## Elena Pinyugina Islam and Russian Orthodox Church in Russia after Collapse of the Soviet Union: Analysis of Interreligious Relationship

Current relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and Islamic organizations in Russia is marked by three tendencies: mutual tolerance, competition and cooperation.

## Tolerance: tradition, consolidation, challenges

If we take up the topic of tolerance between Islamic adherents and adepts of the Orthodox Church in Russia, it's worth noting that these religions exist within a certain historic context and the main influence over their relationship does not stem from the religious doctrines alone. It all begins at the level of relations between neighbors, colleagues, classmates who are all citizens of Russia and some of whom have been born in the USSR. Most part of this population consists of nominal Orthodox Christians and Muslims. They don't pray, don't participate in the church's ceremonies, and don't follow the most part of strict religious prescriptions. For them, religion means just another cultural marker of nationality. There's a certain definition of this phenomenon in the Russian social and political language: ethnical Orthodox, ethnical Muslim. Heritage of Russia's unique historical past consists in peaceful coexistence of its plural nationalities, abundance of mixed marriages, and with rare exceptions absence of interethnic hostilities. The Soviet State has contributed a lot to the cultivation of civil fellowship and solidarity, to the respect of languages and traditions of each nationality among its citizens. This model has been transferred to interethnic relationship in the post-Soviet era: despite the fact that many citizens of the former atheist state showed interest towards religion, its collapse didn't bring about dissent and conflicts. Paying tribute to the clerical administrative bodies of both Russian Orthodox Church and Islamic organizations and their authorized representatives, we should admit that they always stand out for peace, mutual respect and tolerance. Most Russians understand that conflicts in the Caucasus and terrorist acts in many Russian cities have been brought about not by revival of Islam but by political interests of various actors, including foreign ones. Similarly, most ethnic Muslims understand that Russia is their homeland where no one restrains manifestations of their national and religious identities and no one discriminates them on the basis of their religious adherence. Social research shows that the level of tolerance in the regions where Orthodox Christians coexist with Muslims is higher than the average level in the country. Moreover, religious intolerance in Russia is not a religious phenomenon at all; it has pure social and political origins. Much to astonishment of scientists, the research showed no dependence between respondent's religious intolerance and intensity of his/her religious worship, frequency of respondent's visits to church/mosque, prayers, reading of Bible/Koran, depth of his/her religious beliefs and importance of religion in the respondent's life.<sup>1</sup> It means that intolerance of an average Russian citizen results not from his/her religious adherence but from his/her political platform or nationalist beliefs. Implicitly, this fact predetermines friendliness and tolerance that form the foundation of both religions.

Furthermore, there are also historic traditions. Special tolerance between the Muslim society and the Russian Orthodox Church is based on the Russian Empire's tradition of state-religion affairs. Russian state had created a well-organized system of management, control and support of religious organizations, including some specific questions belonging to the spiritual life of all Empire's citizens (for example, this included support of Orthodox monasteries, which constituted a very special form of spiritual life, or maintenance of Sharia court system for Muslims). Despite official status of the Orthodox religion, Empire's authorities recognized and respected Muslim's feelings and traditions, and the Muslims paid back by loyalty up to participation in the wars on the side of the Czar's army. This policy resulted in strengthening of benevolence and tolerance among common religious adherents of the Russian Empire, as well as between clergymen of different confessions towards each other.

Incredible as it may seem, atheism of the Soviet state contributed to the strengthening of tolerance between the clergies of these religions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Soviet state depressed all forms of religiosity and destroyed Orthodox churches as well as Muslim mosques, making no difference between them in its atheistic policy. In this situation churchmen had difficulties with preserving traditions and upholding the faith among the population, and they sympathized with followers of other confessions. Sometimes adherents of different religions met in the Stalinist camps.

