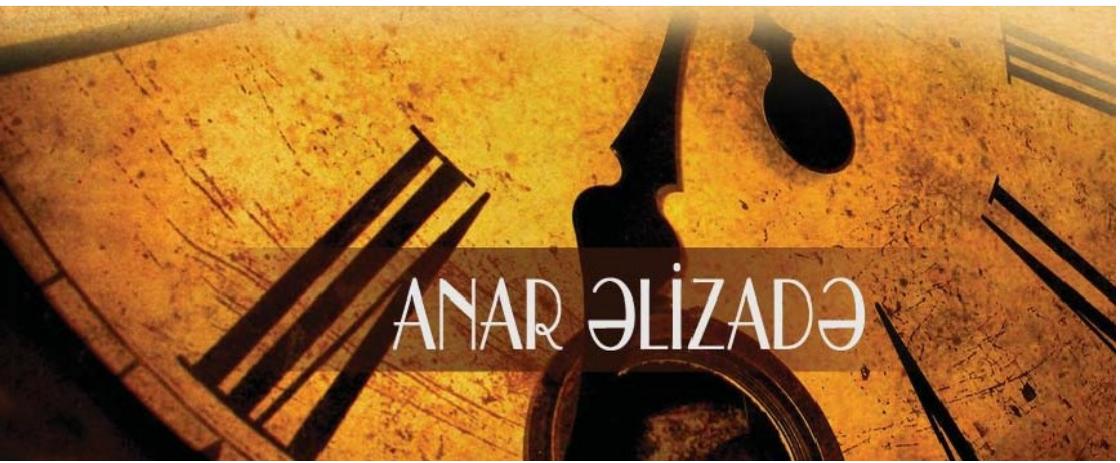


# CHRISTIANITY IN AZERBAIJAN.

from past to present



ANAR ƏLİZADƏ

**ANAR ALİZADE**

**CHRISTIANITY IN  
AZERBAIJAN**

**FROM PAST TO PRESENT**

**Non-Muslim Religions and Sects  
Operating in Azerbaijan**

«Elm və təhsil»

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This book presents to readers the history of Christian denominations and movements and provides detailed information about Christian organizations in Azerbaijan, their management structure, basic beliefs, their number, ethnicity and age composition, as well as those Christians' humanitarian activity and publications in the country. In the process of writing this book the author used archive materials from the State Historical Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the commissary of the Council on Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR, and the Administration for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan; and he interviewed Doukhobors living in Slavyanka village of Gadabay district.

One of the main goals of this book is to present the rich historical heritage and traditions of Christians in Azerbaijan, and to inform readers of the colorful life of Christians in our country. This book will be of particular interest to specialists of religion-oriented governmental and non-governmental organizations, and to religious experts, historians, sociologists, and media representatives who study Christianity in our country.

The book is intended for the general public.

Please send your comments and suggestions by e-mail to [anarzade78@gmail.com](mailto:anarzade78@gmail.com).

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## FROM THE AUTHOR

The main purpose of this book is to provide broad information about the rich religious life of Christians in Azerbaijan, their interesting and at times controversial history. The structures of different religious groups, their communities, and Christian institutions. Another goal of this book is to present the rich religious traditions represented by Christian organizations which have existed historically in our country, and to demonstrate the state's caring attitude towards adherents of all religions, even though the overwhelming majority of Azerbaijan's population is affiliated with Islam. It is important to note that, considerable financial aid is allocated from the national budget to Muslim and non-Muslim religious organizations every year, at the request of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev in order that their places of worship are repaired and refurbished.

I believe that this is the first book on this subject published in our republic. In fact, some publications do provide brief information on Christian organizations in Azerbaijan. Especially noteworthy is the 1<sup>st</sup> issue of the cultural magazine "Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani People in the World." Yet neither this magazine nor other publications provide sufficient and systematic information. It is impossible to obtain extensive information from those sources. However, this book contains detailed information about the past and present situation of virtually all Christian branches, movements, and religious organizations. From that standpoint, "Christianity in Azerbaijan: From Past to Present" as the first book in the series "Non-Muslim Religions and Sects Functioning in Azerbaijan" is a new initiative for our country.

Actually, difficult goals were set during the preparation of this book. I have tried to present the whole picture, though it is an almost impossible task, because a considerable amount of work is required to provide comprehensive information on nearly all the Christian groups in Azerbaijan. Such work is usually produced as a collective effort, but this book is the result of an individual effort, so it will quite naturally have many shortcomings and omissions.

It might be asked whether there is a need for such a book about Christian organizations. I believe there is. In other countries, books of this kind are published in significant numbers by different state institutions and scientific analytical research centers, and this alone should show the importance of such a topic. For instance, The Keston Institute for Religion, Politics, and Society at Baylor University (USA), with the participation of Russian and English scientists produced a foundational four-volume study on religious organizations in the Russian Federation entitled, *Contemporary Religious Life in Russia Today, A Systematic Description of Religious Movements and Organizations*.

We believe this handbook will be useful for governmental and non-governmental organizations alike, dealing in the religious sphere, especially those in mass media. At times journalists can spread information about Christian organizations, which sensationalizes in order to increase their ratings. Sometimes their information is false to such an extent that someone who knows the real picture is amazed at the journalists' ignorance – religious movements are misspelled, all Christian organizations are assumed to have the same beliefs, or one Christian sect is mistaken for another. Here is a basic example: A TV channel reporting on “Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious organization showed the worship service of “Word of Life” church. However, these two religious organizations have quite different beliefs. Many more examples can be given. Journalists would do well to use this book to avoid spreading false information about Christian organizations.

The book may also be useful for those who are interested in conducting research on the history of Christianity in Azerbaijan. This analytical work sheds light on the period of formation of the Baptist Faith in Azerbaijan based on the memoirs of the first Baptist missionaries; it uses archive materials to describe the religious life of Orthodox and Catholics in Old Baku and the activities of the Adventist communities of the Soviet period; it explains how Pentecostalism appeared in our country and who was involved in its formation; it speaks of Molokan sects which emerged in our country; it reveals the past of Doukhobors living in Slavyanka village of Gadabay district.

In the process of collecting materials related to Christian organizations in Azerbaijan, we discovered an interesting point. The history of the Albanian Apostolic Church, the Russian Orthodox Church, German Lutherans and Molokans in our country was more or less researched by our scientists, while the history of the development of Catholicism in Azerbaijan for some reason received very little attention. In fact this branch of Christianity has an ancient history in our country, because the first Catholics came to Azerbaijan as far back as in the Period of the Ilkhanids. Protestant movements such as the Baptists and Adventists, which spread in Azerbaijan from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were not researched at all, although these movements have a very interesting past. For instance, only a few know that Azerbaijan was one of the main regions for the formation of the Russian Baptists, or that the main publication of the Russian and Ukrainian Baptists – “Baptist” Magazine – was published in Baku for some time. It should also be mentioned that there are a significant number of primary sources that shed light on the origin and spread of the Baptist faith in our country. Those sources just need to be studied, and this book includes a first attempt at such a study.

In fact researching the history of Christian denominations and movements in our republic is in itself an important and interesting study, because the Christian religion held the dominant position in these lands before Islam. The history of the Christian religion in our country goes back to the times of the Apostles. Azerbaijan is the homeland of the ancient Eastern Church – the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church. The ancient Albanian temples preserved until today, clearly demonstrate the ancient tradition of Christianity in Azerbaijan.

Christianity furthermore, is the second largest religion in Azerbaijan after Islam in terms of the number of its followers. This world religion is very colorfully and richly represented in our country. There are representatives of Albanian-Udi religious communities, Orthodox, Catholics, members of different Protestant denominations, and followers of new Catholic religious movements are all in our republic. In order to have a correct understanding of the religious life of Azerbaijan it is necessary to analyze not only Islamic religious movements and organizations, but also the activities of Christian organizations and groups.

Of course, writing about any religion or its followers requires great sensitivity and understanding. As they say, “Religion is a delicate matter.” When speaking of the history and beliefs of religions and sects it’s impossible not to affect someone’s interests, because the diversity of ideas and beliefs is most sharply felt in the religious sphere, and it is hard to maintain objectivity in such matters. Members of some religious groups may not like the way certain thoughts and facts are presented in this book. Some points may be subjective. After all, this book is a product of human effort. We hope that the reader will consider the scope and difficulty of the work done, and excuse me for any shortcomings. But let me also emphasize that I tried to adhere to the principle of neutrality in the process of working on this book, i.e. I didn’t approach the activities of Christian organizations from any religious or ideological standpoint.

Any research work is possible only thanks to the hard work of former generations. The book in your hands was written thanks to the work of those who are like a lighthouse to me. Some works were especially useful in the process of writing this book. It is appropriate to mention their authors here. Russian Orthodox priest Alexander Yunitski who lived in Baku in the 19<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> centuries provided valuable historical information about the spread of Orthodoxy and Russian sects in Azerbaijan; Bonch-Bruyevich who wrote the chronicle of Russian sectarianism; the famous religious expert Alexander Klibanov who authored profound studies in the area of spiritual Christianity and Russian Protestantism; the foundational studies of Anvar Pashazade who shed light on the history of ancient temples in Baku; the work by Qilman Ilkin who skillfully described old Baku; and T.Humbatova’s research on the religious life of Germans living in our country. They provided the inspiration for writing the book “Christianity in Azerbaijan: From Past to Present.”

I hope this book will add new light to the religious life of Christians in our republic and contribute to the conducting of new studies.

