

A Research on the Development of the Russian Orthodox Church in the First Decade after the Enthronement of Patriarch Kirill-Inheritance, Transformation and Challenge

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Abstract: In 1988, when the thousand-year anniversary of the baptism of Rus was commemorated, the prelude to the revival of the Russian Orthodox Church slowly unfolded. After more than 30 years of development, the Orthodox Church has now become an important spiritual and cultural force in the Russian society. In the past 30 years, the Russian Orthodox Church has had three Patriarchs: Pimen, Alexy II and Kirill. This article intends to study the work carried out by the Russian Orthodox Church since Patriarch Kirill's enthronement in 2009, to clarify the inheritance of the work of the Russian Orthodox Church in the internal structure of the Church, its interaction with secular society, and dialogue with other Christian denominations, to interpret the transformation of the Russian Orthodox Church from "quantity" growth to "quality" growth, and to analyze the tensions of "desecularization" and "secularization" faced by the Russian Orthodox Church, threats to the unity of the Church, and challenges arising from the rapid growth of the Church.

Key Words: Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, Transformation of Russian Orthodox Church

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The Russian Orthodox Church went through extreme turbulence in the 20th century; after the October Revolution of 1917, the Orthodox Church lost its status as a state religion; during the Soviet period, the Orthodox Church struggled; in 1985, after Gorbachev (М. С. Горбачёв) came to power, while pursuing economic and political reforms, a policy of religious tolerance and openness came to be implemented, which laid the foundation for the revival of the Orthodox Church. In 1988, on the occasion of the thousand-year anniversary of the baptism of Rus, the Russian Orthodox Church held a series of celebrations, and got the government's approval and support, and so the revival of the Orthodox Church was initiated. Thirty years on, the Orthodox Church has now become an important spiritual and cultural force in Russian society. This paper intends to study the work carried out by the Russian Orthodox Church since the enthronement of Patriarch Kirill (Кирилл, 1946-) on February 1, 2009, to analyze the continuation of the work, which the Russian Orthodox Church has done in the past ten years, the trend of transformation on the basis of the continuation, and problems and challenges faced in the process of its development and transformation.

Before the discussion of these issues, the author intends set the stage for the development of the

Russian Orthodox Church in the past 30 years. For this problem, scholars have defined it from different angles, such as the religious sociologist represented by Cinelina (Ю. Ю. Синелина, 1972—2013), from the perspective of Russian national religious belief, divides the development of the Russian Orthodoxy in 1989—2012 into four phases.^{〔1〕} This article focuses on the development of the Orthodox Church, and divides the development process of the Russian Orthodox Church into three stages:

The first stage, the Orthodox Church took hold in Russia (1988—1997). After the thousandth anniversary commemoration of the baptism of Rus, the Orthodox Church developed rapidly: the number of believers increased dramatically, churches were repaired and built, and the priesthood was restored. For the Orthodox Church, what is more significant is that its legal rights have been legally confirmed. In 1993, the Russian Federation adopted the current Constitution. The Constitution stipulates that the Russian Federation is a secular state, no state or obligatory religion may be established, and religious associations shall be equal before the law.^{〔2〕} “Everyone shall be guaranteed the freedom of conscience, the freedom of religion, including the right to profess individually or together with others any religion or to profess no religion at all, to freely choose, possess and disseminate religious and other views and act according to them.”^{〔3〕} In 1997, the Russian Federation’s religious law *On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations* was promulgated. This law reaffirmed the basic principles of the freedom of belief in the 1990 law *On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations* issued by the Soviet Union and the law *On Freedom of Belief* of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic signed by Yeltsin (Б. Н. Ельцин, 1931—2007) in 1990, while further affirming the special role of the Orthodox Church in history, the formation and development of Russian spiritual culture, and left a certain space for the further development of religion and the interaction of religion with the secular domain. The Constitution of the Russian Federation and the religious law *On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations* provide a practical guarantee for the Orthodox Church’s foothold and further development in Russian society.

The second stage, the period of comprehensive development (the Bishop’s Council in November-December of 1997 to the end of 2008). In these ten years, the direction and policies of the Russian Orthodox Church in various fields were laid out, such as the relationship between the Church and the state, education in theological schools, religious education in secular schools, missionary work, social service, mass media and publication, and relationships with other Christian denominations and other religions.

The third stage, the period of reform and transformation (February of 2009 to the end of January of 2019). This is the first decade in which Kirill led the work of the Russian Orthodox Church. After

〔1〕 See: Синелина Ю. Ю. Религиозность в современной России // Отечественные записки. 2013. №. 1. (Sinelina Y. Y., “Religiosity in Modern Russia”, *Domestic Notes*, 2013, No. 1.) In the first phase (from 1989 to the mid-1990s), the number of believers increased dramatically. In the second phase (from the mid-1990s to 2004), the growth of believers slowed. In the third stage, 2004—2005, the number of religious believers basically stopped growing. In the fourth stage (2006 to 2012), the number of religious believers further increased.

〔2〕 *The Constitution of the Russian Federation*. Chapter 1, article 14.

〔3〕 *The Constitution of the Russian Federation*. Chapter 2, article 28.

Kirill became Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, he continued the policy of Patriarch Alexy II (Алексий II, 1929—2008; Patriarch from June 10, 1990 to December 5, 2008), strove to reform the Russian Orthodox Church, gradually shifted the development of the Orthodox Church from “quantity” growth to “quality” growth, and sought the voice of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Orthodox world. This article is devoted to the development and changes of the Russian Orthodox Church during this period.

I Development of the Inheritance

During the tenure of Patriarch Alexy II, he basically set the direction and tone of the internal development of the Russian Orthodox Church, interaction with secular society, and relationships with other Christian denominations and other religions. After the enthronement of Patriarch Kirill, he continued the former guidelines and policies in many aspects, but at the same time he also made many new achievements.

1.1 Inheritance and development within the Orthodox Church

First, the number of dioceses, parishes, monasteries and clerics has steadily increased. Compared with the rapid development of the Church from 1988 to 2008, the first decade of Kirill's tenure was a period of the steady growth of the Church. The increase of churches has benefited to some extent from the introduction of new laws. In December 2010, the law *About Transferring the Property with the Religious Appointment which is State-owned or Municipal Property to Religious Organizations* came into effect, which promoted the return of the property with the religious appointment to the Orthodox Church. The dramatic increase of dioceses is closely related to the institutional adjustment of the Church proposed by Kirill. In this regard, a more detailed discussion will be given in the second part of the article “Transformation in the Development”. The following table is a set of basic data from the Russian Orthodox Church, which allows a more visual observation of its development over the past 30 years.

Table 1 Basic data of Russian Orthodox Church^[4]

Year	archdiocese	diocese	parish	monastery	bishop	priest	deacon
1988		67/76 ^[5]	6800	21/22 ^[6]	74	6674	723
1992				143			
1994		114	15985	281	136	12841	1402
1997		124	18000	390	146		
2000		130	19417	545	153		
2004			26590	652	173		
2008		157	29263	804	203	27216	3454
2011		164	30675	805	217	29324	3850
2013	33	247	33489 ^[7]		290	30430	3765
2016	57	293	34764		354	35171	4816
2017	60	303	36878	944	377	34774	4640
2018		304			381		

[4] Sources of data: Reports made by the Russian Orthodox Patriarchs at previous Bishops' Councils and the report of Patriarch Kirill at the Moscow Diocesan Council in 2008.

1) Алексий II (Ридигер) Церковь и духовное возрождение России. Т. 1. Слова, речи, послания, обращения, 1990—1998. М., 1999. [Alexy II (Ridiger) *The Church and the Spiritual Revival of Russia*. Vol. 1. Words, Speeches, Missives, appeals, 1990—1998. М., 1999.]

2) Доклад Святейшего Патриарха Алексия II на Архиерейском Соборе 1997 года. [Report of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II at the Bishops' Council in 1997.] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/421718.html>.

3) Доклад Святейшего Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Алексия II на Архиерейском Соборе 2000 года. [Report of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Rus 'at the Bishops' Council in 2000.] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/421863.html>.

4) Доклад Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Алексия II на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви 3 октября 2004 года. [Report of Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Rus 'at the Bishops' Council on Oct. 3, 2004.] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/420130.html>.

5) Доклад Местоблюстителя Патриаршего Престола митрополита Смоленского и Калининградского Кирилла на Поместном Соборе Русской Православной Церкви (Москва, 27-29 января 2009 года). [Report of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad at the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow, January 27-29, 2009)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/541724.html>

6) Доклад Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Кирилла на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви (2 февраля 2011 года). [Report of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus 'at the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (February 2, 2011)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1402889.html>

7) Доклад Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви (2 февраля 2013 года). [Report of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus 'at the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (February 2, 2013)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/2770923.html>

8) Доклад Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви (2 февраля 2016 года). [Report of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus 'at the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (February 2, 2016)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4366063.html>

9) Доклад Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви (29 ноября-2 декабря 2017 года). [Report of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus 'at the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (November 29-December 2, 2017)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5072994.html>

10) Доклад Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на Епархиальном собрании г. Москвы (21 декабря 2018 года). [Report of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill at the Diocesan Meeting of Moscow (December 21, 2018)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5327228.html>.

[5] The number is 67 at the Bishops' Council in 1994, the number is 76 at the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2009.

[6] The number is 21 at the Bishops' Council in 2000, the number is 22 at the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2009.

