. Cartoons ridicule the amount of the practical believers in the Church (after patriarch Kirill visited Arctica) and the justifying of the luxuries life of the clergy (Fr Vsevolod Chaplin answers to the old woman that the God only could give her some bread).



DISCUSSIONS ON THE IMAGE AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH (NEGATIVE)



- Слушай, а что это у тебя за часы,
ничего такие, почему брал?

- Да ты что, Вов, я часов вообще не ношу, это фотоколлаж.

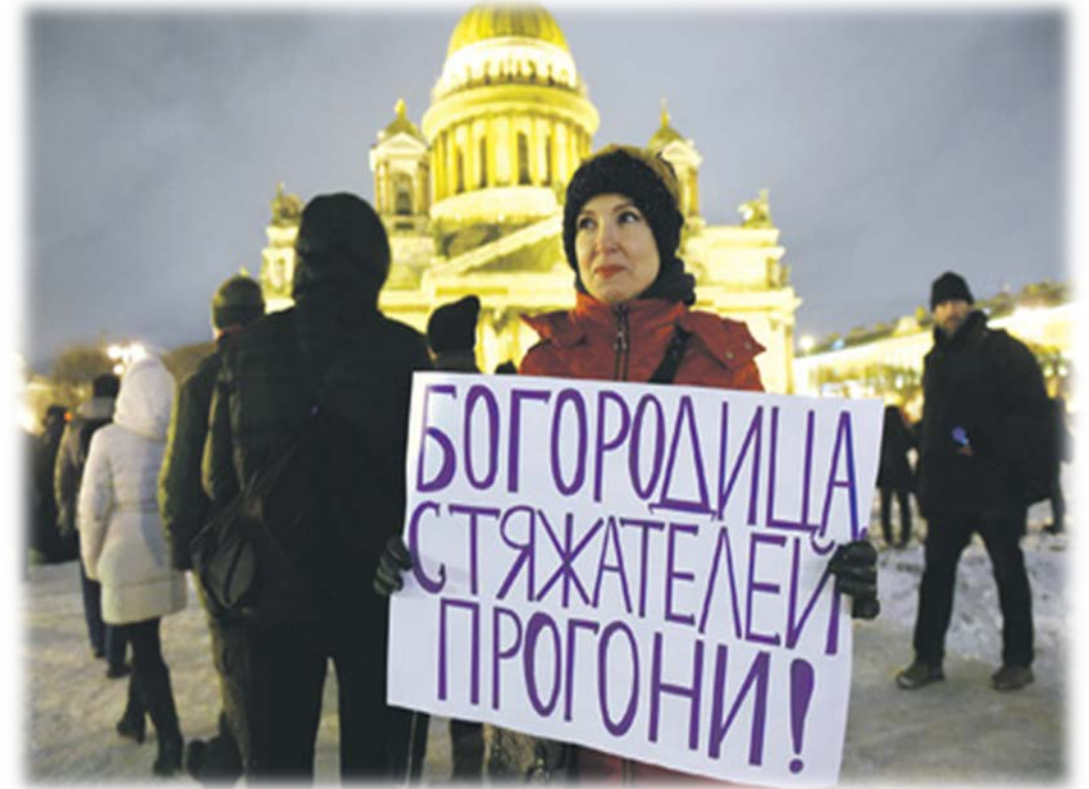
Mockery on the story with expensive watches that were
photoshopped on a photo with patriarch on the web-site of
Moscow Patriarchate.



The laughing on the official image of Patriarch
Kirill using soviet style posters and image of Dr
Evil from the popular movie.



RUSSIA IS ON THE CROSSROADS WHERE RELIGION COULD PUSH DEMOCRACY FORWARD OR STEP BACK.



February 2017 manifestations before the Isaakiy Cathedral in St Petersburg. Different images of Russia. One woman against “American spies” and for returning of the building to the Church and another supporting museum. On the right photo there is a slogan against Patriarchate: “Mother of God ,take away monemakers”. But all that protesters call themselves Orthodox believers.



THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH ON SOCIETY REDUCING

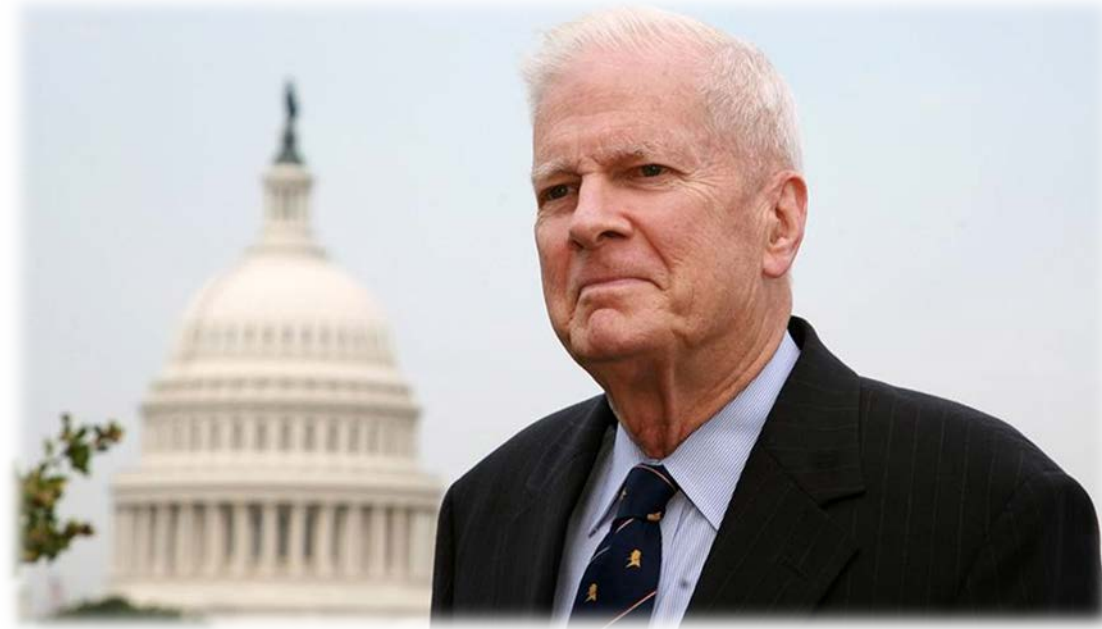


- “The good sense of Russians tells them that to follow the church’s calls to service and to stop defending their rights and freedoms will neither help save their souls nor contribute to the wellbeing of their fellows.
- The anti -democratic activity of the church leadership does of course help to block the country’s democratization and helps spread cynicism, apathy and all kinds of fears and phobias. But this opposition is insignificant as the ROC does not constitute an authoritative political force.
- How destructive to the Orthodox Church itself is its position? This is more difficult to answer. All depends on how inflexibly the church leadership holds onto its ‘romantic’ political doctrine. At all events an anti-clerical reaction is unavoidable”.
- **Sergei Filatov, head of the project “Encyclopedia of religious life in Russia today”**



PASTORAL ORTHODOXY AND EVANGELICAL COMMUNALITY GROWING

- “But is there any real commonality, togetherness, or unifying force within the Russia of today? Some would say that the face of Russia is now surreal and its expression cynical. Cynicism, however, is morality in search of a home. The most famous cynic, Diogenes, was in search of an honest man; and the number of such men – and women – is growing rapidly in Russia”.
- James H. Billington.
“Russia in Search of Itself”



RUSSIAN REVIVAL GROUNDED IN THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURES, ETHNICS AND RELIGIONS EMBRACED WITH EUROPEAN CULTURE.



- **Rodney Stark. “The Triumph of Faith”**
- “In many places around the globe, the competition among Muslims, evangelicals, Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses and hundreds of smaller religious groups has resulted in an atmosphere of revival”.



RUSSIAN REVIVAL — IS IT POSSIBLE?

- **After the tumultuous years of post-soviet openness and then reaction - we could see the first traces of the democratic progress that are invisible in the clouds surrounding Kremlin.**
- Orthodox social and missionary projects on the parish level are based on young generation of lay activists as well as priests. Orthodox “hipsters” come from democratic rules in their work and neglected political loyalty of the bishops.
- Democratic uprising in the evangelical communities: Pentecostals, Baptists, Adventists and many others promoting the ideal of the active citizen that have to create the society of freedom and respect around himself. Every protestant church has social service, the network of parishes and informal movements express the need for civil activity in Russia.
- The features that help to withstand to totalitarian tendencies among authorities:
 - –Christian based European culture of Russia,
 - -western influence on Moscow Patriarchate (especially after the Havana meeting with Pope in 13 February 2016 and the involvement in a campaign for Christian rights in a world),
 - - democratic values rooted in the Christian worldview of the Russian Protestantism.
- **Russia is on the crossroads where religion could push democracy forward or step back.**





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