**Anar Alizade**

*Author and Religious expert.*

## INTRODUCTION

Christianity is the largest religion on Earth in terms of the number of followers. According to the Pew Research Center, in Washington DC, in 2010 Christians constituted 32 percent of the world population.<sup>1</sup> Presently they number over 2,2 billion people.<sup>2</sup>

This monotheistic religion has had a tremendous impact on the development of world civilization, on the course of history, and especially on the formation of Western culture. Its origin goes back to the 1st century A.D. This religion emerged in Palestine and is believed to have been founded by Jesus Christ. Christ in Greek means “the anointed one.” The term “Christianity” derives from “Christ.”

The basic beliefs of Christianity include the teachings of one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), Jesus Christ as the Son of God sent to the world for the salvation of the human race, His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God. In the end-time he will return to the Earth as the Divine Savior, gaining the ultimate victory over the forces of evil,<sup>3</sup> and build his Millennial Divine Kingdom where God’s beloved servants will live.

The holy book of Christianity is the Bible, which consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. However, the New Testament occupies a more important place. The New Testament itself consists of the Four Gospels (in Greek “Evangelion” - “good news,” “glad tidings”), the Epistles of the Apostles, and the book of Revelation. The four canonical (i.e. accepted by Church) Gospels are believed to be authored by four disciples of Jesus Christ – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Apart from the four, there are dozens of apocryphal (i.e. not accepted by Church) Gospels.<sup>4</sup>

1 - The official website of “Pew Research Center” organization is <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/> (retrieval date: 13.08.2016).

2 - <http://internetsobor.org/tserkov-i-mir/tserkov-i-mir/statistika-v-mire-2-2-milliarda-khristian-polovina-iz-nikh-katoliki> (retrieval date: 13.08.2016)

3 - Posobiye dl'ya rabotnikov organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti i pravookhranitel'nykh organov po voprosam vzaimodeystviya gosudarstva i religiozykh organizatsiy (razrabotano sotrudnikami FADN Rossii, MVD Rossii i Minyusta Rossii). - p. 4 [Electronic resource]. - URL: [http://fadn.gov.ru/system/attachments/attaches/000/028/385/original/Пособие\\_по\\_религии\\_ФАДН\\_России.pdf?1480427867](http://fadn.gov.ru/system/attachments/attaches/000/028/385/original/Пособие_по_религии_ФАДН_России.pdf?1480427867) (retrieval date: 13.08.2016); Azərbaycan tarixi: ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. Ali məktəblər üçün dərslik/ Z.M.Bünyadovun və Y.B.Yusifovun redaktəsi ilə. I cild. – Bakı: Azərbaycan Dövlət Nəşriyyatı, 1994.– p. 203.

Although the Bible is the main source of the Christian religion, the Church Fathers' religious teachings and the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils have had a tremendous effect on the shaping of Christian doctrine. The main seven Ecumenical Councils are:

325A.D. The First Ecumenical Council (First Council of Nicaea) Convened by Roman Emperor Constantine I in the city of Nicaea. This Council developed the fundamental beliefs (creed) of Christianity.

381A.D The Second Ecumenical Council (First Council of Constantinople). The formation of Trinitarian belief (“Trinity,” “Tri-unity”) was completed.

431A.D The Third Ecumenical Council (First Council of Ephesus). 200 bishops at the Council repudiated Nestorianism, and became convinced that the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ were in union.

451A.D The Fourth Ecumenical Council (Council of Chalcedon). 630 bishops at the Council repudiated monophysitism.

553A.D The Fifth Ecumenical Council (Second Council of Constantinople). Convened by Emperor Justinian I, the council condemned the religious teachings of some Syrian bishops and the theologian Origen.

Years 680-681 A.D; year 692 A.D The Sixth Ecumenical Council (Third Council of Constantinople). 170 bishops affirmed that Jesus Christ had both human and divine wills. Thus, the orthodox view on Jesus Christ was fully formed at this Council.

787 A.D. The Seventh Ecumenical Council (Second Council of Nicaea). Convened by Empress Irene (Eirene) to answer those who are opposed to the use of icons. Thus, the essence of icons was explained and those who oppose their use were condemned.<sup>5</sup>

As we see from the history of the Ecumenical Councils, theological discussions about the nature of Jesus Christ resulted in the emergence of various religious teachings in the Christian world such as monophysitism, dyophysitism, Arianism, and Nestorianism.

<sup>4</sup> - Posobiye di'a rabotnikov organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti i pravookhranitel'nikh organov po voprosam vzaimodeystviya gosudarstva i religiozykh organizatsiy. - p. 4//Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> - For more detailed information see: Əlizadə A. Xristianlıq: tarix və fəlsəfə (ilk çağlar). Bakı: “Əbilov, Zeynalov və oğulları” nəşriyyatı, 2007. – p. 94-96.

After giving information about the basic beliefs of Christianity, it would be appropriate to briefly review the general history of this world religion. Having emerged in Palestine, Christianity spread throughout the territory of the ancient Roman Empire. Initially, this teaching was mainly accepted by the poor, and the early Christians were relentlessly persecuted. However, by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century the Imperial nobility, state officials, soldiers, and the rich began to lean toward Christianity. During the rule of the Roman Emperor Constantine, persecution of Christians was halted and in the year 313 Christianity became the state religion<sup>6</sup>.

In 395 A.D, the Roman Empire was divided into a Western and an Eastern half. This caused the split of the unified Christian Church into two branches: Western and Eastern. Over time, Western Christians practicing their religion in Latin united around the bishop of Rome (Roman Pope), and Eastern Christians worshipping in Greek united around the Patriarch, residing in Constantinople (today Istanbul). Over several centuries, the difference between Western and Eastern Christians came to the point where their paths diverged. This occurred in 1054 A.D. That year the Roman Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated one another, and thereby Christianity officially split into two branches – Catholic, centered in Rome, and Orthodox centered in Constantinople<sup>7</sup>.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Reformation a movement against Catholic excess saw the emergence of a new branch of Christianity – Protestantism, which eventually branched into many denominations and sects.

Besides Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism there are other Christian branches. For instance, those who recognize only the decisions of the first three Ecumenical Councils that represent branches of ancient eastern churches. Sects rejecting the Holy Trinity like “Jehovah’s Witnesses” belong to the antitrinitarian movement.

Christians also differ regarding forms of church governance. There are three systems of church governance in the Christian world. The characteristics of these systems are shown in Figure 1.

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6 - Azərbaycan tarixi: ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. – p. 203-205.

7 - Posobiye dl'a rabotnikov organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti i pravookhranitel'nikh organov po voprosam vzaimodeystviya gosudarstva i religiozykh organizatsiy. - p. 4// Ibid.

**Figure 1: Systems of Church Governance in Christianity**

EPISCOPAL POLITY	PRESBYTERIAN POLITY	CONGREGATIONALIST POLITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is hierarchy in the church</li> <li>• The clerical institution is based on the hierarchy of bishops</li> <li>• The clergy are subject to the head of the church (Roman Pope, Patriarch, etc.)</li> <li>• The head of the church has great power and influence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no hierarchy in the church</li> <li>• Collegial governance system</li> <li>• Local religious communities (parishes) are united in a unified organization (church)</li> <li>• The unified organization is governed by the collegial organ, the assembly of elders (Presbytery).</li> <li>• Each local religious community chooses its clergy.</li> <li>• The clergy chosen by the community are approved by the Presbytery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each local religious community (congregation) is independent</li> <li>• The clerical institution is rejected</li> <li>• There is no religious center</li> <li>• Each local religious community is governed by its own council</li> <li>• The community members choose their clergy (presbyter or pastor, deacon) themselves</li> </ul>

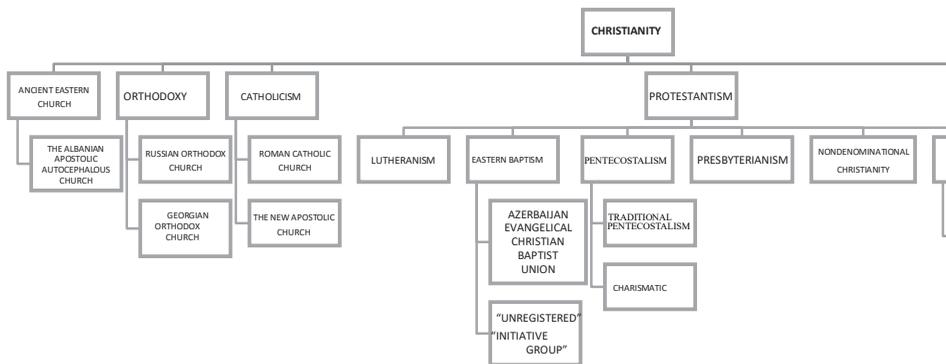
We should note that the Roman Catholic Church, the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as the Lutheran Church, practice episcopal polity. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church is organized according to both Presbyterian and Congregationalist polity. Baptists, Pentecostals, and Charismatics are mainly Congregationalists.

### **Schematic Outline of Christianity in Azerbaijan**

In modern Azerbaijan, the Christian religion is represented with its major branches, various movements, and denominations. A more complete picture of this is presented on Diagram 1.

As seen in Diagram 1, Christianity in Azerbaijan is divided into six branches (Ancient Eastern Church, Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Antitrinitarian, and Spiritual Christianity), which can be further divided into movements (for instance, the Protestant branch of Christianity in our country is divided into six movements: Lutheran, Eastern Baptist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Nondenominational, and Adventist), which are subdivided into denominations, i.e. Christian religion organizations (e.g. the Protestant branch of Christianity includes the Adventist movement, which in turn includes the Seventh-Day Adventist Church).

