

ORTHODOX ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MODERN PUBLIC RELATIONS

O.Yu. Kolosova

*Krasnodar university of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russian Federation
Stavropol, Russia
science-almanac@mail.ru*

The modern ecological situation represents result of social and economic development of the world community directed to the material consumption which made minor spiritual aspects of life and the planned symptoms of spiritual crisis. The process of formation of ecological theology as special direction of religious thought is considered in the article. Its essence and manifestation in Orthodoxy, a place and a role in the modern nature protection movements and formation of ecological consciousness of the believing people comes to light.

Key words: ecological crisis, religious traditions, spiritual and moral revival, orthodox theology, ecological theology.

The new European culture considered that spirituality would come with growth of material well-being [1], but this didn't happen. Material progress of a consumer civilization leads to crisis because material requirements can grow infinitely, entering into contradiction with opportunities of the biosphere to satisfy them. Many researchers see the reason of environmental problems deepening not so much in social system, so in crisis of consciousness, in traditional values. So the academician N. N. Moiseyev in the book "Modern Rationalism", emphasizing a crucial role of rationality, scientific approach in human life, nevertheless draws the conclusion connected not with the rational, but with spiritual sides of human life. "Our moral bases, our inner world and all the more our behavior in the biosphere, - he writes, - don't correspond to those living conditions any more in which society dives itself", whereanent he expresses his opinion "that in the nearest decade understanding of problems of a moral imperative will become one of the most important characteristics of a civilization, the main direction of social science" [2]. Professor of the Moscow spiritual academy A. I. Osipov notes: "Now more and more becomes obvious that the mankind, even with justice and the peace will die if it doesn't preserve, or more precisely if it doesn't recover integrity of the nature. Also it's evident that spiritual and moral revival of a person appears to be as destruction, so the main factor of its possible rise" [3, p. 430]. Therefore, he considers that the environmental problem is first of all a spiritual problem, and the heart of it is present condition not of environment, but of a person.

The fact that search of the solution of all modern problems complex lies on the ways of spiritual revival of a person and society is accepted today. According to M. Sheler the condition of the present valuable world of a person, depends on a specific for him and this society values experience structure. He, appealing to overcome narrow bounds of this structure, suggests to put into the base of life not enterprise, competition and class enmity, but the principle of solidarity and estimate the benefits according to this principle, to esteem the most valuable natural benefits which perhaps can use a number of people (for example, light and air, water, the earth). The more a person is full-fledged, the more she is inclined to see and understand that our entire world is decorated with values. "Devout soul, - Sheler writes, - always silently thanks for freedom, light and air, for an integrity of existence of its hands, its members, its breath, and then everything that for others is indifferent or devoid of sense inhabited by values".

From the second half of the XX century many representatives of the nature protection movement raise a question of the importance of integration, interaction of ecological and religious consciousness [4], about possibility of "inclusion" of religion to conservation. Thereupon there is an intense interest from the side of a wide circle of philosophers, publicists, writers, politicians to religious traditions, which appear to be keepers of values and which are appealed to spread them and transmit them to the next generations. In this context an intense interest to religious traditions which appear to

be treasurers and appealed to spread them and transmit to the next generations is observed from a wide range of philosophers, publicists, writers, politicians. Achievement of this purpose will depend on that, how successfully it will be possible to adapt traditional values to modern types of activity and forms of social life. Modern types of activity occupy only certain spheres of social life – these are economy and finance, political system, technology, science and some spheres of legal regulation [5, p. 029-031]. World view and existential problems, interpersonal relations, family, spiritual unity of society remain behind the traditional spheres. Complex interaction is realized between traditional and modern elements.

