

## **POLITICAL ASPECTS OF A MISSIONARY ACTIVITY OF NEO-PROTESTANT ORGANIZATIONS**

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The analysis of socio-philosophical and religious studies reveals that missionary activity is the most convincing and efficient method among the work of any religious movement. Obviously, the spread of cultural achievements of Western civilization along with religious traditions through missionary activity can be considered as a tool of existential expansion. In this research, having analyzed the link between a missionary work and a policy we determined that non-traditional religious movements are the key elements of the implementation of the Western cultural expansion in the consciousness of people. Inasmuch as missionaries are very close related to the political system of the country, they can be defined as rational or irrational performers of political will of the State. It should be noted that the results of the research, given in the article, draw attention to the fact that the Neo-Protestant and other religious movements have gone beyond the area of their activities and implemented in other confessions, thereby realizing Western “civilization management”.

**Keywords:** religion, society, missionary activity, national interests.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The history of missionary activity in Kazakhstan started in the VII century. Christian missionaries, still conduct their activity. A strong belief of our ancestors during the pre-Soviet era and the time of atheistic communist’s policy of the Soviet Union was a huge obstacle for Christian missionaries, they could not properly achieve their goals. And only after the collapse of the Soviet Union the missionaries have got an opportunity for active work.

This article is closely connected with the terms “evangelization”, “missionary”. As it is known, in confessional literature the term “evangelization” means “preaching of the gospel”, “to advocate Christian belief in society” [1].

But the vast majority of secular scholars, explaining the term “evangelism”, would like to mention the activities of religious organizations whose aim is proselytizing people to Christianity [2]. Also, the term is used to show the works of attracting the individuals with the purpose of increasing the number of religious members in secularized society [3]. The common meaning of all definitions of different authors is to spread the Christianity to people.

According to J. Mac-Arthur, the researcher in the field of religion: “missionary is evangelism on a world level” [4]. Nevertheless, we can see in many sources,

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that evangelism is positioning itself as one of the important goals of missionary function. Thus we can say, the aim of activity of evangelization is realization of concrete objectives and establishing or creating a religious consciousness in people.

For example, the atheistic dictionary of 1985 defines the term “missionary” as a function of preaching of church organizations’ religion in domestic and foreign countries [5]. Also, the term “missionary” is defined as one of the forms of ideological expansions of developed powers during the colonization policy. In later publications the authors underlined that there had been a lot of humanists among the missionaries and started to depart from an ideological critics. This shows that missionary takes an important place in modern time. G. Anderson, who studies the function of protestant mission in modern time, gives his secular view concerning this phenomenon. According to his definition “missionary” is composed of such elements as “vision”, “Godliness, policy and patriotism” [6].

Till the 50s only a narrow sense of a missionary concept was known. According to this, the concept of this notion can be given as follows: spreading of the Christian faith in the world; sending missionaries to the countries where their work is carried out, a current function of missionaries in the region; an organization who plans the departure of missionaries; and directly the centers, where the missionaries work.

The definition, concerning the function of the missionary work, has been worked out only recently. Until the XYIth century the word mission was used in the following meaning: “God Father had sent his Son, and God Father and His Son sent the Sacred Spirit”. The functions of the first preachers of Christian belief was called as “apostolatus” or “propagatio fidei”. In course of time these terms were replaced by the term “mission”. For the last fifteen centuries the church has been using the following: “to preach the teaching”, “to declare the Gospel”, “to establish churches”, “to enlighten the people” and other meanings.

## **2. MAIN PART**

A new meaning of the word mission appeared with the colonization of new regions by Western imperial powers. The historical development of the colonization of this period was closely related to the acquisition of power. The attempts to send the members of the church to the colonies were so important, that the authorities tried to control changes in functions, purposes, objectives of the work of missionaries. Their work was called as “mission” and they were called “missionaries”. The founder of the Jesuit order Ignatius de Loyola (1491-1556) was the first who used it in this sense.

By analyzing the missionary function in historical retrospective (especially, in the time of Great geographical strivings) one might see the reflections of the political objectives of powers. The activity of missionaries is closely connected with the belief that Christianity will improve the quality of life of others races and nations.

No scholar of religion can deny the fact that Christianity is closely connected with the missionary. According to the statement of the Second Vatican Council “the Church realizes the missionary objectives all over the world”. As the founder of protestant missiology, Gustav Warneck (1832-1910) said: “a missionary is the law of life of the Church” [7]. In this regard, it can be concluded that Christianity in its essence is the missionary and it loses its meaning without missionary. “The first and the most important objective of the church is to evangelize the world” [8].