***Diagram 1. Christian Branches, Movements, and Denominations in the Republic of Azerbaijan.***



The Diagram illustrates how Christianity in our republic is quite diverse, complex, and colorful.

In light of so many Christian movements and denominations, the question may be raised as to when Christianity began in Azerbaijan, how many Christians there are in our country today, and what percentage of the population of Azerbaijan they constitute.

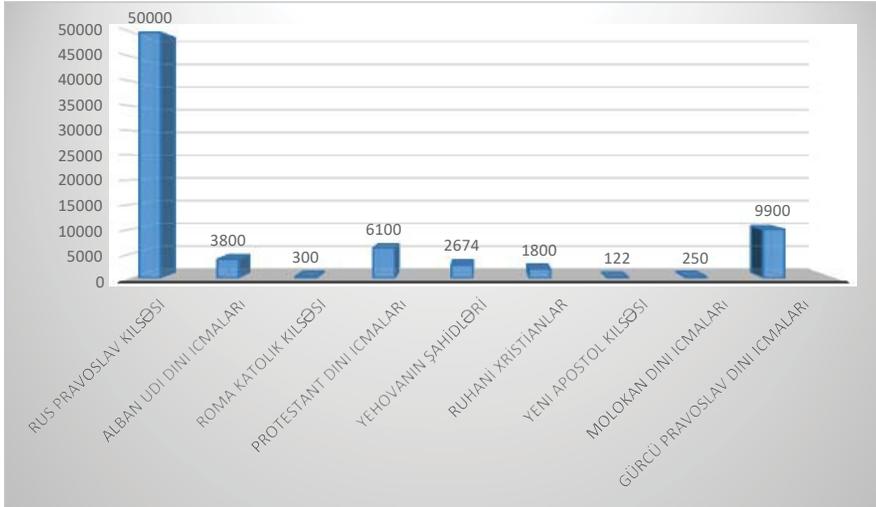
Christianity in our country has deep historical roots. This religion began to emerge in the land of Northern Azerbaijan back in the period of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. The spread of the Christian religion in our country is associated with the names of the Apostles St. Thaddaeus, (St. Eliseus), and St. Bartholomew, and historically, the truth is that in pre-Islamic times Christianity was the dominant religion in our land. In 313A.D, the Albanian king Urnayr announced Christianity as the state religion. The ancient Albanian temples preserved until today clearly demonstrate the rich tradition of Christianity in our country.

Regarding the number of Christians in our republic, first of all it should be noted that in Azerbaijan, Christianity is second after Islam in terms of the number of followers. Christians constitute about 2 per cent of the country's population. This religion is mostly represented by Russians, Belarusians, Greeks, Georgians, Udis, Ukrainians, and other minority peoples.

It should also be stated that among all global Christian branches, Catholicism has the largest number of people, Protestants are the second, and Orthodox are third. However, in Azerbaijan, the situation is different: the largest Christian branch in our country is Orthodoxy, and the smallest is Catholicism. This is illustrated in Diagram 2.

The diagram shows the number of followers of the Russian Orthodox Church alone is several times larger than the number of all the other Christians combined. Since statistics of the members of the Russian Orthodox Church are not kept, it is difficult to identify how many people come to Russian churches in all of the different regions. Members of such an influential national and religious organization as the Russian Orthodox Church, are usually counted based on their ethnic religious identity, and Eastern Slavic people are automatically considered members of that church.

**Diagram 2. Approximate Number of Followers of Christian Religious Organizations in the Republic of Azerbaijan.**



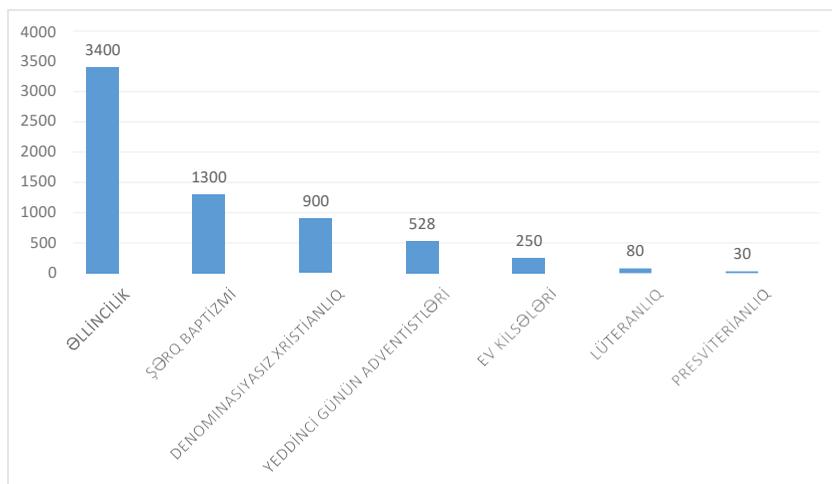
However, statistics based on ethnic religious identity do not reflect reality. For instance, among Slavic citizens in our country there are many Russian sectarians, atheists, members of various Protestant churches and new religious movements, as well as those who do not affiliate with any church or are indifferent toward religion. Diagram 2 shows the number provided by the press secretary of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church K. Pominov. In his interview with “KAVPOLIT” website he declared that approximately half of Russian-speaking citizens in our country (Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Greeks, etc.), that is 50 thousand people belong to the Russian Orthodox Church. In our opinion, this number is more realistic.

It must be noted also, that the number of Molokans in Diagram 2 reflects the total number of people who attend Molokan places of worship all over the republic. In fact, the total number of regular attendees of Molokan places of worship does not exceed 200-250 people.

The number of Albanian-Udi and Georgian Orthodox religious organizations was determined, based on the 2009 all-Azerbaijan population census data.

Regarding the number of Protestants, it should be noted that some Protestant churches keep accurate statistics on their members, (i.e., Seventh-Day Adventists, Lutherans, Presbyterians) while others are not interested in statistics and give approximate numbers which are usually exaggerated. For instance, about 2,600 Baptists are claimed to be living in our country<sup>8</sup>. However, based on our calculations, the number of Baptists in the republic does not exceed 1,100-1,300 people. Moreover, some Protestant communities count only baptized adults as their members, while others count the children as well. All these factors pose challenges to identifying the total number of Protestants living in our country. Yet based on our research we can estimate that the total number of regular members of different Protestant religious communities in Azerbaijan is about 6,100-6,300 people. This is illustrated on Diagram 3.

***Diagram 3. Approximate Number of Members of Protestant Movements in Azerbaijan.***



<sup>8</sup> - See: V iyune my molims'a za tserkvi I narod Azerbaidzhana [Electronic resource]. – URL: <https://drochiapentruhristos.wordpress.com/2014/06/27/в-июне-мы-молимся-за-церкви-и-народ-азер/> (14.09.2016).

As we have seen, Christianity in modern day Azerbaijan, is represented by various Christian movements, denominations, and sects. In order to gain a fuller picture of the ethnic and religious diversity which has existed historically in our country, it seems highly appropriate to learn about the past and current situation of Christian branches and organizations. This is what we have attempted to do in the following chapters of the book. So, lets learn in detail about the Christian movements and denominations that currently exist in our republic.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **ANCIENT EASTERN CHURCH**

## THE ALBANIAN APOSTOLIC AUTOCEPHALOUS CHURCH

*“Azerbaijani people should research the history and destiny of Caucasian Albania more than others. They are responsible before the world for this area, they owe it to global science.”*

*Yevgeni Ignatyevich Krupnov,  
prominent Caucasologist and historian*

U di people live in Gabala and Oghuz districts of our country. This ethnic group which forms a part of the Azerbaijan people is the legal heir of Albanian Autocephalous Church which belongs to the branch of Ancient Eastern churches (a group of churches which recognize only the decisions of the first three Ecumenical Councils). This church had a difficult path of development, and the material and cultural monuments which have been preserved until nowadays – or, in short, our Albanian heritage – are possessed directly by the Azerbaijani people.

Being the most ancient church of the Caucasus and acting on the basis of the tenets of the ancient Eastern churches, the Albanian Church can be traced back to the period of the Apostles. The Albanian Church used to have important status in that region, but after centuries of provocation and treachery from the Armenian Gregorian Church it was abolished by Tsarist Russia in 1836.

Therefore, it is important to know the history of this church and to revive its traditions in order to answer the Armenians' unfounded claims.

### **The Ancient Apostolic Church: From Past to Present**

Caucasian Albania existed on the territory of Northern Azerbaijan between 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and the spread of Christianity there goes back to the times of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Thus, the church founded in Caucasian Albania is considered one of the most ancient churches not only in the Caucasus, but the whole world.

According to historical sources, the first Christian missionaries came to Albania from Jerusalem and Syria and founded Christian communities there. Therefore, the formation of Christianity in our country is associated with the names of the Apostles Thaddaeus and Bartholomew, as well as Thaddaeus' disciples St. Eliseus and Mar. So, the first stage of development of Christianity in Albania is named "Apostolic," or "Syro-phile" (pertaining to Syrian). During this period, which lasted until the 4<sup>th</sup> century Christianity was preached here in Syriac-Aramaic by the Apostles, their disciples, and by Syrian missionaries<sup>9</sup>.

The question may be asked as to why it is important that the origin of the Albanian Church goes back to the Apostles. Well firstly, it shows that the Albanian Church is more ancient and original than many other churches. Secondly, it proves that the Albanian Church was founded not through the means of other churches, but directly through the efforts of disciples of Jesus Christ Himself<sup>10</sup>.

