

SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTION FORMS OF CHURCH AND STATE ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Abstract

Purpose: the aim of the undertaken study is to consider the dynamics of the church-state relationship in the context of Russian new cultural tendencies at the turn of the century.

Methodology: Thus, The methodological basis of the research was formed by philosophical analysis of the church-state relationship, historicism and comparison principles. The following tasks were being solved: defining the interaction ways between the religious organizations and the state on the modern stage of the Russian society development; pointing out the prospects of consolidation of both the church and the state around the democratic civil society fostering program in XXI century; revealing the need to promote respectful attitude towards human values as an integral part of spiritual culture.

Result: The authors achieved the following results within the study: A wider notions of church and state were introduced demonstrating the similarity of some of their functions: offering moral guidance for social well-being; historic doctrinal models “caesaropapism”, “papocaesarism” and “symphony(concordance) of powers” were identified and characterized alongside with their secular counterparts - separation and cooperation models of church-state relationship. In conclusion of the article the urgent need for the transition of church-state relationship from political to social and cultural spheres was justified.

Applications: This research can be used for the universities, teachers, and students.

Novelty/Originality: In this research, the model of Socio-Cultural Interaction Forms of Church and State on the Example of the Russian Orthodox Church is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

Keywords: church-state relationship, interaction models, cooperation, separation, orthodox, symphony of powers, religious, secular

INTRODUCTION

The undertaken study is relevant due to the necessity to consider the new cultural and social tendencies in Russia we are witnessing. The historic processes that have taken place on the cusp of centuries (XX –XXI) demonstrate a deep transformation of all spheres of social life: economic, political and cultural. The crash of the Soviet Union with its communist ideology, the transition to different forms of economic activity and public management resulted not just in the decline of citizens’ material state, but also in a spiritual crisis, urging to research for a way to overcome it turning to traditional moral values attributed to any religion (Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism)([Bessonova, 1998](#)),([Mefodeva, 2016](#)). However, religion is represented by church, according to the typology by a German theologian Ernst Troeltsch ([Smelser,1998](#)) (among other forms are a sect, a denomination and a cult), which has a key advantage: it has close links with broad segment of population and is usually connected to the state with a measure of adaptation. Another competitive form of religious organization is a sect – opposing the state and, as a result, lacking influence and isolated. Since the most powerful organizational form of religion is a church, the authors use it as a baseline of the study, having narrowed down to considering a certain one in order to provide a coherent approach to the problem.

The present research focuses on the analysis of the church-state relations of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) because, at first, it has been dominating throughout the Russian state history and has cultural interaction experience – “the symphony; and secondly, ROC is the biggest and most influential contemporary religious organization not only in Russia but also in Belarus and Ukraine. So its ties affect the whole current church politics in this one and neighboring countries. It is even of greater topicality to consider a native traditional institution (the guardian of the Russian language, mentality, culture as a whole) in the times of massive information penetration of the western values of material welfare priority and emerging of a new consumerist society ([Fakhrutdinova, 2015](#)).

The problem of church-state relations in modern Russian society is being legally regulated by the Federal law “Religious freedom and faith-based organizations”. Although cases of stepping outside the bounds of the law by both public officials and church representatives are not uncommon. This fact evidences that church-state relations are on the threshold of reformation and new models of interaction are to appear. There is an objective necessity to analyze their evolution in the soviet and post-soviet periods, recognize the reasons for the deformation and, what is more important, identify the forms of cultural interaction between the state and religious organizations. This should consequently foster the social consolidation of people with different beliefs on the basis of everlasting human values and lead to social stabilization and civil peace.