[7] The statistical methods of this year and thereafter have changed, and the churches where Liturgy is celebrated are counted.

In addition, the Russian Orthodox Church has accelerated the pace of development in far-abroad countries^[8], on the one hand, actively revived its influence in Europe; on the other hand, strengthened its spread in Asia and the Arab region. In Europe, the St. Nicholas Cathedral in Nice, France, was returned to the Russian Orthodox Church, Holy Trinity Cathedral and the Russian Orthodox Spiritual and Cultural Center were built in Paris; the Patriarchal Metochion (подворье)^[9] in Italy was returned to the Russian Orthodox Church; the Vienna diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church was recognized by the Austrian government; the church of the Nativity of Christ belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church was built in Madrid, Spain. In Asia and the Arab region, new churches and monasteries continued to be built in Thailand, and new parishes were opened in Malaysia and Cambodia; in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates, the first Russian Orthodox church, St. Philip's church, which began construction during the tenure of Patriarch Alexy II, was completed, and was opened for believers in 2012. And in 2013 Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Rus' paid his first visit to China, and celebrated Divine Liturgy at the churches of Shanghai and Harbin. This visit in the context of the good neighborly relations and partnership between Russia and China looks very promising for the Orthodox Church in China.^[10] Thus the Russian Orthodox Church led by Kirill is no longer satisfied with the traditional missionary areas and begins to penetrate Catholic, Buddhist and Islamic majority areas.

Second, the Russian Orthodox Church regulated the veneration of the New Martyrs and Confessors^[11]. An important contribution during the tenure of Alexy II was the glorification of New Martyrs and Confessors. From 1988 to 2008, more than 2,700 saints were canonized.^[12] The canonization of the New Martyrs and Confessors is a significant event in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church. "It is one of the most important religious initiatives to change the life of modern Russian Church."^[13] This move not only led to the unification of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) and the Mother Church, but also to some extent made people have a more comprehensive understanding of the Russian history of the 20th century. After a large-scale canonization at the turn of the century, Kirill turned his focus to work following the canonization, further regulating the veneration of New Martyrs and Confessors, such as the establishment of liturgical rituals, writing biographies and hymns, in order to avoid the veneration of martyrs and confessors who have not been canonized. At the same time, the Russian Orthodox Church also

[8] Far-abroad countries (дальнее зарубежье), this concept originated after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and was generally used to refer to countries that did not belong to the Commonwealth of Independent States.

[9] Metochion is generally affiliated with a monastery. Metochion in the city is used to help the monastery collect donations and receive pilgrims.

[10] See: Paulos Huang and Nikolay Samoylov, "Orthodoxy in China: History, Current State and Prospects for Studies", *International Journal of Sino-Western Studies*, № 14, (2018), 7.

[11] Russian New Martyrs and Confessors refer to the Russian Orthodox clerics and lay people who suffered during the 20th century due to factors such as politics and the war.

[12] Доклад Местоблюстителя Патриаршего Престола митрополита Смоленского и Калининградского Кирилла на Поместном Соборе Русской Православной Церкви. Москва, 27-29 января 2009 года. [Report of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad at the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow, January 27-29, 2009)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/541724.html>

[13] Георгий Митрофанов (протоиерей) История Русской Православной Церкви: 1900 — 1927. СПб., 2002. С. 3. [Georgy Mitrofanov (Archpriest), *History of the Russian Orthodox Church*; 1900—1927. St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 3.]

actively propagated the achievements of the New Martyrs and Confessors to society, organized related literary competitions, and published various books. This is not only the popularization of the veneration of the New Martyrs and Confessors, but also reflects the attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church to the history of the past 20th century.

Finally, the Russian Orthodox Church consolidated the cause of the unification of the Church. In a report made by Patriarch Kirill in the Local Council in 2009, he pointed out that the great achievement of Patriarch Alexy II was to strengthen the unity of the Church. In his tenure, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia returned to the Mother Church in 2007.^[14] Maintaining the unity of the Orthodox Church is also an important task for Kirill. Kirill stressed that it is necessary to strengthen the relation of Orthodox Churches in the territory of the former Soviet Union, such as the relationship between Orthodox Churches of the five countries in Central Asia, the Baltic States and the Russian Mother Church, and continue to solve issues related to Estonian, Moldovan and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches. On the issue of the Orthodox Church in Estonia^[15], Kirill continued to engage in dialogue with the Estonian government to defend the rights of the Russian Orthodox Church in Estonian territory, and to communicate with the Orthodox Church of Constantinople. The effort has not yet reached the ideal result, but the development of the Russian Orthodox Church in Estonia has basically stabilized. On the issue of the Orthodox Church in Moldova^[16], the division of Church due to the establishment of the “Diocese of Bessarabia” has

[14] The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (Русская православная церковь за границей, РПЦЗ), was established in the 1920s. It consisted mainly of emigrants who were exiled by the revolution of 1917 and the civil war. In 1927, the bishop Sergius (Сергий, 1867—1943) issued the “Declaration” (Декларация) calling on the Orthodox Church to reconcile with the Soviet regime. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia expressed disapproval of this, and split with the Mother Church. From the end of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, the Russian Orthodox Church made a series of efforts for the unification of Church. On May 17, 2007, a liturgy was held at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, and documents were signed to confirm that the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia is an semi-autonomous part (самоуправляемая часть) of the Russian Orthodox Church.

[15] The Russian Orthodox Church regards Estonia as its canonical territory. In 1920, the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate was established. In 1923, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople established its own Estonian Autonomous Church in Estonia; in 1978, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople declared the establishment of the Estonian Autonomous Church in 1923 invalid; in February 1996, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople announced the restoration of the document of 1923 and the establishment of an autonomous Orthodox Church of Constantinople in Estonia. This act appeared to the Russian Orthodox Church as a violation of its rights in the canonical territory. The believers of the Estonian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) are 8-10 times more numerous than the believers of the Estonian Autonomous Church (the Patriarchate of Constantinople) (See: the report of Patriarch Kirill at the Bishop’s Council in 2011), but the Estonian Autonomous Church (the Patriarchate of Constantinople) and the Lutheran Church received greater support from the government, which led to restrictions on the development of parishes of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Canonical territory (каноническая территория) is a concept introduced to the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1990s by the relationship with other Christian denominations. It refers to the specific area in which the Local Orthodox Church acts according to the Church Canon. There is no such concept in the Church Canon. In order to establish the authority and legitimacy of this concept, the Russian Orthodox Church traces this concept back to the apostolic era and points out the principles of Church activities contained in this concept. The Russian Orthodox Church considers its canonical territory to include the believers in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. See: Иларион (Алфеев). Принцип «канонической территории» в православной традиции. <https://azbyka.ru/kanonicheskaya-territoriya>

[16] The Moldovan Orthodox Church is an autonomous Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, whose canonical territory covers the Republic of Moldova and Dniester River. At the end of October 2007, the Romanian Orthodox Church decided to establish seven new dioceses, including the restoration of three dioceses in the archdiocese of Bessarabia. The Romanian Orthodox Church stated that three dioceses were included in the archdiocese of Bessarabia before 1944. The Russian Orthodox Church considers this action of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the territory of Moldova to be illegal and that it undermines the sovereignty of Moldova.

deepened the controversy between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Romanian Orthodox Church. In the face of the division of the Church and the dissatisfaction of Moldovan state leaders with the status of the Moldovan Orthodox Church^[17], the Russian Orthodox Church actively repaired and strengthened the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the government. After the new government of Moldova was formed in 2010, the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the Moldovan government has been improved, and progress has been made in teaching religious courses in secular schools and integrating priests into the army chaplaincy. Ukraine has always been a focus of the Russian Orthodox Church. Patriarch Kirill has also done a lot of work to unite the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, such as strengthening the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's voice in the Holy Synod, and actively discussing with the Roman Catholic Church to resolve the problems of Uniatism.

In addition, in the field of mass media and publishing, the Russian Orthodox Church has made great progress in the past decade. The number of publications has rapidly increased; content has become more and more abundant to attract wider readership. The Church network has developed rapidly; dioceses and larger churches have their own websites. The Russian Orthodox Church has also created accounts on Facebook and ВКОНТАКТЕ in order to interact with secular groups in a faster and more convenient way. The Russian Orthodox Church also actively strengthened its cooperation and ties with secular media to propagate the Church.

1.2 Interaction between the Orthodox Church and the secular domain

During the tenure of Patriarch Alexy II, he actively promoted cooperation between the Orthodox Church and the regime, introduced Orthodox cultural courses to secular schools, strengthened missionary work, social services and cultural exchanges, and laid a good foundation for the interaction between the Orthodox Church and the secular domain. After the enthronement of Kirill, he continued the work done by Patriarch Alexy II, and further deepened and promoted cooperation between the Orthodox Church and the secular domain, and strove to embed the Orthodox spirit deeper into secular life.