The founder of the Albanian Church and its first spiritual leader is believed to be St. Eliseus. According to historical sources, Eliseus was inspired by Thaddaeus, a disciple of Jesus Christ, to go to Caucasian Albania and preach Christianity there. The Albanian historian Moses of Kalankatuk wrote of St. Eliseus' religious activity in Caucasian Albania: "...Eliseus was ordained in the Holy Spirit by St. James, the brother of our Lord, who was the first patriarch of Jerusalem. He received east (Albania) as his diocese... He commenced his preaching in Chola and attracting many disciples in many different places, announced the Savior (Jesus). From there he arrived at the town of Srhan in the province of Uti with three disciples, some of whose wicked brothers had pursued them. One of the disciples was martyred by them and the other two deserted the blessed Eliseus and followed the murderers..."<sup>11</sup>.

As we have seen, Moses of Kalankatuk states that St. Eliseus was sent to Caucasian Albania by the first patriarch of Jerusalem, which means the Albanian Church originates directly from the Church of Jerusalem.

9 - See: Mamedova F. Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii//Azerbaidzhan i Azerbaidzhantsy v mire: Kul'turogicheskii zhurnal. Religii Azerbaidzhana, No 1, June 2007. – p. 50.

10 - Azərbaycan tarixi: III-XIII əsrin I rübü / Məsul redaktor: Nailə Vəlixanlı. - Baku: Elm, 2007. – In Seven Volumes. Vol.2. – p.62.

11 - Moisey Kalankatuklu. Albaniya tarixi/Mxitar Qoş. Alban Salnaməsi. – Baku: "Avrasiya press", 2006.



This connection with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem continued into the later times as well. This fact distinguishes the Albanian Church from the Armenian Gregorian Church: “Unlike the Armenian Church, the Albanian Church was originally connected to Jerusalem, to the Church of Jerusalem, and later to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem”<sup>12</sup>.

The historian talking about St. Eliseus’ missionary activity in Caucasian Albania touches on another important matter. He describes how St. Eliseus built the first church in Caucasian Albania laying the foundation of the future Albanian Church: “The holy patriarch came to Gisa (today the village of Kish in Sheki district - A.A.) he founded a church there and offered up bloodless sacrifices. This place was the original source of all the churches and cities and the conversion of us easterners (by “East”he means Caucasian Albania – A.A.)”<sup>13</sup>.

In a nutshell, at the apostolic stage of development an episcopate and a metropolis were formed in the Albanian Church, Eliseus established the episcopate and became the first bishop and archbishop of the Albanian Church<sup>14</sup>.

Having set up a church in the village of Gisa, which became famous as “the mother of Eastern churches,” St. Eliseus continued on his way and was killed in Zerguni valley, the place of fire-worshippers.<sup>15</sup>

The local population of Albania did not understand Christianity, because the new religion was preached mostly in Arabic, Greek, and possibly in Hebrew. The preachers may have used translators as well. Nevertheless, early Christianity was not rooted, and the people continued in fire-worship and other former beliefs<sup>16</sup>.

The second stage of development of the Albanian Church is called “Hellenophilic.” At that stage the spread of Christianity is associated with the activity of Gregory the Illuminator (302-325 A.D.). Tradition has it that Gregory was born in a Parthian family in Artaz province (where Thaddaeus was buried). After his father’s death, he was taken to the Greeks.

12 - Azərbaycan tarixi: III-XIII əsrin I rübü. II cild. – p. 60.

13 - Moisey Kalankatuklu. The quoted work. - p. 28.

14 - See: *Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii*. – p. 51.

15 - See: *Azərbaycan tarixi: ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. I cild/Z.M.Bünyadovun və J.B.Yusifovun redaktəsilə*. – Bakı: Azərbaycan dövlət nəşriyyatı, 1994. – p. 205.

16 - Ibid.

After receiving religious education in the Anatolian city of Caesarea, Gregory the Illuminator came to the Caucasus and began to preach there. Soon he influenced the Albanian king Urnayr. Gregory the Illuminator baptized Urnayr and his men. In 313, this Albanian king announced Christianity as their state religion. He wanted to unify the multinational Albanian state with the help of Christianity. Yet even during Urnayr's rule Christianity did not spread widely in Albania. Attacked by Sassanid rulers from one side and by Turkic Hunnic ethnic groups from the north, Albanians preserved their old religious beliefs<sup>17</sup>.

Famous Albanian historian Moses of Kalankatuk praised the powerful Albanian king Urnayr: "Urnayr, king of Albania, was the husband of the sister of Sapuh, king of Persia, a powerful man who had acquired splendid renown in many battles, raising the standard of victory among the Armenians. He was reborn through St. Gregory the Illuminator and clothed in the Holy Spirit, and he converted the Albanians. He lived as a son of the eternal light and then quit this human life"<sup>18</sup>.

As for Gregory the Illuminator, he came to Haband province (in Upper Karabakh) and built a church in Amaras village (today Sos village of Khojavend District)<sup>19</sup>.

Thus, these two stages of development of the Albanian Church may be characterized in the following way: in the times of the Apostles St. Eliseus laid the foundation of Christianity on the left- bank Albania\* by setting up the church in Kish<sup>20</sup>, and then in the "Hellenophilic" period Gregory the Illuminator established Christianity on the right-bank Albania by building the first Christian temple in Amasra<sup>21</sup>.

Although Christianity was announced as the state religion in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, it spread among the ordinary people with great difficulty. Worship of the forces of nature, belief in Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism were still very strong. After Urnayr's death, Christianity in Albania became

17 - See: Azərbaycan tarixi: ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. – 205 - 206; See: Azərbaycan tarixi: III-XIII əsrin I rübü. Vol. 2. – p. 63.

18 - Moisey Kalankatuklu. Ibid. - p. 42.

19 - See: Azərbaycan tarixi: III-XIII əsrin I rübü. Vol. 2. – p. 63.

20 - i.e. on the territories on the left bank of Kura River.

21 - See: Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii. – p. 51.

even weaker, because power was assumed by Sanesan (or Sanatruk) from the Arani dynasty. This king formed an alliance with the Sassanid ruler, desiring to restore the old beliefs. At that time Gregory the Illuminator's grandson Grigoris was appointed as the bishop of Albania and Iberia. Some Albanian nobles who were in favor of Christianity, called Grigoris to their land. Thus, Grigoris became the Catholicos of Albania<sup>22</sup>. Moses of Kalankatuk wrote about it: "After his death the Albanians asked for the young Grigoris to be their catholicos, for our king Urnayr had asked St. Gregory to consecrate him bishop of his country... Albanians decided to submit voluntarily, summoned the worthy heir of St. Gregory, and were well pleased"<sup>23</sup>.

However, Grigoris like his predecessors was put to death on the Vatnean plain by the Caspian Sea coast. His disciples buried his body in Amaras. After Grigoris' death, the people of Albania turned back to idolatry<sup>24</sup>. Albanian historians wrote about it: "After the martyrdom of Grigoris, catholicos of Albania, the barbarous people of the eastern regions fell once more into heathen idolatry, and making many vows to the fire temples, brought persecution upon the Christians"<sup>25</sup>.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity wasn't deeply rooted in Albania, despite the efforts of Christian Albanian rulers and the nobles who supported them. The middle class and the poor people kept resisting the spread of Christianity, because it was not improving their economic conditions<sup>26</sup>.

Then Albanian kings Urnayr, Vache II, and Vachagan III fought against beliefs which had spread among the people before Christianity. The development of the improved alphabet and writing system, the formation of schools, the translation of the Bible and other religious texts from Syriac and Greek into Albanian, in short, educational advancement made a major contribution to the spread and adoption of Christianity in Caucasian Albania<sup>27</sup>.

22 - See: Azərbaycan tarixi: ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. – p. 206; See: Azərbaycan tarixi: III-XIII əsrin I rübü. Vol. 2. – p. 64.

23 - Moisey Kalankatuklu. The quoted work. – p. 42.

24 - See: Azərbaycan tarixi: ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. – p. 206.

25 - Moisey Kalankatuklu. The quoted work. - p. 51.

26 - See: Azərbaycan tarixi: ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. – p. 207.

27 - See: Azərbaycan tarixi: III-XIII əsrin I rübü. Vol. 2. – p. 64.



*“The mother of Eastern churches” – “Kish” Albanian temple.  
Built in the village of Kish in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Sheki district.*

As a result of the activities of Albanian kings from the Arsacid Dynasty, Christianity began playing an important role in the social and political life of Albania. The feudal nobles of the country built a material base for the formation of the church: the lands and riches of pagan shrines were given to the church. One tenth of all agricultural income was taken from the population as the “tithe” tax for the church. In addition, there were many other taxes and voluntary offerings. Just like the secular nobles, the Christian clergy were provided with plots of land called “khostak”<sup>28</sup>. According to Z. Bunyadov, the Albanian Church owned the most land after the great prince, that is the Albanian king. Church and monastery lands belonged to the church institution as indivisible inherited property. Those lands were called “the inheritance of the holy church”<sup>29</sup>.

Azerbaijani historian F. Mammadova says about it: “As a result of the activities of Albanian kings from the Arsacid Dynasty, Christianity became the ideological basis of the new feudal society and began playing an important role in the social and political life of Albania.”<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, from the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries the Albanian clerical class was economically and politically weak. The clergy didn’t even play a leading role in addressing religious issues. Thus, church regulations were made in the King’s presence with the participation of religious and secular nobles and were approved by the king and the secular nobles. In short, the Albanian Catholicos’ power had a nominal character, because the centralized government in Caucasian Albania was strong. It’s no coincidence that “Aghuen laws” (“Aghuen canons”) accepted at the Council of Aghuen (an area in the Metz Arrank province) convoked in Caucasian Albania in 488 are called the Canons of King Vachagan III<sup>31</sup>.

