

# The Millennium Celebrations of 1988 in the USSR

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The official celebrations of the Millennium of the Baptism of Kievan Rus', organised by the Moscow Patriarchate, took place in conditions of far greater freedom than anyone could have predicted even a few months beforehand. Foreign guests spoke of a more relaxed atmosphere than on previous visits, and church spokesmen publicly called for specific concessions which they would not have dreamed of mentioning until recently. There are still limits to freedom, of course, and there is far from being unanimity within the church as to how it should respond to the new situation. State officials had a prominent role in the celebrations, perhaps more prominent than was always thought appropriate. But coverage of the events in the Soviet press was considerable, while the scale of the celebrations surprised many observers.

The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church began preparing for the celebrations in October 1980 by setting up a Millennium Commission. This consisted of 29 clergy and five lay employees from different institutions within the church.<sup>1</sup> Judging by the scope of the events which took place in 1988, the labours of the Commission must have been prodigious. Yet for several years no plans were made public and no details were given. No observer could be sure how much the state would relax its attitude toward the church for the occasion. It was not until 29 July 1986 that the Holy Synod announced the form the celebrations would take, with events in Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad, Novgorod, Vladimir, Minsk and L'vov from 5-17 June and celebrations in all other dioceses from 18 June to 10 July. The main "solemn jubilee event" would be in Moscow on 10 June. Most significant of all was the announcement that a *Pomestny Sobor* (Local Council) of the church would be held from 6-9 June.<sup>2</sup> This represented an important concession by the state, being only the fourth *Sobor* in the Soviet period (the others were in 1917-18,

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate (JMP)*, 1981 No. 2, pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> *JMP*, 1986 No. 9, pp. 7-8. See *RCL*, Vol. 15 No. 2, p. 196.

1945 and 1971). Normally another *Sobor* would not have been expected until it became necessary to elect a new patriarch. Further details were slow to emerge. In January 1986 Metropolitan Sergi of Odessa, then Chancellor (business manager) of the Moscow Patriarchate, gave an interview in which he discussed some of the *Sobor's* agenda items but said little about the expected nature of the celebrations. Of most interest was his statement that the church was to adopt a new internal measure for church government. He also hinted that new saints would be canonised.<sup>3</sup> On 3 March 1987 TASS published a report showing the church in a more favourable light than the Soviet press had done previously and suggesting, without giving details, that the celebrations would be extensive.<sup>4</sup> The most significant announcement, that there was to be a special millennium concert in Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, came only a month before the celebrations commenced.<sup>5</sup> This was the first indication that events were to take place on state as well as church premises, and reflected the policy of giving the church greater visibility in public life that had by then developed.

As the millennium approached, Soviet press coverage of the occasion showed greater diversity, owing to Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*.<sup>6</sup> Positive comments were published about believers in general<sup>7</sup> and the Russian Orthodox Church and the millennium in particular. For example, in July 1987, Valentin Yanin, Professor of Archaeology at Moscow University, made the following comment in a published dialogue with Professor Ivan Belevtsev of the Leningrad Theological Academy:

... after adopting Christianity, Rus' entered into the centre of the group of countries which developed a traditional ancient culture. The church alone enabled the unification of separate kingdoms. Literacy spread, and through church observance new ideas about man, culture, art were introduced. The Orthodox liturgy itself is a synthesis of art: music, art and theatre.<sup>8</sup>

The fact that such comments could be published is significant, since a central theme of pre-*glasnost*' millennium coverage was to deny that the church had played a significant role in national history and culture. But the fact that positive comments were now published did

<sup>3</sup> *Moscow News*, January 1987, p. 13. See *RCL*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 318-20.

<sup>4</sup> TASS, 6 March 1987.

<sup>5</sup> TASS, 11 May 1988.

<sup>6</sup> Early comment had been on the whole negative: see *RCL* Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 198-99.

<sup>7</sup> *RCL*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 76-78 and No. 2, pp. 111-16.

<sup>8</sup> *Moscow News*, 14 June 1987, p. 41 cited in TASS, 15 July 1987. Another interesting dialogue also enabled Hieromonk Innokenti of the Leningrad Theological Academy to make positive points about the church's role: *Nedelya*, 23-29 May 1988, pp. 18-19.

not mean that there was an end to negative comments. In the same month that Professor Yanin's views were published strong criticism of the church's role was voiced by two other writers, V. Klimov and candidate of philosophical science A. Rotovsky. They accused proponents of "clerical anti-communist propaganda" of using the history of the Russian Orthodox Church as their main object for "falsification":

. . . in the proclamation of Orthodox ideology and the history of the Russian Orthodox Church within the framework of preparations for the celebrations of the 1000th anniversary of the "Baptism of Rus' " the clericalists see a way of rehabilitating religious values as a whole in the eyes of the population of our country.

The authors assert that church spokesmen are drawing attention to those who "suffered for their faith" between 1917 and 1945, although bishops and priests at that time were sentenced for anti-Soviet, not religious activity.<sup>9</sup>

A more thoughtful article by the well-informed, veteran writer on religion and scientific atheism, N. Gordienko, nonetheless contains similar criticism of claims by churchmen:

Contemporary adherents of Russian Orthodoxy. . . declare the introduction of Christianity to Rus' "the greatest event in the history of the Russian people", the beginning of all beginnings. They trace back Russian statehood to this event. Nonetheless, it is known that the ancient Russian state was formed in the second half of the ninth century, that is, more than a hundred years before the religious reform of the Kiev prince Vladimir Svyatoslavovich. . . Under the guise of the struggle with paganism, the church destroyed the pre-Christian cultural heritage of our forefathers, which was distinguished — judging by miraculously preserved remains — by richness of content and variety of form.<sup>10</sup>

*Glasnost*, evidently, has meant debate, not the imposition of a new, more favourable, line on religion. It has given an opening for proponents of Gorbachev's call for "new thinking" without silencing those who prefer the old, hostile attitude to religion.

The key event so far as church-state relations are concerned was Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Patriarch Pimen and members of the Holy Synod in the Kremlin on 19 April 1988. The meeting, which took place at the Patriarch's request, was the first between a Soviet

<sup>9</sup>"Who Needs the 'New Martyrs of Russia'?", *Molodyozh Moldavii*, 16 July 1987.

<sup>10</sup>*Leningradskaya pravda*, 1 June 1988, pp. 2-3.

leader and the church hierarchy for over forty years. Gorbachev's speech, which was reported on the front page of *Izvestiya* and was given wide coverage by the rest of the Soviet media, referred to the millennium as "a significant milestone" in the history, culture and development of Russia. He hailed believers as "Soviet people, working people, patriots". He admitted that religious organisations were "affected" by "the tragic events of the period of the personality cult". He also went on record as saying that legislation on religion is to be revised: this had already been referred to publicly by other official spokesmen and therefore was not news to believers, but it was a commitment that would be hard to go back on. Mr Gorbachev emphasised that the legislation would be revised "on the basis of Leninist principles", signalling the limits within which the revision would take place. Like other spokesmen, he gave no indication when and to what extent the laws were to be revised.

The Orthodox hierarchy's response to this meeting has been to commit the church to Gorbachev's campaign of *perestroika*. In his reply to Gorbachev's address, the Patriarch emphasised that believers were "fervently praying for the success" of restructuring and "the new political thinking".<sup>11</sup> Throughout the celebrations of the millennium the Patriarch referred to the meeting with Gorbachev as a significant gesture on the part of the Soviet authorities, and it is clear that the church hierarchy in general see it as a turning point in church-state relations.<sup>12</sup>

### 1. *Official Celebrations*

The main millennium events in Moscow lasted from the opening ceremony on 5 June to the liturgy on 12 June, when guests dispersed to visit the cities of Leningrad, Kiev and Vladimir for further celebrations. The opening liturgy was celebrated in the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Epiphany in Moscow, and was attended by over 400 visiting church representatives.<sup>13</sup> That afternoon the Patriarch, accompanied by guests, laid a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier by the Kremlin walls. *The Ecumenical Press Service* No. 58, June 1988 stated that there were over 1,500 official guests altogether at the celebrations.

<sup>11</sup> KNS No. 300, 12 May 1988, pp. 16-18.

<sup>12</sup> Official Moscow Patriarchate Press-release on the Millennium No. 11, 13 June 1988, p. 5, (henceforward these are cited as press-release); Press-release No. 5, 7 June 1988, p. 3; Press-release No. 10, 12 June 1988, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Press-release No. 9, 11 June 1988, p. 3.

From 6 to 9 June a *Pomestny Sobor* (Local Council) took place at the Monastery of the Holy Trinity and St Sergi at Zagorsk.<sup>14</sup> The *Sobor* is the supreme authority in the church, and should be convened at regular intervals to review events since the last meeting and to determine the future course of church life. The 1988 *Sobor* also had the task of adopting a new *Ustav* (statute) as the basis for regulating church life. This was in fact the first *Sobor* since 1971, and only the fourth since 1917. Members of the Holy Synod presented reports on the life of the church during the millennium of its existence, and especially since 1971. These reports were followed by the presentation of the draft of the new church statute by Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk. (This is discussed in detail below.) An important step taken at the *Sobor* was the canonisation of nine new saints at a special service in the Church of St Sergi in Zagorsk. The new saints are: Andrei Rublyov c. 1360-?, Maxim Grek (the Greek) c. 1470-1556, Dimitri Donskoi 1350-89, Metropolitan Makari of Moscow c. 1482-1563, *Starets* Paisi Velichkovsky 1722-94, The Blessed Xeniya of Petersburg born c. 1719-32, died 1794-1806, Bishop Ignati Bryanchaninov 1807-67, *Starets* Amvrosi of Optina 1812-91, Feofan Zatvornik (the Recluse) 1815-94. Biographies of them all were made available at the *Sobor*, and it was announced that new church services would be published with which to commemorate them.<sup>15</sup> It is significant that the new saints are all from pre-revolutionary times. Despite calls by independent church activists for the commemoration of martyrs of Stalin's repressions 20th century Christians who had died at that time were not acknowledged. However, foreign observers noted that in an address at the concert held in the Bolshoi Theatre, Metropolitan Mefodi of Voronezh declared that "the time was not yet ripe" to consider canonising new saints and martyrs of the 20th century.