The controversial issue of the church-state interaction attracts attention of historians, theologians, philologists, philosophers. The greatest number of latest works are devoted to the history of church-state relationships: monographs by V.A. Alekseev, N.S. Borisov, E.A. Vyshlenkova, A. Nikolin, M.I. Odintsov, M.V. Shkarovskiy, R.G. Skrynnikov, B.A. Uspenskiy, ([Odintsov Odintsov, 1989](#)) and others. The Russian religious philosophers S.N. Bulgakov, S.L. Frank, I.A. Ilyin, N.O. Losskiy, V.S. Soloviev, V.V. Zenkovskiy, ([Frank, 1992](#)) dwelled upon the church's social role and social essence of the state in their works. The issue of the religion's influence on the spiritual and moral social development is being covered by M.N. Bessonov, V.N. Bondarenko, I.M. Bocharova, Yu.B. Kozlova, L.K. Kurochkin, L.A. Morozova, V.S. Polosin, D.V. Pospelovskiy ([Pospelovskiy, 1995](#)). Recently there appeared thesis and research works containing the analysis of religious doctrines and their significance for defining the position and role of the church in the modern Russian society (A.V. Babaeva, V.P. Sidorov, K.V. Ventyugov) ([Sidorov, 1996](#)); the issue of ROC's relation to the new religious movements is of great interest (T.A. Bazhan, L.I. Grigorieva, V.N. Raguzin, V.A. Vovchenko) ([Bazhan, 2000](#)); historical and philological studies of the relationship between Russian Orthodox Church and state were undertaken by R. M. Akhmedov, A.A. Peredelskiy, G.A. Potapenko ([Akhmedov, 2001](#)).

But despite the great interest to the problem, the issue of church-state historic and cultural forms, of their adequacy for the present cultural situation in the Russian society of the XXI century characterized by the search for spiritual values is not studied thoroughly enough. Besides, few works present an objective unbiased approach to the church and state.

Materials and methods

The object of the research is the church-state relationship in Russian society.

The subjects of the research are historic and cultural forms and dynamics of church-state interrelations.

The aim of the study is to consider the dynamics of the church-state relationship in the context of new cultural tendencies in Russia at the turn of the century (XX-XXI). In order to achieve the aim, the following tasks were solved:

- Defining the interaction ways between the religious organizations and the state on the modern stage of Russian society development;
- Pointing out the prospects for the consolidation of both the church and the state around the democratic civil society fostering program in XXI century;
- Revealing the need to promote a respectful attitude towards human values as an integral part of spiritual culture.

The methodological basis was formed by:

- Philosophical analysis of the church-state relationship, enabling to consider their dynamics and evolution;
- Historicism principle, making it possible to demonstrate the necessity of the church-state cohesion at a time of society democratization;
- Comparison principle, enabling to identify the peculiarities of the church-state relationship in the XXI century opposed to that in a prior period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the present research, we have considered the essential characteristics of church and state from 2 interrelated cultural traditions: philosophical and doctrinal or theological. The approach used by theologians and Russian religious philosophers are dramatically different from that of secular interpreters. Within secular tradition church is an organization of religious followers based on a common doctrine and cult. The state is a political organization of society, possessing a management apparatus, dominance, and violence structure. Both definitions reflect just the external side of the issue. Doctrinal, philosophical and religious understanding of the church's essence ([Eliade, 1994](#)) comes down to the idea that church is an earthly form of Christ's existence, the soul of the world, an ecumenical foundation and spiritual basis of society. The main principle of the church is universalism, expressed in Christ's famous imperative: "There is neither Jew nor Greek.., nor Scythian" (Epistle to the Colossians (Chap.3) Church-state relationship within the doctrinal tradition implies obedience to state authorities "Each soul should be obedient to supreme power, for there is only a God-given power". The state is understood as a God-ordained opportunity to maintain social life, avoiding the evil of sinful earthly existence. The objective of the church, therefore, is the eternal salvation of people through their moral and spiritual guidance; the state's aim is providing earthly well-being. The freedom of church from the state should be understood as a necessity and liberty to fulfill these noble social obligations independently from mutual influence or opposition. Thus, church is intended to preach the truth, and state – to defend its citizens irrelevant of their religious beliefs.