The Council of Aghuen deserves a special discussion here. By convoking this Council Vachagan III tried to protect his country from foreign religious and political influences and interventions, to give more social and political power to the Albanian Church which had been shaken by various rebellions, and at the same time to strengthen the independence of the Albanian Church.

28 - Azərbaycan tarixi: III-XIII əsrin I rübü. Vol. 2. – p. 64.

29 - Bünyadov Z.M. Azərbaycan VII-IX əsrlərdə. – Bakı: “Elm”, 2005. - p. 59.

30 - Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii. – p. 52.

31 - Ibid.

Therefore the purpose of Aghuen laws was ordering religious rites, building the financial base of the clerical class, legalizing the believers' obligations and responsibilities to the church, and destroying the remains of non-Christian beliefs. At the same time, by accepting Aghuen laws Vachagan III wanted to strengthen his rule, to take control of the independently acting feudal lords, to make the clergy's rights equal with the secular nobles, and to organize relations between the people, the secular nobles, and the clergy; in short, he wanted to achieve the religious unity of the people.<sup>32</sup>

The church code adopted at the Council of Aghuen consisted of an introduction and 21 articles. The introduction states the reasons why the Council was convoked. The laws may conventionally be divided into 4 parts:

1. Laws regulating relationships between the clergy, clarifying their rights and obligations;
2. Laws regulating relationships between the clergy and the secular nobles;
3. Laws regulating relationships between the clergy and the non-clerical believers;
4. Laws which are solely legal in nature<sup>33</sup>.

According to Aghuen laws, two types of court were active in Caucasian Albania: the church court and the palace court. There were two kinds of church court: priest court and bishop court. The courts presided over by ordinary priests would handle religious issues such as violations committed by priests failing to perform their duties, and non-clerical believers. The court presided over by the bishop would judge regarding not only religious issues, but also issues related to some areas of property and criminal laws (conflicts, disputes etc.) Their decisions regarding non-religious issues had to be based not on church laws, but on secular laws. And as regards palace courts, they would consider the most serious crimes requiring the death penalty<sup>34</sup>.

32 - Ibid. - p. 53-54.

33 - See: *Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii.* – p. 54.

34 - Ibid.



*Candleholders discovered on the territory of a Christian temple in Mingachevir. 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES. The Museum of the History of Azerbaijan*



*Azerbaijan postage stamps*



*The first baptism ceremony of the Albanian-Udi religious community.*



*“Ten Years of Revival” Celebration. August 4, 2013.*

As we see from Aghuen laws, Albanian kings tried to not only strengthen their power, but also raise the status of the church. From the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries, during the rule of the Mihranid Dynasty, the economic situation of the Albanian Church was further strengthened. This was proven by the church laws adopted by the Council of Partav (Barda), convened in 705A.D. The Council of Partav openly resisted the secular nobles, limited their independence and forbid the aristocracy's interference in the affairs of the church. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the authority of convoking councils belonged to the Albanian Catholicos instead of the ruler of the state. This fact clearly demonstrates the growing status of the Albanian Church. It is worth noting that the Albanian Catholicos Viro (595-629A.D) was able to take the title "great princes of Albania" for the rulers of the Mihranid Dynasty from the powerful king of the Sasanian Empire Khosrow II Parviz (591-628A.D)<sup>35</sup>.

It should also be noted that the Albanian Catholicos Simeon I (706-707A.D) played a major role in depriving kings, aristocracy, commanders, or any other non-clerical persons from their influence over the church.<sup>36</sup> Soon the Albanian Church became so independent and strong that the head of the church began commanding the rulers, princes and feudal lords, and determining landholders. Anyone resisting his rule and disagreeing with the decrees of the church was "cursed" by the church<sup>37</sup>.

When speaking about the Albanian Church we should touch on its organizational structure. As mentioned, the leaders of the Albanian Church were approved by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. This situation continued until Gregory the Illuminator. After him, the bishops of the Albanian Church would approve the heads of the church themselves. It means that after Gregory the Illuminator, in 340A.D, the Albanian Church became autocephalous, i.e. independent. The autocephality of the Albanian Church was due to two reasons: first, the apostolic origin of the church; second, the political status of Albanian state, and the absolute independence of the Eastern Roman Empire<sup>38</sup>.

35 - See: Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii. – p. 53.

36 - See: Bünyədov Z.M. The quoted work. – p. 60-61.

37 - Ibid. – p. 61.

38 - Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii. – p. 52.



*The Icon of St. Eliseus  
"Chotari" Albanian-Udi Church*

The organizational structure of the Albanian Church was formed as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and the legal status of the church was determined after the 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council (Council of Chalcedon) convoked in 451. After that council, the leaders of the Albanian Church began using the titles of “Catholicos-Archbishop, Patriarch,” and in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century “Catholicos of Albaniya, Lpiniya, and Chola” or “Great Catholicos of Albania and Balasakana.”<sup>39</sup>

The Catholicos had limitless power. He could choose not to submit to the Albanian king. His name was often mentioned before the name of the prince. The Catholicos alone had the power to make all the princes in the land obey him. The princes who disobeyed the Catholicos’ decisions were excommunicated, and sometimes even executed<sup>40</sup>.

At the same time, the Catholicos had a large clerical institution operating under his command. The whole of Albania was divided into episcopates. From the 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were 12 episcopates in Albania: Gabala, Qashua, Yeuta, Tsri, Amaras, Balasakan, Shaki, Gardman, Metz Kogmank, Metz Iran, Gaband and Partav (Barda). These were governed by bishops. Besides the bishops who were considered the highest clerical class, the spiritual hierarchy of the Albanian Church consisted of theologians, priests, deacons, and monks<sup>41</sup>.

As for the basic beliefs of the Albanian Church, it must be noted that this apostolic church, like the other ancient Eastern churches, recognized the decisions of the first three Ecumenical Councils, i.e. The First Council of Nicaea (325A.D), The First Council of Constantinople (381A.D), The First Council of Ephesus (431A.D). However, in the Council of Debil (Council of Dvin local church), the Albanian Church along with the Georgian and Armenian churches refused to recognize the 451A.D. decision of The Fourth Ecumenical Council (of Chalcedon) and chose monophysitism (Christian teaching affirming only the divine nature of Jesus Christ)<sup>42</sup>. Thus, the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church became monophysite.

39 - Ibid.

40 - See: Bünyədov Z.M. The quoted work. – p. 60.

41 - See: Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii. – p. 52; Bünyədov Z. Ibid. - p. 61.

42 - See: Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii. – p. 54.

With the emergence of the Arab Caliphate in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Albanian Church was shaken. At that time, the Caucasus region became an area of fighting between Arabia and Byzantium. In the early years of the Arab occupation the Albanian king Javanshir became the Caliphate's vassal and due to his personal authority was able to maintain the independence of the country. However, after his death the course of events resulted in the ultimate fall of the Albanian state and the weakening of the church. In 704, the bishop of Girdiman Nerses Bakur I with the help of the Albanian king Varaz Trdat I's wife Sprama became the Catholicos of the Albanian Church. He opposed the Albanian king's policy of close relationships with the Caliphate, and instead, in his dyophysite belief, wanted to build relationships with the Byzantine Empire. Yet a group of influential feudal lords led by Prince Sheroy, being fierce enemies of Chalcedonianism, did not let him do it<sup>43</sup>.

The Armenian Catholicos Elias seeing it as an opportunity to fulfill his desire to erase the Albanian Church from history, subjugating it to himself, and taking over its financial base, wrote Caliph Abd al-Malik the following letter of denunciation:

“To King Abd al-Malik Amir Mumin from Armenian Catholicos Elias. By the will of the Most High God, our country serves You. We and the Albanian church confess one religion of the Divine Jesus. The Albanian Catholicos who is presently sitting on the throne of Partav has entered into an agreement with the Greek emperor, mentions his name in their services, and compels everyone in his country to accept his beliefs and protection.

May this be known by you, so that you can make a decision about it, because a noble lady has also joined him in this evil plan. Oh great lord, give your command that they should be duly punished for sinning against God”<sup>44</sup>.

The Caliph gladly accepted the Armenian Catholicos' request and wrote him the following reply: “I have read your sincere letter, Catholicos of the Armenian people, and I am extending my mercy to you by sending my faithful servant with a numerous army. We have ordered that the Albanians

43 - Bünyədov Z. *Azərbaycan VII-IX əsrlərdə*. – p. 95.

44 - The text of the letter is taken from the following source: Ziya Bünyədov, “*Azərbaycan VII-IX əsrlərdə*” – p. 86.

who have rebelled against our kingdom be brought back to your religion. Our servant shall execute our order in your presence: he shall put in chains Nerses and the woman who joined him in his evil plan, and will bring them to royal judgment to be shamed in front of all the rebels”<sup>45</sup>.

Therefore, after receiving the letter from the head of Armenian Church, Caliph Abd al-Malik commanded that a religious council be convened in Barda. At that council, Nerses Bakur was announced an apostate, the Albanian king’s wife Sprama was imprisoned, and the Albanian Church was made subject to the Armenian church. At the same time, the Caliph commanded the execution of all dyophysites among the Albanian nobles. This shows that even though the Albanian Church in general was monophysite, some Albanian feudal lords were dyophysites and supporters of the Byzantine Empire<sup>46</sup>.

