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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN MODERN RUSSIA

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6. MISSIONARIES OF OFFICIAL ORTHODOXY

Agents of State Religion in Late Imperial Russia

DANIEL SCARBOROUGH

The Orthodox Church encompassed one of the most extensive social and institutional networks in the Russian Empire. By the late nineteenth century Orthodox clergy and laypeople were participating in a variety of voluntary associations that carried out charity, mutual aid, disaster relief, and support for primary education.[1] Yet the Orthodox Church has also been seen as a major obstacle to the development of civil society in late imperial Russia. Social and entrepreneurial networks remained largely confined to coreligionists during Russia's industrial expansion, partly as a result of intolerance toward non-Orthodox communities.[2] Historians of late imperial Russia have identified interfaith barriers as an important factor behind the inability of the middle classes to collaborate for political self-assertion in the Duma era.[3] Some scholars have attributed this environment of religious intolerance to Orthodox Christianity itself, identifying Orthodox chauvinism and exclusivity as the root of the "mass ethnophobias" that arose in the nineteenth century.[4] Walter Laqueur suggests that the tendency of extreme right-wing groups to demonize minorities was attributable to pervasive superstition and Orthodox preoccupation with the forces of evil.[5] The present work, by contrast, argues that the majority of Orthodox Christians were not predisposed toward religious intolerance. Rather, the main factor in the perpetuation of intolerance was the protected status of the Orthodox Church under the autocratic state. Orthodox associations had developed extensive local autonomy from the state by the early twentieth century as a result of the relaxation of religious regulations after the Great Reforms of the 1860s. These associations were poised to develop closer ties with other communities and associations in Russia's rapidly changing society. Beginning in the 1880s, however, advocates of maintaining the Church's protected status emerged within the ecclesiastical structure and served as agents of continued state regulation of religious life. These agents of state intervention played a major role in perpetuating confessional barriers, exacerbating interconfessional hostility, and reducing the Church's contribution to Russia's nascent civil society.

During the Great Reforms, as part of the general "invitation to society" to assume responsibility for its own needs, members of the church hierarchy sanctioned the formation of free associations among the Orthodox to

compete with other religious groups at the local level through voluntarism and community building practices.[6] John Strickland, however, identifies the emergence of another movement among "a small but influential group of Church leaders," who were skeptical of the reform-era appeal to society. Viewing the tsar as "an apostle-like leader," they looked, instead, to the autocracy to protect the status of Orthodoxy as the national faith of the Russian people.[7] This ideology, which Strickland calls "Orthodox patriotism," was most prevalent among agents of the "internal mission."[8] Professional missionaries were created to work within Orthodox communities by a council of bishops in Kazan in 1884. This council called for the establishment and financial support of antischismatic specialists in each diocese to take responsibility from the regular clergy for fighting apostasy as well as atheism.[9] Much of their missionary work would consist of monitoring rival religious groups and enforcing (with police help) legal restrictions on interfaith contact. In addition to "Orthodox patriotism," the substantial material benefits of their official position are likely to have motivated the missionaries in their work of promoting state regulation of religious interaction. Even after the decree of 17 April 1905 "On Strengthening the Principles of Religious Toleration," which expanded religious freedom in Russia, professional missionaries worked to maintain state control (through their own office) over significant aspects of religious life. By usurping the task of interacting with other religious groups, official missionaries, I argue, reduced the freedom of Orthodox communities to establish ties across confessional boundaries and perpetuated religious intolerance in late imperial Russia. Thus a comparatively small minority within the Orthodox Church inhibited processes that otherwise boded well for the emergence of a civil society with a multiconfessional religious component.

The present work draws on archival material from the dioceses of Moscow and Tver' to examine state intervention in interfaith relations at the local level. The Orthodox associations of these dioceses were uniquely active in their engagement with the society around them. The parish trusteeships of Moscow consistently dedicated more funds to education, charity, and mutual aid than those of any other diocese. After St. Petersburg the far less wealthy parish trusteeships of Tver' were next in the percentage of their collective resources that they dedicated to social needs.[10] Moreover, both dioceses contained overwhelming Orthodox majorities.[11] True, there were well-established communities of Old Believers in both Moscow and Tver', but they were not among the largest in the empire.[12] Thus the Orthodox communities of Moscow and Tver' were more sheltered from religious competition than those of many other dioceses. Nevertheless, official mis-

sionaries were deeply entrenched in both. The Synod designated Moscow as the location for their training and for the first "congress of antischismatic missionaries" in the fall of 1886.[13] Official missionaries obtained positions in the largest brotherhoods of both dioceses and influenced the agendas of those organizations. They established networks of subordinate missionaries that wielded control over the interfaith relations of the robust Orthodox communities of Moscow and Tver'. The Orthodox population of these dioceses thus serves as a useful focus for an examination of the influence of official missionaries on the communities and associations of Orthodox Christians.