¶ On 7 June, it was announced by the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR that part of the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev was to be returned to the Russian Orthodox Church. Both church and state authorities had indicated before the millennium that this was a possibility. The sections to be returned to the church consist of the Far Caves, two churches, the belfry, two wells, five attached buildings, and a plot of land. Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev received the transfer document at a televised ceremony in Kiev on the same day. The Archbishop of Canterbury was present at the ceremony.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>272 members of 67 dioceses from the Soviet Union and nine dioceses abroad took part, and some 400 guests of honour from ninety countries were also present. Press-release No. 9, 11 June 1988, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Press-release No. 5, 7 June 1988, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup>Press-release Nos. 6, 8 June 1988, p. 5, and 7, 9 June 1988, p. 9.

The concert at the Bolshoi Theatre on 10 June was attended by a number of state representatives, including Raisa Gorbachev, Konstantin Kharchev, Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA), and President Gromyko. Some guests praised the event as a great occasion to mark this historic gathering for the millennium; others thought it an over-lavish extravaganza. Dissidents described it as "a farce"<sup>17</sup> and "vulgar drama without substance".<sup>18</sup>

On 11 June President Gromyko received a large group of the guests attending the millennium celebrations in the Kremlin, and held a question and answer session. He gave no information about the new legislation, and no indication that laws on religious education were to be relaxed. "Lenin's decree on the separation of church and state and church from school is operative in this country. We have to go on from that basis." Gromyko hinted that the new legislation may give the church the right of juridical personality and legalise charitable activities. He assured those present at the conference that there was no discrimination against believers in their jobs, and declared that the practice of registration of religious communities was in no way a violation of the law on freedom of conscience: "Religious organisations ought to be in favour of registration." Gromyko answered a total of ten questions put to him from the floor but devoted the majority of the session to answering questions which had been presented in written form before the start of the meeting.<sup>19</sup> Over 700 participants in the celebrations from the Soviet Union and from abroad took part in the meeting, including the Patriarch. Observers professed themselves dissatisfied with the meeting, feeling that President Gromyko had not been forthcoming in his answers. They were particularly disappointed with his pronouncements on religious education, which leave little room for hope that the law will change significantly in this area, (see below).

On 12 June a crowd of more than 10,000 gathered in the square in front of the Danilov Monastery Cathedral where a Divine Liturgy was concelebrated by Patriarch Ignatios IV of Antioch, Patriarch Diodorus I of Jerusalem, Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia, Patriarch Iliya of Georgia, Patriarch Teoctist of all Romania, Patriarch Maxim of Bulgaria and Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus. After the service the crowd was addressed by Cardinal Glemp, who, significantly, spoke of the Polish martyrs of the 20th century. An observer noted that despite a history of bad relations between Russia and Poland, the Soviet crowds listened receptively to the Polish Primate.

<sup>17</sup>*Il Sabato*, report by Irina Alberti on the conference on the Millennium of Russian Christianity held by Christian activists, 4-9 June. See *KNS* No. 304, 7 July 1988, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup>Michael Bourdeaux, *Church Times*, 17 June 1988, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup>*Izvestiya*, 13 June 1988, p. 2.

At a reception held in the Praga restaurant in the afternoon of 12 June, Patriarch Pimen addressed the guests, and again went out of his way to stress the gratitude felt by the Russian Orthodox Church towards the state authorities for assisting in the preparations for the millennium and for their willingness to include believers in the process of *perestroika*:

Another mark of our time consists of the most important process of restoration of the Leninist norms of life, and we are all witnesses of and participants in this process. From all our hearts we thank the leaders of our country for their understanding of the needs of believers. We recall again and again our historic meeting with Mr Gorbachev. One can hardly overestimate the importance of what has been done by the state to help our Church conduct this celebration in a proper way. We are deeply grateful to the Council for Religious Affairs under the USSR Council of Ministers for the all-round assistance in solving the daily problems in the life of the Church, for the benevolent help in the preparations for this celebration.<sup>20</sup>

This reception brought to an end the celebrations in Moscow.

A potentially lasting symbol of improved church-state relations was the laying of a foundation stone in the south of Moscow for a new church to commemorate the millennium of the Baptism of Rus'. The new church is within the boundaries of the Moscow ring road, just off the Kashira highway, near the Tsaritsyno Ponds. Guests at the conference were present at the ceremony. Kharchev addressed those present, declaring that "the laying of this foundation stone is the incarnation of Leninist principles" — a remark which one guest at least found amusing, in the light of Lenin's hostile attitude to religion.

### *Kiev*

Celebrations in Kiev began with a "jubilee ceremony" at the Taras Shevchenko Opera and Ballet Theatre, presided over by Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev, with guests of honour representing other religions and denominations in attendance. Soviet officials were also present. In his address, Filaret noted the difficulties encountered by the church after the revolution: "The process of the implementation of legislative measures concerning the Church was neither easy nor painless. . . . But in the course of time the Russian Orthodox Church has found its own place in socialist society." Several guests addressed the gathering, including Cardinal Willebrands, Head of the Secretariat for Christian

<sup>20</sup>Press-release No. 11, 13 June 1988, p. 5.

Unity, American evangelist Billy Graham, and the Chairman of the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments, Petro Tonko.<sup>21</sup>

At an all-night vigil held at the St Vladimir Cathedral on 14 June, militiamen are reported to have had difficulty in holding back the crowd which had gathered. A Soviet reporter, Mykhailo Vdorytsky, noted the large crowds but commented that:

... not all of them came to the Cathedral in order to be introduced to the millennium-long history of Orthodoxy in Rus'. For many of them it was merely a matter of prestige — to get a pass by hook or by crook, while many believers had to send their prayers outside the cathedral, straining to hear the singing reaching from inside the temple. (*sic*)

Believers told Vdorytsky of their hopes that more churches would be built in cities.<sup>22</sup>

A divine liturgy was held on the morning of 15 June at St Vladimir's Cathedral, with a procession outside the cathedral, which was also attended by large crowds. That evening a jubilee concert took place at the Kiev Opera and Ballet Theatre, which was broadcast live on television and radio. On 16 June a Divine Liturgy was held at the Kiev Monastery of the Caves in the new territory which had just been returned to the church. Believers told foreigners who were present that, while they were pleased that part of the monastery had been returned, they wanted the whole of the original monastery to be handed back to the church.

The Kiev festivities were concluded with an open-air service (which is technically illegal) at the statue of St Vladimir on St Vladimir Hill. Despite a heavy fall of rain, the crowds (according to western correspondents) numbered many thousands. The correspondent for *News from Ukraine* noticed preachers giving impromptu sermons to sections of the crowds, away from the official festivities. They were from Orthodox and Baptist churches. The militia did not stop them from speaking.<sup>23</sup>

A group of participants in the celebrations met Valentyna Shevchenko, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the

<sup>21</sup> Press-release No. 12, 6 June 1988, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> *News from Ukraine* No. 26 1988, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *News from Ukraine* No. 26 1988, pp. 1, 4-5. The reporter records an exchange between a preacher named Antoni from Volhynia and a member of the crowd listening to him: "Which is your Orthodox faith, Russian or Ukrainian?" — to which Father Antoni responded that there is one Orthodox faith for people of all nationalities. This exchange may indicate that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, formed in 1918, and forcibly dissolved in the 1930s, may still be attracting some allegiance from the Orthodox peoples of Ukraine.



Ukrainian SSR, who gave some new data on the state of religion in Ukraine (see supplement).<sup>24</sup>

The celebrations of the millennium will continue in the dioceses for the rest of the year. For example, Metropolitan Leonid of Riga stated that the millennium would be celebrated in Riga on 19 June with a liturgy to which Christian leaders, representatives of state authorities, and the believers of the city would be invited. Foreign guests and participants in the celebrations in Moscow would also be taking part in the celebrations in Riga. After the main liturgy the millennium would be celebrated in all the Russian Orthodox churches of the diocese.<sup>25</sup>

### *The Soviet Press and the Millennium*

Guests were surprised to find that millennium celebrations were reported on television and radio, and widely in the press. *Izvestiya*, the government newspaper, carried a series of articles about the church between 31 May and 17 June while the party paper, *Pravda*, was more restricted in its coverage. One of the most notable *Izvestiya* items was an interview with a monk in Zagorsk, Fr Mark Danilovsky, entitled "Father Mark Reads and Writes". As the title indicates, there is some surprise that a member of the clergy should have the basic educational attributes that every other Soviet citizen possesses. On finding that Father Mark served in the army, as all young men are required to do by law, the authors express their surprise simply by means of an interrogation mark.<sup>26</sup> This article reminds one of the earlier indignation of Archpriest Vladimir Sorokin, Rector of the Leningrad Theological Schools, who claims that priests and monks are regarded as hardly human: "believers don't live on the moon — they live here, on our own Russian soil."<sup>27</sup> Few papers reported the events of the *Sobor* and the millennium celebrations in any detail. *Izvestiya* on 11 June, carried an interview with Archbishop Agafangel of Vinnitsa who reported that:

A statute was adopted at the *Pomestny Sobor* — a resolution on the government of the Russian Orthodox Church. There were interesting discussions. Now we will use it in our life and activities. The statute corresponds to the new position of our Church, which is linked to *perestroika* and the democratisation of

<sup>24</sup> *News from Ukraine*, No. 26 1988, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Sovetskaya Latviya*, 27 April 1988, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Izvestiya*, 5 June 1988, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Meditinskaya gazeta*, 30 March 1988, p. 4.

Soviet society. There were some important points — now our Church has the role of juridical personality.<sup>28</sup>

A *Pravda* report concentrated on the positive attitude of the church to *perestroika*, and on the paper delivered by Metropolitan Alexi of Leningrad and Novgorod on peace.<sup>29</sup> Coverage of events in Kiev was full, especially the return of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves to the church.