1.2.1 The relationship between the state and the Orthodox Church

The Russian Orthodox Church continued to claim to hold to the non-political nature of Church, strengthened good relations and cooperation with government departments at all levels, and actively participated in the revision of some federal laws to seek more space for the development of the Orthodox Church. For example, in November 2015, the federal law *On amendments to the Federal law "On freedom of conscience and on religious associations" and other legislative acts of the Russian Federation (№ 341-ФЗ)* was passed, which changed supervision procedures of the judicial system for religious organizations' activities, so that religious organizations are no longer subject to a series of provisions of the federal law *On non-commercial organizations*, and have greater freedom to engage in commercial activities. In addition, the Orthodox Church has a deep connection with the military and prisons. As early as 1994, Patriarch Alexy II began to send the clergy to serve soldiers in the army, and encouraged the clergy to go to prisons to serve inmates. Patriarch Kirill continued

[17] In September 2010, Acting President Mihai Ghimpu pointed out that the Moldovan Orthodox Church is not an independent Church, but a "branch of the Russian Orthodox Church". See: Доклад Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Кирилла на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви. 2 февраля 2011 года. [Report of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' at the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (February 2, 2011)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1402889.html>.

this work and made it systematic. On July 21, 2009, the President of the Russian Federation passed a resolution to restore the chaplaincy serving in the Russian armed forces. Since then, the Russian Orthodox Church has begun to establish and improve this system. On June 1, 2017, a total of 266 positions of assistant commanders were set up in the armed forces of the Russian Federation to handle the work of soldiers-believers, among them 259 representatives from the Orthodox Church.^[18] In 2011, the Bishop's Council adopted the concept of establishing a chaplaincy serving in prisons. Since then, the Russian Orthodox Church has reached an agreement with the secular government to set up the position of assistant head in local prison administrations of each federal subject of the Russian Federation to assist in handling prisoners-believers. The implementation of chaplaincies in the armed forces and in prisons on the one hand shows the good interaction between the government and the Orthodox Church, and on the other hand demonstrates the growing social influence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

1. 2. 2 Intervention in secular education

A great achievement of Patriarch Kirill is shown in the field of secular education, mainly in the following aspects.

First, the subject "The Basics of Orthodox Culture" was included in primary and secondary schools.^[19] The desire of the Russian Orthodox Church to introduce relevant subjects of Orthodox culture to primary and secondary schools has a long history. During the tenure of Alexy II, the Orthodox Church repeatedly requested that the national legislatures grant the Orthodox Church the right to teach religious subjects in secular schools. In 1997, the promulgation of the federal law *On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations* provided a legal basis for the inclusion of religious education in secular education. The law stipulates: "Upon the request of their parents or guardians, with the agreement of children studying in state or municipal educational institutions, the administration of these institutions by agreement with the appropriate organ of local government is to offer religious organizations the opportunity to teach religion to children outside the framework of the educational program."^[20] Therefore, since 1997, the Orthodox Church has cooperated with some regions (such as Smolensk region) to introduce Orthodox cultural subjects into primary and secondary schools as electives. Since September 1, 2006, in Belgorod, Kaluga, Bryansk and Smolensk regions,^[21] According to statistics, between 2006 and 2007, there were 500,000 to 600,000 students

[18] Доклад Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви. 29 ноября - 2 декабря 2017 года. [Report of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus 'at the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (November 29 - December 2, 2017)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5072994.html>.

[19] The Law of God (Закон божий) was a compulsory course in primary and secondary schools during the period of the Russian Empire. During the Soviet period, "The teaching of religion in state and public schools, as well as in private schools where general subjects are taught, is forbidden." See: Decree on the Separation of Church and State and School from Church (Декрет об отделении церкви от государства и школы от церкви) (January 23, 1918) Article 9.

[20] *On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations*, Chapter 1, article 5. 4.

[21] The Basics of Orthodox "Culture" has been included in the compulsory courses of secular primary and secondary schools.

studying Orthodox culture in secular national and municipal schools in Russia.^[22] But at this time, “The Basics of Orthodox Culture” is still only taught in primary and secondary schools in some Russian regions.

During the tenure of Patriarch Kirill, the status of “The Basics of Orthodox Culture” has undergone fundamental changes. On October 6, 2009, the Russian Ministry of Education and Science issued the Federal National Standard of Elementary Education. The subject “Fundamentals of Spiritual and Moral Culture of the Peoples of Russia”^[23] was included in the teaching program as a compulsory course. From April 1, 2010 in secular primary and secondary schools of 19 federal subjects “Fundamentals of Spiritual and Moral Culture of the Peoples of Russia” began to be taught as a compulsory course, and one module of the course is “The Basics of Orthodox Culture”. On January 28, 2012, the Russian government promulgated the “Order of the Government of the Russian Federation on the plan for the introduction of a comprehensive training course for general education institutions ‘Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics’ in all subjects of the Russian Federation from 2012/13 academic year” (January 28th, 2012)^[24]. According to this plan, from September 1, 2012, “Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics” was fully launched as a compulsory course in all general education institutions in all subjects of Russia. The course consists of six modules: “The Basics of Secular Ethics”, “The Basics of World Religious Culture”, “The Basics of Orthodox Culture”, “The Basics of Islamic Culture”, “The Basics of Buddhist Culture”, and “The Basics of Jewish Culture”. Students voluntarily choose one of them to study. According to a survey by the Russian Orthodox Church, the number of students who chose “The Basics of Orthodox Culture” increased in most dioceses from the 2012/2013 academic year to the 2016/2017 academic year. In addition, in order to improve the teaching quality of “The Basics of Orthodox Culture”, the Russian Orthodox Church has established cooperative relationships with secular schools and institutions to hold various themed lectures, training courses, seminars, etc. In order to improve the elective rate, the clergy of the Orthodox Church actively joined the parent associations and organized the public cultural project to popularize “The Basics of Orthodox Culture”.

Second, theology has become a nationally recognized “scientific” specialty (научная специальность). In the 1990s, theology as a direction (направление) or specialty (специальность) has been listed in the classification of undergraduate and master’s degrees in secular higher educational

[22] Комиссия по вопросам толерантности и свободы совести Общественной палаты Российской Федерации. Предварительные результаты мониторинга соблюдения принципов свободы совести и вероисповедания при изучении учебных курсов по истории и культуре религий в государственных и муниципальных общеобразовательных учреждениях в регионах Российской Федерации. [Commission on tolerance and freedom of conscience of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation. Preliminary results of monitoring about the compliance with the principles of freedom of conscience and religion in the study of training courses on the history and culture of religions in state and municipal educational institutions in the regions of the Russian Federation.] <http://www.oprf.ru/structure/comissions2006/11/materials/1896>.

[23] On December 18, 2012, the subject “Fundamentals of Spiritual and Moral Culture of the Peoples of Russia” was renamed “Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics”.

[24] Распоряжение Правительства РФ о Плане мероприятий по введению с 2012/13 учебного года во всех субъектах Российской Федерации комплексного учебного курса для общеобразовательных учреждений “Основы религиозных культур и светской этики” от 28 января 2012г. [Order of the government of the Russian Federation on the Plan about the introduction of comprehensive training course “Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics” for general education institutions from the 2012/13 academic year in all subjects of the Russian Federation (January 28, 2012)] <http://www.pravo.gov.ru/laws/acts/8/5652451088.html>

institutions. For example, at the end of 1992, under the wave of the democratic reform, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation included the direction of theology in the national classification of education, and set the corresponding standards. Since 1994, the Russian Orthodox Church has proposed adding the specialty “theology” to the national classification of education, and developing corresponding national standards from the standpoint of religious worldview. On February 1, 1999, the Ministry of Education included the direction “theology” in the classification of a master’s degree, and on March 2 of the same year, the specialty “Theology” was added to the classification. In 2001 and 2002, the Ministry of Education approved the training standards for the direction “theology” (undergraduates and masters) and the specialty “theology”. However, theology has not been recognized as a scientific specialty by the secular educational institutions. Whether or not theology is a science, whether or not it can become a scientific specialty, such disputes did not come to an end until 2015. In 2015, the Higher Attestation Commission (BAK) of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia approved the theology to be a new scientific specialty with the code 26. 00. 01. In 2016, the candidate’s (кандидат наук) and doctoral thesis defense committee for the theology was established. In 2017, the first candidates passed their thesis defense. At this point, theology as a science has been recognized by the secular education system.

Third, Russian Orthodox Church improved Sunday schools. At the Bishop’s Council in 2000, Patriarch Alexy II proposed perfecting the Sunday school system, and called it the key to the revival of parishes. After Kirill became Patriarch, he continued this work. In 2012, the standard of educational activities implemented in Sunday schools was introduced and revised in 2017. The main purpose of this standard is to systemize the teaching activities of Sunday schools and improve the quality of education. The “Standards” classify Sunday school into types: Sunday group (less 10 students) and Sunday school (more than 10 students). The “Standard” of 2012 divides students into three levels: preschool children (5—6 years old), primary stage (7—11 years old), and major stages (12—16 years old). Newly revised, the “Standard” of 2017 divides students into four phases, the first phase (5—7 years old), the second phase (8—10 years old), the third phase (11—13 years old), and the fourth phase (14—17 years old), and the learning content in the three previous stages is compressed in the three new phases from 5 to 13 years old. A clear plan of the religious education for students 14—17 years old in the new “Standard” has not been given. The Russian Orthodox Church stated that it will be separately issued, which shows that the Orthodox Church is serious and cautious about the education of these teenagers. Two “Standards”, especially the “Standard” revised in 2017, prescribe in detail the content, duration of a lesson, teaching methods and purposes of each phase and give some examples. According the new “Standard”, Sunday school gets rid of the traditional teaching methods, adopts a suitable teaching way for children of different ages in order to attract children to understand and participate in Church life. The systematization and standardization of Sunday schools have made up for the “regret” that the Orthodox Church cannot introduce the subject “The Law of God” into the national and municipal secular schools, and become a supplement to “The Basics of Orthodox Culture” in the national and municipal secular schools.