Thus, the first and the main reason of paving the foundation for missionary are religious. The other aspect of missionaries’ religious strives are the political purposes, which are seen on the second level. In this case, if to rely on historical data, one might see that the missionary function always was conducted within the political objectives of western imperial, i.e. the program of its realization was fulfilled due to the political objectives of colonization imperia. Missionary functions reached their high peak during the great geographical discoveries and the period of America and Africa’s colonization. Protestant missionaries widely spread their states’ influence and achieved significant results during the colonizing policy of England in 18-19th. It might be concluded that all European powers use this political tool. In the result of the activity of missionaries colonized nations had become dependent on the colonizing countries in political, economic and moral aspects, and could not resist them. Such significant results were achieved with the help of religious preaching.

The authorities, who know the specifics of religious factor, use it for solving political issues. Deliberately or subconsciously, many developed countries contribute to this process. Missionary activity is mostly financed by economically developed countries and countries with great power ambitions. This situation could be observed in different periods of history and in modern times. For example, according to data of 1979, 650US and Canadian companies have spent more than US \$ 1billion in order to finance 40thousand foreign missionaries [9].

According to the scientists, who study the missionary activity, all the functions of the Church have a political aspect. D. North says that objectives and tasks of missionary are very broad and they demand a great volume of human recourses [10].

A German lawyer Arnold Erhardt, who studied political metaphysics, in his three-volume book “From Solon up to Augustine” described the impact of the first missionary activity on the political system, showing the destructive character of the early Christian faith. The first Christian missionary movements in the first century had a radical and revolutionary character. However, Arnold Erkhart pointed that revolution should not be considered in connection with terror, it should offer the alternative. Missionary in Greek and Roman world held this alternative in their works.

By denying all gods, Christianity destroyed the political theory set by power. Thus, analyzing this situation, we can say, that the first missionaries shook the political structure of the Roman Empire through their activities.

Since the reign of Emperor Constantine the concepts of “Christian state”, “mutual dependence of Church and State” and “the relationship between the people” have been definitively formed.

The Byzantine emperor was able to unite the religious and political functions. The state interests were in accordance with the Church interests and on the contrary the church interests were not contradictory to the state ones. This situation exerted an influence on the missionary activities. The involvement of state authorities to the missionary work has started since medieval period and it lasts till the modern days. For example, you can see the political aspects of the involvement of Russian princes and kings into the missionary activity. After the missionaries had implemented their tasks, the Russian princes were sent to the war to the north and north-eastern regions. The evangelization objectives coincide with the rule “to make everybody Russian”. Due to this fact the protestant leaders in the west gave negative estimations to the works of Orthodox leadership. However, the western church was not different from its eastern “brother”, because, the colonization which opened the missionary work and missionary policy of western churches was one of the inalienable parts of the political purposes of European states.

When the way to India and America across the ocean was open, Pope Alexander VI, in his papal bull *Inter Caetera Divinae*, divided the newly discovered lands between the states of Portugal and Spain. Thus he gave them the rights to govern the newly opened places and the places that would be opened in future. The papal bull proved that Pope had a power all over the world. This proved that the two leaders were endowed with political and ecclesiastical power in the colonies. There was a concept that if some state has the right to colonize the certain places, it should also conduct the missionary activity. Since that period the spread of Christian belief and colonization was so closely interrelated that it was difficult to consider them separately. In the colonies they had to appoint the heads of dioceses and the bishops. The bishops were not allowed to contact directly with Roman Pope. For legality of the laws of the Pope in the colonies a direct consent of the King was necessary. The kings of Portuguese and Spain started to consider themselves not as representatives of Pope, but the successor of the God [11].

The belief in the superiority and purity of the Christian faith has been one of the main distinguishing features of missionary activity. Gustav Warneck has underlined three main elements: the convenience and applicability of Christianity to other people; the achievements of Christian missionary “within the sphere of its competence” and in comparison with other religions the Christianity proves its power and energy in the history and modern time [12]. All this generates in western churches the belief in the superiority of their culture.

According to Robert Speer Western missionaries brought “Christ” and “civilization” [13].

In the period of vast European colonization policy, western Christians believed that their culture had a superiority over other cultures and had a universal character. As western culture considered the Christianity as the most perfect one, they thought that this religion should be inserted into the western culture as well as in other cultures. In 1932, the work, titled «Reconsidering the work of missionaries» was published, where the missionaries' activity had been comprehensively studied. It was written in this paper that "there is a tendency of uniting all the people into one world culture, which his western culture". Also, the ongoing process should find a great support from other people. And missionaries should consciously spread the western culture" [14].

Similar ideas were presented in the book "Le role civilisateur des missions" ("The civilization role of the missionaries" (1922). German historian Julious Rikhter, who studied the history of the missionary activity, in his work, which was published in 1927, said: "protestant mission is an important and inalienable part of the cultural colonizing of European and American nations" [15].

