



<sup>1</sup> Regina M. Mukhametzyanova-Duggal,  
<sup>2</sup> Alexander N. Klyashev, <sup>3</sup> Denis A. Efimov

<sup>1,2,3</sup> R.G. Kuzeev Institute for Ethnological Studies – Subdivision of the Ufa Federal Research Centre RAS

<sup>1,2,3</sup> 6 K. Marks str., Ufa, 450077, Russia

<sup>1</sup>mdregm@yandex.ru; <sup>2</sup>ak1168@mail.ru; <sup>3</sup>missionerufa@mail.ru

### Regular Members of Orthodox Communities: Ethno-Social Structure, Identity, Value Orientations (On the Example of the Russian Region – the Republic of Bashkortostan)

**Abstract.** The article presents the results of fieldwork conducted to describe the ethno-demographic and socio-cultural portrait of believers of the Republic of Bashkortostan (active members of Orthodox religious organizations). Such aspects as the ethno-social structure, the ranking of identities, some value orientations are analyzed. Russian Orthodox Church members of the Republic of Bashkortostan of the Russian Federation – members of the Russian, Tatar and Bashkir ethnic groups – are considered in the article. Empirical materials were collected by methods of observation and questioning. The results of field data processing show that Turkic-speaking peoples (Tatars and Bashkirs) – Orthodox believers, compared with the Russian Orthodox believers, represent a more educated group consisting of qualified specialists, and more focused on the priority of spiritual values over material ones. This is related with the circumstance that a voluntary conversion to Orthodoxy Tatars and Bashkirs was a consequence of the loss of ethno-confessional traditions and involvement in industrial society, was associated with the study and adoption of Christian doctrines, which are associated with a certain asceticism and a willingness to accept difficulties associated with the implementation of religious practices. The smaller number of potential “heroes of faith” is explained by the fact that for Russians Orthodoxy is partly an ethno-confessional marker and is not always associated with a deep study of the religious doctrines of Christianity and deep involvement in the implementation of religious practices.

**Key words:** believers, Orthodox, identity, Russians, Tatars, Bashkirs, ethno-social structure, value orientations, Bashkortostan, Russia

<sup>1</sup> Мухаметзянова-Дуггал Р.М., <sup>2</sup> Кляшев А.Н.,  
<sup>3</sup> Ефимов Д.А.

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Институт этнологических исследований им. Р.Г. Кузеева Уфимского федерального исследовательского центра РАН

<sup>1,2,3</sup> 450077, Россия, г. Уфа, ул. К. Маркса, 6

<sup>1</sup>mdregm@yandex.ru; <sup>2</sup>ak1168@mail.ru; <sup>3</sup>missionerufa@mail.ru

### Регулярные члены православных общин: этносоциальная структура, идентичность, ценностные ориентации (на примере российского региона – Республики Башкортостан)

**Аннотация.** Данная работа основана на материалах опросов, осуществлённых для выявления социальных, демографических и этнокультурных граней образа православного – деятельного участника православной общины Башкортостана. Анализируются такие аспекты, как этносоциальная структура, ранжирование идентичностей, некоторые ценностные ориентации. В статье рассматриваются члены Русской православной церкви Республики Башкортостан Российской Федерации – представители русской, татарской и башкирской этнических групп. Полевые исследования осуществлялись с применением наблюдения и анкетирования. Материалы полевых работ показывают, что тюркоязычные народы (татары и башкиры) – православные верующие, по сравнению с русскими православными верующими, представляют собой более образованную группу, состоящую из квалифицированных специалистов,



Regina M.  
Mukhametzyanova-  
Duggal



Alexander N.  
Klyashev



Denis A. Efimov

и более ориентированную на приоритет духовных ценностей над материальными. Это обусловлено тем, что сознательный переход татар и башкир в православие был следствием утраты этноконфессиональных традиций и вовлечённости в индустриальное общество, а также изучением и принятием христианских доктрин, которые связаны с определённым аскетизмом и готовностью принять трудности при осуществлении религиозных практик. Меньшее число потенциальных “героев веры” объясняется тем, что для русских православие отчасти является этноконфессиональным маркером и не всегда связано с глубоким изучением религиозных доктрин христианства и глубокой вовлечённостью в осуществление религиозных практик.