However, it's worth noting that some elements of the Muslim culture hadn't been prosecuted as opposed to the total oppression of the Orthodox

<sup>1 |</sup> Main summary of the project was presented on December 12, 2005 in the discourse "Orthodox Church, Islam and religious intolerance in Russia" at the international congress devoted to the dialogue of cultures and religions in Bilbao (Spain) under the aegis of UNESCO. http://portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=news&id=38842

religious identity. The Soviet power conducted a flexible nationalist policy in the Muslim regions. Economic and social programs favored families with many children in this area. A tradition of marriages arranged by parents and payment of bride-wealth had been preserved. Population of the Soviet Muslim republics continued to perform circumcision of boys and funeral ceremonies in accordance with the Muslim practices. Many Muslim women continued to wear Hijab which was regarded as normal. All these Islamic dogmas were considered part of ethnic Muslims' cultural tradition and thus were not prosecuted. These practices were followed even in the ethnic Muslim families of high-ranking officials and members of the Communist Party. At the same moment, Orthodox christenings were conducted in secrecy and often when the children grew up they didn't know whether they'd been baptized or not.

Despite absence of bans on performing traditional rituals, religious ideology was of course criticized throughout the country, regardless of the religion. But in this regard again, the Muslims had more opportunities for performing spiritual rites and conducting common prayers at gatherings since Islam doesn't require mandatory presence of priests for administering the sacrament. Also, Muslims could observe their religious holidays under the pretence of national holidays, while Orthodox Christians were persecuted for open celebration of their religious holidays. Thus, the nationalist policy of the Soviet power to some extent contributed the fact that in the Soviet era Russian Muslims didn't learn to hate the central authorities for religious discrimination. Generally, separatist tendencies in the Muslim regions and republics after collapse of the Soviet Union were brought about by nationalist trends.

At the new stage of the Russian history, starting from the 1990s, the modern democracy in Russia declared it as the duty of state to encourage revival of Islamic and Orthodox spiritual traditions, supporting the building of Islamic mosques and Orthodox Christian places of worship, providing educational possibilities for clergy at schools and university's level. The only condition for provision of financial support to representatives of "traditional religions of the peoples of Russia"<sup>2</sup> was their observance of tolerance in public statements and public activities.

In the frame of this state-assigned paradigm, interreligious relations quickly acquired their institutional forms in Russia. The new system was implemented in *Interreligious Council of Russia* (further referred to as ICR) in 1998. It was founded not by the state institutions or by functionaries, but by organizations, representing the so-called traditional religions of the peoples of Russia: the Buddhist traditional sangha of Russia, the Congress of Jewish religious communities and organizations of Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church and two Muslim structures — Council of Muftis of Russia (CMR) and the Central Spiritual Governance for Muslims of Russia and the European countries of the CIS (CSGM).

<sup>2 |</sup> Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism.

According to the founding document of this consultative body, it serves as a mechanism for coordination of traditional religious organizations for the purpose of consolidation and development of the dialogue between them, provision and support of interreligious and interethnic peace, achievement of consensus and stability in the society, prevention of conflicts on the ethnic and confessional grounds, assertion of traditional spiritual values in the society, and dialogue with the Russian state authorities. As described in the Regulation on ICR, the aim of this organization is not to approach confessions and doctrines; it addresses solely social life issues and defends interests of the religious organizations that it represents.

The question of proselytism, important for both confessions that strive to pass along the universal truth, is resolved along the tolerance lines between the Orthodox Christians and the Muslims. This is how Kirill, the present Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church addressed this issue: «At large, there's no such question as the conversion of ethnic Orthodox Christians to Islam. ... It's true that each year several dozens of Russians turn to Islam as the result of spiritual quests or mixed marriages; however, even more ethnic Muslims become Christians for the same reasons. Such changes of religious faith do not result from a purposeful activity of the Russian Orthodox Church or of traditional Muslim centers of Russia and do not complicate interreligious relations. Our religions first of all aim at reviving the traditional religious spirit each in its respective territory, and it's obvious that we should abandon mutual proselvtism in the favor of peaceful coexistence<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, Orthodox priests usually address their sermons to followers of their faith and to those ethnic Orthodox Christians (Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians) who do not lead an active religious life or are members of other Christian associations that are new to Russia, as well as to those who are members of totalitarian sects. The Muslims act in a similar manner. When these nonofficial boundaries are violated, conflicts of various levels emerge. A serious challenge to existing tolerance between the leaders of Muslim religious organizations and the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church is brought about by increasing migration flows that move from the Muslim countries of the CIS and adverse regions of the Caucasus into numerous Russian cities. Xenophobia towards newcomers on the one hand, disrespect for traditions of the native population on the other hand result in population's negative reaction toward construction of mosques in cities and districts that never had them before. Negative attitude towards immigrants associated with their behavior is then transferred towards the Islam.

