ASPECTS OF INCULTURATION OF NEOPENTECOSTALISM IN THE CONDITIONS OF A POLICONFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Purpose: The article discusses aspects of the inculturation of neo-Pentecostal churches in a multi-confessional environment.

Methodology: The authors describe the introductions of elements of the Orthodox cult and Orthodox spiritual culture into the religious practice of neo-Pentecostal churches, based on data from field studies conducted in 2015-2017 in Kazan.

Results: The article raises issues of changing religion in a late modern society and under the influence of the processes of glocalization and globalization.

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

Novelty/Originality: This research is devoted to the problems of inculturation of neo-Pentecostal churches in a multi-confessional environment and religion change issues in the context of glocalization and globalization processes.

Keywords: Neo-Pentecostalism, Inculturation, National ministries, Multi-confessional milieu, Orthodoxy.

INTRODUCTION

Pentecostalism refers to one of the late directions of Protestantism, originating in the charismatic "awakening" of the Christian churches of the twentieth century. Pentecostalism both in the West and in Russia arises as a protest against the frozen form of classical Pentecostalism, which contributed to the emergence of distinctive features among representatives of this trend: expressiveness in expressing the experience of the divine, focus on personal relationships with God, active missionary and social activities. Despite the differences between the "neo-Pentecostals" and the essential theological concepts of classical Pentecostalism continue to form the basis of the neo-Pentecostal movement. New Pentecostals believe that through the actions of the Holy Spirit a person can survive "being born again" and "baptized in the Holy Spirit", which gives him the gifts of the Holy Spirit and prepares him to serve God in the everyday world. Selka, S. (2019)

One of the characteristic features of neo-Pentecostals is an interest in the national culture of the people among whom they preach and disseminate their teachings.

On the one hand, the interest in national identity and the acculturation of religious practice are inherent in the very neo-Pentecostalism as a religious movement that arose and is developing the multicultural environment of American society, when the diversity of religious and folk traditions, Americans “filled with the Holy Spirit”, were constituted by a protestant Protestant ethos. On the other hand, all branches of Christianity are characterized by religious acculturation of the visual and ceremonial side of Christianity using elements of national tradition and mythology to convey the meaning of Christian symbols and dogmas. Anderson, A. H. (2013)

The concept of “religious acculturation” in the research literature regarding neo-Pentecostals is often used as a designation of a focused missionary strategy in national regions in order to adapt the sermon and ministry for local residents. But in studies, the aspect of the natural process of acculturation of neo-Pentecostalism in the multi-confessional environment of the Russian Federation is omitted. Selka, S. (2019)

First, neo-Pentecostalism has changed markedly after decades of functioning in Russia. At the dawn of its appearance in Russia, neo-Pentecostalism, led by American preachers or graduates of missionary colleges, broadcast values that were foreign to most Russians, but contrasted markedly with the routine of perestroika Russia and therefore attracted ambitious young people, the liberal part of the intelligentsia and young people who left the classical Pentecostal wishing change and openness. In the process of growth and establishment of churches, believers from among local parishioners became pastors and ministers. [eight, p. 90] According to Russian scholars, ministers of neo-Pentecostal churches “Russified” and, following the established trend of “traditionalism” at the beginning of the 2000s, began to search for the sources of their identity in the culture and history of the peoples of Russia, in “Russian evangelism” (Russian religious movements). Diantell, E., Hervieu-Léger, D., & Saint-Martin, I. (Eds.). (2004)

Secondly, the religious situation in Russia has undergone tremendous changes. Today, one does not have to ignore the situation of increased religious pluralism of Christian churches and denominations of various kinds, existing within the framework of the dominant environment of “culture-forming” Russian Orthodoxy. Anderson, A. H. (2013)

This situation, in turn, requires all participants in interfaith interaction to contribute to the formation of new forms of interaction.
METHODS

In our study, we proceed from empirical data collected during the included observation in the Kazan communities of Kazan during 2015 - 2017, which include in-depth interviews, diaries of included observations, as well as the author's field notes.

The basis of our fieldwork is the anthropological method of “getting used to” in the field, i.e. gradual inclusion in the studied environment as its participant. The status of a “participant” avoids the possible replacement of the representation of the religious everyday life of neo-Pentecostal communities with a socially desired image. Dianteill, E., Hervieu-Léger, D., & Saint-Martin, I. (Eds.). (2004)

The chosen research strategy involves the use of certain methods of collecting empirical material. From an array of descriptive methods, we selected a rich description, which suggests that the researcher should thus fix social discourse, that he from the transient event, which exists only at the time of completion, in the field diary will retain all the relevance of the perfect, which will make it possible to return repeatedly to the descriptions of what happened. Selka, S. (2019)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religious acculturation in neo-Pentecostal communities is carried out at the ritual, personal, and the level of formation of religious concepts (worldview).