The founder of theory of the biosphere and a noosphere V. I. Vernadsky was deeply convinced that all spiritual manifestations of a person mainly result from religion and that all forms of spirituality are connected with it [6]. Theorists of Christianity not only share the idea of V. I. Vernadsky about inevitability of a person transition to creation of a noosphere, but also consider important to proceed to its realization: “The spiritual planetary process, defined as formation of a noosphere, is illusory entity, but nevertheless, it’s a real necessity and even survival imperative of mankind” [7]. Herewith, they believe that the survival of a modern civilization depends on extent of “ecological and spiritual transformations”. However, mobilization of people to form a noosphere is one of the ultimate goals of ecological consciousness. According to conclusion of T. Goricheva, the scientific thought and religion hold to the unique strategy of socionatural development: “In Orthodoxy (especially in Russian) cosmism is an integral part of world perception and world view. Even the secular scientific thought in Russia moves in the same direction: space exploration, ideas about noosphere” [8].

Theologians of all branches of Christianity and other religions discuss problems of interaction of religion and ecology, their integration. First of all, theologians connect possibility of preservation of biological resources of the biosphere with its effectiveness. Adherents of religious commitments think that only religion appears to be that factor which will bring mankind out of ecological crisis. They believe that the modern science can't help the person to solve this problem. Moreover, they accuse science of all actual problems of mankind. A.I. Osipov writes - “Science easily becomes the tool of destruction, it turns into master and murderer from the obedient instrument of its creator, developing independent from the spiritual and moral principles of Christianity, having lost the idea of God-love as the supreme principle of being and the highest criterion of truth and at the same time discovering huge forces of impact on the outside world and a person himself”. The church holds to the thesis that “mind has to keep to measure of knowledge not to be lost” (St. Callistus Catafigiot). Evangelic principles of being which serve as basis for such formation of man of science under which he comprehending this world would never use opened to him knowledge and forces for the sake of evil.

Such world in accordance with Christian views represents an effectually organized integral organism which requires rational and respectful relation on the part of a man, but not a lifeless moving system, soulless entity, object for experiments. From the second half of the XX century theologians of Russian Orthodox Church began actively participating in discussion of the ecological situation which developed in the world. The church has the special aspect of activity in this matter – spiritual and moral. Professors of Moscow and other spiritual academies and heads of Russian Orthodox Church repeatedly raise and discuss the questions about the reasons of present ecological state of nature, necessity of ecological ideas inclusion in believers world view on pages of the main edition of Russian Orthodox Church – “The magazine of the Moscow patriarchy”.

The Most Holy Patriarch Alexis II on the pontifical meeting of Russian Orthodox Church (1997) noted in his report that “it is time to express Church opinion about problems of environmental conservation”, emphasized necessity of “nature solicitous attitude revival peculiar to orthodox tradition”, using of “a certain experience of ecological activity of other confessions”, consolidation of Russian Orthodox Church connection with the state in the sphere of conservation [9, p. 77, 78]. “Point of view” of Russian Orthodox Church about wide spectrum of problem of conditions and preservation of natural amenities consistently and informatively reflected in the “Bases of the social concept of Russian Orthodox Church” (2000) in the section “Church and Environmental Problems”. Theologians of Orthodoxy mainly stress their disquietude for the present state of nature. They acknowledge the global character of originated degradation of all components of the biosphere, depletion of its unrenewable

resources, reduction of fresh water reserves, accumulation of harmful substances in the biosphere. On the basis of it one can draw a conclusion that the biosphere “appeared on the threshold of global environmental disaster” [10, p. 71].

The reason of it, from the point of view of theologians, is “the Fall of man and his alienation from God”, occurred in “prehistoric times”. Already then people instead of “cultivating” and “storing” everything that God had created began treating the world surrounding them from the position of power and violence. Further deepening of such relation of a person to environment caused ecological crisis. All crisis situations appearing in the world are proclaimed as “divine punishment”. Orthodox theologians connect negative consequences of a person’s impact on the nature directly with digression of a person from originally Christian principles, considering that “sin significantly complicated and obstructed the initial way” of a person and nature. Hierarches of Orthodoxy aspire to prove that if the mankind conceived the basic Godgiven rules of environment treatment, it would never face with such problems of nature using which today have unprecedented sharpness. Orthodox theologians, as well as representatives of other movements of Christianity, consider that one of the reasons of ecological crisis is refusal of the principles of Christian asceticism which limits human demands to the most necessary for life. In this regard orthodox thinkers, speaking about nature, put forward the principle of “Christian asceticism” without being limited to the general appeals to the religious and moral relations improvement.