Second challenge to tolerance has been brought be religious revival among post-Soviet population. In the absence of state–Imposed bans

<sup>3 |</sup> How relation between the Russian Orthodox religion and the Islam is formed in Russia. Interview of Kirill, metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, Nezavisimaya Gazeta — Religion. Reading Mode: http://religion.ng.ru/facts/2000-04-26/1\_relations.html

people actively launched their spiritual quests. Thus, newly converted Muslims appeared in the regions that had never had ethnic Muslims before and started active campaigns advocating building of mosques and of Islamic culture centers, and promoted conversion of ethnic Orthodox Christians to Islam.

At the same time, Christian missionaries (adepts of Catholic, Protestant and sometimes Orthodox Churches) appear in indigenous Muslim regions and among ethnic Muslims. Sincere position of the missionaries presupposes making some declarations regarding doctrines of other religions. Sometimes it's difficult for ministers, both Muslim and Orthodox ones, to stay within the limits of theoretical theological disputes. However, the absence of reconcilement between positions of spiritual leaders and their subordinates, as well as common misunderstanding of a necessary balance between religious testimony and civil tolerance towards other religions may bring dangerous effects in the decades to come.

Still there are opposite examples, when conflicts of interests between missionaries are resolved in a tolerant manner. One of such cases happened as Muslim soldiers served in a military unit where Orthodox priest came to hold a service<sup>4</sup>. Anxiety of Muslim spiritual leaders in cases like this is caused not by the presence of Muslim adepts at an Orthodox rite or by observance of Christian holidays by their comrades-In-arms, but by the possibility of conversion of Muslim soldiers into the Orthodox Christianity as the result of the priest's missionary sermon. The fact that the religious piety usually increases during the military service term is widely known. Thus, the army turns into a fertile ground for missionaries who adhere to the tolerance principles. Not always Islamic spiritual organizations can provide each ethnic Muslim with a personal mullah, since many military units are located far away from large towns. These episodes serve as a starting point as Muslim leaders criticize the Russian central authorities for providing the Russian Orthodox Church with exclusive privileges while Islam ranks second popular religion in Russia and doesn't have such opportunities. The situation is complicated by the fact that Muslims live not only compactly in certain regions but are also dispersed throughout the country. Certainly, an ethnic Muslim raised somewhere in the Siberia, in a family that didn't follow religious traditions, may serve his military term somewhere in the Far East and not necessarily in the Muslim Tatarstan that is totally foreign for him. Nevertheless, the Russian Orthodox Church has a full right to take care of the moral well-being of the Russian soldiers that are ethnic Orthodox Christians. Yet some fervent Muslim leaders call for a total prohibition of religious counseling in the military units since there are no equal opportunities for conducting Muslim services as well<sup>5</sup>. Leading public figures were at first worried that activities of the Russian

<sup>4 |</sup> http://www.regions.ru/news/2144738/print/

<sup>5</sup> http://i-r-p.ru/page/stream-event/index-20501.html

Orthodox Church in the army would lead to increase of interreligious tensions. They pointed out that similar activities of the Russian Church in the Empire's army could not be repeated at the present time. In the Empire's army, military units were formed on the national basis and thus were monoconfessional. Thereby mullahs took care of the Muslim military units, while Orthodox priests held sermons in the Orthodox ones. There are no divisions by confession in the present army, so fears have been voiced that soldiers would start to differentiate their attitude to their comrades-In-arms on the religious basis. Luckily, during public debates the question about chaplains has been resolved in a cooperative manner. The spokespersons of the Orthodox Church have proposed to share their accumulated experience of religious services in the military ranks with representatives of Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. In June 2007 these representatives were invited to participate in educational trainings of chaplains in the Novgorod military unit in order to exchange their experience. At these trainings statistical data was revealed that enabled to calculate a necessary amount of churchmen for conduction of sermons and prayers in the army and in the field churches/mosques. According to these statistics, 83 % of Russian army's members consider themselves to be Orthodox Christians, 8% — Muslims, while the rest (9%) profess Judaism, Buddhism and other religions<sup>6</sup>. As the result of the compromise reached between representatives of the Orthodox Church, Islam and Judaism, the President of the Russian Federation has addressed a special request to the Ministry of Defense to create a nation-wide legal, organization and financial basis for a speedy creation of chaplain institution in the Armed Forces and the Navy of the Russian Federation.