Inculturation taking place at the ritual level is primarily associated with the introduction of elements of the Orthodox cult into the religious practice of neo-Pentecostal communities. These can be both cult-ritual objects of Orthodoxy, such as an icon, a communion cup, vestments of priests, etc., as well as elements of the cult itself, for example, the Orthodox liturgy. So, in one of Kazan neo-Pentecostal churches, Sunday prayer meeting in the image of the Orthodox liturgy is practiced. The pastor also criticizes the free attitude towards the Eucharist adopted among neo-Pentecostals, in which the sacrament can be performed anywhere and even from disposable tableware, which is subsequently thrown out, and not from the corresponding cup. Dianteill, E., Hervieu-Léger, D., & Saint-Martin, I. (Eds.). (2004)

Also in neo-Pentecostal churches, one can find the use of elements of the Orthodox culture: the practice of carol songs, the stylization of choral singing to the Orthodox chant, the use of the Orthodox bell and celebrating the main Christian holidays, Christmas and Easter, according to the Orthodox calendar. In addition to the general church tendencies of acculturation, at the ritual level, there are special cases where the introduction of elements of the Orthodox cult does not apply to the whole church but is practiced only in certain home groups. So, in such small communities it is possible, to meet the practice when, along with the glossolalia, believers can use the Jesus prayer and other prayers from Orthodox prayer books, overshadowing themselves with the sign of the cross on the Orthodox model. Selka, S. (2019)

Similar religious eclecticism can be explained through the concept of ritual. The outwardly secular and internationalized practice of Pentecostalism was insufficient for the Russian mentality, and it was necessary to fill in the lack of ritual action, which was carried out through the Russification of Pentecostalism and the introduction of elements of Orthodoxy. On the other hand, interest in Orthodoxy and the Orthodox heritage can be reinforced by the tendency to consider the Russian Orthodox Church as an older brother by faith, which has manifested itself in recent years in the neo-Pentecostal Union of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Holy Spirit, led by S. Ryakhovsky. Anderson, A. H. (2013)

At the worldview level, religious acculturation is associated with the comprehension of patristic theological concepts and the creation of a distinctive theology that is independent of American theological authorities and traditions. The comprehension and development of patristic theology are also connected with ecumenical friendship, which was established between liberal Orthodox communities including the tradition of O. A. Men’, and the neo-Pentecostal churches. In ecumenical dialogue, representatives of both sides interpret the problems of salvation, church “house-building” in the context of Russian culture. Chirkov, N. V. (2018)

Russian researcher O. Kuropatkina explains a similar aspect of acculturation as a consequence of ethnic and religious self-identification. In the process of development and establishment of neo-Pentecostal churches for the intellectual part, the question arose about their own cultural path, about the eschatological role of the martyrdom of the Russian people and the special religious path of Russia. In search of a solution to these questions for themselves, the Pentecostals turn not only to patriotic theological thought but also to Russian religious philosophy.

At the personal level, acculturation is expressed in the fact that a small part of the Pentecostals combines full membership in the community and observe Orthodox rites and traditions in private, either only by their family or individually. Thus, some neo-Pentecostals consider it reasonable to acquaint their children with Orthodox culture and tradition, to baptize them in the Orthodox Church, so that in the process of growing up they give the opportunity for their own choice of direction in Christianity. Selka, S. (2019)

Such a decision and behavior of believers can be understood if we take into account that for most Russians the leading form of identity is ethno-confessional identity, when belonging to a certain ethnic group determines a religious choice and the idea that Tatars must be Muslims and Russians Orthodox is rooted in public consciousness. In a situation where
personal religious choice contrasts with the expectations of relatives, close friends and acquaintances, the two traditions are crossed at a personal level, usually exclusively in practical terms. Believers consider it natural to remain ritual in Orthodoxy (to baptize children, get married, attend an Orthodox church), but at the same time participate in home groups of the Pentecostal church, attend Sunday prayer meeting and participate in the analysis of scripture at church meetings, i.e. to continue to participate fully in the life of the neo-Pentecostal community. Chirkov, N. V. (2018)

There are churches whose ministers think their mission is to provide such undecided Christians with help in choosing

SUMMARY

Religious acculturation is a natural process of the development of neo-Pentecostalism in a multiconfessional environment, where the Russian Orthodox Church plays a culture-forming, dominant role. Firstly, the formation of a sustained interest of neo-Pentecostals in Orthodox rituals is associated with the peculiarities of the religious situation in Russia, where the prevailing role in the identity of Russians is played by ethno-confessional identity. Secondly, Christianity itself has an interest in the cultural national identity of the peoples among whom the sermon is being held. So, in Orthodoxy and Catholicism, you can find many elements of religious acculturation, when elements of popular beliefs were comprehended and used to convey Christian values and meanings. Thirdly, the institutionalization of neo-Pentecostal communities leads to a natural search for the cultural self-identification of believers and the rooted teachings (the origins of Russian evangelism) in the history and culture of Russia.

In our opinion, the religious acculturation taking place in neo-Pentecostal communities can be explained not only by the processes taking place in the religious situation of the Russian Federation. Pentecostalism, as a religious movement, often called by scholars “global Christianity”, which has seized almost all continents, is at the same time subjected to the processes of glocalization and modernization that affect modern religions. The individualization and de-institutionalization of religious modernity lead to the loss of a direct relationship between the self-determination of the believer as a Pentecostal and the religious practice characteristic of the religious ethos of this Christian movement. The individualization of religious consciousness leads to a situation where believers themselves seek to determine the value integrity of their religious worldview.

CONCLUSIONS

Religious acculturation, as a natural phenomenon of the social processes of adaptation and assimilation of different cultural worlds, is becoming increasingly noticeable in the context of globalization, aggravated by the globalizing world. The glocalization of national, religious, symbolic worlds provokes their differentiation, permeability, and flexibility, which, in turn, destroys the usual constants of religious identity, which are replaced by the uniqueness of the religious community and the directness of the experiences that it can give.

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