**Ключевые слова:** верующие, православные, идентичность, русские, татары, башкиры, этносоциальные характеристики, ценностные ориентации, Башкортостан, Россия

### Introduction

In 2020–2021, within the confines of the research topics “Religions and spiritual life in the multicultural space of the Southern Urals” and “Traditional Religions and New Religious Movements in the Southern Urals: issues of functioning, state-confessional and interfaith relations” by the R.G. Kuzeev Institute for Ethnological Studies – Subdivision of the Ufa Federal Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IES UFRC RAS) conducted a study of regular members of religious communities of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Republic of Bashkortostan.

By regular members, we mean believers with high rates of religious behavior and participation in religious life, whose number in Russia, according to the Institute for Socio-Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, is about 10% [Sinelina, 2013, 81–82]. Regular members of Orthodox communities are characterized by the implementation of the following aspects of religious practices: weekly attendance of Sunday services, regular confession and communion; observance of fasts, rituals and sacraments (prayer rule, wedding, christening, funeral service, etc.) and holidays; attendance of Sunday adults and (for children) children’s schools. For regular members of Orthodox communities, it is mandatory to implement confessional moral and moral attitudes in everyday life (in the family, at work, among friends and acquaintances); regular purification from sins committed through confession to God with the obligatory participation of a priest as a witness and regular communion as a visible Sacrament, through which the power of the Holy Spirit is received, as well as regular prayers.

The Republic of Bashkortostan is one of the multicultural districts of the Russia. In conformity with the All-Russian Population Census of 2010, representatives of 160 nationalities and ethnic groups live in Bashkortostan. The most numerous are: Russians (36.0%), Bashkirs (28.8%), Tatars (24.8%), Chuvash (2.7%), Mari (2.6%), Ukrainians (1%), as well as Mordvins, Udmurts, Belarusians, Germans, Latvians, Jews [National composition, 2016, 9]. About 20 different religions, denominations and religious groups are also represented in the republic. The largest and most numerous are Islam and Orthodoxy, their associations make up more than 90% of the total number of religious organizations: about 70% are Muslim, 20% are Orthodox. Protestant groups (Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostals, Mormons, etc.) and other beliefs (Old Believers, Buddhism, ethnic beliefs) – about 10% [Informaciya, <https://glavarb.ru/rus/administration/sovetpogosudarstvenno-konfessionalnimotnosheniyampriprezidenterb/>]. Islam is practiced by two major ethnic groups – Bashkirs and Tatars, Orthodoxy is mainly followed by Russians.

The authors identified the following ethnic composition of the Orthodox believers of the Republic of Bashkortostan from the sample population: Russians made up 81.9%, Tatars 6.7%, Bashkirs 1.9%, others – 9.5% (Mari, Mordvins, Germans) (Table 1).

The empirical material obtained by the IES UFRC RAS in 2020–2021 in the parishes of Orthodox Christians of the Republic of Bashkortostan allowed us to realize the purpose of this study – to determine some ethno-social characteristics, ranking the identities and doctrinal features of Orthodox believers – representatives of the largest ethnic groups of the Republic of Bashkortostan – Russians, Tatars and Bashkirs. The objectives of the study are to identify and compare the level of education, professional composition, assessment of the role of material well – being, education, successful career, etc. in the life of a Christian; as well as assessment of the role of sorrows in the life of a Christian among Orthodox Christians-Bashkirs, Tatars and Russians of the Republic of Bashkortostan.

Table 1. Ethnic composition, (%)

Nationalities	Percentages
Russians	81,9
Tatars	6,7
Bashkirs	1,9
Others	9,5
Total number of respondents	100,0

The Orthodox communities (Bashkirs, Tatars and Russians) of the Republic of Bashkortostan are the research object; some of their socio-demographic and doctrinal features, the ranking of identities are the research subject.

#### Methodological basis and materials

Information about the social characteristics and doctrinal features of regular members of the Orthodox communities of the Republic of Bashkortostan was obtained by methods of sociology: surveys of members of Orthodox religious associations through questionnaires. The surveys were conducted using closed-type questionnaires. The paper compares three ethnic groups-regular members of the Orthodox communities of the Republic of Bashkortostan (Bashkirs, Tatars and Russians) with each other according to characteristics such as: the level of education, professional composition, assessments of the role of material well-being, education, successful career, etc.in the life of a Christian; as well as assessments of the role of sorrows in the life of a Christian.

This work contains the results of field research carried out by the Department of Religious Studies of the IES UFRS RAS in the cities of Ufa, Sterlitamak, Salavat, Sibai, as well as in rural settlements of the Birsky district, Blagoveshchensky district, Beloretsky district, Uchalinsky district of the Bashkortostan; a total of 161 respondents were interviewed, the number of answers to various questions contained in the questionnaire is variable.