Prior to 1905 state protection of "official Orthodoxy" was a draconian form of social control that the regime imposed on all its subjects, including Orthodox Christians. Atheism was illegal for all subjects of the empire. Conversion from Orthodoxy to any other religion was illegal both for those born into the Church and for those baptized into it at a later age. After 1832 children of mixed Orthodox and non-Orthodox marriages were automatically considered Orthodox. Landowning apostates from Orthodoxy could have their property seized if it was populated by Orthodox peasants. In some cases apostates were deprived of their own children.[14] For the Orthodox clergy the protected status of their church came at a price. The state viewed the Orthodox Church as its promoter of loyalty and social support among the Russian population, and it reserved the right to compel the Church to perform this function. This prerogative was expressed in the Law Code of the Russian Empire: "Autocratic power acts in church administration through the Holy Governing Synod, which it established."[15] As representatives of the official church, Orthodox priests were deprived of the freedom to preach sermons contrary to government policy. Church regulations dictated that the Orthodox priest was to preach "about submission to authority, and especially to the authority of the tsar, and about the obligations of every rank."[16] To prevent deviation from these guidelines, all priests were required to submit their sermons in written form to their local superintendent (*blagochinnyi*) for approval prior to delivering them.[17] Even proselytism was regulated among the Orthodox clergy, as missionary work among the non-Orthodox required permission from state authorities. Ironically, the clergy of no other religion endured such tight state regulation of their sermons as did the pastors of the official Orthodox Church.

Despite the extensive demands that the regime imposed on them, Orthodox clergymen were often disinclined to call on state power in return. Unlike the clergy of most state churches throughout Europe, the Orthodox pastorate enjoyed neither significant financial support from the government

nor legal enforcement of tithe payments.[18] By the beginning of the twentieth century the Synod was providing state salaries to priests in some urban parishes and supplementary aid to priests in impoverished, rural parishes. Yet most parish clergymen derived the majority of their livelihood from the voluntary tithes of their parishioners. The parish clergy was, therefore, more directly beholden to the Orthodox population in a material sense than to the authorities. Priests did not report incriminating confessions to the police as they were legally required to do.[19] Many clergymen even concealed the number of apostates and religious dissenters residing in their parishes from the authorities to avoid alienating the communities that supported them.[20] Thus the privileged status of the Orthodox Church could be more of a burden than a boon to most parish clergymen.

The mid-nineteenth century saw a relaxation of the imperial government's control over religious expression and interaction. As part of the Great Reforms Orthodox Christians of all estates were authorized to participate in voluntary associations known as "brotherhoods." This institution represented a revival of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Orthodox brotherhoods of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They were originally established by Orthodox laypeople within the Commonwealth to provide mutual aid for the protection of church property and support for religious schools, especially after six of their bishops entered into union with the Roman Catholic Church in 1596.[21] The brotherhoods were first recreated in 1862 in the western provinces of their origin, without the help of the tsarist regime, for the same goals that their predecessors had pursued: education, charity, and "the preservation of Orthodoxy from the influence of Catholicism."[22] The first three brotherhoods were organized in Kiev Diocese with the sponsorship of Metropolitan Arsenii (Moskvin). In 1864 the minister of internal affairs promulgated the "Fundamental Rules" for the establishment of brotherhoods, which granted retroactive state recognition to existing brotherhoods and authorized the establishment of future institutions for the support of religious education, charity, missionary work, and "the defense of the Orthodox Church against the propaganda of other confessions."[23] An empire-wide survey of brotherhoods carried out in 1893 by the church publicist Aleksandr Papkov reported their total number to be 159 with 37,642 members in possession of an estimated 1,629,707 rubles.[24] While many of them were concentrated in the western provinces, with twenty-two brotherhoods in Minsk Diocese alone, the report indicates that the movement had spread throughout the empire. Papkov observed the second largest number of brotherhoods in the dioceses of Moscow, Riga, and Podol'sk, each of which contained at least eight. He observed two brother-

hoods in Tver'.[25] Archival records of smaller brotherhoods not mentioned in Papkov's report indicate that these numbers must have been higher.[26]

It was in keeping with the reformist mood of the era that state authorities endorsed the participation of society in an officially sponsored enterprise such as the promotion of Orthodox Christianity. The brotherhood was not the only Orthodox association to receive official sanction in the decades following the Great Reforms. Such organizations gradually multiplied over the empire's final half-century and were often justified by the need to strengthen Orthodox communities to enable them to resist the encroachment of other confessions.[27] The parish trusteeship, for example, was also created in 1864 to allow clergy and parishioners to assemble and raise funds for a variety of parish needs such as education, mutual aid, charity, and church renovation.[28] A 1901 Synodal report associated these tasks with interfaith competition: "The main tasks of the parish trusteeships have been: cooperation for the dissemination and strengthening of the truth and principles of the Orthodox faith in the parish; care for the defense of the Orthodox population of the parish against the harmful influences of the false teachings of various sects and other confessions."[29]