Orthodoxy is strongly involved in the field of secular education, and its moral and ethical ideology contributes to the construction of the national spiritual and moral system. This is its positive side. However, the textbooks about Orthodoxy used in the national and municipal secular

schools inevitably have a certain belief orientation, which to some extent undermines the principle of separation of religion from education, and also causes dissatisfaction for some people.

1.2.3 Missionary work

It is always a major job for the Russian Orthodox Church to attract more people to understand Orthodox Christianity and believe in the Orthodox faith. In the past 30 years, the Orthodox Church has achieved remarkable results in this field. In the 1990s, Patriarch Alexy II paid close attention to the missionary work in Siberia, the Far East and the ethnic areas. The Bishop's Council in 2004 reaffirmed the importance of the mission in these areas. Since the enthronement of Kirill, he has continued this policy and proposed some deepening programs, such as attracting those who have been baptized, but rarely enter the church to participate in Church life; working out an effective reward mechanism to encourage the clergy to the frontiers inhabited by national minorities; underlining the missionary work among Cossacks. The latter one is a major development in the missionary work during the tenure of Patriarch Kirill. Although as early as the 1990s, the Russian Orthodox Church had cooperated with the Committee on Cossack affairs under the President, Patriarch Kirill highlighted the importance of the missionary work among Cossacks and proposed that the goal of this work is to revive the true Cossacks who are loyal to the Church and serve the motherland. Historically, Cossacks were a brave group and strong guardians for the Russian state and the Orthodox Church, but this group was less involved in Church life. At the end of the 20th century, the Cossack revival movement emerged, and as the Cossack revival movement grew, its sense of independence expanded. The Russian Orthodox Church emphasizes the importance of the missionary work among Cossacks. On the one hand, it adapts to trends in the development and revival of Cossacks; on the other hand, it conforms to the needs of the country with the help of faith to mitigate Cossacks' tendency toward separation.

Further, in terms of social services and culture, the Russian Orthodox Church has also achieved great results in the first decade of the tenure of Kirill. The Orthodox Church continued to develop its philanthropic efforts, such as the establishment of orphanages, nursing homes, centers for alcoholic rehabilitation, centers for addiction treatment, nursing centers, charity canteens, cooperation with disabled groups, fighting unemployment, giving counseling and material assistance to people suffering from natural disasters and war, and more. In the field of culture, in 2010, a special Patriarchal Committee on Culture was established; national and local Orthodox cultural activities continued to be carried out, such as the annual Christmas reading (Рождественское чтение) which opened in 1992; various literary awards and literary competitions, such as Literature Award named after Sts Cyril and Methodius, International children's and youth literary contest named after Ivan Shmelev "Leto Gospodne"; the celebration of Orthodox Book Day; organizing various exhibitions, more influential such as series exhibition "Orthodox Rus. My Story" of 2013—2016; cooperation with museums to improve the protection and restoration of cultural relics, and more.

1.3 Relationship with other Christian denominations

After Kirill became Patriarch, he continued the policy of Alexy II in foreign exchanges. With the purpose of dialogue and cooperation and exchanges, the Russian Orthodox Church continued to maintain friendly communication with Eastern Churches, such as the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Ethiopian Church, actively developed relationships with other Orthodox Churches, and had good

interactions with the majority of Orthodox Churches.

The Russian Orthodox Church strengthened its dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, and the relationship between them gradually eased. In the 1980s and 1990s, and at the beginning of the 21st century, the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church was relatively tense due to the missionary work of Catholic Church in the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church^[25]. At the same time, the two sides also engaged in a constructive dialogue on the protection of traditional Christian values and the role of religion in social life. Since the 2010s, the two sides have expanded the range of dialogue, especially the deterioration of the situation of Christians in the Middle East, as well as terrorism and other issues, have enhanced the possibility of cooperation between the two sides and eased the contradiction between them. In 2012, the Russian Orthodox Church and the head of the Polish Catholic Bishops' Conference signed a significant Joint Missive to the people of the Russia and Poland^[26], calling on the people of the two countries to strengthen dialogue, strive for the reconciliation, look to the future and face new challenges together. On February 12, 2016, Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church and Pope Francis (1936-, the Pope from March 19, 2013) held a historic meeting in Havana (Cuba). It caused widespread repercussions in the whole world. The two sides signed a Joint Declaration^[27] calling on the international community to work together to end the violence in the Middle East as much as possible, and pointed out that Uniatism is not the way to achieve Church unity. In 2017, part of the holy relics of Saint Nicholas (Николай Чудотворец, с. 270-с. 345), who is highly revered by Russians, was delivered from Bari of Italy to Moscow and St. Petersburg. This is the first time that Saint Nicholas left Bari in 930 years. In May and October 2018, Hilarion Alfejev (Иларион, Алфеев), the chairman of the Department of External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church, met with Pope Francis twice. On the issue of the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Francis repeatedly stressed that the Roman Catholic Church would not intervene in the internal affairs of the Orthodox Church. Pope Francis had a further discussion about cultural cooperation between the two sides. Thus it can be seen that dialogue, cooperation and facing common challenges are the main policies implemented by the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church in the past decade.

On the issue of Protestantism, after Kirill took office, the Russian Orthodox Church has been maintaining a good relationship with the Evangelical Church of Germany and the Evangelical

[25] In 2002, the Roman Catholic Church upgraded the four Apostolic Administrations in Russia to dioceses, and appointed a new archbishop, established two dioceses in Kazakhstan, and built two cathedral churches in the territory of Ukraine, which is traditionally under the justification of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox Church believes that the Roman Catholic Church's move undermined the Church canons; the Roman Catholic Church in fact established a parallel Local Church in the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Roman Catholic Church denied the Russian Orthodox Church's allegations, and considers that it is just a procedural issue to form four Apostolic Administrations into dioceses.

[26] Совместное послание народам России и Польши Предстоятеля Русской Православной Церкви Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Кирилла и Председателя Епископской Конференции Польши Архиепископа Юзефа Михалика, митрополита Перемышльского. [Joint Missive to the Peoples of Russia and Poland by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', Chairman of the Russian Orthodox Church, and Archbishop of Przemysl Jozef Mihalik, Chairman of the Episcopal Conference of Poland] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/2411498.html>

[27] Совместное заявление Папы Римского Франциска и Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла. [Joint Declaration by Pope Francis and his Holiness Patriarch Kirill] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4372074>

Lutheran Church of Finland. Conflict with other Protestant denominations has mainly focused on their missionary work in the “canonical territory” of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the attitude to some traditional values. The Russian Orthodox Church upholds more traditional values, is dissatisfied with the practice of some Protestant groups, such as the blessing of same-sex marriages, the ordination of homosexuals, and thus temporarily suspended contact with the Episcopal Church (United States), the Church of Sweden, and the Church of Norway. This also reflects the consistency of the Russian Orthodox Church in the protection of traditional Christian values.

II Transformation in the Development

Since the revival of the Orthodox Church in Russia from 1988 to 2008, after 20 years of development, the Russian Orthodox Church has made great advances, and the increase of believers and clergy is very impressive. Although the Russian Orthodox constantly emphasized the importance of “quality”, “quantity” growth was still the main task of this period. After Kirill was appointed as Patriarch, on the basis of the previous “quantitative change”, the development of the Russian Orthodox Church turned to “quality” growth, which is the priority of the development of the Russian Orthodox Church in the new stage. “Quality” growth is mainly reflected in the following aspects.

2.1 Institutional reform of the Orthodox Church; improvement of management quality

Throughout the reports of Patriarch Alexy II in several Bishop’s Councils, it can be seen that the communication between dioceses and the Holy Synod, which means between the local institutions and the central institutions, was not smooth. On the one hand, the orders of the Holy Synod were not effectively carried out in some dioceses. On the other hand, Holy Synod did not have access to real and effective information from some dioceses in order to formulate more reasonable policies. Since Kirill became Patriarch, an important task has been to deepen the institutional reform of the Orthodox Church, reform of the Church districts and personnel reform.

At the central level, new institutions are set up, the various departments of the Holy Synod are adjusted, and regulations for departments are made in order to standardize departmental management. The most important of the newly established institutions are the Inter-Council Presence (Межсоборное присутствие) and the Supreme Church Council (Высший Церковный Совет). The Inter-Council Presence was formally established in 2010 and is a consultative body of the Moscow Patriarchate. It is mainly responsible for studying the issues to be discussed at Local Councils and Bishop’s Councils and preparing the draft decisions on these issues. The chairman of the Inter-Council Presence is Patriarch, and the members are elected by the Holy Synod from bishops, clergy and lay people for a four-year’s term. The Supreme Church Council is not a new institution. It was first established in 1917^[28], and on May 9, 1922, Patriarch Tikhon (Тихон, 1865 – 1925, Patriarch from December 4, 1917 to April 7, 1925) was arrested, and after that the Supreme Church Council suspended. In 2011, it was re-established. The Supreme Church Council is an executive body of the Russian Orthodox Church, and aims at coordinating work between various branches of the Holy

[28] The Supreme Church Council established in the early 20th century consisted of the Patriarch, 3 bishops of the Holy Synod, 1 monk, 5 secular priests and 6 lay people.