The increased publicity given to the church hierarchy and the millennium did not please all Soviet citizens. Kharchev informed a group of lecturers at the Higher Party School in Moscow that he had received numerous telephone calls complaining at the extensive coverage of church events in the Soviet media, and especially on television. Kharchev's response to such complaints was to tell the Soviet people that they must learn to think of the church and its churchmen as normal, rather than abnormal.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. Unofficial Millennium Celebrations

Independent thinkers within the church, including some released early from labour camps during 1987, endeavoured to organise unofficial celebrations. In so doing, they hoped to draw attention to aspects of church life glossed over in the official celebrations. Conferences and exhibitions were planned.

The most successful of these, in Leningrad, should probably be termed "semi-official" rather than "unofficial". It was organised by the informal group Club 81 and held on 22-24 April. It had been in preparation for four months, with no attempt to prevent it becoming public knowledge and no interference from government bodies. It was held in public premises where Club 81 meets. A crew from Leningrad television filmed and broadcast part of the proceedings on the second day. Entitled "The Values of Christian Culture on the Eve of the Millennium of Christianity in Russia", the conference attracted academic contributions from a dozen speakers. Those attending were primarily members of the Leningrad intelligentsia, plus some from Moscow. Contributors included both dissidents and Archpriest Vladimir Sorokin, Rector of the Leningrad Theological Schools, whose participation appears to be a new departure for events of this kind.<sup>31</sup>

Other initiatives in Leningrad were less successful. Some Christian artists attempted to exhibit their works at an exhibition dedicated to

<sup>28</sup> *Izvestiya*, 11 June 1988, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Pravda*, 10 June 1988, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Russkaya mysl'*, 20 May 1988, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> *KNS* No. 300, 12 May 1988, p. 7.

the millennium. Their paintings were refused, and the eventual exhibition contained few Christian paintings. Metropolitan Alexi of Leningrad negotiated with the President of the Leningrad Soviet, Khodyrev, for an exhibition called "The Petersburg Period of Russian Culture", which eventually took place in the Vlaginy Palace on the outskirts of Leningrad.

The most remarkable official undertaking was the documentary film *Khram* ("Church") shown in various Leningrad cinemas. It includes footage of the destruction of the Cathedral of the Saviour in Moscow, which stood on the site of what is now the open-air swimming-pool. Interviews with believers who explain the reasons for their faith are also shown in the film. However, according to a *samizdat* source dated 26 March 1988, the film was not advertised and was shown only sporadically. Nonetheless, excerpts showing the dynamiting of the Cathedral were broadcast on Soviet television in May, shortly before the Reagan-Gorbachev summit.<sup>32</sup>

Attempts to organise an unofficial millennium conference in Moscow met with more obstructions than those in Leningrad. A conference took place between 4-9 June, overlapping the official celebrations, and was organised by former prisoner of conscience Alexander Ogorodnikov, the editor of the *samizdat* Orthodox magazine *Vybor* (Choice) and other Orthodox activists. Halls had been hired in advance and more than three hundred would-be participants arrived for the lectures. However, according to an Italian journalist who was present, they

found themselves standing before firmly locked doors on two occasions, at places where the conference should have taken place. The "Red October" house of culture. . . was unexpectedly inspected by the fire-brigade, who decided it should be closed as a fire-risk; a small amateur theatre which had incautiously received the conference participants was closed by the local soviet. As a result, the 22 lectures were given in private apartments. Ogorodnikov and his friends, fellow editors of his *Christian Community Bulletin*, taking heed of the experience of their fellow-believers, did not try to hire a hall. They met and debated in believers' private flats from 7-9 June.<sup>33</sup>

However, as Michael Bourdeaux, who was present for one of the sessions, notes, there was no disturbance from the police. He arrived with a group of twenty British tourists, who were warmly welcomed.<sup>34</sup>

An attempt to organise a photographic exhibition also foundered. A professional photographer travelled to several locations in Russia

<sup>32</sup> *Samizdat* document in Keston archives by Sergei Lopukhin, dated 26 March 1988.

<sup>33</sup> Report by Irina Alberti in *Il Sabato*: see *KNS* No. 304, 7 July 1988, pp. 5-6.

<sup>34</sup> *Church Times*, 17 June 1988, p. 10.

and Ukraine and took some excellent black-and-white photographs of ruined churches. However, the organisers were unable to persuade the authorities to give them a venue for the exhibition, and the photographer was refused permission to travel to Moscow. Some of the photographs were forwarded to Keston College in the hope that they could be exhibited in the West.<sup>35</sup>

As already noted in *RCL*, in the months before the millennium church activists wrote a number of *samizdat* appeals and open letters, some addressed to Gorbachev and to Patriarch Pimen, emphasising matters of concern to believers, especially legal restrictions on their activities.<sup>36</sup> One of the more controversial of these was Father Gleb Yakunin's appeal to Patriarch Pimen to resign, made several weeks before the millennium celebrations began<sup>37</sup> and repeated at a press conference held during the celebrations.<sup>38</sup> Yakunin alleged that the Patriarch was both too ill and too conditioned by past repressions of the church to take advantage of changes in Soviet society.

Generally speaking, however, dissidents found that the need they had perceived earlier for alternative millennium celebrations had been partly overtaken by the advance of *glasnost*'. They took advantage of the relaxation of restrictions on contacts with westerners and talked to journalists and other foreign visitors about the implications of Gorbachev's reforms for the church and for society as a whole.<sup>39</sup> A number of official foreign guests at the celebrations made a point of visiting well-known church activists, but it was reported that some activists had been disappointed that such contacts were not more extensive.<sup>40</sup>

### 3. Non-Orthodox Denominations and the Millennium

The Orthodox celebrations dominated events and Soviet press coverage, and were the only ones authorised by the Soviet authorities. However, other denominations who chose to mark the occasion publicly were not prevented from doing so. Moreover, some longstanding, controversial issues, notably that of the Ukrainian Catholics, were discussed publicly or semi-publicly.

<sup>35</sup> *The Times*, 30 July 1988, pp. 10 and 24. *RCL* Vol. 16 No. 3 (1988), cover picture.

<sup>36</sup> John Dunlop, "The Russian Orthodox Church in the Millennium Year: What it Needs from the Soviet State", *RCL*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 105-11.

<sup>37</sup> See *KNS* No. 297, 31 March 1988, p. 4-5.

<sup>38</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 8 June 1988, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> For example, Christian activists appeared on the BBC *Everyman* documentary programme "Christians in an Atheist Land" shown on 12 June 1988 and on the BBC Radio Four programme "Icons and Ideology", broadcast from 19-21 June 1988.

<sup>40</sup> *Il Sabato* reported in *KNS* No. 304, 7 July 1988, pp. 5-6.

## *Catholics*

During preparations for the millennium there was considerable controversy over which nations and denominations had the "right" to celebrate it, that is, legitimately to trace their origins to the baptism of Prince Vladimir (Volodymyr).<sup>41</sup> Such controversy was particularly acute in the case of Ukrainians, especially those championing the cause of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (the "Uniate" church) which is outlawed in the Soviet Union. This issue was the major one among several which made it impossible for the Pope to visit the USSR during the millennium celebrations — and possibly at any other time. It was therefore something of a surprise to find the matter referred to publicly, if obliquely, without apparent rancour. It was a time for diplomatic exchanges rather than for action or even promise of action, but at least wheels had been set in motion.

The presence of a very high-ranking Roman Catholic delegation, representing both the Vatican and Bishops' Conferences of different countries, and including no fewer than ten cardinals, helped bring this about. Representatives of the illegal Ukrainian Catholic Church were able for the first time to meet Vatican representatives, who also had important meetings with state as well as Russian Orthodox leaders.

Great surprise was caused when Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev reportedly announced that discussions between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Vatican on the future of the Ukrainian Catholic Church would take place shortly in Helsinki.<sup>42</sup> However, it subsequently transpired that this was one of a series of routine talks between the two churches: in the event, the discussion was on the Eastern-rite Catholics, and was referred to a committee which is to report back in a year's time. Ukrainian Catholics, however, have expressed indignation that their fate is to be discussed by the Russian Orthodox hierarchs without any representation from their own church. (In addition to historical grievances on both sides, the situation is complicated by the fact that the greatest concentration of Russian Orthodox churches is in Ukraine. According to the figures cited by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR (see statistical supplement), there are over 4,000 of them. Many of these churches were taken over by the Orthodox Church after the Ukrainian Catholic Church was declared illegal by the Soviet authorities in 1946. If the Ukrainian Catholic Church were to be legalised, it is estimated that over 1,500 churches would join it rather than the Russian Orthodox Church.)

<sup>41</sup> See Andrew Sorokowski, "The Millennium: A Ukrainian Perspective", *RCL*, Vol. 15 No. 3 (1987), pp. 257-63.

<sup>42</sup> Announced in Moscow 4 June 1988; reported in the *Herald Tribune*, 6 June 1988.

On 10 June, Cardinal Casaroli, the Vatican Secretary of State, and Cardinal Willebrands, head of its Secretariat for Christian Unity, met representatives of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.<sup>43</sup> No details of the discussions were made available.

The Soviet authorities adopted an apparently tolerant but non-committal tone towards the Roman Catholics. President Gromyko, at his meeting with guests at the millennium celebrations, declared: "The government will not stand in the way of the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church in the Soviet Union. We are not trying to encroach on the rights of Catholics here."<sup>44</sup> On 13 June Cardinal Casaroli went to the Kremlin to deliver a personal message to Mr Gorbachev from the Pope. This was the first-ever meeting between a high-ranking Vatican official and a Soviet leader. Although the question of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was not raised, nor the question of the rights of Catholic believers, the meeting was regarded as a major step forward in Soviet-Vatican relations. Gorbachev stated: "I believe that after this meeting — you will agree that it has been of a friendly nature — both sides have grounds for reflection. Both you and I have to think it all out, but as I have said, we do have a basis on which to get a dialogue under way." However, Gorbachev warned that, in view of the fact that the Soviet people had willingly espoused the socialist movement, any interference in Soviet affairs through any channels, including church channels, was "unacceptable".<sup>45</sup>

In Kiev, Ukrainian Catholics held an unofficial celebration on 5 June at the statue of Prince Vladimir (Volodymyr). Two hundred people gathered to listen to a tape-recording of church bells and choral chants. Excerpts were read from Pope John Paul II's 1985 appeal to the Fourth Synod of Ukrainian Bishops concerning the millennium. Oles Shevchenko, a leader of the Culturological Club, called for the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The militia and the KGB filmed the event but made no attempt to interfere.<sup>46</sup>

Reuters reported that the millennium was also celebrated with secret forest masses near the villages of Buniv and Bilichin on 29 May and 5 June. About 1,000 people are reported to have attended the mass near Bilichin on 5 June.<sup>47</sup>

On 8 July the Russian Orthodox Church reopened the church at Grushevo (Hrushiv), which became a place of pilgrimage for Ukrainian Catholics in 1987 when apparitions of the Virgin Mary were reported there. Orthodox priests began celebrating services at

<sup>43</sup>KNS No. 304, 23 June 1988, pp. 11-12.