In Great Britain, among the authorities, the number of those who understand the importance of missionary activity for the empire increases. Also, they know how to assist to the missionaries work in colonized countries. The German chancellor, Grafvon Caprivi said in 1890: "We should build several stations in the inner regions of colonized countries where dealers and missionaries will work and develop their activities" [16].

Every country considered missionaries as parliament allies in realizing their political plans. In 1958, Mr. Nel, the member of South Africa's Parliament said that one of the reasons of people's indifference to missionary activities is misunderstanding of "political essence of missionary work". He says: "If we bring to faith the black race, the white race will have a hope". If the plan is not implemented, then "our policy, our legal program and our plans will not be successful". Why young people should take enormous responsibility and work hard on missionary activities. "Missionary activity is not only a service to God, it is also a work for the benefit of nature; is a good opportunity to worship God and to serve the motherland" [17].

The value and importance of missionary work for the state was understood not only by politicians; a lot of missionaries agreed with this view too. A famous French Cardinal Lavigerie (1825-1892), while sending "the white fathers" to Africa, admonished them by the words: "Nous travaillons aussi pour la France" (We work for France). In the introduction of the book, dedicated to the bicentennial of preaching the Gospel by the British Society (1701-1900) the following is written: "After the celebration of the expansion of the empire, we must draw attention to the spiritual condition and prove the stability of the Empire" [18].

Contemporary politicians would agree with the words of Karl Mirbtom, who wrote in 1910: "The missionary and the members of colonies became great allies and it would have an excellent impact on the next generation".

In 1913, the Catholic missionary Schmidlin, analyzing the speech of Zolfugge “Colonization is a mission”, concluded: “...a spiritual conquest and assimilation of colonies happens due to the missionary activities... . In fact, a government joins the protectorate only externally; the colonization is carried out by missionary activities, fulfilling deep objectives of the colonial policy. In other words, if the state provides the physical subjugation by the law and punishment, the missionary activity contributes to internal obedience and honesty” [19].

The religious factor is often used in an international politics for implementation of their own interests by majority of power. For instance, in November 1998, US Congress adopted «International Act on Religious Freedom». According to this document US puts economic, diplomatic and other limits on those states which breach the freedom of religion.

In October 1998, a document “A national security strategy for a new century” was adopted in US [20]. According to this document, one of the points of the US strategic plan is the recognition of its world domination among other countries.

It is said in the document: “In international relations we should be ready to apply all the tools of national potential to influence the certain countries... To defend our national interest we should interfere in the relations taking place in the world and we should not spare finance, military, political and all our power” [21]. Certainly, the religion has found its place in the given document. Moreover, it is underlined that “We should not allow the breaching the religious freedom in China and Russia and other countries” [21].

Huntington, the professor of the Harvard University and the author of the idea of the “third wave” of democracy, has shown an important role of the religion in the process of modern world. According to his idea, the first wave started in 1820th and finished in 1920th with the establishing of dictatorships. It goes back to the times of the French Revolution and its main part consists of ideas of the North America and Europe. The second wave began with the Allied victory in World War II. As a result, the democracy has been established in West Germany, Italy, Austria, Japan, and Korea. The democratic tendencies were strengthened in Turkey, Greece and Latin America.

According to S. Huntington, Protestantism was dominant in two waves of democracy and closely connected with the United States. The third wave starts from the breakup of Portuguese dictatorship and continues till the modern days. S. Huntington says: “The future of the third wave depends on the degree of stability of Western Christianity on the territory of countries, as well as on the territory of countries where Christianity is not so developed” [22]. He does not exclude the possibility of the clash of civilizations in the XXI century. He defines the civilization as a community of people practicing certain religion [23].

Thus, the religion is a defining element in building a civilization. The political concepts of recent times do not take into consideration the religious systems and

situations which form the religious outlook of certain region. We believe that these factors define the relationship with the environment and economic development, and also determine the degree of religious expansion. Missionaries have become one of the political elements using new methods of work and involving more and more people.

It must be noted that the various forms of invasion and government control have been changed in accordance with the requirements of the time. At the last stage of the development of information and communication, “supervising forms of civilization” were replaced by the military ones, and the direct political control took the second place. Thus, religious beliefs and newly established values, which have emerged as a result of the missionary work, will provide the basis of communication for countries which do not have a border crossing, without any political or military pressure. As an example, let’s analyze the US’s intention to conquer globally the civilization. In the works directed to control the world, the missionary activity takes an important place.

Neo-Protestant and other non-traditional religious movement’s activity are often discussed on the Internet in recent years. For example, such Internet sites [aswww.tengrinews.kz](http://aswww.tengrinews.kz), [www.megapolis.kz](http://www.megapolis.kz), [www.nur.kz](http://www.nur.kz) discussed the program “Save us, God, from “Grace”. There was discussed the negative impact of this destructive course on human consciousness. According to the story, in Taldykorgan, a young woman, despite the objection of her husband, regularly goes to the church “Grace” with their little daughter for worshipping. The husband is sure that his little girl’s psyche is damaged. Moreover, the young family is on the verge of collapse, because the husband does not want his young daughter and his wife to visit the church “Grace”.

