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## **LAND PROVISION OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH: HISTORY AND MODERNITY**

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### **Abstract**

The article considers the land provision of the Russian Church and clergy in the post-reform period. It is shown that during this period the government gradually increased the land ownership of the clergy, since this did not contradict the already established dependence of the Church on the state. The reason for this process was that after secularization, the Church was supported by the state, and the government could not provide the Church with anything but land, since insufficient state funds were allocated for the Church. In addition to land grants, the State continued to pay staff salaries to monasteries, including the salary of the brethren, as well as alms (for the maintenance of provincial monasteries). But in most cases, state payments were auxiliary, not basic. At the present time, which is undoubtedly favorable for the Church and its activities, new difficulties and tasks arise before it. In particular, since most of the parishes are located in rural areas, there is a question of granting land plots to rural clergy.

**Keywords:** church, state, land, salary, clergy.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The clergy of the Central Black Earth region in the post-reform period becomes an active participant in the land market. In the period from 1863 to 1877, according to 10 provinces of the Central Black Earth region, the clergy sold 6,989 acres of land, while 26,118 were acquired. As a result, the clergy bought up 19,129 acres. Thus, the clergy of the Central Black Earth region in the post-reform period was mainly engaged in buying up land. However, the scale and quantity of acquired landed property was rather insignificant (compared to the nobility or the merchant class).



It can be noted that among the clergy themselves in the post-reform period, a process of gradual property differentiation was observed, which was expressed in the appearance of an insignificant stratum of landowners.

## II. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The methodological basis of the study was the principle of historicism and scientific objectivity. We sought to consider specific phenomena as interconnected and changing over time, to reveal the objective laws of the historical development of methods and forms of church land ownership and land use over a certain period of time. In the work on the study, an analytical method was used, which was used when considering statistical data, a comparative method of empirical study, which makes it possible, through a broad comparison of facts, to formulate the main conclusions and generalizations.

Almost every rural church had a land allotment. As a rule, it was arable land and hayfields. The amount of land was divided among the members of the clergy in the same proportion as all church income. In a three-state parish (priest, sexton, sexton), the land was divided into 5 parts, the priest received 3 parts, and the clerks received one each. On the four-staff - the priest received half of the land, the other half was divided among themselves by the deacon, deacon and sexton. As a rule, the family of a priest could not effectively cultivate their land, both due to a lack of labor, and because of employment in the service. In many parishes, the clergy rented their allotment to the local landowner, for which they received money and food from the landowner. So, the priest of the village of Verzilovo, Serpukhov district, received from the princes of Shakhovsky a ruble in the amount of 225 rubles in banknotes, 15 quarters of rye and oats, 1.5 - buckwheat flour, humus fodder and firewood (in 1850). The clergy of the village of Kiyasovo, Serpukhov district, for the use of their land received from the landowner Gagarin (in 1850) the following rule: the priest - 48 rubles 86 kopecks in silver, 135 pounds of rye flour, 10 quarters of oats. The deacon, sexton and sexton received 28.5 kopecks of silver, 135 pounds of rye and 10 quarters of oats for all 32 rubles.

After the peasant reform, the landowners, as a rule, did not take the land, because having lost serfs, they also lost gratuitous workers. For example, in 1861, in the village of Maryinskoye, Kolomna district, a local landowner definitely refused to pay the due to the priest. As a result, the father found himself in a difficult position. Rug was not paid and the land was not returned. And there are no funds, and there is nowhere to sow grain. Deciding to search for the truth, the priest petitioned St. Philaret of Moscow for help. Vladyka Metropolitan completely took the side of the young clergyman. The decree of the consistory demanded that the landowner fulfill her obligations - to pay the priest the due funds. She agreed and paid part of the money, but the contract was terminated. At the end of the XIX century. priests leased the land not to the landowners, but to the local peasants.

It must be emphasized that in the pre-secularization period, the accumulation of land by the clergy took place mainly through private contributions, which the state constantly prevented, up to direct prohibitions on bequeathing and donating land to monasteries. After secularization, the growth of church lands occurred mainly at the expense of the treasury, under the direct patronage of state power.