This perception of the need to permit free association enabled Orthodox communities to cooperate in addressing confessionally neutral social needs. For example, one brotherhood founded in a rural parish of Tver' in 1901 provided financial support for a local clinic (*fel'dsherskii vrachebnyi punkt*) and for a society of firefighters.[30] At the same time that the Orthodox were being invited to engage with the society around them, restrictions on the social activities of religious nonconformists were also being tempered. In 1874 the marriages of Old Believers were officially recognized and their children were accepted into educational institutions.[31] The modest liberalization of the regime's regulation of religious life facilitated interaction between the Orthodox and other religious communities living in proximity with them, creating the potential for interfaith cooperation. In 1899, for example, a charitable society for needy schoolchildren was founded in the town of Rovno, and counted Orthodox priests, one Catholic priest, and one "teacher of the Talmud-Torah," among its members.[32]

Primary education provided a particularly rich opportunity for interfaith collaboration. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, Orthodox priests began establishing small schools in their parishes to provide basic education and religious instruction to the children of their parishioners for no obligatory fee. The chief procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, expressed his hope in 1898 that these parish schools would serve as a useful tool of conversion for those children of non-Orthodox families

who attended them.[33] Yet education had become a universal concern, especially with the appearance of new employment opportunities for literate peasants that came with industrialization at the end of the nineteenth century.[34] Many Catholic families voluntarily sent their children to Orthodox parish schools, although any goodwill generated from this exchange turned to resentment in 1892, when all Catholic schools in the empire were transferred to the Ministry of Education, leaving many Catholics with no other alternative than the parish schools.[35] Nevertheless, parish schools provided an entirely new educational opportunity for the children of other non-Orthodox communities. Brotherhoods and other voluntary associations provided the main source of support for these institutions.[36] In 1902 one Moscow priest described the process: "The clergy create schools from what? Well, from nothing. We have neither funds nor material. The priest goes from door to door, bows, and asks his parishioners to help him build the school in which their children must learn."[37] Brotherhoods published reports on some parish schools in which only a minority of the students adhered to the official Orthodox Church.[38] In some cases the "schismatics" themselves provided the voluntary support that sustained these schools. Moscow's parish school inspector published a report in 1903 in which he recounted the visit of one Old Believer to a parish school. The man was reportedly so impressed with the Russian language lesson and the children's singing that he donated twenty kopecks on the spot, before turning around and donating thirty more.[39] In such reports the ultimate goal of conversion usually went unmentioned.

Records of simple interaction across confessional boundaries suggest that Orthodox parishioners, the primary financial supporters of both Orthodox associations and clergy, favored coexistence and even cooperation with other confessions in the realm of common social concerns. Heather Coleman has documented the outbreaks of violence within Orthodox villages in reaction to Baptist conversions in the early twentieth century.[40] Yet these episodes seem exceptional. The large number of petitions and complaints that the increasingly literate parishioners of Moscow and Tver' dioceses sent to their consistories in the early twentieth century do not reflect the preoccupation of ecclesiastical officialdom with the suppression and conversion of schismatics and sectarians.[41] In letters written in praise of their priest, if parishioners mentioned other religious groups, it was usually to commend their pastor for maintaining amicable relations with them. Parishioners from a church in the Lefortovo District of Moscow, for example, wrote to the consistory requesting that their priest be honored with a pectoral cross. Among his qualities and accomplishments they noted that "sec-

tarians living among us, as well as members of other faiths such as Catholics and Lutherans, with whom he has dealings in connection with the German cemetery, regard him with the same deep respect as do we."[42] When parishioners did commend the missionary work of their priest, they described this work as a component of education and community building rather than confrontation. For example, parishioners from the Volokolamsk District of Moscow Province wrote to the consistory: "The kindness and morals of our priest have earned him love and respect even from the Old Believers, from whom five families have left the schism for Orthodoxy thanks to his authoritative and edifying Christian persuasion."[43] It seems unlikely that many parish priests felt pressured by the parishioners who supported them to initiate hostile confrontations with religious dissenters. It is still less likely that many peasant parishioners would have approved of their clergyman bringing police into their communities to enforce religious conformity.