It should be noted, that 96% of 120 comments bear a negative reaction to the followers of “Grace”, “Jehovah’s Witnesses” and other non-traditional currents. The vast majority of comments left on internet sites demands of adopting and implementing measures against these religious branches, even closing the activity of such destructive branches on the territory of Kazakhstan.

For example: Ali. Original, the user: “It is necessary to close all sects immediately. The pastors and leaders of the organization should be put on trial. Many families were broken through the actions of church. I have known one family, now they divorce because of “Grace”. The apartment has been sold, and the husband gave the money to the pastors. His wife and two young children are wandering from door to door. After the husband had given the money, he was thrown into the street and now he scrounge around for something to eat. When they meet you in the street just throw them their brochures in the face [24].

On the internet space one might notice that the users are against their functions. Also, it is found out, that internet users do not know the law on «Religious freedom».

For instance, one should know that it is prohibited to preach and spread the religious materials in the streets and houses for non-traditional religious branches. We can also see that there are no barriers preventing their activities. According to the sociological poll, conducted by “Center of information and analyzing” of Almaty Internal Policy Administration among the citizens of the city, 53% of them are familiar with the missionaries’ activities of non-traditional religious organizations. 47% never communicate directly with the missionaries or with their representatives, however they have heard about missionaries’ functions and activities from friends and natives. Also, it was revealed that 18,1% have an experience of going to Church or meeting with the missionaries.

The following citizens of the cities have become the top target for missionaries: the people between the age of 40-49, among them 30% have an experience of going to Church or meeting with the missionaries; among the people between the age of 18-19 -23,3% have an experience of going to Church; among the people with high education -26,8%; Russians – 23,5%; people, whose income is above average – 32,5% [25].

The majority of the Almaty citizens, who have taken part in the questionnaire (66%) underlines, that the activity of non-traditional religious organizations bears a threat to Kazakhstani society. 49.6% of the respondents believe that the greatest dangerous the ideological zombiing; 41.9% note the negative consequences for future generations; 20.3% believe that all this is a lie to rob people; 17.7% believe that they create the rise of xenophobia and extremist attitudes in society; 15.5% believe that on-traditional religious organizations represent a danger to the traditional religious belief and values [25].

In fact, foreign missionaries do not respect traditional religions preserved by the people for centuries. They use dirty methods, which are considered to be proselytism.

Charles, a missionary, says the following: “In order to approach to Muslims, use their religion and language. Use the ayahs from the Quran which do not harm the Christianity. Organize the Friday preaching parallel to Friday praying of Muslims; the house church leaders might look like imams; rituals, concerning entering the house church, might be organized according to the Muslim traditions” [26].

At the same time, the religious rituals should be carried out on the language of the nation, which dominates (Kazakh, Russian, Uighur, Uzbek). During the rituals the religious songs should be accompanied with national musical instruments like dombra, kobyz, sibizgi. Such proselytizing activity in the society might exert a negative influence on inter-religious relations that may result in a big problem.

We would like to end our research work with the words of former US State Secretary Madeleine Albright «Diplomacy based on religious belief is an important tool in realizing foreign policy» [27].



### 3. SUMMARY

In the course of two thousand years in the human history and till modern times along with the establishing of new cults which lead to difficult changes in society, through the establishing of western values with the help of activity that radically changed the nation's mentality, missionary is one of the tool which opens territorial and existential expansion of western countries.

Also, through the study of interrelation of missionary activities of Neo-protestant branches we have found that Neo-protestant and non-traditional religious branches are the important elements of cultural expansion of western countries with the purpose of introducing the values which are alien to our people. They try to replace the traditional values that have been created throughout the centuries. The missionaries consciously or unconsciously fulfill the policy which is related to their state system, spreading their country's purposes.

Considering the above mentioned results, we underline that Neo-protestant and on-traditional religious organizations' function is to spread their activity to the spaces where another belief is practiced, through the preaching their religious beliefs in another states without any interferences; the missionary function can be defined as the purposes and results of western "civilization control".

In this connection, "Center of Information and analyzing" has conducted the sociological poll among the residents of Almaty city with the purpose of defining the functions of non-traditional religious organizations; it reveals that the vast majority of participants on the internet space are against the Neo-protestant and non-traditional religious organizations' activity.

Also, it is impossible to join people that have been divided into several religions. For example, Yugoslavia, which has been one country, is divided into Catholic Croats, Orthodox Serbs and Bosnians who accepted Islamic religion.

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