Having deprived the Church of property, the state was forced to take care of the parish clergy and monasticism. Life practice has shown the expediency of endowing the episcopate, clergy and monasticism with land. Therefore, during the 19th century there was a steady growth of church, bishops and monastic land ownership. In the reign of each emperor from Paul I to Nicholas II, the Russian Orthodox Church alienated several dozen acres from state lands and state forestries. The reasons for allocating land to the clergy were varied. The most important of these was inflation, which grew from year to year. The clergy, who were put on a salary, experienced all the hardships of this process. This led to the allocation of land and other real estate to the church, to an increase in salaries, and a comprehensive improvement in the life of the clergy. It should be especially noted that the accumulation of land after secularization is not a continuation of an interrupted process, but a new process that took place in new historical conditions, with a different direction and goals.



Gradually from the XIX-th century the government issues a number of legislative acts regulating the size of church land allotments. In the north of Russia in Karelia, where there was little land suitable for arable farming, land surveying sometimes led to conflicts.

There are few examples of this kind. All these cases are significant only in view of the fact that dissociation from the church in accordance with the legislation of 30 or less acres of land remained a rather rare fact.

Sometimes there was no free land, then the clergy developed it themselves (clearing the land from the forest). So, in the Yangozersky parish there was no "purposely allotted church land", but "consisted" "according to fortresses and various letters from former times from 1716 (1668 - M.P.) of the year given to the clergy and clergy owned and plowed by their labors for sowing rye in the field for 5 quarters, and in two for the same. In the parish of Salmenizh, according to the same source, the clergy had no land other than "developed by their labors." Occasionally, clergy and clergy bought land. The paucity of evidence may be due to the fact that clergy were forbidden to acquire plots of peasant land, increasing social tension in parishes and entering into litigation with parishioners.

Land plots sometimes went to the clergy from testators who were not their relatives and gave their land not to specific clerics, but to the parish church. So, judging by the will, the peasant Afanasy Larionov gave in 1787 his plot "to the house of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker for eternal remembrance" and ordered "children and grandchildren, neither relatives nor nephews to intervene in any fiction." But wills were deposited in the funds of judicial institutions only in cases where the heirs violated the will of the deceased. Therefore, it is impossible to judge how typical this way of replenishing the land assigned to the church is.



Vladimir Egorovich Makovsky "Prayer for Easter", 1888.

The members of the clergy divided the plots received from parishioners or marked off by land surveyors among themselves in accordance with their positions. In the 19th century this issue is not specified in the legislation, and the clergy were guided by local traditions.

The clergy freely disposed of those land plots that were in their individual possession: clearings and purchase lands.



So, in 1889, the sexton of the Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in the Tulomozero volost, as can be seen from his will, left his son, the peasant Osip Ivanov, "plowed land and hay meadows of his own and according to mortgage letters." If it was about church land (scribed or separated in the course of a general survey), then the order of inheritance was different. For example, judging by the petition of the "deacon's son" Yegor Kuzmin from the Ilyinsky exhibition of the Vodlozero churchyard, the petitioner lost the right to use church land after failing the bishop's exam, and the church land that he could have received was placed at the disposal of another, more qualified and successful member of the clergy".

Having received the plots due by law, local priests and at the end of the XIX-th - beginning of the XX-th century. Engaged in agriculture, which remained an important source of livelihood for them.

In the 1890s in the European part of Russia, there were 28,000 churches endowed with land. Of these, city churches owning land accounted for 1,117 (3.9%). The entire church land was approximately 1 million 671 thousand 198 acres, of which 96 thousand 194 dess. belonged to city churches (5.8%), and 1 million 575 thousand dess. - rural (94.2%).

Churches also differed in size of their landholdings. 245 churches had from 250 to 500 dessiatins. land, 50 churches had from 500 to 1 thousand dess., 29 churches had from 1 to 1.5 thousand dess., but the majority, of course, could not count on such a large amount of land allotments and limited themselves to those plots allocated by the government. On average, in the European zone of Russia, including Samara, Simbirsk and Penza provinces, their sizes did not exceed 57–60 dess. for every church.

The value of church landed property without buildings, factories, shops, etc., was 116 million rubles. ser. The church's land ownership tended to increase. Thus, by 1905 church land had been added by 200,000 dess.

### III. CONCLUSION

At the present time, which is undoubtedly favorable for the Church and her activities, new difficulties and tasks arise before her. In particular, since the majority of parishes are located in rural areas, the question arises of providing rural clergy with land allotments. In the Land Code of the Russian Federation, religious organizations turned out to be essentially forgotten: the place and regime of the lands of religious organizations as part of the participants in land ownership and land use are not prescribed, but there is only a mention of them in the general list of those legal entities to whom agricultural land is provided (Article 82 ZK RF).