The history of church-state interrelations began with persecution and oppression from the state. In a further development, the relations took various shapes: from peaceful coexistence and mutual help to utter indifference and ignoring church by the state ([Polosin, 1993](#)). It is noteworthy that the state, as a rule, forced the church to yield to dictated conditions guided by the principle "cuius regio, eius religio" (subjects should follow the religion of their ruler). Christian church guided by the notions of non-violence and lenity strived to help, support and consolidate state, especially in periods of its high social significance and authority due to relevant public policy ([Vasilieva, 1999](#)).

The analysis of church-state relations and a wider interpretation of the notions of church and state suggests the similarity of some of their functions. It is crucial that taking into account the complexity and contrariety of church-state relationships, their interests meet in one point: the state provides the church with legal status on its territory and the church is concerned about moral health of a nation, which harmonizes their social interaction. These refer to uniting and consolidating people, coordinating and maintaining moral standards in everyday activities. Thus, both public institutions are aimed at providing moral foundation and social harmony on the basis of universal human values. However, church and state have different natures: church is a representative of heavenly matters in mundane affairs, the soul of society and culture; state is its corpus, form-shaping principle (Ilyin, 1995). In this respect the historical problem of their relations and the challenge to combine heavenly and earthly motives were reflected in different interaction forms and models. The doctrinal tradition points out “caesaropapism”, “papocaesarism” and “symphony (concordance) of powers” (Katin, 2015).

1. In western parts of the Roman Empire, where the state historically usurped power and some functions of the church, the “caesaropapism” form emerged. These relations were rooted in the pagan culture of the ancient world (for example, Egyptian pharaoh was the head of the state and supreme priest or god simultaneously; in Roman Sparta high priests were tsars as well) and is characterized by the primacy of state over church and the presence of the authority to being god’s favored.
2. Another form, on the contrary, suggests subjection of the state to religious bodies. Within this kind of relationship, state power is almost missing. “Papocaesarism” is typical for catholic states where the Pope, the pontiff possesses church and state powers.
3. In the Byzantine Empire of VI century A.D., a principle of the symphony of church and state powers came into being. The essence of symphony is mutual cooperation, support, and responsibility without infringing on the sole competence of another party. “Symphony principle is a principle of mutual freedom; each power lives on its own but in a way that their synchronous sounding produces a symphony or an accord. The church is a part of the state’s existence, its conscience, creative force, and state is an external arrangement of the nation’s life belonging to the church,” (Zenkovskiy, 1996) - this is how an orthodox philosopher V.V. Zenkovsky explains the principle.

The most consistent embodiment of the principle was demonstrated in the framework of the Orthodox Church activity in the times of the Russian princes and monarchs’ reigning up to the Synodal era (Khayrutdinov, 2009).

The process of secularization of culture, which had begun in Western Europe and practically meant secularization of spiritual values of a nation, was caught up by Peter I in Russia. It consisted of 3 periods: Franks of the Reformation and Enlightenment eras and implies the absence of secular authority’s desire to legitimate church, while church authorities have to abide secular laws. It has resulted in appearing of the principle of separation of church and state. It was frequently implemented one-sidedly, which lead to violence and oppression of the church (Katin, 2016) (Examples: revolutionary France around 1789, Soviet Russia).

- In secular culture caesaropapism is manifested in the principle of separation of church from state, which in its turn, was demonstrated in its radical form during the Soviet period (1917-1980), when the church was being prosecuted by the state, church activities roughly interfered in, the church’s authority was used for political purposes. In the modern world this principle is manifested in cooperation and separation models.

A. The separation model implies the displacement of religion from all state activity spheres. The church and state exist in two isolated fields; their relationship is not reflected in specific legislation. This model has been developed in the USA.

B. The cooperation model is characterized by a different division principle, that is the religious and secular are separated but interact and cooperate. The state takes on the obligation to protect religious believers of traditional confessions, collaborates with them in various public spheres and provides basic civil rights to less common religious communities. These interrelations are regulated by constitutional provisions as well as agreements with churches and religious associations. Such model functions in most countries of Eastern Europe: Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland.