The expansion of local autonomy and free association that followed the Great Reforms led, in some cases, to conflict, anxiety, and calls for tighter regulation of social interaction.[44] In the case of the Church such calls came from yet another voluntary association that emerged among the clergy. Since the mid-nineteenth century members of the hierarchy had been demanding that local congresses of bishops be convened to discuss issues of concern for the Church outside of the Synod. Like the brotherhoods, these congresses were justified by the need to address the threat posed to the Church by religious competition.[45] The first bishops' congresses were held in Kiev and Kazan in 1884. Delegates to the latter argued that the threat posed to the Orthodox fold by sectarianism was too great to be met by the regular parish clergy and proposed that antischismatic specialists should be trained "in measures to weaken sectarian propaganda." In response to the congress's proposal, the Synod passed a resolution in 1886 requiring all bishops to establish official missionaries in their dioceses. These missionaries did not have to be ordained clergymen and were to be relieved of any other pastoral obligations not pertaining to the fight against sectarianism. They were to be generously supported, "with the designation of local funds."[46] One Father Polianskii, for example, left his position as instructor at the Moscow Theological Academy in 1903 to work as a full-time missionary and was compensated with an apartment with heating and a salary of three thousand rubles a year.[47] This was quite an improvement over the seven hundred to nine hundred rubles a year that he would have received as a teacher.[48] In carrying out their work, these missionaries were not materially accountable to the wishes of the Orthodox laity as regular parish clergymen were. Bishops' congresses were discontinued, partly due to Pobedonostsev's suspicion

that they would advocate greater independence for the church hierarchy from the state.[49] Yet the official missionaries established a permanent network within the ecclesiastical administration that gradually assumed legal authority over interfaith relations within the dioceses, brotherhoods, and parishes. This professional network, along with its supporters among the clergy, would ultimately reduce the autonomy of Orthodox communities from the state.

The primary focus of the professional missionaries was the Orthodox population. Their priorities and strategies were expressed in a series of missionary congresses held in 1887, 1891, 1897, and 1908. The first, convened in Moscow and attended by sixty-four professional missionaries, compiled a list of "infectious" threats to Orthodox unity, which placed non-Orthodox confessions in the same category as revolutionaries, referred to as rationalistic sects (*ratsionalisticheskie sekty*).[50] Strickland points out that this "internal mission" to the Orthodox themselves was strongly influenced by the program of "Orthodox patriotism."[51] Leaders of the movement believed that only Orthodox Christianity could restore cultural and social unity to the Russian nation. They sought, therefore, to restore cultural predominance to the Orthodox Church. Autocratic authority was a crucial component of this cultural mission. Alexander III, in particular, instilled confidence in Orthodox patriots through his steadfast refusal to relax state control over religious life. Bishop Nikanor (Kamenskii) of Orel wrote in 1899 that Alexander deserved the title of "Equal to the Apostles," because he had refused to decriminalize apostasy among the Orthodox.[52] His pious successor would receive similar reverence. The official lay missionary Vasilii Skvortsov established a state-funded journal in 1896, *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, which hailed the coronation of Nicholas II that year as part of the "struggle for a native Orthodoxy."[53]

The strategy that official missionaries adopted of consistently appealing to state authority for enforcement of religious norms is likely to have been shaped by this ideology. The congress of 1891, which also took place in Moscow, declared that strengthening religious convictions among the Orthodox was by itself insufficient to prevent the spread of sectarianism and that cooperation with "state power" was also necessary. Local authorities would be asked to enforce tighter regulation of religious life among the Orthodox by, for example, compelling factory workers to attend missionary lectures, preventing the sale of icons in unauthorized locations, and enforcing prohibitions against commercial activity on holy days. The congress also called for increased restrictions on the public activities of sectarian groups to minimize their interaction with the Orthodox population.[54] In accordance with

these policies, missionaries carried out surveillance on the population under their jurisdiction with the help of the police and brought to trial offenders of antisectarian laws.[55]

Their official status allowed missionaries to obtain positions of authority in Orthodox associations and communities. Missionaries occupied council seats in the largest brotherhoods of both Moscow and Tver' and ensured that significant sums were dedicated to the surveillance of sectarians and the distribution of antischismatic literature.[56] Significant amounts of the parish clergy's own resources were also diverted to support the missionaries. At the diocesan congress held in Tver' in 1902 the bishop blocked a motion by the clergy's elected representatives to allocate a parish taxation surplus of 12,472.92 rubles from the consistory's savings to local educational expenses on the grounds that the salary of the diocesan missionary was derived from the interest that these invested funds generated.[57] Missionaries influenced the public activity of Orthodox communities down to the level of the parish. Special licenses ensured that missionaries had greater authority over interfaith relations than did Orthodox pastors. The text of a license issued in 1898 to an assistant missionary of peasant background demonstrates that this authority extended into the very churches of the regular parish clergy.

> By order of His Imperial Majesty, Autocrat of all Russia, through the Moscow Consistory, this license is issued to the peasant Afanasii Vasil'ev Kuznetsov, assistant missionary of Luzhitsk Okrug, Moscow Province, to be presented at the appropriate times to the civil authorities in both cities and settlements and asserts that he, Kuznetsov, has been authorized by the diocesan authorities to conduct public and private discussions with schismatic Old Believers and other sectarians in churches, monasteries, public buildings, factories . . . in private homes, and under the open sky.[58]

Although members of the parish clergy were not explicitly forbidden to engage in religious discussions with the non-Orthodox, they were required to obtain permission to hold the kinds of public and private events that the bearer of the above license could organize at will. By discouraging Orthodox associations from engaging the non-Orthodox and encouraging their reliance on surveillance and regulation of interfaith contacts, missionaries strengthened their own influence within the ecclesiastical administration and over diocesan resources.