This apposes people before the need “to reconsider” their relationship with the natural world. Understanding of the taking effective measures need contributing to the nature degradation processes cease becomes coming to the people [11]. In the quality of such measures one can call: changing of husbandry methods, creation of the resource saving technologies and non-waste industries, realization of ecological education and training of all population groups. However, all these measures were initially proved in system of scientific knowledge. The orthodox church appreciates them.

Orthodox theologians believe that the nature isn't a conglomerate of various structural educations. In their opinion, everything is interconnected in the natural world therefore “nature is not a receptacle of the resources intended for egoistical and irresponsible consumption, but the house where the person is not the owner, but the housekeeper, and also the temple where he is a priest, the employee, however, not for the nature, but for the unique Creator” [10]. But serving the Creator, the person will also serve the nature. So Russian orthodox theology explains its point of view according to the role of a person in the nature. It considers that all troubles of the nature “contain in the human soul, but not in the spheres of economy, biology, technology or policy”. Thereby “reformation of the nature should begin with transformation of a person’s soul”. Theologians of Orthodoxy consider religious and moral improvement of a person and society as one of the important factors of the environmental problems solution. But their improvement has to begin with “the overcoming of human sinfulness”.

P. S. Karako considers that the ecological theology as the religious thought movement began to join system of public consciousness, promotes to formation of ecological form in it. He defines ecological theology as set of ideas of a nature state, character of the relation of the person to it in the past, real and future, penetrated by the idea of God as creator of the nature and its manager [12].

Some of representatives of ecological theology of Orthodoxy connect success of the modern problems solution with enhancement of “the monastic movement” and expansion of monasteries chain. Life in monasteries and use of the earth by monks is a sample of the person’s relation to the nature. Mainly “torches of monasteries, while there is a world, act as lighthouses on this correct way of mankind rescue” [13] The same thought is also stated by some authors of the collection “Orthodox Monasteries and Ecology”. They assert that distribution and introduction of husbandry monastic experience across all Russia will allow solving all the most acute environmental problems not only region, but also of all Russian state. Such ideas of ecological crisis overcoming are rather abstract, they don't consider modernization of modern material production and use of achievements of scientific knowledge [14] of the biosphere and its processes, and, besides, don't assume rational forms of a person’s relation to the nature.

Certainly, it is necessary to accept that cooperation of Orthodox Church with public institutions is useful in the ecological education and upbringing [15, p. 23-25] which purpose has to be training to

intelligent understanding of the nature, careful attitude of the person to world around and at the same time improvement of an inner world of a person. Today in this context ecological education acquires the status of education backbone factor in general, defines its strategic objective and the leading directions. Global biospheric education within the modern ecological culture contributes to person's understanding of the role and responsibility in overcoming of global problems of the present [16], to a choice of a way of life which corresponds to the principles of ecological and moral imperatives. Undoubtedly, it is necessary to see positive sides in contents of the modern religious doctrines mentioning an ecological problematics. So, one should pay attention to substantiation improvement of material production technologies by representatives of ecological theology, their inclusion in substance circulation of the biosphere, ecological education and upbringing realization necessity, spiritual development of the modern person and society [17], increases of moral and ethic responsibility [18] and legal responsibility for the harm done to the nature. To raise environmental consciousness level one should bring these and other points up the consciousness of believers and atheists. Besides, they will become also a factor of growth of their activity in the movement on environment protection.

New approach to religious traditions, reevaluation of the importance of the basic values of Orthodoxy, which defined skeleton spiritual orientations are necessary at this stage of social development [19, p. 29-31]. In modern society the main objectives of religious traditions should be: maintenance of balance, synthesis, balance of values of rational and technological and traditional institutes. If process of creation of new institutes, norms and forms of communication is made not on negation of religious bases, but on the contrary, at their organic inclusion, traditional norms and values will receive new perspective and will play the positive role in transformation of modern society [20].

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