The methodological basis of the survey is the method of V. F. Chesnokova for calculating the index of churching (B-index) of Orthodox believers [Chesnokova, 2005, 25–46]. The selection criteria for the sample representing the «core of believers» of the Orthodox of the Republic of Bashkortostan were five indicators of religious behavior: visiting the temple/church, confession and communion, reading the Gospel, prayer, fasting.

#### Results

*The level of education.* The research results show that the Bashkirs are the most educated ethnic group in the sample – the number of respondents with higher education among them is 100%; Tatars are in second place, among them 57.1% have higher education. 39.5% of respondents have higher education among Orthodox Russians, 2.3% have an academic degree. Russian Russians and 14.3% of Tatars have incomplete higher education; 40.7% of Russians and 14.3% of Tatars have specialized secondary education. 40.7% of respondents – Russians and 14.3% of respondents-Tatars have secondary special education. Russians (8.1%) and Tatars (14.3%) have secondary education; Russians (5.8%) have incomplete secondary education. The largest group of Bashkirs (100%) and Tatars (57.1%) are respondents with higher education, Russians (40.7%) are respondents with secondary special education (Table 2).

Table 2. Level of education, (%)

	Russians	Tatars	Bashkirs
Primary or incomplete secondary education	5.8	–	–
Secondary education	8.1	14.3	–
Secondary specialised education	40.7	14.3	–
Incomplete higher education	3.5	14.3	–

Higher education	39.5	57.1	100
Postgraduate studies or academic degree	2.3	–	–
Total respondents to the question	100	100	100

*Professional staff.* Specialists engaged in qualified mental or physical labor (heads of a company, large division, heads of departments, qualified specialists, civil servants, qualified workers, entrepreneurs), Bashkirs in the sample are 100% among respondents, 52.7% among Tatars, 34.2% among Russians. The largest groups among the Bashkirs executives of heads of a company, large division (50%) and qualified specialist (50%); among the Tatars – qualified specialist (28.6%), civil servants (28.6%) and not working (28.6%); among the Russian pensioners (48.2%) and qualified specialist (12.9%) (Table 3).

Table 3. Professional composition, (%)

	Russians	Tatars	Bashkirs
I do not work	7.1	28.6	
Heads of a company, large division	7.1	–	50
Heads of department	3.5	–	–
Qualified specialist	12.9	28.6	50
Civil servants	7.1	28.6	–
Unskilled workers	2.4	–	–
Qualified workers	2.4	–	–
Entrepreneurs	1.2	–	–
Housewives	2.4	–	–
Student	1.2	–	–
Pensioners	48.2	14.3	–
Unemployed	2.4	–	–
Other	1.2	–	–
I am at a loss to answer	1.2	–	–

*Ranking of identities.* The results of the research show that among Russian respondents (62.1%) and Tatar respondents (57.1%) (Bashkirs did not answer the block of questions related to identities), religious identity occupies the first place in the ranking of identities. The second place among Russians is occupied by family identity – 32.9%, among Tatar respondents, the number of those who chose family identity as the second most important (42.9%) is equal to the number of respondents who chose religious identity in the second block (42.9%). Civil identity is in third place – it was chosen by 45.8% of Russians and 42.9% of Tatars. The fourth place is occupied by professional identity – it was noted by 35.5% of Russians and 42.9% of Tatars. The last, fifth place is occupied by ethnic identity – it was chosen by 36.8% of Russians and 60.0% of Tatars. Thus, the materials presented demonstrate that for the Russian and Tatar groups of Orthodox identities, according to the degree of significance, they represent the following system: the most significant is religious identity, followed by family identity, the third place is occupied by civil identity, the fourth – professional identity and the fifth – ethnic identity. Such areas of life as religion, family, patriotism, professional sphere are valuable, and only the fifth place is occupied by the area of ethnicity – religion for regular members of Orthodox communities is a conscious choice that determines their system of values, while ethnicity for believers of the multi-ethnic region of Russia is not as important as religion, family, citizenship and the area of professional interests (Table 4).