Despite the influence of official missionaries, many clergymen met the challenges facing the Church through social engagement. The proliferation of voluntary associations among the clergy, largely justified as a means to resist the spread of new religious movements, also allowed pastors to combat

poverty and social dislocation by promoting charity, education, and mutual aid among the laity.[59] Such pastoral work was also referred to as part of an "internal mission" to strengthen the piety and solidarity of Orthodox communities. An article in Moscow's diocesan journal from 1902, for example, declared:

> In the sphere of social life, the internal mission fights against need of all kinds that oppress the poor classes. . . . The mission thus collaborates in the establishment of various associations, organized for different kinds of mutual aid, loan funds, companies for the organization of inexpensive apartments, and consumers' societies. The mission also works to instill into the members of these societies the spirit of true Christian self-sacrifice, on which their success depends.[60]

The article claimed that social engagement was needed to counter the growing influence of sectarians and evangelical Protestants in Russia's cities but also argued that this work should be carried out independently of the "secular authorities." Urban workers were turning away from the Church, the article claimed, because "it is supported by the state, the agents of which are unpopular among the workers."[61] Clergymen who engaged in this form of the "internal mission" often succeeded in organizing voluntary associations among the laity.[62] Yet even in those areas where Orthodox associations were highly active, such as Moscow and Tver', there is little evidence of their participation in interfaith competition or collaboration. This important limitation on the associational activity of the Orthodox population was largely maintained by the missionary network. Operating alongside the regular pastorate at the parish level, official missionaries effectively perpetuated confessional boundaries even after the 1905 decree that reduced state regulation of religious life.

On 17 April 1905 Emperor Nicholas II's decree on religious toleration guaranteed all subjects of the Russian Empire "freedom of belief and prayer according to the dictates of [their] conscience."[63] In addition to decriminalizing apostasy, the decree increased freedom of association among non-Orthodox religious communities by, for example, recognizing the freedom of Protestant converts to congregate in prayer houses and private homes. This decree, as well as the October Manifesto, came as a tremendous shock to many Orthodox clergymen. Others, however, perceived potential benefits for the Church in the decree. An article published in Moscow's diocesan journal in September 1905 declared: "Remember that the time has passed when we could rely on the strength of police enforcement, and thank God for that. Remember instead the words of the Savior: *My grace is sufficient for*

thee, for my strength is made perfect in my weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). We need not fanaticism but toleration."[64]

In addition to distancing the Church from complicity in police persecution, "toleration" presented opportunities for interfaith collaboration that some churchmen recognized as mutually beneficial. The antireligious intimidation and violence that erupted during the 1905 revolution affected both Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities.[65] The archpriest-superintendent (*blagochinnyi*) of Rzhev, a town in Tver' Province dominated by Old Belief, noted in his 1906 report to the consistory that the "schismatics" had served as allies against revolutionary violence over the previous months. "The city is characterized by hostility toward and condemnation of all strikers. The Schism, in my personal opinion, as a source of strict conservatism, has done Rzhev an important service by opposing the harmful trends of recent years."[66] Even the stridently anti-Catholic Metropolitan Evlogii (Georgievskii) of Kholm proved capable of recognizing commonality with other religious groups amid Russia's experiment with popular representation. As a deputy to the Second Duma he described his feelings of sympathy and admiration for Muslim representatives who experienced the same antireligious scorn from liberal and radical politicians as did the Orthodox. "I was able to observe how Muslim deputies, at their appointed times, left the assembly and prayed in the Catherine Hall. They knelt in corners and prayed with rhythmic motions of their bodies. Journalists and deputies laughed at them while they smoked, but I was moved to respect them for bearing witness to their religious convictions."[67]

The Orthodox were capable of perceiving the potential for collaboration with other religious communities in the Russian Empire of the Duma era. Their ultimate failure to establish ties with other religious groups was not simply the result of Orthodox chauvinism. It stemmed from the Church's inability to escape its own protected status as the state church of the Russian Empire.

Some church leaders believed that the tsar's decree had necessitated greater freedom for Orthodox communities to compete with Russia's newly liberated religious minorities. Metropolitan Antonii (Vadkovskii) of St. Petersburg called for a corresponding relaxation of regulations on the speech and association of the Orthodox clergy. He argued before the Committee of Ministers that state tutelage, "renders the voice of the Church inaudible in both private and public life," and that the continuation of such tutelage in an openly multiconfessional society would place the Church in an untenable position.[68] The Synod again invited Orthodox society to organize its own defense. On 18 November 1905 the Synod issued a "decree on the

organization of parish life and pastoral councils."[69] The decree proposed that the management of parish funds and property be entrusted to "parish councils" that would be elected by parishioners and chaired by their priest. It also authorized clergymen to organize "pastoral councils" at all levels of the dioceses and to invite laypeople to take part in them. Parish and pastoral councils significantly enhanced freedom of association among the Orthodox clergy and laity in the hope that they would help the Church compete in Russia's emerging marketplace of confessions and ideas.