## Competition

Both Islamic and Orthodox religions strive to increase their influence over the society. Ambitious leaders of some Muslim organizations and individual imams, as well as the head of the Russian Orthodox Church and the clergy participate in important political events and actions, express their opinions in the mass media about developments in the country and in the world and address their flock by giving their interpretations of certain political news. Both religions try to establish consulting mechanisms with federal and local authorities. The Muslims have repeatedly argued for introduction of a vice-president post designed especially to promote interests of Muslims in Russia. State symbols of Russia that possess certain Christian elements often come under fire of some Muslim critics. A wide celebration of the date of Conversion of Russia into the Christianity has provoked a response action of

<sup>6 |</sup> Missionaries will land into the troops. Muslims, Judaists and Buddhists plan to send their chaplains to the Army. http://www.vremya. ru/2007/110/12/181466.html

Muslims to introduce a Conversion to Islam holiday which would be totally incompatible with the historical and political realities of Russia. Before becoming a part of Russia, each Muslim region had its own history, language and national culture, different from other Muslim regions; thus adoption of Islam took place at different times in various regions. Conversion to Islam didn't bring unification of these Muslim regions. What unites the Muslim peoples of Russia is not their religious identity but their appurtenance to the Russian State. On the contrary, the conversion of Russia into Christianity had served to unite the Russian lands, to introduce a unified Old Church Slavonic language that laid foundation for the all-Russian writing and cultural systems.

Such actions of Muslim leaders aimed at increasing the importance of Islam at the national social and political life have made the country's authorities ponder over the idea of unification of isolated Muslim societies in order to solve such questions with mutual efficiency both for the Muslims and for the state. At the moment, the project of uniting three major Russian Islam organizations (Council of Muftis of Russia, Russia's Central Spiritual Governance for Muslims and Coordination Center of the Muslims of the Northern Caucasus) has not been completed, although negotiations started several years ago. It's worth noting that the Russian Orthodox Church sustains fruitful relations on a regular basis with these largest Muslim organizations in different regions, and the members of the Council of Muftis of Russia accept with understanding the fact that the Muslims of this country are represented by leaders of several structures.

However, certain Muslim spokespersons fervently criticize officials for non-sufficient, in their opinion, support of Islam in their local regions. Such nontolerant attacks reflect the views of politically active Muslims who ignore the fact that Russian ethnos remains the state-forming ethnos in Russia. So it's only natural that the Orthodox religion continues to play the first role in regions populated mostly by Russians, with the respect for the freedom of religion that ethnic and confessional minorities enjoy. Not a single political leader of the country or a spokesperson of the Russian Orthodox Church or even a common citizen has for once doubted in public the Islam's right to play a leading role in political and cultural life of Muslim regions in Russia, despite a sufficient percentage of non-Muslim population in these regions. Political leaders and officials of the Muslim regions openly demonstrate their religious commitment. Refusal to acknowledge similar rights of the state officials to support the Orthodox culture at the rest of the Russian Federation's territory launches a serious threat to the tolerance principles and gives evidence of unhealthy competition for financial and administrative support of the state authorities. Such attacks take place despite the fact that the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill has repeatedly underlined importance of all traditional religions of Russia for preservation of the state's stability and development of the society under the threat of globalization and westernization challenges. On numerous occasions he has

declared that moral foundations of Islam and Orthodox religion, the values upheld by these religions are congenial and that both Muslims and Orthodox adepts trace their origins to Abraham.

## Cooperation

Orthodox and Islamic spiritual organizations pursue similar aims in their dialogue with the state authorities. First of all, they call for restitution of the real estate that had been nationalized from the churches and spiritual organizations after the revolution of 1917, including buildings presently occupied by museums and land lots. The Russian Orthodox Church is interested in the restitution of about 3 million hectares of land, while the Muslim organizations possessed about 200 thousand hectares of land before the revolution<sup>7</sup>. Second, both religious establishments strive to receive various tax benefits. Federal law №40-FZ dated April 5, 2010 introduces the notion of "socially oriented non-commercial organizations" and obliges the state to support them. Since charity is the main activity of most religious organizations, legislative initiatives provide for their tax benefits. Besides, they stipulate conditions for toll-free placement and distribution of social advertisements and literature aimed at charitable purposes. Volunteer works under the auspices of religious organizations and their services and gifts to religious organizations are considered as nontaxable benefits. Third, both religions support each other in terms of using the state mechanisms in order to prevent other religions from spreading their influence inside Russia. These rival religions include such newly appeared religions as Krishnaism, Scientology, Christian and Muslim branches of foreign origin (the Protestants, as well as the Muslim Wahhabites and members of terrorist groups). The latter seem to be the most dangerous as their activities compromise both the Christian religion and the Islam in each other's perception and in the eyes of the atheists.