Thus, by supporting Armenians, the Arab Caliph achieved two goals: (1) shaking the interests of the dyophysite Byzantine Empire in Transcaucasia; (2) implementing his interests in Caucasian Albania by using Gregorian priests and receiving their support<sup>47</sup>.

As we have seen, by writing his letter of denunciation against the head of the Albanian Church, backed by the Arabs’ military and political power, the Armenian Catholicos was able to subordinate the Albanian Catholicate. In fact, enmity between the Armenian Gregorian Church and the Albanian Apostolic Church goes back to even earlier times. This enmity was caused by the Armenian Church’s claims of more ancient and superior origins. Because of these claims the Armenian Church tried to put an end to the independence of the Albanian clergy by using the power of the military and the intrigues of Sassanids and later the Arab Caliphate<sup>48</sup>.

However, even a glance at history will show that the Albanian Church has more ancient religious traditions. This is proved by the fact that the first church in the Caucasus was built by St. Eliseus in the village of Kish.

45 - Ibid.

46 - See: Bünyədov Z. The quoted work. - p. 95; Azərbaycan tarixi: ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. Vol. 1. – p. 207.

47 - See: Bünyədov Z. Ibid. - p. 86; Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii. – p.54-55.

48 - See: Bünyədov Z. Ibid. - p. 83-84.

After the Albanian Catholicos Nerses Bakur was removed from his position, the Albanian state went into decline, and from 706 A.D. Armenians began oppressing the Albanian clergy, converting the Albanian population in the mountains, those outside of Arab influence, into the Gregorian faith. In the meantime the population of other provinces, those on the plains adhering to pre-Christian beliefs, were converted to Islam, so by the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Islam became the dominant religion of Albania. Christianity preserved its influence only in present day Nagorno-Karabakh. The Albanian population of Nagorno-Karabakh was eventually Gregorianized<sup>49</sup>.

During the Gregorianization process, the Armenian church gradually nullified the authority of the Albanian Catholicate and used Arab rulers to destroy all the monuments which could even slightly remind anyone of Albanian culture. Before destroying the literary texts of Caucasian Albania, Armenian priests would translate them into Grabar, the ancient Armenian language.<sup>50</sup> Later they would try to appropriate the rich cultural heritage of the Albanians by falsifying their historical materials.

However, the process of Gregorianization and Armenianization of the Albanian population was long and Albanians fiercely resisted it. The struggle between Albanian and Armenian clergy continued. In the 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the Armenian church was weak, Albanian bishops would elect their heads of the church independently, without informing the Armenian Catholicate. Even up to the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the monastery in Khachinyali province which is ancient Turkic land, had an alternative Albanian catholicate not recognized by the official Albanian Catholicate<sup>51</sup>.

From the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, during times of political chaos, the Albanian Catholicate fell into a period of decline. Nevertheless, the Church for centuries tried to maintain its existence. The following places were centers of the Albanian Church during the time of its existence:

49 - Bünyədov Z. *Ibid.* – p. 90; Azərbaycan tarixi: ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. Vol. 1. – p. 207; Posleduyushaya sud'ba Albanskoy Tserkvi [Electronic resource]//The official website of Albanian-Udi Christian religious community. – URL: <http://udi.az/hystory/0004-2> (retrieval date: 11.08.2016).

50 - Bünyədov Z. The quoted work. - p. 88.

51 - Posleduyushaya sud'ba Albanskoy Tserkvi //Ibid.

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1. The first center – Chola (the territory between Lesser Caucasus and Darband)
  2. 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries – Barda
  3. 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries – Charek-Khamshi (near Gadabay)
  4. Khudavank monastery complex (Dadavank monastery)
  5. Years 1511-1836 – Gandzasar’s Cathedral<sup>52</sup>.

In this regard, special mention needs to be made of Gandzasar’s Albanian episcopate. This temple was built in 1240 by the Albanian prince Hasan Jalal, and the authority of the bishop of this temple gradually grew. In 1511, Gandzasar monastery became the residence of Albanian Catholicoses and the center of the Albanian Church. Therefore, the Albanian Catholicate was known as Gandzasar Catholicate. This Catholicate had many religious leaders who were descendants of prince Hasan Jalal. The residence of Gandzasar Catholicate was also the political center of the Albanian principedom in Karabakh. Although in 1634 Gandzasar Catholicate was forced to recognize the dominance of the Armenian church, Albanian bishops chose Gandzasar catholicoses themselves without consulting the Armenian patriarchate<sup>53</sup>.

Following Azerbaijan’s occupation by Tsarist Russia, the existence of the Albanian Church was brought to a complete end. And in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Tsarist government tried to strengthen its position in the region by resettling its faithful Armenian servants from Iran and Turkey to the historic lands of Azerbaijan. Naturally, every favorable condition was granted for the Armenian Gregorian church, and the requests of the Armenian Catholicos were granted immediately by the tyrannical Tsarist regime. One of their requests concerned the Albanian Catholicate.

At the instigation of Armenian church, on March 11, 1836 Emperor Nicholas I issued a special “Decree” of 111 articles regulating the activity of the Armenian church. According to this Decree, the Albanian Catholicate was abolished and replaced by two Dioceses (Artsakh-Shusha and Shamakhi) which were made subject to the Armenian Catholicate, and

52 - See: *Khristianstvo v Kavkazskoy Albanii*. – p.55; Esai Hasan-Jalal. *Kratkaya istoriya strany Albanskoj (1702-1722 gg.)*. – Baku: Elm, 1989. – p. 5.

53 - See: Mammadova F. *Politicheskaya istoriya i istoricheskaya geografiya Kavkazskoy Albanii (III v. do n.e. - VIII v. n.e.)*. – Baku: Elm, 1986. - p. 238; Esai Hasan-Jalal. *The quoted work*. – p. 5.

the Vicariate of Ganja was formed within the Armenian Church Tbilisi Consistory<sup>54</sup>.

From 1909-1910, the Holy Synod of the Russian Empire allowed Armenian clergy to destroy ancient archive documents of those dioceses which were subordinate to them. Undoubtedly, those archives contained historical documents of the Albanian Church<sup>55</sup>. The destruction of the documents by Armenians was an effort to erase the historical memory of the Albanian Church. Undoubtedly, it was a premeditated crime committed with the intention of seizing the lands of Northern Azerbaijan<sup>56</sup>.

As we have seen, because of the imperial interests of Russia, as well as the unfounded claims and schemes of the Armenian Gregorian clergy, the existence of the Albanian Church with its ancient Christian traditions was brought to an end. However, as subsequent developments showed, even though Albanian Christianity was destroyed as a religious organization, and in spite of the decisions of the holders of power, the heirs of the Albanian Church, Udis, have in their hearts, always remained attached to their ancient church.

The most illustrative example of this, is the case of when Udis, reluctant to accept the Armenians' spiritual authority in 1867, wrote a letter objecting to the Russian Tsar and refused to even gather in their ancient temples which had been made subject to Armenian Gregorian priests. After the abolition of the Albanian Catholicos, members of the Albanian Church who didn't recognize Armenian spiritual authority and resisted the Gregorianization and Armenianization process, preferred for a long time to gather in homes<sup>57</sup>.

Thus, Armenian priests did not succeed in destroying every memory of the Albanian Church. With its unique crucifix and calendar. The Albanian Church continued living in the Udis' hearts, and it has maintained its existence to this day.

54 - Posleduyushaya sud'ba Albanskoy Tserkvi//Ibid.

55 - Politicheskaya istoriya i istoricheskaya geografiya Kavkazskoy Albanii (III v. do n.e. - VIII n.e.) – p. 239.

56 - İsmayılov G. Tolerantlıq: bildiklərimiz və bilmədiklərimiz. – Bakı: Nurlar, 2014. - p. 71.

57- Robert Mobili. Albanskaya tserkov i arm'anskaya fal'sifikatsiya [Electronic resource]// The official website of Albanian-Udi Christian religious community: <http://udi.az/articles/0009-2.html> – (retrieval date: 12.08.2016).



*The Residence of Albanian Catholicoses – Gandzasar Monastery.  
Kalbajar District. 13<sup>th</sup> century.*



*Khudavank monastery complex. Kalbajar District. 6<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

## The Revival of the Albanian Church

Presently the total number of Udis in the world is ten thousand people. According to the information of the 2009 State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the number of Udis in our country is 3,800 people<sup>58</sup>. They are concentrated in the village of Nij, Gabala district, as well as in Oghuz district and in Baku city.

The regaining of independence by the Azerbaijani people in 1991 gave the Udi people a chance to revive their ancient church traditions. Some important steps have been taken in that direction. First of all, some ancient Albanian temples in Kish, Sheki district and Nij village of Gabala district, as well as Oghuz district were restored and renovated and given to Udis. Presently these temples worship in Udi language.

One of the greatest steps to restoration of the Albanian-Udi Christian religious community of the Republic of Azerbaijan was taken in 2003 when it was officially registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations.

Besides registration, some measures related to Christian traditions have been taken to restoration the Albanian Church. After Sergi II of Gandzasar was killed, the autocephalous tradition of the Albanian Church was broken. The restoration of this tradition required the blessing of the ancient Eastern church. And in 2008, several members of the Albanian-Udi religious community received a blessing from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and were baptized in the Jordan river. Thus was restored the independence of the Albanian-Udi religious organization.