Synod and general Church institutions. With these two institutions, the establishment of the former provides a guarantee for effectively functioning of the Bishop's Council and shortening the interval between two Bishop's Councils; and the restoration of the latter not only ensures the mutual cooperation between various branches of the Holy Synod, but also to a certain extent decentralizes the power of the Holy Synod (9 permanent representatives, 5 temporary representatives). The departmental adjustment is mainly aimed at the functional departments of the Holy Synod. First, new departments are established according to the needs of the work of the Orthodox Church, such as the Committee on Interaction with the Cossacks, the Patriarchal Council for Culture, the restoration of the Financial and Economic Administration, etc. Second, some departments are reorganized, such as that the Department for Prison Ministry is separated from the Department for Cooperation with the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies; the Department for Church-Society Relations and the Information Department established in 2009 were reorganized into the Department for the Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media; the Department for Monasteries was reorganized into the Department for Monasteries and Monasticism. The reorganization takes into account the specialization and relevance of various departments, so that departments can operate more effectively. Finally, regulations and rules are formulated for some departments to normalize development, for example, the Administration of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Education Committee, the Department for Education and Catechization, the Department for Mission, the Department for Youth Affairs, the Department for the Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media have successively adopted their regulations or rules. 3

From the perspective of local management, the Russian Orthodox Church has established a three-level management model: the patriarchate-archdiocese-diocese. For this reason, new archdioceses have been established, and dioceses have been revised. In 2011, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church approved *the Regulations on the archdioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church*^[29]. This decision was both a heritage of the Christian tradition and the continuation of the document *On Church Districts* (О церковных округах), which was adopted in the Local Council of 1917—1918, but not carried out. Russia is a vast country with different ethnicities, cultures and customs. Faced with many dioceses with different needs, the central administration of the Orthodox Church is difficult, and it is almost impossible to directly manage the dioceses. By integrating dioceses in a federal subject into as archdiocese, on the one hand, the archdiocese and federal subject have the same administrative area, which facilitates cooperation and communication between the Orthodox Church and the local government; on the other hand, a central-to-local pyramidal management system is formed, which helps the central Church administration to exert its influence on dioceses. At the level of the Diocese, some large dioceses have been scaled down and divided into several dioceses; in the diocese of big cities, deputy dioceses were established because only one diocese is allowed in a city.

[29] Положение о Митрополиях Русской Православной Церкви (от 5—6 октября 2011 года). [Regulation on Archdioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church (October 5—6, 2011)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1639871.html> From this moment, the concept of the archdiocese (митрополия) and the metropolitan district (митрополичий округ) has made a difference. The metropolitan district has greater autonomy, and the highest administrative institution is the Synod supervised by the head of the metropolitan district; the administrative institution of archdioceses is the Bishops Committee. At present, the Russian Orthodox Church has two metropolitan districts; the metropolitan district of Kazakhstan and the metropolitan district of Central Asia.

Diocesan reform has increased management positions, facilitated the arrangement and training of younger clergy, and prevented some problems, such as dioceses becoming too powerful to obey the central leadership.

In terms of personnel arrangements, the position of the assistant of the rural dean (благочинный) and rector is introduced. These assistants are responsible for assisting in the work of religious education, catechization, youth and social services. They not only share the work of the rural dean and rector, but also work more efficiently, because they usually receive specific professional training.

The institutional reform carried out by Patriarch Kirill is characterized by specialization and has strengthened the management of dioceses. This is its advantage. At the same time, this reform has also caused institutional bloating and enlarged the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church, with an accompanying hidden danger of bureaucratization.

2.2 Reform of theological schools: aligning with secular education and improving teaching quality

During the tenure of Alexy II, the Patriarch realized the importance of clergy quality to Church development. He reorganized the theological seminary (духовная семинария) into a five-year higher educational institution to upgrade the level of research. After the enthronement of Kirill, in the face of the new situation, he pointed out: "The urgency of improving the level of teaching and training is the main motivation for promoting the reform of the educational system in theological schools. The educational system of theological schools should be a system worthy of respect and a prestigious system to the secular school in Russia and foreign theological schools."^[30] For this purpose, the Russian Orthodox Church has undergone a significant reform of theological schools, that is, to join the Bologna Process (Болонский процесс)^[31]. The aim of the reform is to integrate the system of the theological school with the Russian system of secular higher educational institutions and European educational institutions.

First, a three-level educational system paralleling secular education. Since 2010, theological schools of the Russian Orthodox Church have begun to implement a three-level training system for undergraduate, masters and doctoral studies. A four (or five)-year undergraduate program helps students to acquire advanced theological education. Only graduates who have received undergraduate education and specialized training may become a priest. The aim of two-year master's program is to cultivate researchers, teachers, and staff who work in administrative institutions of the Church. Postgraduates mainly engage in research work. In Russia postgraduate degrees consist of two levels: candidate and doctoral degrees. The candidate degree is equivalent to a Ph. D., and a doctor's degree is equivalent to Doctor of Science, corresponding to a doctorate in the Russian secular educational system. Currently, the theological doctoral degree can be awarded in Sts Cyril and Methodius Church Post-Graduate and Doctoral School. At the same time, the Russian Orthodox Church got rid of the institution of theological college (духовное училище). In 2013, the Holy Synod instructed that

[30] Доклад Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Кирилла на Архиерейском совещании 2 февраля 2010 года. [Report of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus 'at the Bishops' Meeting on February 2, 2010] <http://pda.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1061403.html>

[31] In 1999, 29 European countries proposed the European Higher Education Reform Plan in Bologna, Italy, which aims to integrate European educational resources, break the national restrictions of education, and build a European higher education zone. In 2003, Russia joined the Bologna process.

theological colleges would be reorganized into theological seminaries or centers for training professionals in the field of missionary, youth and social work within three years. At the end of November 2017, theological colleges were no more.

Second, unification of the syllabus. In order to standardize and improve the teaching quality in theological schools, since September 2015, a unified syllabus has been gradually implemented in theological schools of the Russian Orthodox Church. In the 2017 – 2018 academic year, 4, 176 students studied according to the new syllabus, accounting for 74% of the total number of undergraduate students in theological schools.^[32] This transformation will be completed in 2018 – 2019. After this work is completed, a unified two-year master's educational program will be developed. In addition, the Russian Orthodox Church is also considering the establishment of a unified educational system for theological schools in the “canonical territory” of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Finally, the diploma of a theological school is recognized by the state, which is an important symbol of the integration of theological schools with the Russian secular higher educational institution. In February 2008, Russia passed amendments to the *Federal Law on Education, On Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education and Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations*.^[33] Articles about the approval and recognition of professional religious educational institutions are introduced, which provides a legal basis for the integration of theological schools with secular schools. Taking advantage of this historic opportunity, the Russian Orthodox Church set out to deepen the reform of theological schools, so that it gradually moved closer to the standards of national higher educational schools in terms of educational structure, syllabus, teaching methods, and faculty, and reached the point that theological schools can award state-recognized diplomas (without the Russian National Emblem) to their graduates. At present, there are 43 various theological schools and universities in Russia^[34], of which 6 are recognized by the state^[35]. Full national recognition of theological schools is still a very long way away.

The Russian Orthodox Church's compliance with the Bologna Process, on the one hand, stimulates and enhances the educational quality of the theological school by reference to the secular educational system. On the other hand, it also helps Orthodox theological schools to establish closer

[32] Доклад Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви (29 ноября-2 декабря 2017 года). [Report of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus 'at the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (November 29-December 2, 2017)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5072994.html>

[33] Федеральный закон от 28 февраля 2008 г. N 14-ФЗ "О внесении изменений в отдельные законодательные акты Российской Федерации в части лицензирования и аккредитации учреждений профессионального религиозного образования (духовных образовательных учреждений). [The Federal Law of February 28, 2008. N 14 – FL “On the Modification of Separate Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Regarding Licensing and Accreditation of Institutions of Professional Religious Education (Theological Educational Institutions)"] <https://legalacts.ru/doc/federalnyi-zakon-ot-28022008-n-14-fz-o/>

[34] Учебный комитет РПЦ. Учебные заведения РПЦ; обновленный список. [The Education Committee of the ROC. Educational Institutions of the ROC: an Updated List] <http://www.uchkom.info/uchebnyy-komitet/uchebnye-zavedeniya/>

[35] Moscow Theological Academy (Sergiev Posad, Moscow region), Saint Petersburg Theological Academy (St. Petersburg), St. Tikhon's Orthodox University (Moscow), Orenburg Theological Seminary (Orenburg), Penza Theological Seminary (Penza), Sretensky Theological Seminary (Moscow). Sources of data: Реестр организаций, осуществляющих образовательную деятельность по имеющим государственную аккредитацию образовательным программам. [List of Organizations Engaged in Educational Activities with State-Accredited Educational Programs.] <http://isga.obrnadzor.gov.ru/accreestrestr/>

relationships with secular schools. In addition, the integration of Orthodox theological education with secular institutions has further enhanced the competitiveness of Orthodox theological schools in the field of education, because not all graduates of theological schools will choose to join the clergy, and a higher educational diploma recognized by the state can help them gain employment in a wider field.

2.3 The change of indicators measuring the development of the Orthodox Church: from “quantity” to “quality”

As the Russian Orthodox Church set the goal of “quality” development, some markers measuring the development of the Orthodox Church also changed.