Table 4. Ranking of identities, (%)

First of all, I am:		
	Russians	Tatars
A citizen of the Russian Federation	21.8	28.6
A specialist	3.4	0.0
A Christian	62.1	57.1
A representative of the ethnic group	0.0	0.0
Husband, father (wife, mother, a member of his family)	12.6	14.3
Second of all, I am:		
	Russians	Tatars
A citizen of the Russian Federation	31.8	14.3
A specialist	3.5	0.0
A Christian	30.6	42.9
A representative of the ethnic group	1.2	0.0
Husband, father (wife, mother, a member of his family)	32.9	
In the third place, I am:		
	Russians	Tatars
A citizen of the Russian Federation	45.8	42.9
A specialist	7.2	28.6
A Christian	9.6	14.3
A representative of the ethnic group	7.2	0.0
Husband, father (wife, mother, a member of his family)	30.1	14.3
In the fourth place, I am:		
	Russians	Tatars
A citizen of the Russian Federation	14.5	14.3
A specialist	35.5	42.9
A Christian	9.2	28.6
A representative of the ethnic group	28.9	0.0
Husband, father (wife, mother, a member of his family)	11.8	14.3
In the fifth place, I am:		
	Russians	Tatars
A citizen of the Russian Federation	16.2	0.0
A specialist	29.4	0.0
A Christian	8.8	40.0
A representative of the ethnic group	36.8	60.0
Husband, father (wife, mother, a member of his family)	8.8	0.0

*Age structure.* The research materials revealed that the overwhelming number of respondents is represented by believers over forty-five years old. Among Russians, the number of respondents aged 45 years and older is 74.3%, among Tatars, 83.3% of respondents aged 45 to 60 years, among Bashkirs – one hundred percent. 25.6% of respondents are younger than 45 years old among Russians, 14.1% of respondents aged 35 to 45 years among Tatars. Russians, in our opinion, confirm the thesis that Orthodoxy is an ethno-confessional marker for Russians, among other things (Table 5).

Table 5. Age composition, (%)

	Up to 25 years old	25–35 years old	35–45 years old	45–60 years old	Over 60 years old
Russians	6.4	5.1	14.1	34.6	39.7
Tatars	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	0.0
Bashkirs	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	0.0

*The Significance of Success in Life for the Believer.* Conditional supporters of «Prosperity theology», who believe that the realization of material well-being, education, a successful career and other similar aspects in the life of a believer is an indispensable attribute of a believer, among respondents-Russians 11.9%; among respondents-Tatars, the number of those who chose this answer is 14.3%; among Bashkirs there are no such respondents. The largest groups among Russians are believers who chose the following answers: “The realization of these values should not be the main goal of a Christian” (38.1%), “These values are attractive, but a Christian can do without them” (22.6%), 12.5% found it difficult to answer. Among Tatars, 28.6% chose the answer “The realization of these values should not be the main goal of a Christian”; 14.3% of Tatar respondents accounted for each of the other answer options. The only Orthodox Bashkir who answered this question chose the position “These values are attractive, but a Christian can do without them” (Table 6).

Table 6. The Significance of Success in Life for the Believer (%)

	Russians	Tatars	Bashkirs
The embodiment of these values is essential in the Christian life.	11.9	14.3	–
Attempts to embody these values interfere with salvation.	3.6	14.3	–
In the life of a believer they are neutral	6	14.3	–
These values are attractive, but a Christian can do without them	22.6	14.3	100
The realization of these values should not be the main goal of a Christian	38.1	28.6	–
Find it difficult to answer	17.9	14.3	–

*The Significance of Life's Difficulties for Believers.* 100% of respondents are Tatars, 100% of respondents are Bashkirs and the overwhelming majority of respondents are Russians (83.8%) believe that tribulation is God's tool that serves to save a person. 12.5% of Russians found it difficult to choose an answer, 3.8% believe that the negative moments in the life of a Christian are the influence of Satan that are contrary to God's plan for the Christian and need to be countered (Table 7).

Table 7. The Significance of Life's Difficulties for Believers (%)

	Russians	Tatars	Bashkirs
These moments in the life of believers are acts of Satan, that is, influences of Satan that are contrary to God's plan for the Christian and need to be counteracted.	3.8	–	–
Tribulation is God's tool that serves the salvation of man	83.8	100	100
I am at a loss to answer	12.5	–	–

### Conclusion

Turkic-speaking peoples – Orthodox believers (Tatars and Bashkirs) represent a more highly educated group than Russian Orthodox respondents – 100% of Bashkirs and 71.4% of Tatars have higher secondary special education (incomplete higher education, higher education and academic degree), while less than half of such respondents have 45.3%. Russian Orthodox also have more specialists engaged in qualified mental or physical labor than Russian respondents – 100% of such respondents are Bashkirs in the sample, 52.7% are Tatars, 34.2% are Russians; the largest group among Russians is pensioners, of whom 48.2% are in the sample.