Fourth, leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church and official Islamic divisions need administrative support of the state bodies in dealing with breakaway groups that left official Orthodox church or Islamic spiritual organizations and created alternative sects that attract adepts and make use them or hurt them. Such agents often spread libels about official religious organizations, cause panic among adepts of the same religion and sow discord among believers towards the external world.

Another block of questions where the Orthodox Christians and the Muslims sometimes cooperate and sometime compete, deals with promotion of religious education into the state system of education. Thus, the Orthodox leaders advocate integration of religious educational establishment into

7 | Religion's economic claims // Novaya Gazeta. M., 2009. September, 26. Access mode: http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/ search?q=cache:http://www.novayagazeta.ru/data/2009/071/33.html&hl=ru&strip=1

the national system of higher education and acknowledgement of religious education's diplomas at the state's level (this would enable graduates of religious educational establishments to find employment outside of churches and religious establishments). The Russian Orthodox Church calls for introduction of scholastic degrees (PhD of theology and doctor of theology) into the state's system of attestation of scientists; while this discipline is included into humanitarian sciences of many countries, the campaign has encountered serious obstacles in Russia. These attempts of the Russian Orthodox Church are not challenged by the representatives of Muslim community since all traditional religions would have benefited from this innovation.

Second important aim of the Russian Orthodox Church is to introduce the subject of the "Essential elements of the Orthodox religion" into the state high schools. Muslim leaders have opposed this endeavor and criticized the state for protecting the interests of the Russian Orthodox Church in the system of education<sup>8</sup>. At the same time, Islam receives a similar administrative and financial support of the state in the educational system. According to the "Plan of measures for education of specialists with advanced knowledge of Islamic history and culture in 2007-2010", approved by the decree of the Russian government № 775-r dated 14.06.2007, in 2007 the state allotted at least 300 million rubles for the development of Islamic religious education<sup>9</sup>. In the same 2007, about 800 million rubles (almost 35 million dollars) were received by the Muslim religious organizations from additional sources "with active participation of the state"<sup>10</sup>. The general scheme works as follows: subsidies are allocated for a certain state university who has partnership with a certain Muslim college. As the result, a lot of educational books, methodic works and reference materials, textbooks, monographs and popular scientific literature have been published. There are some proofs of "positive discrimination" in the frame of this program, as some prestigious state universities enroll students on the basis of quotas (based on religion), upon the recommendations of the Muslim spiritual organizations. Because of this program's efficient implementation, the number of Islamic universities exceeds the number of Orthodox ones in Russia<sup>11</sup>.

As for the social work, representatives of the Orthodox church and of the Muslim organizations often participate in public debates, including TV shows, and defend together the same traditional values: adherence to religious beliefs, support of family, motherhood and childhood, respect

<sup>8 |</sup> Muslims sabotage the "Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture" http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=796714 Muslims of Dagestan propose to substitute the subject Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture in high schools Religious Studies http://www.pravoslavie.ru/ news/28393.htm

<sup>9 |</sup> Figures cited from: *Ponkin I.V.* About Contents, Trends and Consequences of Realization of the Plan of Measures for Education of Specialists with Advanced Knowledge of Islamic History and Culture in 2007–2010. Research Note. Access mode: http://www.verav.ru/common/mpublic.php?num=194

<sup>10 |</sup> Refer to: public declaration of A.A.Grishin, counselor of the President's Administration: 800 million rubles have been allocated with participation of the state authorities to development of Islamic community in Russia in 2007// http://www.interfax-religion.ru/ islam/?act=news&div=22887. — 14.02.2008.