"The Church of Christ has only one sword—the sword of spiritual admonition [*vrazumlenie*] and persuasion [*ubezhdenie*]," the Synod declared in its November decree. It continued that while "our Sovereign has seen fit to announce to His people the immanent reordering of the state on principles of freedom," many people were taking advantage of the situation and, "having lost their fear of God, have already begun to use that freedom for evil." Therefore, the Synod urged that "this spiritual sword—Christ's eternal truth—must rouse its strength through the communication of the pastor with all believers loyal to the Church.[70]

Yet restrictions remained in place to dull this "spiritual sword." While the decree transferred unprecedented authority over the management of diocesan resources to elected representatives of the laity, it did not sanction unauthorized or spontaneous assembly among the Orthodox.[71] It did not relax the censorship of sermons or the prohibition against unsupervised interfaith interaction. Thus Metropolitan Antonii's fears remained well founded. The decree of toleration had also retained many restrictions on non-Orthodox religious groups. Conversion was legal only among different Christian denominations, and proselytism among the Orthodox remained illegal. The failure of a Duma bill in May 1906 to relax these restrictions made it clear that the Church was to retain a reduced version of its protected status.[72] The retention of restrictions on the parish clergy's own freedom of speech made recourse to these remaining legal defenses often more appealing than facing the challenges and opportunities of interfaith interaction.

The network of official missionaries played a central role in perpetuating state regulation of religious life after the decree of toleration. Despite a series of articles in *Missionerskoe obozrenie* condemning the tsar's decree in apocalyptic terms, the editor, Skvortsov, continued to espouse the centrality of autocratic authority to Orthodoxy in Russia, as did many other "Orthodox patriots." Strickland argues that Orthodox patriots' "decision to retain an uncompromising faith in autocracy was a sign of the movement's dislocation from political reality and its inability to offer the Russian public a viable alternative to a secular nationalism in the fateful years before the

war and revolution."[73] At a tactical level, however, the decision of official missionaries to retain legal compulsion as their primary weapon in the fight against apostasy may have been based as much on professional self-interest as on ideological intransigence.[74] Their lucrative position within the ecclesiastical structure was based on the perception that regular clergymen were unable to address the crisis of apostasy, and their legal mandate to supervise interfaith relations had perpetuated the marginalization of the parish clergy as representatives of the Church to other confessions. Rather than altering their strategy to focus on "responding to the social needs that sectarianism addressed," as some delegates to the 1908 missionary congress in Kiev suggested, official missionaries continued to act as agents of state control over interfaith relations.[75] In so doing, they maintained their own control over religious interaction and over diocesan funds.

This missionary network immediately responded to the decree of toleration by educating the parish clergy about the legal protections from religious competition that remained available to them. The Moscow missionary Fr. Polianskii published a series of articles in the diocesan press in which he delineated and clarified the legal restrictions that remained in place against the non-Orthodox. He stated: "It would be completely incorrect to presume that because the edict does not forbid something that it therefore permits it. The edict permits only that which is written in it, and it is not written that members of other religions, Old Believers, and sectarians have the right to conduct propaganda among the Orthodox. . . . In the journal of the Committee of Ministers, it is clearly stated that propagandistic activity by various sects and ideologies, if such should occur, should be investigated and prevented."[76]

The missionaries successfully encouraged many parish clergymen to appeal to these laws in response to perceived threats to their congregations. It is not surprising that this approach did not check the spread of conversions to other denominations. Delegates to the 1908 congress expressed horror at the success of new religious movements among the Russian population.[77] Yet the official missionaries were able to expand and intensify their strategy. In May 1908 the Synod approved plans to establish missionary councils in each diocese to oversee a network of district missionaries.[78] On his appointment as chairman of Moscow's missionary council in 1917, Bishop Aleksii of Dmitrov expressed his concerns to Metropolitan Makarii of Moscow regarding the possibility of conflicts of interest within the council's decision-making structure: "Hitherto, missionary concerns and material concerns have both been resolved in the missionary council. Individuals with vested interests in the designation of funds have taken part, as

voting members, in decisions regarding the allocation of those funds."[79] By the empire's final decade official missionaries had become an entrenched interest group with ties to conservative prelates in the Synod and control over resources in the dioceses. Through this position of influence they had become the dominant representatives of Orthodoxy to other confessions throughout much of Russia.