<sup>44</sup>*Izvestiya*, 13 June 1988, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup>*Pravda*, 14 June 1988, p. 3; *Turkmenskaya iskra*, 15 June 1988, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup>KNS No. 303, 23 June 1988, p. 13.

<sup>47</sup>KNS No. 304, 7 July 1988, p. 16.

Grushevo on 9 July in an apparent attempt to prevent Ukrainian Catholics from worshipping there during the millennium. Police were stationed on the roads leading to the village. Despite these measures, 8,000 Ukrainian Catholics congregated at Grushevo on 10 July. They were attacked at the church by drunken youths and adults with bottles and stones. Many pilgrims returned home after these attacks, but 5,000 stayed and celebrated mass at some distance from the village, where they erected an eight-metre high wooden cross. On 11 July the authorities pulled down the cross and removed it.

In a much larger celebration of the millennium, 15,000 Ukrainian Catholics gathered in Zarvanytsa, Ternopol' *oblast'*, on 17 July, having travelled from the regions of Ternopol', L'vov, Rovno, and Transcarpathia. Buses bringing some of the pilgrims were ordered to turn back five kilometres from Zarvanytsa, but passengers continued on foot. Despite an obvious police presence and heavy rainfall, the crowd stayed for a high mass celebrated by a Ukrainian Catholic bishop, Pavlo Vaslyk. About 4,000 people received communion.<sup>48</sup> This was the largest public mass held by Ukrainian Catholics since 1946.

### *Baptists*

The All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists enjoys good formal relations with the Moscow Patriarchate, and was represented at the official celebrations. In addition, Baptists in Kiev held independent celebrations. On Saturday 18 June, an evangelistic service was held on the premises of the Independent Baptist church in Kiev (which is legally registered but does not belong to the Baptist Union). The authorities had given permission for invitations to be printed for this event, but these were unofficially reproduced, leading to attendance figures of between 3-4,000 people. One hundred of them made a public Christian commitment. In the afternoon of the same day, a crowd of 4-5,000 gathered at the statue of St Vladimir for an open-air meeting. When the militia arrived and asked that the meeting be brought to an end, the preacher asked the crowd if they wished to call a halt to the proceedings. The crowd responded by calling for the meeting to continue, and the preacher went on with his address without further official interference. The next day the church held an open-air baptismal service on the banks of the River Dnieper. Between 10-13,000 people attended and 75 were baptised in the river. No permission had been sought for the event, but the militia made no attempt to prevent it taking place.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> KNS No. 305, 4 August 1988, pp. 4-5.

<sup>49</sup> KNS No. 304, 7 July 1988, p. 4-5.

#### 4. *The Sobor*

Guests and participants congregated at the *Sobor* with high expectations. Visitors reported a feeling of joy and anticipation. A foreign guest was particularly struck by the sound of laughter during the *Sobor* — something notably absent in the repressive and tense atmosphere of the 1971 *Sobor*. Optimism and excitement were in the air. Nonetheless, the fact that CRA Chairman Kharchev was not only present throughout the proceedings, but was seated at the Primate's right hand, was a palpable reminder that it was not purely a church occasion.

Two unprecedented events witnessed to the new atmosphere. During the *Sobor*, news came of a train disaster at the town of Arzamas.<sup>50</sup> Delegates immediately resolved to send condolences to Prime Minister Ryzhkov, and a fund was set up for the bereaved families and the injured.<sup>51</sup> A total of 50,000 roubles was collected from participants in the *Sobor* — an astonishingly large figure for the few hundred present people.<sup>52</sup> On the final day of the *Sobor* a *panikhida* (requiem service) was held for the dead of the Afghan War.<sup>53</sup> A fund was set up for bereaved families and the wounded of the war, and around 200,000 roubles were collected from participants. Western observers viewed both these events as signs of the feeling of spontaneity at the *Sobor*. They are all the more striking in that the setting up of funds for the bereaved of Arzamas and of Afghanistan remains technically illegal under state law.

Texts of the reports of members of the Holy Synod to the *Sobor* were made available to guests who were not present at the closed sessions. Daily press-releases reported on the proceedings of the day before. No transcripts were available of the discussions which took place after each paper, but it is more likely that this was due to the problems of composing transcripts in time rather than to an unwillingness on the part of the Patriarchate to share the proceedings with their guests. It became evident as the *Sobor* continued that not only is the Russian Orthodox Church aware of the problems she faces, but she also has bishops who are prepared to admit to the problems and suggest solutions to them.

<sup>50</sup>The accident took place on Saturday 4 June, about eighty kilometres from Gor'ky. Sixty-eight people died, and hundreds were injured in the explosion.

<sup>51</sup>Press-release No. 7, 9 June 1988, p. 10.

<sup>52</sup>*Izvestiya*, 11 June 1988, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup>Press-release No. 8, 10 June 1988, p. 4. *Izvestiya*, 11 June 1988, p. 2.



### *The New Statute*

The most eagerly-awaited part of the *Sobor* was the discussion of the new *Ustav* (Statute), drawn up by a committee led by Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk and Vyaz'ma. He submitted a report before introducing the *Ustav* explaining the need for it and outlining the historical conditions which have led to this need. In particular he noted:

- a) the absence of a clear procedure of church administration and the ignorance of duties and responsibilities can produce erroneous actions on different levels of the church administration . . .
- b) the regulations written in wartime have none of the laws usually adopted in Orthodoxy . . . and thus give no clear idea of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the supreme hierarchy, clergy and laymen. From the very beginning it was assumed that, with the normalisation of life disorganised by war, they would be replaced by a permanent statute. . .
- c) The 1961 amendments to the 1945 *Polozheniya* (Statute) were provoked not by the internal needs of the church but by the complicated external situation in which our church lived in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

With these three statements Archbishop Kirill denied the validity of the 1945 and 1961 regulations, which have always had an uneasy status in the church, and put much of the blame onto Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign. He made it clear that the 1988 *Ustav* should be treated as the logical successor to the 1917 Statute.

Archbishop Kirill highlighted one of the chief defects of the 1961 amendments, this being the unsatisfactory status of the priest in his parish, divorced as he is from control of its financial and administrative activity: "It is well known that the situation existing in parishes provoked and provokes significant criticism by the hierarchs, clergy and laymen." He declared that the new Statute was intended to be a fluid document, that is, it may be amended and added to according to the introduction of new state legislation.<sup>54</sup>

Archbishop Kirill presented the text of the new *Ustav* after his report. Observers were impressed to see that members of the *Sobor* were able to propose and pass amendments; there was a general feeling that the *Ustav* was passed unanimously in a spirit of optimism rather than in a spirit of fear, such as that which had attended the new regulations of 1945 and 1971.

<sup>54</sup> Details taken from the English text of a report by Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk and Vyaz'ma *The Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church*, delivered on the final day of the *Sobor*, 9 June.

The new Statute has a new name, *Ustav*, doubtless intended to indicate a break with the past. The measures adopted in 1945 and 1971, *Polozheniya* in Russian, were also usually translated as "Statute", so the distinction is unfortunately not apparent in English translations.

The new *Ustav* has fifteen sections: I General Statutes; II Local Council; III Bishops' Council; IV The Patriarch; V The Holy Synod; VI Synodal Institutions; VII Dioceses; VIII Parishes; IX Monasteries; X Theological Schools; XI Overseas Institutions; XII Finance and Property; XIII Pensions; XIV Stamps and Seals; Amendments to this Charter. (The 1945 *Polozheniya* had only four sections: 1) The Patriarch; 2) Holy Synod; 3) Dioceses; 4) Parishes.)

It had been generally expected that the new *Ustav* would overturn the controversial 1961 amendment and reinstate the priest as head of the parish. There is now no doubt about this: it is stated unambiguously in several places that the priest is to be chairman of the parish assembly (*sobraniye*). In practice, the Bishops' Pre-Council Congress of March 1988 decided that it was not desirable for all priests to be immediately elected as chairmen of parish assemblies, which would necessitate the displacement of the existing chairmen. It was felt that they should be elected as chairman over an (unspecified) period of time.

The *Ustav* states that the Patriarch may retire, though retaining patriarchal rank for life. In fact, this was probably possible earlier, though it was not spelt out. No patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church has yet retired. This measure doubtless reflects concern over the poor health of the ageing Patriarch Pimen. There have been rumours about his possible retirement for some time.

An interesting new clause is introduced into the procedures following the death or retirement of a patriarch. Previously, the position of *Locum Tenens* (which is held until the election of a new patriarch by a Local Council) was assumed by the senior permanent member of the Holy Synod according to his date of episcopal consecration (currently Metropolitan Alexi of Leningrad and Tallinn). The new procedure is for the Holy Synod to meet and elect a *Locum Tenens* from one of its five permanent members. The meeting is to be chaired by the Metropolitan "of the most ancient see of the Russian Orthodox Church — Kiev". This appears to be an attempt to give more prominence to the place of Ukraine within the Russian Orthodox Church — perhaps a concession to those who have voiced grievances on this issue.

The *Ustav* states that a candidate for patriarch must, *inter alia*, be not less than forty years of age, be a Soviet citizen and have theological education. (Patriarch Pimen has no formal education,

having grown up at a time when all theological schools were closed.) There is also a clause stating that a candidate for patriarch must be a bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church. The draft statute which became available in the West before the *Sobor* stipulated that the candidate must be a diocesan bishop. The omission of the word "diocesan" means that a suffragan, or vicar-bishop, may become patriarch. The obvious contender in this category is Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yur'ev, Chairman of the Publishing Department of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The hierarchical structure of the church and the powers and responsibilities of its various bodies are spelt out more clearly than before. The Local Council still has supreme legal, executive, and judicial authority, but it must now be convened at least once every five years: previously there was no time limit.<sup>55</sup> The Bishops' Council has supreme authority between Local Councils and must be convened at least once every five years (previously no time limit). The Patriarch, with the Holy Synod, has supreme authority between Councils (as before).