Judging from the statistical standards of parishes, the quality standard is strengthened while paying attention to the quantity growth. In the Bishop’s Council of 2011 it was proposed that at least one church, chapel or prayer room should be opened for every settlement in the “canonical territory” of the Russian Orthodox Church, in which Orthodox believers live. At the same time, since 2012, a new statistical standard of parishes has been adopted—whether the Liturgy is held in the church or prayer room. Therefore, according to the new standard the statistical data of parishes at the end of 2012 are as follows: There are 11,731 churches where the Liturgy is held more than once a week, 12,644 churches where the Liturgy is held once a week, 9114 churches where the Liturgy is held less than once a week but not less than once a month, in total there are 33,489 churches where the Liturgy is held at least once a month.^[36] It is because the Russian Orthodox Church attaches great importance to the Liturgy, so it influences the architectural requirements for a church. The Russian Orthodox Church no longer overemphasizes the external shape and scale of the building, and suggests building a primitive and small chapel in areas with restrictive conditions.

From the point of view of numerical growth, the focus on the growth of “Orthodox believers” (православные) has shifted to the concern of “churching believers” (воцерковленные). In 1989, data of the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (ВЦИОМ) showed that Russian Orthodox believers accounted for 20% of the total number of nationals^[37]; in 2008, data of the Public Opinion Foundation (ФОМ) and the Institute of Social and Political Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ИСПИ РАН) were 63%^[38] and 65—69%^[39]; in 2012, the data of the Levada-Center (Левада-центр), the Public Opinion Foundation and the Institute of Social and Political Studies of the

[36] The church here refers to the various types of places where liturgical ceremonies are held. Sources of data: Доклад Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви. 2 февраля 2013 года. [Report of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus ‘at the Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (February 2, 2013)] <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/2770923.html>

[37] Чеснокова В. Ф. Тесным путем: процесс воцерковления населения России в конце XX века. М.: Академический Проект, 2005. С. 8. [Chesnokova V. F., *By a Narrow Path: the Process of Churching of the Population of Russia in the late XX century*, М.: Academic Project, 2005, p. 8.]

[38] Воцерковленность православных. Индекс воцерковленности православных; мониторинг. 03 Июля 2014. [“The Churching of the Orthodox Believers. Index of the Churching of the Orthodox Believers; Monitoring”. July 3, 2014] <http://fom.ru/TSennosti/11587>

[39] Синелина Ю. Ю. Динамика религиозности Россиян (1989—2012). [Sinelina Y. Y., “Dynamics of Religiosity of Russians (1989—2012)”] <http://religious.life/2014/09/sinelina-dina-mika-religioznosti-rossiyan-1989-2012/>

Russian Academy of Sciences were 74%^[40], 64—72%^[41] and 82%^[42] respectively. It can be seen that the proportion of Orthodox believers is generally on the rise, but the proportion of “churching believers” has not changed significantly. “Churching” (воцерковление) was a special ceremony in the ancient Church, which was held on the 40th day of the baby’s birth. Russian sociologist Chesnokova (В. Ф. Чеснокова, 1934 — 2010) borrowed this concept to measure the devoutness of believers, referring to a person voluntarily admitting the influence of the Church by accepting the inherent lifestyle and way of thinking of the Church.^[43] In order to measure the degree of a person’s churching, Chesnokova proposed five indicators: visiting the church, confession and taking Holy Communion, reading the gospel, praying, and observing the fasts. The Public Opinion Foundation (2000—2014) and the Institute of Social and Political Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (2004, 2006, 2011) have continued to pay attention to these five indicators in recent years. According to the results of the survey, after more than 20 years of development, the proportion of “churching believers”, which means visiting the church at least once a month, taking Holy Communion 1—2 times a year, reading Church prayers, reading the gospel regularly, observing some big fasts, has not increased significantly, and has remained at 11—13%. That is to say, although the number of people who claim to be Orthodox believers is growing, the number of people who regularly attend the liturgy and participate in Church life has not increased significantly.

In view of the fact that the number of believers has basically reached saturation, and the number of “churching believers” has not made substantial progress, the Russian Orthodox Church has shifted the focus to how to increase the proportion of “churching believers”. To this end, a series of measures have been taken, such as continuously improving the quality of clerics and the level of missionary work, strengthening the dissemination of the course “The Basics of Orthodox Culture” in secular educational institutions, changing the teaching methods of Sunday schools, and organizing various types of Orthodox cultural activities. One of the key points of these measures is the work for youth. During the tenure of Patriarch Alexy II, he paid great attention to work with the youth. By the 2010s, the Russian Orthodox Church clearly proposed that an important direction of the work of Church is to draw the young generation to enter the church, and put forward new tasks: cultivating talents, especially young leaders; exploring ways to carry out the work for youth. The Russian Orthodox Church fully recognizes that youth is not only the future of a country, but also the future support of the Church. The growth of the proportion of “churching believers” among the youth means building up the loyalty of the future state to the Orthodox Church and assures the future existence and development of the Orthodox Church.

[40] В России 74% православных и 7% мусульман. 17. 12. 2012. [“In Russia 74% Orthodox Believers and 7% Muslims”. 17. 12. 2012.] <http://www.levada.ru/2012/12/17/v-rossii-74-pravoslavnyh-i-7-musulman/>

[41] Воцерковленность православных. Индекс воцерковленности православных; мониторинг. 03 Июля 2014. [“The Churching of the Orthodox Believers. Index of the Churching of the Orthodox Believers; Monitoring”. July 3, 2014] <http://fom.ru/TSennosti/11587>

[42] Синелина Ю. Ю. Динамика религиозности Россиян (1989—2012). [Sinolina Y. Y. , “Dynamics of Religiosity of Russians (1989—2012)”]

[43] Чеснокова В. Ф. Тесным путем: процесс воцерковления населения России в конце XX века. М. : Академический Проект, 2005. С. 18. [Chesnokova V. F. , *By a Narrow Path: the Process of Churching of the Population of Russia in the late XX century*, М. : Academic Project, 2005, p. 18.]

III Challenges in the Process of Transformation

After 30 years of revival and development, the Russian Orthodox Church has achieved certain results in the growth of “quantity” and the improvement of “quality”. At the same time, it should be noted that the Russian Orthodox Church faces some severe challenges in the process of its development and transformation. These challenges are either due to tension with secular society caused by the development of the Russian Orthodox Church, or closely related to complex ethnic and international political situations, or come from hidden dangers arising from the rapid growth and expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church.

3.1 The tension between desecularization and secularization

The famous sociologist Peter Berger (1929 – 2017) proposed the theory of religious secularization in the book *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* in 1967. Berger defines secularization as “the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols”.^[44] In social and institutional aspects, it means that the Church retreats from areas in which it was once dominant; in the cultural aspect, it means the decline of religious content; in the aspect of consciousness, it means the growing of the non-religious consciousness. However, as the situation of the world changed, Berger re-examined his theory of “secularization” and published the article “The desecularization of the world: a global overview” in 1997. In this article he criticized the fallacy of theory of “secularization” and turned to the position of “desecularization”, and he also pointed out that a representative of the phenomenon of “desecularization” in modern society is the revival of the Orthodoxy in Russia. The author does not want to analyze the theories of Berger’s secularization and desecularization, but wants to use the two concepts that he proposed to explore the tension of “desecularization” and “secularization” faced by the Russian Orthodox Church today.

As Berger said, at the end of the 20th century, there was a trend of religious “desecularization” in Russia; the revival and quick and vigorous development of the Orthodox Church, a sharp increase in the number of believers, the massive construction of churches, the infiltration and expansion of Orthodoxy into secular educational and cultural fields, and more. There is indeed a “prosperous” scene of the “desecularization” in Russia. However, the tendency of “secularization” is hidden behind this picture.

Firstly, we will discuss the “desecularization” of the development of Russian Orthodox Church from the perspective of the understanding of the faith of believers. Although most Russians claim to be Orthodox believers, this belief is not to a certain extent a religious identity, but more a national cultural identity. The head of the Levada-Center, the sociologist Lev Gudkov (Лев Гудков) once asserted that Orthodoxy is more like an ethnic religious symbol than a religious identity.^[45] The Russian religious scholars Ovsienko (Ф. Г. Овсиенко, 1939 – 2007) and Trofimchuk (Н. А.

[44] Berger, Peter L., *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Anchor Books, 1969, p. 107.

[45] Символ веры православного атеиста. 16. 11. 2017. [“The Creed of an Orthodox Atheist”. 16. 11. 2017.] <https://www.levada.ru/2017/11/16/simvol-very-pravoslavnogo-ateista/>

Трофимчук, 1942—2002) also wrote that Orthodoxy cannot be the ideology of the whole people. The reason is that the majority of Russians who identify themselves as Orthodox believers are not profoundly religious.^[46] According to a survey of the Levada-Center (2017), among Orthodox believers, only 58% believe in the existence of God, 13% either don't believe in God at all, or don't know if God exists, 16% do not believe in life after death, 17% do not believe in the existence of hell and the devil, but one-third of “atheists” believe in heaven.^[47] This set of data shows that there is no certain connection between faith identity and Orthodox doctrine and worldview. As mentioned above, the number of “churching believers” has not increased significantly in the past few decades. Thus, the revival of the Russian Orthodox Church in the growth of believers to a certain extent reflects the tendency of “secularization”, which can be mainly explained from the following aspects.