The insecurity of many parish clergymen about their own ability, and that of their communities, to freely compete with other confessions induced many of them to appeal to the official missionary network to intervene in interfaith disputes at the local level. This insecurity may well have been the product of the missionaries' legal usurpation of that responsibility. Letters between Moscow's missionaries and parish clergymen illustrate that this relationship continued well after 1905. In 1912 one priest from the town of Mytishch, Father Protopopov, addressed two letters to the diocesan missionary Varzhanskii in which he recounted attempts by local Baptists to win converts from among the Orthodox. "Regarding the Most Holy Mother of God, they claimed that She was a simple woman . . . they said that one should not kiss the Gospels."[80] Fr. Protopopov also expressed fear that his parishioners might be won over by Baptist "propaganda." "One young woman, who is very religious but uneducated, has had her Orthodox beliefs shattered by the shameless arguments of these sectarians. She has been left with no foundation and is suffering from internal strife."[81] What would seem to have been an important occasion for pastoral action Fr. Protopopov viewed as cause for police intervention. He repeatedly pointed out that these meetings were illegal and asked Varzhanskii to have them shut down: "Because the law on sectarian meetings has obviously been broken, I humbly implore Your Excellency to petition for their immediate closure in Mytishch and for the complete prohibition of local sectarians, of whom there are only seven, to hold any meetings whatsoever in the future, including prayer meetings."[82] These letters reveal an acute lack of confidence on the part of this priest in his ability to resist the influence of just seven Baptist evangelists without police support. Such timidity is not entirely surprising considering the fact that the priest himself could not legally have held large, extraliturgical meetings of his own without a permit. The diocesan mission offered the priest an easy alternative to confronting both state restrictions and religious competition.

In response to these letters Varzhanskii dispatched a subordinate missionary to observe the situation in the town. That missionary, Tsvetkov, reported his subsequent confrontation with the Baptists and seemed to think that he had gained the upper hand. He attended their sermon in a private

home along with "fifty to sixty people." The preacher, about twenty years old, reportedly proclaimed: "of the Church of Christ, that is the Orthodox Church . . . there remain only scraps [*rozhki da nozhki*]. Those who claim to follow the teachings of the Apostles lead dissolute lives. If they carry the keys to the Kingdom of God, they use them neither for themselves nor to admit others." Several spectators, Tsvetkov reported, were offended and left. After the talk he approached the preacher and asked, "How can there remain only scraps of the Church of Christ when Christ himself promised Her eternal life?" Instead of an answer, they forcibly led him out. He was met on the street by some of the spectators, who thanked him.[83] Varzhanskii, however, deemed this apparent victory insufficient and complained to the governor of Moscow. In April of the next year the district police inspector was dispatched to Mytishch to warn all registered Baptists not to hold meetings for Orthodox Christians. The local police were also warned to enforce compliance with laws against proselytism.[84] Despite their generally high academic qualifications, often from a theological academy, professional missionaries utilized police force as a matter of course, even when peaceful and "rational" debate seemed to have been sufficient to deflect competition from other confessions.[85]

The fact that official missionaries facilitated police enforcement of religious conformity among Orthodox believers as well as among apostates demonstrated their lack of concern over the sympathy or support of Orthodox communities. As missionaries repeatedly pointed out, many spectators at the religious meetings they broke up were merely curious Orthodox Christians. With the help of missionaries some priests censored their parishioners' access to literature as well. In March 1914, for example, a district missionary wrote to Varzhanskii regarding the illegal circulation of Lev Tolstoi's religious writings by a local zemstvo library.

> Respected Nikolai Iur'evich! I present the enclosed report that I wrote at the request of the priest of Borisov, Fr. Vasilii Bogoiavlenskii, who learned from you that the essays of L. Tolstoi, indicated in the report, are forbidden for distribution among the people. . . . Believing that these essays were permitted in public libraries, I was forced to be reconciled with this evil. Now, since I have learned that these essays by Tolstoi are not allowed in such places but circulate among the people anyway, I happily accepted Fr. Vasilii's assignment to write you this report and ask you to put a stop to this harm inflicted on simple people.[86]

Thus the parish priest seems to have learned of this prohibition against Tolstoi's work only from the missionary, who encouraged him to request the

seizure of this material from the library. The missionary handled even that chore at the priest's request. While regular parish clergymen did rely on the goodwill of the laity, their fear of religious or even ideological competition could outweigh their concern about retaining the trust of their parishioners.