The role of the Bishops' Council has been more clearly defined than previously. The Holy Synod has been expanded from five permanent and three rotating members to five permanent and five rotating. The effect of these two measures would appear to be to give more power to diocesan bishops, at the expense of the permanent members of the Holy Synod. However, it appears also to increase the power of bishops at the expense of the clergy and laity. The hierarchy continues down through dioceses, deaneries and parishes. The role of the dean (*blagochinny*) is more prominent (or more clearly defined) than previously.

A curious feature of the *Ustav* is that three of its provisions contradict the present state Law on Religious Associations. It is known that the Law is under revision, but it is not yet known what changes are to be made to it, nor when the new version is to be published. It is inconceivable that the church statute could contradict state laws in any way: indeed, this is specified in the *Ustav*, which cites "state laws affecting the Church" as one of five bases for church government. (When the draft *Ustav* first became available, this specification caused alarm among church activists, who pointed out that it was strictly uncanonical, but this no longer appears to be a cause for concern given the generally satisfactory nature of the final version.) The following provisions therefore suggest that state law on these points is to be amended (or that amendments have been decided

<sup>55</sup>The draft Statute presented to the Council stated that the Local Council should be convened every ten years. This was changed in the course of the *Sobor* to every five years.

upon but not yet published). This possibility is specifically provided for in the *Ustav*. A footnote on the first page says that the *Ustav* is “in conformity with current legislation on religious cults and may be altered or added to if new legislation is adopted”.

1. Parishes, theological schools, and monasteries may buy property. Specifically, they may a) receive a church and objects of the cult for use free of charge from the state; b) build, rent or *buy* houses and other premises for their needs (our emphasis). Presumably “church” (*khram*) refers to pre-revolutionary buildings. The phrase “other premises” seems to mean that a parish may own its own newly-built church or house of prayer (*molitvenny dom*). (An article in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (No. 1 1986) stated that parishes could own buildings, but the legal status of this statement was never clear.)

2. Provision is made for giving to charity. Parishes may disburse income on “general church, diocesan, patriotic, internal parish *and other charitable aims*” (our emphasis). There is no indication what such aims might be. “Patriotic” presumably means donations to the Soviet Peace Fund, as before. The charitable funds for victims of the Afghan War and the Arzamas train disaster evidently mean that “charitable aims” include financial help for people in need. It remains unclear whether and in what ways believers will be allowed to give practical charitable aid to those in need. In an interview with *Ogonyok* Kharchev declared that “believers — for it’s their money that the church is counting — do not know where the money they have sacrificed is going” (the obvious implication being that they ought to know). . . “To deprive believers of the right to perform charitable acts means to take away the possibility of following a basic Christian teaching. That is clearly unjust.”<sup>56</sup> Yet in a private speech to lecturers at the Higher Party School in March 1988, Kharchev declared that “to allow believers to carry bed-pans” would put communists in a bad light, “both morally and politically”. The contradictions between his public and private utterances will have to be resolved before it becomes clear how active believers will be allowed to be.<sup>57</sup>

3. Representation in court. State law is ambiguous as to whether a parish has the right of juridical personality. The *Ustav* now says that the three-person parish council (*sovet*) or executive committee “takes on the obligations of *representing the parish in court*” (our emphasis). Also, if necessary, the parish’ assembly (*sobraniye*) (i.e. all members of the parish registered with the local authorities) may entrust one of its number to represent the parish in court.

Clearer procedures are laid down for the functioning of the church bodies described in the *Ustav*. All may, in special circumstances,

<sup>56</sup> *Ogonyok*, No. 21 1988, pp. 26-28.

<sup>57</sup> *Russkaya mysl'*, 20 May 1988, p. 4.

function with a two-thirds quorum. Voting is to be by simple majority with a casting vote for the chairman. People with complaints against members of any body may attend the meeting where the complaint is raised, including the Holy Synod.

The parish council (three people) now has a set term of office — three years (previously no time limit). This term may be lengthened or shortened by the parish assembly.

Candidates for bishop must be not less than thirty. A diocese must not be vacant for more than forty days after the death or retirement of the bishop. (Some have been vacant for twenty years or more).

Monasteries may now be legally registered in the same way as parishes. Previously they existed only *de facto*.

### *Reports of Members of the Holy Synod*

There were eight reports on the spiritual and administrative life of the Russian Orthodox Church since the Baptism of Rus' in 988, and especially since 1971.

Some of these speeches are of particular interest because apparently reliable facts and figures about church life are made public. Speakers refer openly and unequivocally to some of the difficulties faced by the church and make constructive suggestions for resolving them. The most interesting reports, so far as new opportunities for the church are concerned, are those dealing with administrative matters, given by Metropolitans Vladimir of Rostov, Mefodi of Voronezh, Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Archbishop Alexander of Dmitrov.

#### *(a) Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov*

He was made Chancellor (administrator) of the Moscow Patriarchate and a permanent member of the Holy Synod in December 1987. Metropolitan Vladimir gave what appear to be precise statistics about the Patriarchate: it consists of 6,893 parishes, 67 dioceses, 74 bishops, of whom seven work abroad, 6,674 priests, 724 deacons, 21 convents and monasteries, 1,190 monks and nuns, two theological academies, three seminaries, 1,999 theological students (1,029 residential, 810 correspondence, 180 precentors' classes), 4,007 church old-age pensioners.<sup>58</sup> Metropolitan Vladimir stated that over sixty churches had started functioning in the past year, and expressed the hope that the number of churches would grow further. He called for an

<sup>58</sup>Report by Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novochoerkassk, *The Life and Activity of the Russian Orthodox Church from 1971 to 1988*, p. 2.

improvement in the theological education of students in order that students at the academies be better qualified. He suggested setting up a special theological periodical for each academy towards this end, and commented that the situation was aggravated by a lack of text-books in the academies. He said that the church also faced a deficiency of precentors, psalm-readers, lectors, and church singers, and called for facilities for training such church personnel to be expanded.

Pensions for priests and deacons should be increased, as should those for psalm-readers, who receive only 45 roubles per month after 25 years of service.<sup>59</sup> The church should also consider offering pensions to lead singers in church choirs. Metropolitan Vladimir called for the church to make more provision for her retired clergy and churchmen, and suggested that more homes for the aged and disabled be prepared along the lines of the Tolga convent, which is currently being renovated for use as an old people's home for retired clergy. Such homes would be under the jurisdiction of the Pensions Committee.

More religious literature should be made available to believers; reasonably comprehensive diocesan and parish libraries need to be set up, and the publication of doctrinal and service books should be increased to provide for all parishes.

Perhaps most interestingly, Metropolitan Vladimir reaffirmed the need for the priest of a parish to set a moral and spiritual example to his congregation through regular and "fervent" celebration of services. The vehemence of the Metropolitan's language on this point would seem to indicate that discipline among the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church has become lax:

Behaviour by a member of clergy that does not conform to the demands of pastoral ethics has an extremely negative influence on parish life. . . Arbitrary abridgement of service formularies is inadmissible.

An interesting comparison with this comment may be found in Kharchev's private speech to lecturers of the Higher Party School in Moscow. He noted:

<sup>59</sup>The average pension in the Soviet Union at the end of 1986 was 75.1 roubles a month (*Narkhoz SSR za 70 let*, p. 439). The minimum old-age pension for a worker with the required number of years of service is 55 roubles a month (forty for collective-farm workers); the maximum, 120 roubles a month. Pensions for priests of the ROC are as follows: sixty roubles a month for priests who have served at least 25 years (100 roubles a month for those who have served at least fifty years); sixty roubles a month for deacons who have served at least 25 years (seventy roubles a month for those who have served at least fifty years). Priests who have served between 25 and fifty years get an additional one rouble sixty kopeks a month for every year of service after the 25-year mark; deacons get an additional 40 kopeks a month, (*Argumenty i fakty*).

The Party has an interest in the new type of priest. At the moment the priest is often not at all involved in his parish. He has been born in another area, often he is even of a different nationality. A priest like this comes in his car once a week, takes a service, and doesn't want to know any more about it. . . . We have gained the most success in control of religion and influence over it through the priests and bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>60</sup>

This claim that the Party has control over the selection of priests, and their placings, would seem to bear out Metropolitan Vladimir's expressions of concern about conscientiousness among Russian Orthodox clergy.

Metropolitan Vladimir went on to call for regular sermons on Sundays, charity and generosity. He noted, like Archbishop Kirill, that the action of the 1961 Bishops' Council in depriving the priest of control over parish finances and administration had had "serious negative consequences". "The task of the present Council is to eliminate this discrepancy and to include in the Statute. . . such provisions as would correspond to the canonic norms of church life."<sup>61</sup>

Metropolitan Vladimir's comments correspond fairly closely to estimates made over the years at Keston College. The figure of 6,893 parishes is slightly higher than our earlier estimate of 6,500. However, a number of churches have been opened since Gorbachev came to power (see below).

The figure of seven bishops working abroad seems to refer only to those bishops who are Soviet citizens temporarily assigned to posts abroad. In addition to them, there are four non-Soviet bishops permanently abroad.

It will be noted that the number of priests, 6,674, is less than the number of parishes by just over two hundred. Large city churches customarily have more than one priest, so this means that there are still a number of parishes without a permanent priest. These are usually village communities with congregations too small to support a full-time incumbent, so that two, three or four churches share a priest. Such churches hold services infrequently.