In 2009, the Albanian-Udi Christian religious community of the Republic of Azerbaijan (legal address: Gabala district, Nij village, Albanian autocephalous church “Chotari”) was re-registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations. In 2011, one more Albanian-Udi religious organization received official status: Oghuz City Albanian-Udi Christian Religious Community (legal address: Oghuz city, “Kiski Gerges” pilgrimage site).

58 - The official website of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan.– URL: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/> (retrieval date: 12.08.2016).

Another historical event took place on July 14, 2013. The “Chotari” Albanian-Udi church organized a baptism ceremony. The significance of this event is in the fact that since the abolition of the Albanian Catholicate by Tsarist Russia, Udis were not allowed to carry out baptism ceremonies themselves, and they had to be baptized by Russian Orthodox priests. The baptism ceremony, which had been forgotten in the Albanian-Udi community for over 80 years, was revived on July 14th, 2013. On that day the baptism ceremony was carried out by the chairman of the Albanian-Udi Christian religious community, Robert Mobili and his spiritual assistant Rafiq Danakari. The first person baptized was a small girl named Yeva (Eve)<sup>59</sup>.

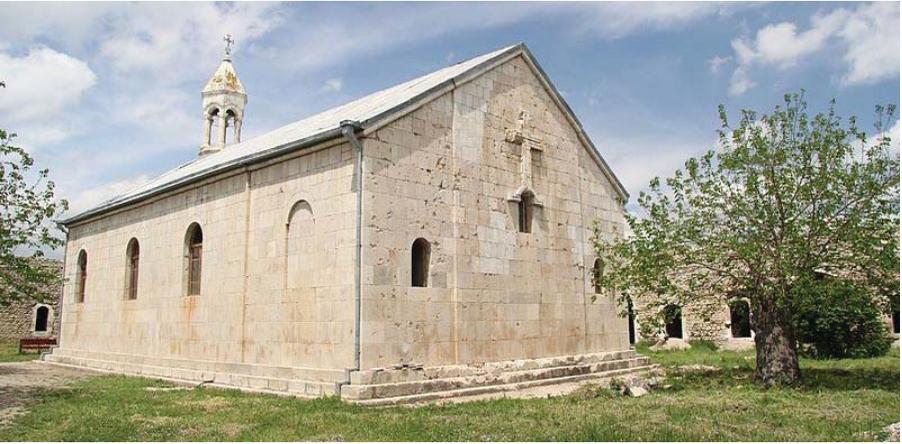
Then, on August 3, 2013 the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan supported festival ceremonies dedicated to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the revival of the Albanian-Udi church and the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of Christianity as the official religion in Caucasian Albania. The commemorative event was attended by the Archbishop of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church, Alexander Ishein, the Ordinary of the Apostolic Prefecture of Roman Catholic Church in Azerbaijan, Vladimir Fekete, the Chairman of Baku’s Religious Community of Mountain Jews Milikh Yevdayev, as well as the regional representative of the Caucasian Muslims Office, representatives of the diplomatic corps and other guests.

Recently there have also been other events related to the restoration of the ancient traditions of the Albanian Church. For instance, the Gospel of Luke was translated into the Udi language; several members of Albanian-Udi religious community are studying in religious educational institutions abroad in order to acquire religious titles.

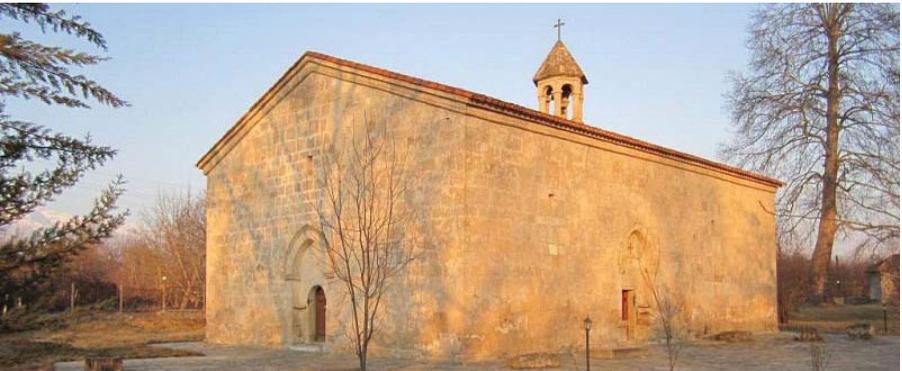
At the same time, Udis living in our country are provided with the full care of the state of Azerbaijan. The revival of the Albanian Church is supported in every way at the official level. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev issued a decree to allocate 100,000 Manat from the reserve fund of the state budget of 2016 for the support and improvement of the material condition of the Alban-Udi religious community.

59 – The baptism of Udis the the St. Eliseus Udi Church in the village of Nij. Afterword. [Electronic resource]// Information-Coordination Center for Udi Communities. – URL: <http://www.udicenter.org/novosti/166-kreshchenie-udin-v-udinskoj-tserkvi-svyatogo-eliseya-v-poselke-nidzh> (retrieval date: 12.08.2016).

The restoration of the Albanian Church is very important for our country, because Armenian aggressors making territorial claims against our country have been trying to appropriate ancient Christian Albanian temples, to reduce the influence of the Albanian Church, and to take possession of its rich heritage. However, the direct heirs of these ancient monuments are Azerbaijani people, Udis included. So, reviving the Albanian Church is both redressing a historical injustice, and answering false claims from an occupying force from a religious and historical perspective.



*Amaras monastery/ Khojavend district, Sos village. 4<sup>th</sup> century.*



*“Chotari” Albanian-Udi Church. Gabala district, Nij village. Year 1723.*

# **CHAPTER II**

## **ORTHODOXY**

## ORTHODOXY: OVERVIEW

The history of Orthodoxy starts from Jerusalem, in the year 33 A.D. Initially all Christians would call themselves “Orthodox.”

“Orthodox” is a Greek work meaning “the right belief,” or “the true religion.” After the split of Christianity into two branches in 1054, only Eastern Christians were labeled “Orthodox”<sup>1</sup>.

Orthodoxy has preserved the traditions and aspects of early Christianity more than other Christian churches. The Orthodox Church fully adheres to all the religious tenets set by the early Christian church, neither changing them nor adding anything to them. However, Orthodox Churches are known for their conservatism, resisting novelties, and their loyalty to old traditions<sup>2</sup>. The English priest John Young wrote: *“To go into an Eastern Orthodox church is like stepping back a thousand years or more; neither the furnishings nor the ritual seem to have changed at all. Often the building itself is centuries old and crumbling, with clouds of incense surrounding the worshippers... Religious paintings (icons) are placed around the church. They are surrounded by candles, with people bowing in reverence in front of them and kissing them. Behind an elaborate screen (the iconostasis), priests and deacons move about in glorious vestments, engaged in ancient ceremony”*<sup>3</sup>.

The foundational beliefs of Orthodoxy are based on the Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea (325A.D) and Constantinople (381A.D). The decisions of these Ecumenical Councils define Orthodox belief in the Holy Trinity. The Orthodox Church adheres to the dyophysite religious teaching, which presents Jesus Christ as having both human and divine natures<sup>4</sup>.

Like most Christians, the Orthodox Church believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He was crucified, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, that He will come again on the day of judgment to build His Kingdom, that sinners will go to Hell, and the faithful will go to Heaven. The Orthodox Church recognizes seven sacraments, (Baptism, Confirmation,

1 - See: Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Religioznye organizatsii sovremennogo mira: Uchebnoye posobiye. — Moscow: Moscow University Publication, 2010. — p. 20.

2 - See: Tikhomirova G. Khristianstvo i kul'tura. — Riga: 2011. — p. 341-342.

3 - See: Young J. Khristianstvo. - Moscow: FAIR-PRESS, 2001. — p. 92.

4 - Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Ibid. — p. 20-21.

Eucharist, Repentance, Matrimony, Priesthood, Anointing with “holy” oil)<sup>5</sup>.

The Bible and Holy Tradition are the main sources of faith in Orthodoxy. Besides the officially recognized Old Testament books which are believed to have been written by revelation, the Orthodox Church also accepts some religious texts which are not a part of the official Torah. In fact, the Orthodox Church does not believe those unofficial books to be a product of revelation. However, they recognize them as useful and instructive, and include them in their Old Testament editions<sup>6</sup>.

According to the Orthodox Church, Holy Tradition consists of the religious teachings of the Church Fathers who lived in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries and the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils. Yet the Orthodox Church accepts only the decisions of the following seven councils: The First Ecumenical Council (First Council of Nicaea, 325A.D), the Second Ecumenical Council (First Council of Constantinople, 381A.D), the Third Ecumenical Council (First Council of Ephesus, 431A.D), the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Council of Chalcedon, 451A.D), the Fifth Ecumenical Council (Second Council of Constantinople, 553A.D), the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Third Council of Constantinople, 680-681A.D; 692A.D), and the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Second Council of Nicaea, 787A.D)<sup>7</sup>.

At the same time, Orthodoxy has the following unique characteristics:

- Unlike Catholicism, Orthodoxy does not have a strictly centered church government, that is the Orthodox Church in the whole world is not governed from a single religious center like the Vatican. Larger local Orthodox churches are fully independent (autocephalous) and national in nature. Each autocephalous Orthodox church makes decisions on its local councils. Orthodox churches are united only on the basis of common religious values and forms of worship.

- Orthodox churches are led by clergy with the religious titles such as patriarch, mytropolite, or archbishop.

- Compared to other churches, Orthodox religious rituals are longer and more complicated. The main religious ritual of the Orthodox church is called liturgy.

5 - Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Ibid. – p. 21-22.

6 - Ibid. - p. 24.