The ideal form of church-state relationship is “symphony of powers” (Uspenskiy, 1998) which implies mutual cooperation, support and responsibility of church and state without interference in the other one’s particular competency. Our view is that at the present moment church-state relationships should be based in accordance with the “symphony of powers” idea in a form of the cooperation model. The cooperation model of church-state relations preconditions dialogue, partnership and “co-working”.

We believe the present situation in Russia favors the establishment of the cooperation model, though some crucial questions should be solved (Stolyar, 2001). It is necessary to identify the most authoritative religion (or religions), provide them with government support, and define the legal status of the church, perhaps, to complement the state laws by canon law. Some solutions to the problem can be found in our country’s legacy of the past. The history of the Russian Empire contains a valuable experience of coexistence of the Russian Orthodox Church with other denominations and state regulation of the issue. Russia has always been a multinational and multi-confessional state, where ROC had a status of the

state religion before the Revolution in 1917. All subjects belonging to national religious denominations enjoyed freedom of religious belief, but there was a certain hierarchy within this freedom.

Nowadays the church comes forward as a social force, ideology and cultural value, it enters into a debate and dialogue with the authorities, it doesn't appeal and plead, but lobbies alongside with the improvement in its economic position and increasing popular impact ([Kozlova, 2000](#)).

Higher social claims of the church are illustrated by the document "Basic Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church" adopted at the Jubilee Bishops' Council in 2000. The Concept was aimed according to the main RPC's ideologist, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill, at affirming a clear position on a list of compelling issues of the day.

According to the document the fields of church-government cooperation are the following: peacemaking, safeguarding public morals; spiritual, cultural and moral education; benevolence and charity matters; conservation and development of cultural and historical heritage; dialogue with the state authorities on the public policy and church issues; care for warriors and law-enforcement personnel; science, healthcare, and many other important spheres.

The church hierarchs try to convince the state and community authorities that the church is a powerful unifying factor integrating all positive forces in the situation of social and economic stalemate and lack of legal and moral reference points. Moreover, the contemporary Orthodox Church claims to be a new ideology, a new orthodox outlook. Religious, national identity can become a modern Russian ideology.

The official RPC representatives actually support the separation of church from the state, though not in its distorted variant as it used to be during the communist regime, but in the spirit of the "symphony of powers" and tolerance. The church states that Russian civil society should be based on moral solidarity, which requires RPC to play a special role among other denominations as majority religion and historical force building the Russian state.

It is generally to be noted that the church seeks dialogue not only with the state but the people as well, demonstrating its social orientation and that liberal democracy values are compatible with Orthodox faith. This fact holds the promise for moral revival of Russian society and opening up broader horizons for church-state partnership.

CONCLUSION

1. Wider notions of church and state were introduced. The church is not purely material establishment of people, but also a spiritual social institution, ensuring moral purity and aimed at exercising organization, coordination, and control over human lives and activity.
2. The state is not only an institute of compulsion and coercion but a community of spiritually sympathetic people, shaping life moral compass as well. The objective of the church - eternal salvation of people through their moral and spiritual guidance; the state's concern is to provide earthly well-being, protecting against wrongdoing.
3. The following historic forms and interaction models of the church-state relationship were identified: according to the doctrinal tradition – "caesaropapism", "papocaesarism" and "symphony(concordance) of powers".

The principle of separation of powers (separation of church and state), manifested in a separation and cooperation model, was established in secular culture.

4. Cooperation model stipulates dialogue, partnership and "co-working". Contemporary church-state relations, in our opinion, should be based on dialogue and cooperation culture.
5. The conclusion about the urgent need of church-state relationship transition from political to social and cultural spheres is drawn. Within the establishing civil society, the church should interact not only with the state but also with public organizations, should participate in educational and cultural activities, charitable acts, be engaged in environmental-related, peace-building activities and other kinds of social work.

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