According to a leaked report by the Council for Religious Affairs dated 1974, there were only 5,994 priests in that year. There has therefore been considerable expansion of numbers of theological students in order to increase the numbers of priests. Contemporary estimates from the early 1970s record figures of around 1,200 theological students. This figure has risen to 1,999, although 160 of

<sup>60</sup> *Russkaya mysl'*, 20 May 1988, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> *Report by Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov*, p. 7.

these are in precentors' classes and will not become priests. Despite this apparent growth the total number of priests appears to have grown by less than seven hundred over 14 years. This is because in 1974, 48.5 per cent of the clergy were aged over sixty. The new young priests have replaced these older priests without increasing the overall numbers of clergy significantly. The present average age of priests is 47.<sup>62</sup> The training of future priests, as both Metropolitan Vladimir and Alexander of Dmitrov point out, remains a critical matter for the church.

### (b) *Archbishop Alexander of Dmitrov*

Archbishop Alexander gave detailed figures for student attendance at the theological academies and seminaries of the ROC (see table below). 213 students have graduated from the precentors' course since it was begun in 1981. 280 theological students study full-time in each academy, and the number of residential students in the seminaries is approaching nine hundred. Yet despite this expansion "the theological schools cover the clerical deficiency of the Russian Orthodox Church only by half." The Archbishop expressed particular concern for the Volga region, Central Russia, the Urals and Siberia. The increase in attendance at the seminaries has not produced good conditions for learning, and he suggested that new seminaries be opened in Siberia, in the Volga region, and in Western Ukraine. He called for the church to prepare candidates for seminary places more carefully and thoroughly.

The secularisation of society requires that students be taught better than at present. Archbishop Alexander called for an improvement in the teaching at the seminaries and academies, more text-books, and reprints of the rarer theological volumes on church history. The church must spend more money on education: "Education expenditure is to ensure the church's tomorrow. Such spending will never be a waste."<sup>63</sup> There was a shortage not only of priests, but also of junior church staff. These included church choir-conductors, psalm-readers, singers and altar-boys. A solution to this might be to introduce training facilities at special diocesan centres or at monasteries. He also declared that "it is high time" the church opened an icon-painting school, thus making "her own contribution to the nation-wide

<sup>62</sup> Press-release No. 9, 11 June 1988, p. 2. For earlier estimates of numbers of theological students, see Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church* (Croom Helm: London, 1986) pp. 120-23.

<sup>63</sup> Report by Archbishop Alexander of Dmitrov *Dukhovnoye Obrazovaniye Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi*, p. 12.



campaign for the preservation of our national cultural heritage, which is now very much in the public interest.”<sup>64</sup>

Archbishop Alexander expressed deep concern over the low standard of theology in the church. He asked that a theological centre be set up to deal with pressing theological, historical, and canonical problems of the church. He suggested that theological research be encouraged at the academies with special *in situ* publishing facilities for regular publications, to be contributed to by lecturers and advanced students.

### (c) Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk

Metropolitan Pitirim has been in office as Chairman of the Publishing Department of the Moscow Patriarchate since 1962. A cautious and conservative hierarch who has held high office in the church since the Khrushchev period, Pitirim called for change in his department in more moderate terms than other speakers quoted here. It is therefore noteworthy that he should have demanded investment in the Publishing Department for catechetical publications, Bibles and service-books, and even ask that the church be permitted to possess its own printing press.

The need for catechetical literature is growing more acute as people turn to the church from “families which are not traditionally Orthodox”.<sup>65</sup> Metropolitan Pitirim suggested that the Publishing Department should produce short articles and monographs designed for use as instruction manuals, as well as publications which would set out the fundamentals of the Christian faith. “For various reasons,” declared Metropolitan Pitirim, “such works have become bibliographical rarities.” He also stated the intention of the Publishing Department to print more theology from sister Orthodox Churches and from other Christian traditions. Finally, he gave his reasons for asking for a printing base for the Publishing Department:

I would like to make a special mention of the fact that the Publishing Department of the Moscow Patriarchate has often been dissatisfied with the poor printing quality of its books, and violation of deadlines by [state] printing-houses. Among the most glaring examples of recent times has been the monograph of the Baptism of Russia by Archpriest Lev Lebedev. It went to press at the end of 1986 and was expected to come off the press in July-August 1987, but we received the edition only at the end of

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>65</sup> Report by Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yur'ev *On the Publishing work in the Russian Orthodox Church*, p. 9.

May 1988, with the quality of colour-printing much lower than that of sample copies. This and other cases of the same kind compel the Publishing Department to consider the establishment of a printing base of its own.<sup>66</sup>

Metropolitan Pitirim declared that the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* “does not meet the demands of the time and the reader”.<sup>67</sup> The journal has become more of a newspaper than a journal, while the information printed in it came late to the office and even later to the reader. Metropolitan Pitirim outlined plans for a new, informative, weekly journal, which would relieve *JMP* of its role as a newspaper. In view of these remarks it is interesting to note that the millennium edition of *JMP* (No. 6, 1988) does not contain the customary section “Life in the Dioceses”, and includes only one article on peace, concentrating instead on theology, history, hagiography and other more academic items. It went to press on 7 April, two months before Pitirim’s speech at the *Sobor*. The cover has a new colour, doubtless to symbolise change.

Metropolitan Pitirim went on to express the hope that “the radical increase of interest in the Russian Orthodox Church displayed by the Soviet public at large”<sup>68</sup> will be met by a corresponding improvement in the quality and efficiency of church publications. He also declared:

We would like to hope that the changes which have been taking place in the socio-political life of our country will enable us to find new approaches to the organisation of the church press, especially to the list of titles and print-run (*tirazh*) of church periodicals.<sup>69</sup>

Metropolitan Pitirim’s report, according to one observer, provoked stronger criticism at the *Sobor* than any other, so the lack of published material is clearly a matter of concern to many in the church. Kharchev commented on church publications in his speech to lecturers of the Higher Party School, reporting that there have been only 350,000 copies of the Bible printed in the past seventy years, which was “too few”. The *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* has a print run of only 30,000 — “a mere drop in the ocean” — and Kharchev declared that the new publication *The Moscow Church Herald* is

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12. Pitirim referred in his report only to increased distribution on church premises or through church channels, and this would not necessarily require a change in the law. The Law on Religious Associations does not mention church publications, and they are regulated *de facto* by the CRA. This leaves open the question of free production and distribution of religious literature outside official church channels, for which some activists have been calling: this would still be contrary to the Constitution as hitherto interpreted, as it could be viewed as “religious propaganda”.

“beautifully produced, but it’s a publication designed purely for advertisement purposes, counter-propaganda for abroad.” Kharchev indicated in his speech that he would be pleased to see church publications increase in quantity, thus making Metropolitan Pitirim’s plans for the future feasible.<sup>70</sup>

#### (d) *Metropolitan Mefodi of Voronezh*

Mefodi was made a metropolitan on 1 April 1988. His speech was the most outspoken and hard-hitting at the *Sobor*. He launched into a spirited defence of the church’s economic activities. “Foreseeing later reproaches directed against the Economic Department on the part of ascetically-minded colleagues”,<sup>71</sup> he reminded those present that the church is dependent on those who look after the equipping of priests and churches with vestments, utensils, and help in restoration work.

He noted with pride the resounding success of the plant at Sofrino near Moscow opened in 1980 to provide for the church’s needs by producing icons, baptismal crosses, vestments, candles and other items indispensable to Orthodox worship. There are a thousand workers at Sofrino, including one hundred skilled staff.<sup>72</sup> The changes provoked by *glasnost*’ have enabled the Sofrino plant to improve its products by mechanising all the major production processes. Metropolitan Mefodi’s enthusiasm for this new technology is evident in his not wholly artistic appreciation of the new production-line articles, which, he declared, “scarcely differ from the works of the old masters”.<sup>73</sup> Production figures at Sofrino since 1980 are impressive: candles (kg) 11,100,000; mass-produced icons 25,000,000; hand-painted icons 5,389; baptismal crosses 63,000,000; sacerdotal vestments 10,515; deacons’ vestments 5,213.<sup>74</sup> Metropolitan Mefodi was outspoken about the difficulties caused by the current state law. He complained about the high taxation levied on church products and buildings:

In spite of the fact that the entire output of the Economic Department is not meant for marketing, or for sale to the population at large, but is only for religious purposes to be used only in churches during services, the whole production is taxed as if it were produced for marketing. . . . When the church begins to

<sup>70</sup> *Russkaya mysl*’, 20 May 1988, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> Report by Metropolitan Mefodi of Voronezh and Lipetsk *Khozyaistvennaya deyatyl’nost’ russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi ot drevnosti do nashikh dnei*, p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

restore buildings, such works are heavily taxed.<sup>75</sup>

He pointed out the problem of the legal status of newly-constructed church buildings, which, though built with money donated by believers, technically remain the property of the state:

Being separated from the state, the Church cannot have its own property. While using state property, even without compensation, the Church in fact appears to be dependent on the state. This contradiction should be corrected.<sup>76</sup>

The "problem of all problems", according to Metropolitan Mefodi, was the organisation of the church's own restoration establishment. The state institutions involved in restoration work were, in the opinion of the Economic Department, "unprofitable" and their work is "mainly low quality". Metropolitan Mefodi warned that if the church was intending to go ahead with the restoration of the Tolga and Optina monasteries, she would waste large sums of money by accepting the help of "the powerless and unprofitable trusts engaged in restoration work". He called for a restoration centre to be set up, under the direction of the Economic Department and owned by the church, provided with its own materials, to obviate the necessity of involving other organisations in economic enterprises of this kind.

While noting the overseas orders which the Sofrino plant receives, he called for a considered approach to establish the best uses to which the Economic Department might put its foreign currency in view of the fact that the draft law on cooperative systems would facilitate international business contracts and the use of foreign currency.

It is clear from this report that the Economic Department has found the Sofrino plant to be even more successful than was originally expected. It is anxious to expand its activities, and expresses a clear impatience with state legislation which prevents it from doing so.

### *Continuing Problems*

It seems clear that the Orthodox hierarchy is aware of the many difficulties it faces and, however frank the *Sobor* proceedings were, there remain problems that the Orthodox leadership prefers not to discuss publicly. Patriarch Pimen's failing health and apparent

<sup>75</sup>Income from the production and sale of religious objects, repair contracts etc., are taxed in accordance with article 19 of the tax law, the category for private entrepreneurs, which has a much higher rate of taxation than in the socialist sector of the economy, with a ceiling of 81 per cent. (Dimitry Pospelovsky, *The Russian Orthodox Church 1965-1982*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984, p. 431.) The law, *O pokhodnom naloge s naseleniya*, was passed in 1943.