The state's guidance to the Orthodox ideology. Since Gorbachev came to power in 1985, the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union and Russia's independence, the state has been working to improve relations with the Orthodox Church. The state has given some Orthodox feast days the status of national holiday and has held some religious activities at the state level. The state's support for the Orthodox Church does not mean that the state intends to restore its status as state religion, but emphasizes Orthodoxy as a spiritual value and moral power, as the soul of the nation, as a bond to unite most Russians that can be used to fill the vacuum of faith after the collapse of the Soviet Union and reforge Russia's dream of holding great power.

The characteristics of Orthodoxy. The Orthodoxy is known as a “ceremonial” religion. Its long and complicated rituals, numerous feast days and strict fasting to some extent restrict believers to understanding Orthodoxy and participating in Church life, which leads some people to adhere nominally to Orthodoxy, not practically.

The change of religious concepts. The first half of the 1990s was a period of rapid growth of Orthodox believers in Russia. At this time, as Alexy Firsov (Алексей Фирсов), general director of the Russian Public Opinion Research Center said, it was a trend and a fashion to believe in religion, especially Orthodoxy, and it was closely related to throwing off political shackles.^[48] With the revival and development of Orthodoxy, the two concepts of Orthodoxy and Church are gradually separated. For the Church, the Orthodoxy is its great cause, the Church is its embodiment; for the country, Orthodoxy is the spirit of the nation, the soft power of the country; for the individual, Orthodoxy is only the choice and comfort of personal spiritual life. Firsov pointed out that religion has lost its institutionalized position and has become an individual private matter.^[49] This is an exact manifestation of the secularization of religion, “privatized religion is a matter of the ‘choice’ or

[46] Овсиенко Ф. Г., Трофимчук Н. А. Православие в контексте развития федеративных и этнополитических отношений в Российской Федерации // Религия и культура. Реф. сб. М.: ИНИОН РАН, 2000. С. 107. [Ovsienko F. G., Trofimchuk N. A., “Orthodoxy in the Context of Federal and Ethnopolitical Relations in the Russian Federation”, Religion and culture, M.: INION RAN, 2000, p. 107.]

[47] Символ веры православного атеиста. 16. 11. 2017. [“The Creed of an Orthodox Atheist”. 16. 11. 2017.] <https://www.levada.ru/2017/11/16/simvol-very-pravoslavnogo-ateista/>

[48] Религия: за и против. 27 июля 2015. [“Religion: Pro et Contra”. July 27, 2015.] <https://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=89>

[49] *Ibid.*

‘preference’ of the individual or the nuclear family, ipso facto lacking in a common, binding quality.”^[50]

Secondly, we will analyze the “desecularization” of Russian orthodox development from the perspective of the relationship between the Church and the state. In the Bishop’s Council of 2000 *the Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church* was approved, in which the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the state is described as a state “between the separation and national Church ideology”^[51]. Although currently, the relationship seems to be stable, it is also increasingly criticized by the people. According to a survey conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center in 2015, from 2007 to 2015, the proportion of the people who request to defend the provisions of secular state in the Constitution increased significantly from 54% to 64%. 47% of Russians believe that the Church should influence the spiritual life of society, but not interfere with politics.^[52] According to a survey conducted by the Levada-Center in 2017, although 39% of Russians are satisfied with the current interaction between the state and the religion, this proportion was reduced by 17% over 2016.^[53] It can be seen that under the influence of the “secularization” of religion in the field of ideology, at the social and institutional level, the call for religious secularization will also rise, and the “honeymoon period” between the Russian Orthodox Church and the state may end.

Finally, we will study the “desecularization” of Russian Orthodox development from the perspective of expansion of Orthodox education to the secular field and the integration of theological schools with secular schools. The Russian Orthodox Church successfully introduced “The Basics of Orthodox Culture” into the syllabus of primary and secondary schools, which can be regarded as a kind of success of “desecularization”. However, in the face of the relevant national educational laws and regulations, in order to attract more students to choose “The Basics of Orthodox Culture”, the Orthodox Church has to make certain concessions to “secularization”, such as the adjustment of methods of propagating the faith, the revision of the textbooks that were previously too religious. Joining the Bologna Process for the Russian Orthodox Church is not only a reform of theological schools in order to improve them, but also an action of the intended integration with secular education. The national recognition of the theological school’s diploma is bound to introduce certain secular educational courses and standards into theological schools. Although this reform is beneficial to the Orthodox Church, the theological school education will also be controlled to a certain extent by the state. This cannot be said to be anything but a process of secularization.

Therefore, although on the fact of it, Russia is experiencing the process of “desecularization” of religion (Orthodoxy), it is bound to face the problem of “secularization” in the process of realizing this process. For the Russian Orthodox Church and the state, how to find the balance between “desecularization” and “secularization” is the common task and challenge faced by both sides. The

[50] Berger, Peter L., *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Anchor Books, 1969, p. 133.

[51] Добрускин М. Е. Русская православная церковь на современном этапе // *Философия и общество*. 2016. №. 3. [Dobruskin M. E., “Russian Orthodox Church at the Present Stage”, *Philosophy and Community*, 2016, №. 3.]

[52] *Церковь и общество: вместе или порознь?* 24 июня 2015. [“Church and Society: Together or Separately?” June 24, 2015.] <https://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=61>

[53] *Религиозность*. 18. 07. 2017. [“Religiosity”. 18. 07. 2017.] <https://www.levada.ru/2017/07/18/religioznost/>

Russian Orthodox Church relies too much on the state to achieve its “desecularization”, which will make the Church face the possibility of losing its identity.

3.2 Unity of the Church

The unity of the Church has always been an arduous task for the Russian Orthodox Church. In the 17th century, the Nikonian reforms led to the division of the Russian Orthodox Church and the formation of the Old Ritualist (Old Believers) sects. In the 1920s, a series of events, including the revolution, the establishment of the new regime, led to the division of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia from the Mother Church. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the separatist tendency of some Orthodox Churches in the territory of the former Soviet Union became a huge challenge for the Russian Orthodox Church. On December 15, 2018, the establishment of the schismatic Ukrainian Orthodox Church subjected the unity of the Russian Orthodox Church to greater threat.^[54]

Historically, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have several times been divided and united; the split of the 15th century, and the unification of 17th century due to the integration of Ukraine into Russian territory, and the redivision of the 21st century. The split of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church rang alarm bells for the Russian Orthodox Church’s tripartite of “Church-state-nation”. In the early Christian Church, the boundaries of dioceses, archdioceses, and Patriarchates basically coincided with the boundaries of cities and countries. With the development of history, national territories changed, and the boundaries of the Church and the state were no longer consistent. Especially in the 20th century, due to the establishment of the Soviet Union, the two world wars, the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, and so on, the boundaries of the Church and the state majorly differed. Although the boundaries of the Church and state are not necessarily consistent, there is still a tendency observed in the world today that the Church’s boundary conforms to boundary of the state and the nation. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is a typical example. A direct consequence of the establishment of the new autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church is the situation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. As Ukrainian nationalism continues to rise, the newly established Ukrainian Orthodox Church has been fostered by the state, and it is likely to lead to the growth of the separatist tendencies among Ukrainian Orthodox believers and unstable factors in the dioceses around the world under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The schism of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church may also give some stimulation to the Belarusian Orthodox Church. At present, there is a good relationship between the Belarusian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church, but with the “example” of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, it has to consider a potential push for the independence of the Belarusian Orthodox Church. Firstly, Orthodox Christianity is the dominant religion in Belarus. The survey conducted by the Belarusian Sociological Center “Mirror-Information” (ЗЕРКАЛО-ИНФО) in March-April of 2013 shows that

[54] On December 15, 2018, a unifying council was held in Kiev, where the archbishop Epiphany Dumenko (Епифаний, Думенко) was elected as the head of the new Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kiev Patriarchate) (1992—2018) and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (1920—2018) announced their dissolutions. On January 5, 2019, Bartholomew (Варфоломей), Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, signed the Tomos (Томос)—a document that gave the Ukrainian Orthodox Church its autocephaly, and on January 6, 2019, the Tomos was given to Archbishop Epiphany.

Orthodox believers account for about 68% of the total population.^[55] Secondly, the Orthodox believers of Belarus are mainly Belarusians. Lastly, the Belarusian Orthodox Church already had a relatively complete administrative and clerical system. In 1989, the Russian Orthodox Church granted the Belarusian Orthodox Church the status of Exarchate (экзархат). It was established on the principles of the religion and nation. The Belarusian exarchate has a high level of autonomy, the highest legislative, law enforcement and judicial powers belong to the Synod headed by the archbishop of the Belarusian Orthodox Church, but the journal of the Synod of the Exarchate is to be submitted to the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, and approved by the Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus'. The archbishop of the Exarchate is elected by the Holy Synod of Moscow Patriarchate and appointed by the Patriarch. After the Crimean referendum on joining Russia, Belarusian nationalism rose, such as emphasizing the importance of the Belarusian language, the discussion of the Chinese translation of the country name (白俄罗斯 Baieluosi & 白罗斯 Bailuosi). In addition, the self-proclaimed "Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church" has been active since World War II, and regards the former Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church as its Mother Church. Although its power and influence are relatively weak, it is supported by a group of Belarusian emigrants. Therefore, the development trend of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, relations between Belarus and Russia, and the involvement of international forces will affect the development of separatist tendencies of the Belarusian Orthodox Church in the future.