Official missionaries exacerbated interfaith tensions not only by promoting police enforcement of religious conformity but also by fomenting hostility and xenophobia among the Orthodox toward other communities. An example is provided by a 1912 court case in Moscow involving seventeen teenage boys. According to the testimony of a Lutheran pastor, the boys had attended a prayer meeting for German evangelical Christians and shouted, "Anathema to the sectarians!" That this attack was motivated more by general xenophobia than any specific religious animosity is suggested by the fact that one of the boys was also accused of directing the slur "yid" at one of the congregants.[87] In his capacity as an attorney, the official missionary Varzhanskii represented the boys. His defense exhibited general xenophobia as well: "the witness-accuser, the German sectarian named Pochkat, a foreign subject and sectarian propagandist from Riga, has merely indicated that an anathema is offensive to sectarians, amounting in his opinion to a curse."[88] In the boys' defense Varzhanskii employed the standard missionary appeal to laws against proselytizing among the Orthodox. He argued that they could not be accused of breaking the law against "disturbing the religious services of the Orthodox and other faiths [*inovertsy*]," because this law "cannot protect all manner of gatherings of innumerable Russian sects when it remains unclear if the gathering took place for purposes of propaganda, religious service, or prayer." Otherwise, he argued, the Orthodox would be unable to protest against sectarian propaganda.[89] Thus Varzhanskii essentially argued that the law against proselytism sanctioned the verbal abuse of those deemed to be sectarians. Two of the older boys were sentenced to two weeks' imprisonment, but Varzhanskii was given "personal supervision" over the others so as to influence their future behavior.[90] Coleman, too, notes that official missionaries encouraged Orthodox Christians to disrupt sectarian meetings.[91] Like their work within the brotherhoods, it is clear that the organizational activity of the missionaries influenced the stance of Orthodox communities and associations toward the non-Orthodox, manufacturing interfaith hostility and perpetuating social divisions within Russian society.

Interfaith interaction was not the only form of social activity that the party of the "apostle-like tsar" and its missionary activists suppressed among the Orthodox clergy. After most of the sixteen priests elected to the First and Second Dumas affiliated themselves with dissident parties, the missionary

Skvortsov began publishing articles in *Kolokol*, a church journal he started editing in 1905, which called for the creation of a separate clerical curia.[92] Once this curia was established, clerical campaigning and voting could be contained within ecclesiastical organizations, allowing Synodal authorities to monitor and control the process. The chief procurator of the Synod, Petr Izvol'skii, dispatched the official missionary and "Orthodox patriot" Father Ioann Vostorgov on an unofficial mission from May to December 1907 to manipulate clerical elections with the help of diocesan authorities throughout European Russia.[93] From Tver' Vostorgov issued a report describing his campaign of coercion and intimidation. The chairmen of the clergy's local congresses were called before the bishops and governor, who instructed them to compile lists of loyal and dissident clergymen in their districts. The latter were to be excluded from the electoral process by confining them to their parishes or excluding them from the city of Tver' during the elections.[94] This suppression of political expression within the Church effectively prevented the emergence of a "clerical party" in Russia.[95] Yet the regime's direct intervention into interfaith relations through official missionaries may have restricted the autonomy of the Orthodox community even more severely than did intervention into the Church's participation in politics.

It was the fear of engaging other religious groups in free competition, without the protection of the Church's privileged status, that motivated Orthodox complicity in government regulation of interfaith relations, especially after the decree of toleration. Paradoxically, recognition of the need for the Orthodox community to meet the challenge of religious competition independently of the state had justified the extension of freedom of association within the Church throughout the empire's final half-century. State sanction for the formation of Orthodox brotherhoods was initially justified by their performance of missionary activity. The creation of subsequent organizations that progressively broadened the scope of voluntarism permitted among Orthodox clergy and laity was partially motivated by the perception in the Synod of the need to compete with the successful mutual aid activities of evangelicals, Catholics, Volga-German Lutherans, and Old Believers.[96] These Orthodox associations allowed the Church to influence Russian society independently of the imperial government. Yet the regulation of contact with non-Orthodox groups circumscribed the scope and scale of public activity in which these associations could engage. It is clear that by acting as agents of such regulation, official missionaries checked the advance of Orthodox associations into the emerging public sphere of late imperial Russia.

The history of the Orthodox Church in late imperial Russia provides a striking example of the oppressive influence of state protection of an official religion on that very religion. After the fall of the Soviet Union Russia's leadership pledged to help the Orthodox Church recover from decades of persecution. This policy has resulted in the partial restoration of the Church's privileged status in the form of special tax concessions, influence over public education, and the right to preview and comment on legislation under consideration in the Duma.[97] Yet the Soviet collapse also permitted the revival of many other forms of religious practice in Russia. Church leaders, including Patriarch Kirill, have criticized the proselytism of other religious associations among Russians as predatory and harmful for the Church's recovery from Soviet oppression. This criticism has resulted in legislation to shield the Orthodox from religious competition. The 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations discourages proselytism by new religious groups in the Russian Federation and allows for the forcible liquidation of associations deemed harmful.[98] This law was amended in response to the February 2012 demonstration by Pussy Riot in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior to explicitly criminalize insulting the religious feelings of believers.[99] Yet as the history of the late imperial period shows, state efforts to protect the Church are far more likely to weaken its influence over society and to exacerbate social tensions.