<sup>76</sup>Metropolitan Mefodi of Voronezh, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

inability to adapt to the changing face of the Soviet Union are a cause of concern. Fr Gleb Yakunin and others have called publicly for his resignation. Dissidents use western outlets to write articles calling for a less subservient hierarchy, for catechetical literature, and for a realistic approach to the increasingly secular environment. They complain at the lack of care shown by the hierarchy for Orthodox imprisoned for their faith. They call for those Christians who died under Stalin to be commemorated as martyrs. There is still a gulf between the expectations of the hierarchs and of the independent activists. The response of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy to their critics has until recently consisted of a refusal to speak on the issue. During the last few months, however, the Patriarch has charged his critics with threatening the unity of the church. In an interview with Novosti Press Agency in May 1988, he gave a strong warning of the consequences of dissent:

At times we witness phenomena distinguished by instances of dissent, by some temptation or other for spiritual reasons, deviations from standards of spiritual life that have withstood the test of time. Often, what lies at the root of all this is arrogance, temptation through vanity when one makes an idol of oneself and attempts to set oneself inappropriate spiritual tasks. As a consequence, one becomes divorced from the Church and its shepherds, and even sets oneself up as a shepherd, speaking on behalf of all believers and criticising the church leadership. . . The church leadership is duty-bound to warn against the danger of separation from the Tree of the Church, the loss of common spirit and common reason.<sup>77</sup>

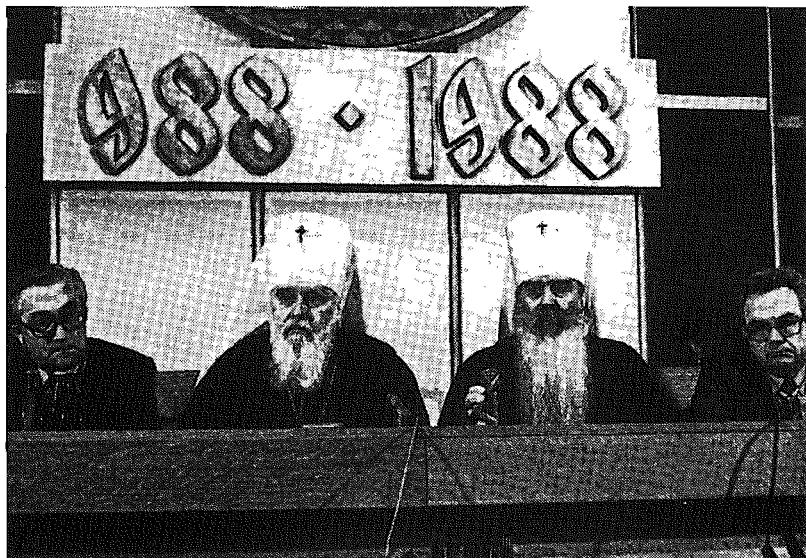
At the Pre-Council Bishops' Congress the same attitude to dissidents was evident:

The Bishops' Pre-Council Congress noted that. . . certain members of the clergy, the laity and also some people who do not belong to the church are attempting to stir up discord and dissent in church circles, to shake church discipline, to sow discord among the flock and undermine confidence in the Supreme Church Authority.<sup>78</sup>

No mention was made at the millennium proceedings of the absence of Patriarch Demetrios of Constantinople, who failed even to send a representative. This is particularly surprising as he had visited

<sup>77</sup> *Novosti Press Agency Report*, May 1988, pp. 13-14.

<sup>78</sup> *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, June 1988, p. 7. Similar strong criticism of dissidents was voiced by Patriarch Pimen in a book-length interview (*1000 Years of Faith in Russia*, Alceste Santini, St Paul Publications, Slough, 1988, pp. 95-98).



At a press conference held during the millennium celebrations are, from left to right, Alexei Buyevsky, Executive Secretary of the Department of External Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and Galicia, Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yur'ev, Chairman of the Publishing Department of the Moscow Patriarchate, and Konstantin Kharchev, Chairman of the State Council for Religious Affairs.

The Millennium Celebrations of the Russian Orthodox Church. See article on pp. 292-328.  
*(Photos Courtesy National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA)*

The closing worship of the celebrations in the Danilov monastery, Moscow.





Newly baptised converts emerge from the River Dnieper.

#### Baptists Mark the Millennium.

On 19 June 1988 approximately 13,000 Baptists gathered near Kiev on the banks of the River Dnieper to celebrate the baptism of 75 recent converts. The majority of those present belonged to autonomously registered Baptist churches, but some came from churches of the All-Union Council and others from unregistered congregations. See article on pp. 292-328. (Photos © Aid to the Persecuted)

#### The choir.



Moscow in 1987 — the first such visit by an Ecumenical Patriarch for four hundred years. It is believed that he felt that the Russian Orthodox Church was attempting to supplant his position as *primus inter pares* among leaders of world Orthodoxy.<sup>79</sup>

Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev, in his paper entitled *The Millennium of the Baptism of Rus'*, summarised the history of the Russian Orthodox Church more accurately than any other official church history which has yet appeared in the Soviet period. Even so, he failed to point out the anti-religious aspect of communist ideology, instead following Gorbachev, who has claimed that in supporting believers he is acting in line with Leninist principles. In the highly critical atmosphere encouraged by *glasnost'* such a refusal to admit the truth may well diminish the credibility of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy among the Soviet people.

Although there was lively discussion of the education of children in the Christian faith between sessions at the *Sobor*, no provision was made for formal debate. Speakers, while calling for more catechetical literature, shied away from the issue of Sunday schools, and failed to comment on state legislation which forbids the teaching of religion to minors in state schools while allowing the teaching of atheist principles. The *Ecumenical Press Service*, reporting on the millennium, stated that Archbishop Kirill had indicated that there was an effort under way to legalise Christian education among children and adults, though this matter was not discussed at the *Sobor*.<sup>80</sup> Kharchev, in his speech to the lecturers of the Higher Party School, made several interesting comments on religious education in the Soviet Union. He pointed out the inevitably hostile attitude of a child who has been forced to learn his or her faith in secret, and declared that the Soviet government must show some concern about its reputation among the people it governs: "I understand your perplexity. I am against religious education in schools as well. But what can we do? . . . I am against Sunday schools, but we must do something."<sup>81</sup> It seems both from Gromyko's comments on religious education (see above) and from Kharchev's comments quoted here that the question of religious education continues to exercise the authorities, and therefore was not submitted for open debate at the *Sobor*.

### Conclusion

It is widely acknowledged that the Russian Orthodox Church has been allowed far more latitude in her celebrations of the millennium of the

<sup>79</sup> KNS No. 301, 26 May 1988, p. 11.

<sup>80</sup> *Ecumenical Press Service*, No. 58, June 1988.

<sup>81</sup> *Russkaya mysl'*, 20 May 1988, p. 4.



baptism of Rus' than had originally been anticipated. The relaxation in church-state relations has been evident in the return of buildings to the church, the meeting between Patriarch Pimen and Gorbachev and the extensive coverage of millennium events in the Soviet media.

All this still did not please everybody. The differences in perceptions between those who were involved in the celebrations and those who were not remains striking. Foreigners who spoke privately to believers report that many were disappointed to find themselves excluded from the liturgies at the patriarchal cathedral and the Danilov Monastery. One activist said that those invited to the Danilov Monastery event were "the kind of people who get tickets to the Bolshoi". Foreign guests at the liturgy bore this out: one was surprised to find himself standing next to a cosmonaut, and another found the occasion lacked spiritual uplift. Believers consulted privately did concede that such occasions showed that religion was no longer a crime, but there was nonetheless strong feeling that such lavish celebrations were a waste of money better spent on other aspects of church life now that there are opportunities to do so. Some felt that in the new circumstances "to bear real fruit, the church needs a capacity and a readiness to act which, however, it lacks." There remains a gulf between hierarchs working slowly and cautiously for an expansion of church activities within the permitted framework, and activists eager to seize current opportunities which may not last.<sup>82</sup>

Nonetheless, the state has publicly changed its attitude to believers. Why? In his interview with *Ogonyok*, Kharchev declared that the current changes are "a reversion to Leninist principles": these are distinguished by "democracy and respect for the feeling of believers". He admits the failure of atheist propaganda. "To close or even to destroy churches — that's no way to finish with the religious faith of the masses. On the contrary: any persecution magnifies it, gives it the touch of sacrifice, the recognition of one's own moral superiority and rectitude." It is the aim of the present policy to "attract believers over to our side", and put right the administrative excesses of past years.<sup>83</sup>

In his speech to lecturers of the Higher Party School in March 1988, Kharchev displays a markedly different attitude to the change in policy. Here, he makes it clear that the government is less interested in putting right past wrongs than in engaging the support of the many millions of believers for the economic policy of *perestroika*:

Remember the Leninist idea, that politics begins when you start to talk in terms of millions. . . The church has survived, and has not only survived, but has rejuvenated herself. And the question

<sup>82</sup> Comments by foreign guests and *KNS* No. 304, 7 July 1988, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> *Ogonyok* No. 21, May 1988, pp. 26-28.

arises, which is more useful to the Party — someone who believes in God, or someone who believes in nothing at all, or someone who believes in both God and communism? I think we should choose the lesser evil.

Kharchev's main concern is that the Party should have control over every aspect of the lives of the citizens, including believers. "Before us is the task of training a new type of priest: the selection and placing of priests is a matter for the Party." In the past, he admits, the Party's control over the clergy has proved to work against its interests because a priest who is uninterested in his parish is able to report back neither on the attitude of his congregation to party or government officials nor on their life away from the public eye. To regain control lost "in the period of repression and the time of stagnation", the Party needs a new approach. Kharchev appeals to the party lecturers to "create, if not an institute, then a laboratory for studying the problems of relations between the Party and the church, and the interaction between socialism and religion. We will provide you with the material."<sup>84</sup> Kharchev's frankness about party control over the clergy and hierarchy unintentionally provides a basis for the criticisms of activists within the church referred to above.