The schism of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is also an alarm to the Russian Orthodox Church in handling relations with the five countries in Central Asia. At present, the Orthodox Church of these countries under the Moscow Patriarchate has relatively weak separatist tendencies. The main reasons are as follows: On one side, the Orthodoxy in these countries is a non-dominant religion, to a certain extent it has a greater need to be attached to the more powerful Mother Church. On the other side, the relationship between Russia and the five countries in Central Asia is relatively good, and the local Orthodox Church actively communicates and dialogues with the government. However, under the wave of global nationalism, as the nationalism of the five countries in Central Asia is increasingly awakened, the willingness to get rid of the influence of Russia is growing, especially in relatively powerful Kazakhstan, it is especially necessary to have a pleasant relationship between the Orthodox Church and the local government, the main ethnic group, and the dominant beliefs. Once the relationship between the states, nations, Orthodoxy and Islam deteriorates, the Orthodox Church in these countries as the minority will suffer, and this is likely to contribute to separatist tendencies; either to convert to other religions, or to join other Orthodox Churches. In addition, although the power of each Orthodox Church in these five countries is relatively weak, it does not rule out the consciousness and possibility of the creation of an independent, united Orthodox Church under the unified Central Asian Islamic space.

In summary, the unity of the Russian Orthodox Church is not a simple internal affair of the Church, it is closely related to international relations, ethnic relations and religious relations. The Constitution of the Russian Federation stipulates that Russia is a secular state, so the Orthodox

[55] Михайчиков Леонид Опрос: лишь 4% белорусов считают себя атеистами. 20 мая 2013. [Myachikov Leonid, "A Survey: Only 4% of Belarusians Consider Themselves Atheists". May 20, 2013.] [https://news.tut.by/society/349182.html? crnd=9106](https://news.tut.by/society/349182.html?crnd=9106)

Church must not interfere too much with state affairs in order to maintain unity, and must not be excessively involved in the secular field. Otherwise, it will lead to the secularization of the religion on the one hand mentioned in the first point above, and on the other hand will break the fragile balance of relations between the state and the Church and frustrate the Russian Orthodox Church at home.

3.3 Hidden dangers arising from the rapid growth and expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church

After decades of revival, the Russian Orthodox Church is now the most populous Church in the Orthodox world. Patriarch Kirill claims that the Russian Orthodox Church has 180 million followers.^[56] The boom of the Orthodox Church in Russia, steady development in the territory of the former Soviet Union, the revival among the diaspora, poses certain challenges to the other Orthodox Churches and the culture of other countries in the world, first and foremost, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. In recent years, there are many disagreements among the Orthodox Churches of Russia and Constantinople, and the disputes have escalated.

The emergence of the contradiction between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of Constantinople cannot be separated from their respective historical, realistic and cultural factors. From the Russian side, as the Russian Orthodox Church continues to grow and flourish, it begins to seek greater voice in the Orthodox world. A more prominent manifestation is the preparation and convening of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (Святой и Великий Собор Православной Церкви). In 1948, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church's autocephaly, the Russian Orthodox Church began to actively participate in the initiative and preparations of the Holy and Great Council of Orthodox Church. In 1996, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople tried to receive the Estonian Autonomous Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Constantinople) as a full member of the pre-Council of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church in order to enhance the status of the Estonian Autonomous Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox Church firmly opposed this act, and was supported by other Orthodox Churches. In June 2016, the Holy and Great Council of Orthodox Church was held in Crete, but on the eve of the Council, the Russian Orthodox Church refused to attend the Council. One of the reasons was that the Council did not fully take into account the views of the Russian Orthodox Church and ignored the suggestions of the Russian Orthodox Church to the document "Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World". We can see the strong sense of mission of the Russian Orthodox Church from these actions, such as the active initiative and preparation of the Holy and Great Council of Orthodox Church, and the reasons for refusing to attend the Council. This sense of mission has a long historical tradition and ideological foundation. As early as the 16th century, or even earlier, Filofei (Филофей Псковский, 1465—1542), elder of the Pskov Spaso-Eliazar monastery wrote a letter to the prince Vasily III (Василий III Иоаннович, 1505—1533), in which he proposed the idea of "Moscow-the third Rome". Constantinople is the second Rome, also the New Jerusalem, after its fall, Russia replaced Byzantium and became the third Rome, the new New Jerusalem, and thereafter there will be no fourth Rome. The Russian Orthodox Church of a Third Rome would naturally replace the leadership of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople of the Second

[56] Патриарх Кирилл: прихожанами РПЦ являются около 180 млн человек. 28 окт. 2017. ["Patriarch Kirill: about 180 Million People are Members of the ROC". Oct. 28, 2017.] <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/4684885>

Rome. This sense of the mission of the Russian Orthodox Church, combined with its current power, will impel it to seek greater voice in the Orthodox world and even the Christian world, and thus the controversy with the Orthodox Church of Constantinople is inevitable.

From the perspective of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, its status of *primus inter pares* among Orthodox Churches was established at the Fourth Ecumenical Council; in 1453, Byzantium fell, the power of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople was sharply reduced; in the 19th century, the Greek Church was separated from the Church of Constantinople; in the 1920s, the Ottoman Empire broke up, and the Patriarchate of Constantinople lost most of its believers, retaining only 5.255 million followers^[57]. Whether from the perspective of the number of believers, the Church's financial resources, or from the perspective of its influence, the voice of the Church of Constantinople in the Orthodox world is increasingly weak. In order to preserve its historical status and retain believers, in the 1920s, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople declared that all diaspora is under its justification, which caused conflict with the Russian Orthodox Church, which possesses a large global diaspora. In addition, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople has restored or established dioceses under the justification of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in some areas, such as the American Archdiocese^[58] and the Estonian Autonomous Orthodox Church (the Patriarchate of Constantinople); in 2008, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople arbitrarily included the Chinese mainland, Taiwan of China, and Southeast Asian countries in the archdiocese of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.^[59] On January 6, 2019, the Patriarch of Constantinople granted the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Tomos—the document of the recognition of the autocephaly, which gave a heavy blow to the unification of the Russian Orthodox Church. The series of actions of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople are not only driven by political and economic interests, but also stem from the sense of crisis of its status of *primus inter pares* among the Orthodox world, and this crisis mainly comes from the Russian Orthodox Church, which used to be its subsidiary Church.

The fight for “big brother” status between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of Constantinople is difficult to assess, which will be the winner in the short term. Orthodox Christianity is a relatively conservative religion which values tradition. It is difficult to undermine the history, especially the tradition and facts recognized by the seven ecumenical councils. And the strong sense of the mission of the Russian Orthodox Church will drive it to act as the savior of the Orthodox world. Therefore, the controversy between them may continue for a long time. In addition, the absolute priority and special treatment of the Orthodox Church in Russia has also caused dissatisfaction from other traditional religions, especially Islamic groups. There are many hidden dangers during the expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church in regions of the world not traditionally Orthodox, such as development and spread in Europe and Latin America where Catholicism is dominant, in the Southeast Asian where Buddhism is dominant, in China and North

[57] “Ecumenical Patriarchate”, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/ecumenical-patriarchate>.

[58] The Orthodox Church of Constantinople does not recognize the autocephalous status of Orthodox Church in America, which got the Tomos from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1970.

[59] The Russian Orthodox Church stated the decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople was illegal, and was the interference in the internal affairs of Chinese Church. See: Dmitry I. Petrovsky “Modern State and Perspectives of the Orthodox Church in China”, *International Journal of Sino-Western Studies*, No. 14, (2018), 80.

Korea where atheism is dominant, hostility from the local dominant ethnic groups and dominant beliefs, fusion with the local dominant culture, and changes to adapt to the local culture which challenge Orthodox tradition.

The first decade of Kirill's tenure was an innovative decade in the development of the Russian Orthodox Church. In the past ten years, the Orthodox Church has not only inherited and developed the traditional model, but also carried out the necessary reform in order to cope with the needs of reality. As the Orthodox Church became more and more powerful, challenges from political, religious, social, and cultural angles in Russia and abroad are increasing. Understanding the present condition and trends of the development of Russian Orthodox Church, analyzing the hidden problems and dangers, will help us to more fully understand the spiritual life, relations between the state and religion and diplomatic characteristics of contemporary Russia, and also help us to establish more healthy and effective relations between China and Russia.

中文题目:

基里尔任牧首十年来俄罗斯东正教会的发展研究——传承、转型与挑战

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提要:1988 年, 罗斯受洗千年之际, 俄罗斯东正教复兴的序幕徐徐拉开。历经 30 余年的发展, 东正教如今已成为俄罗斯社会一股重要的精神文化力量。30 年间, 俄罗斯东正教会历经三位牧首——皮缅、阿列克西二世和基里尔。本文拟以基里尔 2009 年就任牧首以来俄罗斯东正教会所开展的工作为考察对象, 理清俄罗斯东正教会在教会内部建设、与世俗领域互动和与基督宗教其他派别的对话等方面工作的传承, 解读俄罗斯东正教会从“量”的增长到“质”的提升式发展模式的转型, 剖析俄罗斯东正教会所面临的“非世俗化”与“世俗化”的张力、教会统一的威胁、教会快速增长扩张所带来的挑战。

关键词:俄罗斯东正教会; 牧首基里尔; 俄罗斯东正教会转型