<sup>11 |</sup> This statement implies not clerical schools, but faith — based universities, supported by the state.

for labor, patriotism, as opposed to such values as secularism, priority of sexual freedom, juvenile judiciary<sup>12</sup>, non-restrained freedom of speech. As an example of mutual support, the Russian Orthodox Church has rejoiced in indignation of the Muslims over the publication of caricatures of Prophet Muhammad in Denmark, while the Muslim leaders opposed distribution in Russia of the «Da Vinci Code» movie that distorts traditional Christian values. While the Russian Orthodox Church called its adherents to boycott this movie, the Muslim leaders expressed even greater resentment, threatening to provoke street riots<sup>13</sup> if this movie is released in Russia.

As the result of accumulated interactions between religions, both positive and negative, in 2008members of the Interreligious Council of Russia published a Declaration<sup>14</sup> that postulated that:

— Representatives of traditional religions in Russia should bear responsibility for their declarations (which should be well thought-out) and should understand the fragility and delicacy of the interreligious dialogue;

— Very often in the modern world some materials and publications appear that create a negative image of certain religions, distort their principles and insult their adherents; these works acquire support of certain political organizations within the reference to the freedom of speech and creativity in the cultural sphere, education and mass media. If such practice is not stopped, this would lead to radicalization of religious communities and would create unacceptable conditions for cohabitation of people with different views and beliefs.

Another sphere of cooperation between the Muslims and the Orthodox Christians lies within the struggle with the drug abuse, alcoholism<sup>15</sup> and the spread of the AIDS<sup>16</sup>. One more example of cooperation took place after the outburst of the Georgia's military operations in the South Ossetia: Orthodox Christians and Muslims of the North Caucasus together collected and transferred funds and articles of daily necessity to the fellow citizens in the South Ossetia<sup>17</sup>.

A good example of cooperation in the political sphere was a joint action of Orthodox and Muslim youth in Moscow in commemoration of ancestors who fought with fascism during the Second World War<sup>18</sup>. Organization of youth conferences and summer camps for Orthodox and Muslim adherents in the Caucasus launched by the political and spiritual leaders of the South

<sup>12 |</sup> Declaration of the Presidium of Interreligious Council of Russia for the questions of defense of family's and children's rights http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1144016.html

<sup>13 |</sup> http://www.regnum.ru/news/642140.html

<sup>14</sup> Declaration of the Interreligious Council of Russia for the culture of interreligious relations in Russia and in the world http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/387502.html

<sup>15 |</sup> Muslims and Orthodox will reinforce their struggle with alcoholism http://www.rian.ru/society/20090220/162672229.html

<sup>16 |</sup> Moscow hosts a conference devoted to interaction of religious communities with AIDS prevention and help the HIV positive people http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/490689.html

<sup>17 |</sup> http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/450432.html

<sup>18</sup> A youth action "Faith and Victory" took place in the capital city. — Access mode: http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/234042.html

federal district aims at long-term targets<sup>19</sup> and forms a good tradition that could be transferred to other Russian regions.

However, there are some alarming signals that fall outside of the tolerance-competition-cooperation triangle in the interreligious dialogue. These principles should be supported not only by the leaders of the spiritual organizations, but also by the missionaries and common priests, by the middle level of clergy and by politically active population with explicit religious adherence. A particular risk remains with the youth whose views might differ from the traditional ones and who tends to call in question their values and fairness. If the present leaders do not start to educate a new generation who will take over after the present Soviet or post-Soviet generation of Orthodox and Muslim spiritual leaders are gone, the adepts of both religions might end with antagonism instead of tolerance, conflicts instead of cooperation and hostility and dissent instead of a healthy competition. A similar responsibility rests with political leaders who use religious rhetoric and with functionaries who oversee questions of assistance to religious communities: all of them should understand the consequences of their actions in the long-term perspective.

<sup>19 | &</sup>quot;Tolerance is the key to success": <u>http://www.stapravda.ru/20100803/letniy lager pravoslavnoy i musulmanskoy molodezhi</u> <u>deystvuet v n 47111.html</u>; Youth religious forum gathered Muslim and Orthodox adepts of the North-Caucasus federal district in Grozny. –Access mode: <u>http://www.stapravda.ru/20100727/molodezhnyy religioznyy forum sobral musulman i pravoslavnykh sk 46961.html</u>