An interesting sign of the new openness on church matters has been the readiness of Kharchev and others to provide formerly unavailable statistics on church life. However, the spate of new figures include many which are mutually contradictory. And as Kharchev listened to proceedings at the *Sobor*, speakers quoted figures which appear to contradict much of what he has been saying (see statistical supplement).

Media coverage of religion and the rights of believers has lessened noticeably following the end of the celebrations. *Moscow News* continues to carry articles reporting the return of churches, but Russian-language newspapers have contained virtually nothing on religion. There has been very little on atheism either: atheist propagandists may well be unsure what they are now expected to write. At the Party Conference in June religion was barely mentioned, though Gorbachev did reassert the new party line on believers:

We do not conceal our attitude to the religious world view as an unmaterialistic and unscientific one, but this is no reason for a disrespectful attitude to the spiritual world of people who believe and, even less, for the use of administrative methods to assert materialistic views. . . All believers, regardless of the religion they profess, are citizens of the USSR with full rights. . . The draft Law on the Freedom of Conscience which is now being

<sup>84</sup> *Russkaya mysl'*, 20 May 1988, p. 4.

prepared is based on Leninist principles and takes account of all present day realities.<sup>85</sup>

However, no discussion of the proposed new law at the conference was reported.

The rapid rate of change in church-state relations during the first half of this year has now slowed down. It was at least in part a demonstration to journalists and churchmen visiting for the millennium that freedom of belief does exist in the Soviet Union. The other main reason for the new tolerance towards believers is entirely pragmatic: Gorbachev needs their support for *perestroika*. It remains to be seen whether or not this tolerance will continue, and perhaps develop further, in ways which church activists have been suggesting for decades.

<sup>85</sup> *Pravda*, 29 June 1988, p. 1. See *Chronicle* item on pp. 356-58.

# Statistical Supplement<sup>86</sup>

## Baptisms

### All baptisms

Source	Date	Year	Statistics given	Extrapolations <sup>87</sup>
Kharchev ( <i>Nauka i religiya</i> )	November 1987	1971	965,188	total baptisms 1971-87 approx. 14,000,000
		1976	808,478	
		1981	830,596	
		1986	774,747	
Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov	June 1988			1971-87 30,000,000

### Baptisms of children of school age

Kharchev ( <i>Nauka i religiya</i> )	November 1987	1971	29,335	total school-age baptisms 1971-87 approx. 600,000
		1976	25,682	
		1981	40,253	
		1986	40,469	

Kharchev ( <i>Russkaya mysl'</i> )	March 1988	1988	30 per cent children baptised	total child baptisms 1971-87 approx. 20-21,000,000
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<sup>86</sup> Statistics are drawn from: *Report* by Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov 7 June 1988, *Report* by Archbishop of Alexander of Dmitrov 8 June 1988, *Ogonyok*, (Kharchev) No. 21/88 pp. 26-28, *Izvestiya* 19 June 1988, p. 3, *Russkaya mysl'*, (Kharchev) 20 May 1988, p. 4, *Nauka i religiya* (Kharchev), November 1987, p. 23, *Nauka i religiya* June 1988 p. 16.

<sup>87</sup> *The Europa Year Book* (1985) gives figures for the number of live births in the Soviet Union rising from 4,719,655 in 1976 to 5,100,282 in 1982. These figures form the basis of our rough estimate for the number of births between 1971 and 1987 and for our calculation for the number of baptisms representing the thirty per cent quoted by Kharchev. It is possible that the discrepancy of over 10,000,000 between Kharchev's thirty per cent and Metropolitan Vladimir's 30,000,000 represents the number of adult baptisms performed over this period. Apart from various estimates by sociologists, these are the first figures for the number of baptisms performed in the Soviet Union to be publicly quoted.

## Adult baptisms

<i>Source</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Statistics given</i>	<i>Extrapolations</i>
Kharchev ( <i>Nauka i religiya</i> )	November 1987	1971	21,680	
		1976	26,818	
		1981	45,178	
		1986	51,864	
				total adult baptisms 1971-87 approx. 624,000

It seems that the statistics given in *Nauka i religiya* bear little relation to the later figures of Kharchev and of Metropolitan Vladimir. However, it is interesting to note that even these figures indicate an increase in adult baptisms and baptisms of children of school age during the 1970s and 1980s with, for some reason, a sharp increase between 1976 and 1981. It is possible that the discrepancy between Kharchev's later figures in *Russkaya mysl'* and those given by Metropolitan Vladimir may be due to (a) unregistered baptisms (b) adult baptisms, which are not included in Kharchev's thirty per cent.

Metropolitan Mefodi stated in his speech that the Sofrino plant had produced 63,000,000 baptismal crosses since its founding in 1980. While it is unlikely that over half of these crosses have been exported, it remains unclear whether the high production figures are due to a higher rate of baptisms than that given even by Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov, or simply due to the fact that chains and crosses wear out with use.

## *Number of Russian Orthodox Parishes*

<i>Source</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Statistics given</i>
Kharchev ( <i>Ogonyok</i> )	May 1988	1986	6,794
Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov	8 June 1988	1988	6,893

This is the only figure Kharchev has given consistent with that of Metropolitan Vladimir. Metropolitan Vladimir's higher figure no doubt reflects the return of churches in recent months (see below for number of churches returned).

## *Parishes and churches opened in the 1980s*

<i>Source</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Statistics given</i>
Kharchev ( <i>Ogonyok</i> )	May 1988	1985-88	35
Kharchev (interview on Soviet television 12 June 1988)	15 June 1988	1987	18
		1988	almost 80
Kharchev ( <i>Izvestiya</i> )	19 June 1988	1988	90
Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov	8 June 1988	1987-88	over 60

There is confusion over the rate at which churches have been returned to the Orthodox Church. Kharchev's figures are inconsistent with each other, and none of them correspond to Metropolitan Vladimir's. Further confusion is provided from other sources. In a recent interview with *Open Doors* (January 1988), Archbishop Makari of Ivano-Frankovsk stated that thirty churches had been opened in the Moscow diocese alone in the past year. He also claimed that over the past five years, no fewer than 52 churches had been opened or restored in Siberia. The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR told visitors to the millennium that 105 new churches had been opened in the past three years in Ukraine alone. (She did not specify the denominations of these churches.)<sup>88</sup> Such figures, if reliable, suggest a higher rate of registration than either Metropolitan Vladimir or Kharchev is prepared to admit.

### *Theological Education*

#### *Attendance figures at the seminaries and academies 1987-88*

<i>Source</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Statistics</i>
Kharchev ( <i>Nauka i religiya</i> )	November 1987	total no. of students 2,500 (correspondence students 800)
Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov	7 June 1988	total no. of students 1,999 (correspondence students 810) (precentor class students 160)
Archbishop Alexander of Dmitrov	8 June 1988	total no. of students 1,904 (full-time seminary students 900; full-time academy students 200; correspondence students 804 — academies 200, seminaries 602)

It is unclear why Kharchev's figures for the number of students at the seminaries and academies of the Russian Orthodox Church differ so markedly from those given by Metropolitan Vladimir and by Archbishop Alexander. He claims that the number of students has doubled over the past 15 years. This is difficult to verify, since there have been no reliable statistics given within that period. The discrepancy between the figures given by the two Russian Orthodox hierarchs also remains inexplicable. (Could it be that Vladimir is quoting enrolment figures and Alexander the number of those who finished the course?) It is possible that Archbishop Alexander is not including the students in the precentor classes. However, if this is so, and Metropolitan

<sup>88</sup>See above, p. 304. She also said that there are 6,179 religious communities of different faiths in Ukraine in a population of 51 million people. Of these, 4,022 are Orthodox, while 1,200 belong to the Evangelical Christian Baptists. There are 7,620 priests in Ukraine, and over 4,000 places of worship. These figures are as given by the reporter from *News from Ukraine* (No. 26, June 1988, p. 4).

Vladimir's figure of 160 is correct, his total number of students would rise above that of Metropolitan Vladimir to 2,064.

In the June 1988 edition of *Nauka i religiya* it is stated that each year around sixty students enrol at Leningrad and Odessa seminaries annually, while around ninety students enrol at the Moscow seminary, giving a total of 150. This is considerably less than the total annual intake of 225 suggested by Archbishop Alexander's figures (nine hundred full-time seminary students divided by four — the number of years of the seminary course).

*Graduation figures for years 1971-1987*<sup>89</sup>

<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Statistics</i>
Archbishop Alexander of Dmitrov	8 June 1988	Seminaries: full-time students 2,755; correspondence students 937 Academies: full-time students 557 (Moscow 355, Leningrad 202); correspondence students 338 preceptor class students (since founding in 1981) 213

These are the first official figures for numbers of graduates, but caution must be exercised in attempting to calculate the total numbers of new priests. Not all graduates are ordained (though most are). Moreover, an unknown number of priests are ordained without receiving formal theological education, even by correspondence. The increase of nearly seven hundred in the total number of priests between 1974 and 1988 (see above, page 314) shows that the annual number of new priests has increased, but not markedly. Archbishop Alexander's figure for the total number of graduates over the 16 years, 2,755, gives an annual average of 320. The extrapolated figure for the number of graduates eligible for priesthood in 1988 (nine hundred full-time seminary students plus 804 correspondence students divided by the four years of the seminary course) is 375. This bears out the general impression of an increase in the numbers of graduates. The pattern over the whole 16 years, however, is one of sharp increase during the 1970s and a levelling-off, possibly even a slight decline, during the last few years. (For earlier figures and estimates, see Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, pp. 120-23.)

<sup>89</sup> Press-release No. 7 (9 June 1988) gives a report of Archbishop Alexander's speech quoting figures which contradict those in the printed text. In both the English and the Russian versions of the press-release, it is stated that: in 1971-87, 9,957 students graduated from the seminaries; 933 students graduated from the academies in this period; 240 students graduated from the preceptor class. These figures, if true, would mean that over the period in question well over six hundred students would have graduated from the seminaries alone annually: a figure far in excess of the number of students in each year. The contradictory figures are inexplicable. (As we go to press, the surprisingly high figures attributed to Archbishop Alexander in the Moscow Patriarchate press-release are reproduced in the official *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* September 1988, p. 18.)