There are also more potential «heroes of faith» who are ready to endure difficulties for their religious beliefs among the Turkic-speaking Orthodox in the sample; 100% of respondents Tatars and Bashkirs identify the sorrows that take place in the life of a Christian (diseases, material difficulties, conflicts with others, etc.) as God's tool that serves to save a person to eternal life. Among Russians, such respondents are 83.8%.

At the same time, respondents who believe that a Christian must necessarily be successful in his life path are most among Tatars – 14.3%, among Russians several such respondents are slightly less – 11.9%, the only Bashkir respondent believes that material well-being, education, a successful career, etc., but their implementation in the life of a Christian is not at all mandatory. The majority of Russians (38.1%), as well as Tatars (28.6%), believe that the practical implementation of these values should not be the meaning of a Christian's life.

Turkic-speaking peoples – Orthodox believers (Tatars and Bashkirs) of the Republic of Bashkortostan represent a more educated group, represented by a larger number of qualified specialists engaged in intellectual or physical labor than Russians, who are more willing to endure the difficulties associated with the realization of their religion, and are more focused on the priority of spiritual values over material ones.

This is connected, as we believe, with the fact that the adoption of Orthodoxy Tatars and Bashkirs, traditionally considered by ethnological science as carriers of Islam, was a consequence of the loss of ethno-confessional traditions and involvement in industrial society, was conscious and was associated with the study and adoption of Christian doctrines associated with a certain asceticism and readiness to accept difficulties associated with religious practices. The smaller number of potential “heroes of faith”, in our opinion, is explained by the fact that for Russians Orthodoxy is partly an ethno-confessional marker and is not always associated with a deep study of the religious doctrines of Christianity.

### Acknowledgement

The research is supported by the state assignment of the IES UFRS RAS, NAAAAA-A21-121012290084-6.

### Библиографический список

1. Информация о религиозной ситуации и государственно-конфессиональных отношениях на территории Республики Башкортостан на 01.01.2021 г. [Электронный ресурс] // Совет по государственно-конфессиональным отношениям при Главе Республики Башкортостан. – URL: <https://glavarb.ru/rus/administration/sovetpogosudarstvenno-konfessionalnimotnosheniyampriprezidenterb/> (дата обращения 16.08.2021).
2. Национальный состав и владение языками, гражданство населения Республики Башкортостан по данным Всероссийской переписи населения 2010 года: статистический сборник: в 2 ч. / Под ред. А.М. Ганиева и др. – Уфа: Китап, 2016. – Ч. 1. – 341 с.
3. Синелина, Ю.Ю., Новые тенденции в религиозном сознании и поведении россиян / Ю.Ю. Синелина // Вестник Московского университета. Серия 18. Социология и политология. – 2013. – № 1. – С. 81–82.
4. Чеснокова, В.Ф. Тесным путем. Процесс воцерковления населения России в конце XX века / В.Ф. Чеснокова. – М.: Академический Проект, 2005. – 297 с.

*Текст поступил в редакцию 12.11.2021.*

*Принят к публикации 17.01.2022.*

*Опубликован 23.06.2022.*

## References

1. *Informaciya o religioznoj situacii i gosudarstvenno-konfessional'nyh otnosheniyah na territorii Respubliki Bashkortostan na 01.01.2021 g.* [Information about the Religious Situation and State-Confessional Relations on the Territory of the Republic of Bashkortostan for 01.01.2021] Available at: <https://glavarb.ru/rus/administration/sovetpogosudarstvenno-konfessionalnimotnosheniyampriprezidenterb/> (accessed on August 28, 2021) (in Russian).
2. *Nacional'nyj sostav i vladenie yazykami, grazhdanstvo naseleniya Respubliki Bashkortostan po dannym Vserossijskoj perepisi naseleniya 2010 goda: statisticheskij sbornik* [Ethnic Composition and Language Skills, Citizenship of the Population of the Republic of Bashkortostan According to the 2010 All-Russian Population Census: Statistical Collection]. In 2 parts. Part 1. Ufa: Bashkortostanstat, 2013, 193 p. (in Russian).
3. Sinelina Y.Y. *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta* [MSU Bulletin]. 2013. Seriya 18. Sociologiya i politologiya, no. 1, pp. 81–82 (in Russian).
4. Chesnokova, V.F. *Tesnym putem. Process vocerkovleniya naseleniya Rossii v konce XX veka* [In a Tight Way. The Process of Churching the Population of Russia at the End of the Twentieth Century]. Moscow: 2005, 304 p. (in Russian).

*Submitted for publication: November 12, 2021.*

*Accepted for publication: January 17, 2022.*

*Published: June 23, 2022.*