Religious organizations are also mentioned in Art. 78 of the Code, in the list of users of agricultural land, which states that these lands can be used for agricultural production and for other purposes related to agricultural production. Meanwhile, such an understanding of the purpose of lands administered by religious organizations is incomplete and extremely narrow, because on the territory of these organizations there are places of worship, cemeteries, household and household buildings, part of the territories is allocated for religious processions and celebrations, which is associated with mass visits to believers, etc. Apparently, this is why the Federal Land Cadastre Service of Russia classifies, for example, monastic lands as "lands of industry, transport, communications, radio broadcasting, television, computer science, space support, energy, defense and other purposes", including them to "land for other purposes". Within the same category, monastic lands refer to social and cultural facilities located outside the boundaries of settlements, provided for various purposes and not taken into account in other categories. Meanwhile, a certain part of the lands occupied by monasteries and other religious organizations should also be attributed to the lands of specially protected territories and objects of historical, cultural and spiritual significance, with all the ensuing consequences.

The attitude of the Church itself to various forms of ownership is interesting. It is expressed in the Fundamentals of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church: "The Church recognizes the existence of diverse forms of ownership. State, public, corporate, private and mixed forms of ownership in different countries have taken root in different ways in the course of historical development. The Church does not give preference to any of these forms" (VII.3).





Today the Church does not raise the issue of restitution of the lands that belonged to her before the revolution. This is neither necessary nor possible for many reasons, including economic ones: parishes and monasteries do not have the necessary funds, equipment, and labor to develop large agricultural lands. But some additional land should be allocated to it. This is especially true of those holy places where a large number of pilgrims flock. By the way, many monasteries engaged in agricultural production achieve very high rates in this field of activity. Thus, in the economy of Optina Pustyn (Kaluga region), grain crops are obtained that are much higher than the yields of neighboring agricultural enterprises. There are four ponds stocked with fish, there are a number of high-yielding cows and an apiary. The merits of the monasteries in the promotion of gardening in the northern regions of the country, the development of beekeeping, etc. are known.

In recent years, with great difficulty, there has been a transfer of temple buildings and other property that once belonged to them to religious organizations. This process is regulated by Decree No. 490 of the Government of the Russian Federation dated June 30, 2001 "On the procedure for transferring federal property for religious purposes to religious organizations," but there are many unresolved issues.

Very important, but not yet resolved, is the question of the participation of the state in the restoration of churches returned to the Church. A large part has historical value and belongs to the monuments of culture and architecture, protected by the state. But this, obviously, also implies that the state should play an active role in their restoration. Meanwhile, the state, with some exceptions, entrusted this activity to the Church. (For example, the state satisfied the application for assistance in the restoration of 12 churches of the Novgorod diocese only for St. Sophia Cathedral.)

The restoration of the former temple buildings returned to the Church, which are now in a dilapidated state, on a larger scale could be carried out through charity concerts of famous cultural figures, teleconferences and other actions.

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## ЗЕМЕЛЬНОЕ ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЕ РУССКОЙ ПРАВОСЛАВНОЙ ЦЕРКВИ: ИСТОРИЯ И СОВРЕМЕННОСТЬ

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### Аннотация

В статье рассматривается земельное обеспечение Русской Церкви и духовенства в пореформенный период. Показано, что в этот период правительство постепенно увеличивало земельную собственность духовенства, поскольку это не противоречило уже установившейся зависимости Церкви от государства. Причиной этого процесса было то, что после секуляризации Церковь поддерживалась государством и правительство не могло предоставить Церкви ничего, кроме земли, поскольку на Церковь выделялось недостаточно государственных средств. В дополнение к земельным пожалованиям государство продолжало выплачивать монастырям жалованье персоналу, включая жалованье братии, а также милостыню (на содержание провинциальных монастырей). Но в большинстве случаев государственные выплаты были вспомогательными, а не основными. В настоящее время, которое, несомненно, благоприятно для Церкви и ее деятельности, перед ней возникают новые трудности и задачи. В частности, поскольку большинство приходов расположено в сельской местности, встает вопрос о предоставлении земельных участков сельскому духовенству.

**Ключевые слова:** церковь, государство, земля, жалованье, духовенство.

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