7 - Ibid. - p. 24-25.

8 - Ibid. – p.22-27.

- Leavened bread is used for the ritual of the Lord's Supper.
- Orthodox believers cross themselves with 3 fingers from left to right.
- During the baptism ritual, the baptized person is submerged into water three times.
- Orthodox believers pay homage to the Holy Mother Mary, Angels, saints, their "holy relics," and religious objects which are believed to be holy, such as icons.
  - The octagonal cross is widespread among Orthodox Churches.
  - Religious rituals are performed in national languages, mostly in their archaic forms (e.g., rituals of Russian Orthodox Church are performed in the ancient Slavic language).
    - In the worship service incense is burned, and priests wear special fine clothes.
    - Priesthood is widespread in the Orthodox world, and there are separate monasteries for men and women. Orthodox priests are divided into two groups: black (monks) and white. The "black" monks are not allowed to get married. The "white" priests can get married until they acquire their religious title, but they are not allowed to divorce or re-marry, even in the case of a priest's wife dying.
    - The greatest holiday of the Orthodox Church is Easter, the celebration of Jesus Christ's resurrection. This religious feast is celebrated on the first Sunday after the spring equinox, which occurs in either April or May. Easter is followed by twelve great religious feasts (The Nativity of Christ, the Baptism of Christ, Candlemas – the day of the presentation of our Lord, the Transfiguration – the day when Jesus Christ's appearance was transformed, the Nativity of Mother Mary, the day of Holy Mary's entry into Jerusalem's Temple, the day of Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem, the Annunciation – the day when the good news was announced to Mother Mary, the Dormition – the day of Holy Mary's death, and the day of the Exaltation of Jesus Christ's cross). Besides Easter and the mentioned twelve feasts, the Orthodox also celebrate many other feasts dedicated to "saints," "miraculous" icons, and significant religious events.
      - Each local Orthodox church has its "saints." Local churches celebrate feasts honoring their saints. *For instance, the saint of Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church is Apostle*



***Every year on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, Orthodox believers living in our country gather near Baku's Maiden Tower to perform a religious ritual in honor of this disciple of Jesus Christ. In addition, on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Orthodox in our republic commemorate Holy Martyr Ioann of Baku.***

- The Orthodox Church does not have a common religious calendar. Most Orthodox churches use the Gregorian calendar, while Russian, Greek, Jerusalem, and Serbian churches use the Julian calendar.

Presently there are fifteen autocephalous Orthodox churches in the world: the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, the Orthodox Church of Alexandria, the Orthodox Church of Antioch, the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Georgian Orthodox Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Albanian Orthodox Church, the Polish Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, and the American Orthodox Church. Although the Orthodox world has no religious center, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople has the greatest authority. The official name of this church is The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople<sup>9</sup>.

At the same time, there are also autonomous churches under each of these autocephalous churches. These autonomous churches have freedom to solve their internal issues independently. There are also Orthodox churches that declared themselves autocephalous, but their independency was never recognized by any autocephalous Orthodox church. One of them is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate<sup>10</sup>.

Orthodoxy is the third largest branch of Christianity after Catholicism and Protestantism. According to statistical information in 2003, the number of Orthodox believers is 180 million people. Most of them are concentrated in Russia, and among autocephalous churches, the Russian Orthodox Church has the most adherents<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, it's appropriate to give some brief information about its history.

9 - POSOBIYE dl'a rabotnikov organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti i pravookhranitel'nykh organov po voprosam vzaimodeystviya gosudarstva i religioznykh organizatsiy (razrabotano sotrudnikami FADN Rossii, MVD Rossii i Minyusta Rossii). - p. 4-5 [Electronic resource]. – URL:[http://fadn.gov.ru/system/attachments/attaches/000/028/385/original/Пособие\\_по\\_религии\\_ФАДН\\_России.pdf?1480427867](http://fadn.gov.ru/system/attachments/attaches/000/028/385/original/Пособие_по_религии_ФАДН_России.pdf?1480427867) (retrieval date: 16.12.2016).

10 - Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Ibid. – p. 26.

11 - Ibid. - p. 27-28.

In 988, the ruler of the Kievan Rus' Prince Vladimir the Great was baptized and made Christianity the state religion. From that point the formation of the Russian Church began. However, the spread of Christianity in present-day Russia took place even before that time. In 990 an independent metropolitanate of the Byzantine Church (the Orthodox Church of Constantinople) was first formed in Kievan Rus'. From the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, leaders of the Russian Church were titled the "Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia." During the rule of Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible), the Russian Church experienced a revival, in 1589 the Patriarchate was established in Russia, and Metropolitan Job became the first Russian Patriarch. In 1590, the Church Council in Constantinople recognized the Russian Church as autocephalous<sup>12</sup>.

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of Patriarch Nikon's church reforms, the Russian Orthodox Church was split into two parts. Nikon wanted the Russian Orthodox Church to dominate the Orthodox world. With the support of Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich, Nikon ordered all rituals performed in the Russian Church to be adjusted to the Greek religious tradition, and all the religious books and services to be corrected<sup>13</sup>. However, some clerics and parts of society protested and refused to accept these new forms, forming a movement of those who do not recognize the decision of the official church. The members of this movement were called "staroobryadtsy" ("old ritualists") or "drevlepravoslavnye" ("the old Orthodox")<sup>14</sup>. In the past the Russian Orthodox Church used the Tzar's power to persecute the old ritualists, calling them "raskolnik" (dissenter).

Presently the old ritualists' religious movement is represented by various religious organizations. The main difference between those who accepted Patriarch Nikon's reforms and the "staroobryadtsy" is this: the

12 - Filatov S., Vorontsova L. *Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov'*. Moskovskiy Partiarkhat// *Sovremennaya religioznaya zhizn Rossii: Opyt sistematicheskogo opisaniya*. Vol. 1. – Moscow:

«Logos». – 2004. – p. 10-11,13-14; POSOBIYE dl'a rabotnikov organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti i pravookhranitel'nykh organov po voprosam vzaimodeystviya gosudarstva i religioznykh organizatsiy. – p. 5//Ibid.

13 - Filatov S., Vorontsova L. Ibid. – p.14; POSOBIYE dl'a rabotnikov organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti i pravookhranitel'nykh organov po voprosam vzaimodeystviya gosudarstva i religioznykh organizatsiy. – p. 23//Ibid.

14 - POSOBIYE dl'a rabotnikov organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti i pravookhranitel'nykh organov po voprosam vzaimodeystviya gosudarstva i religioznykh organizatsiy. – 23//Ibid; S. Filatov, V. N'ekhotin, L. Vorontsova. *Staroobr'adchestvo// Sovremennaya religioznaya zhizn Rossii: Opyt sistematicheskogo opisaniya*. Vol. 1. – Moscow:

15 «Logos». – 2004. – p. 169.

adherents of the official church cross themselves with three fingers, while the old ritualists do it with two fingers. Staroobryadtsy spell Jesus' name with one 'i' – "Isus", while those who accept the reforms spell it with two 'i's – "Iisus," etc.<sup>15</sup>.

As for the subsequent history of the Russian Orthodox Church, by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the Russian Tzar Peter I made church reforms abolishing the Patriarchy and placing the church of the Russian Empire under a collegial body named the Holy Synod controlled by the oberprocuror who was directly accountable to the Russian Emperor<sup>16</sup>. In 1917, after the February Revolution, the Patriarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church was restored. During Soviet rule, the Russian Church suffered very harsh persecution, and after the fall of the USSR it entered a new stage of development. Now, in modern Russia it has immense influence.

16 - POSOBIYE dl'a rabotnikov organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti i pravookhranitel'nykh organov po voprosam vzaimodeystviya gosudarstva i religioznykh organizatsiy. – p. 23//Ibid.

17 - POSOBIYE dl'a rabotnikov organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti i pravookhranitel'nykh organov po voprosam vzaimodeystviya gosudarstva i religioznykh organizatsiy. - p. 5//Ibid.

## THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH: PAST AND PRESENT

*In the 19th century, as Tsarist troops entered the land of Azerbaijan, the Russian Orthodox Church laid its foundation in our ancient land. Following the Tsarist invasion, as a result of migration, representatives of Belarusian, Ukrainian, and other Orthodox people, helped this church took deep root in our country, and in a short period of time, it became the largest Christian church here.*

*It is true that the first Russians came to Northern Azerbaijan a few centuries before. Even in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a Russian Orthodox house of worship operated in Shamakhi meeting the religious needs of Russian traders<sup>17</sup>. But as a church organization, the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in our country begins from 1815 when “the Chapel of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” was built on the place of the old mosque near the Maiden Tower.*

*For the two hundred years plus of its existence in our country, this Church has gone through various complicated and contradictory stages. The Russian Church came to our country as the dominant religious ideology of Tzarism and with great privileges in imperial times. However, after the establishment of atheist Bolshevik rule, it lost its former dominance and influence, and faced hardship and persecution instead. However, with the regaining of independence by the Azerbaijani people there opened a way for the revival of Russian Orthodoxy.*

*So, let us review the history of this Russian Church in our country.*

### **The First Orthodox Russians**

With the migration of Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, and other Orthodox people to different parts of Northern Azerbaijan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century following its occupation by the Russian Empire, the ethnic and religious picture of the country changed as the Russian Orthodox Church was established there. It is interesting that the Russian priest Alexander Yunitski who put much effort into strengthening Orthodoxy in Azerbaijan welcomed the entrance of Orthodoxy in our country by means of occupation. *“The mission of the Orthodox church was opened as soon as the Russian flag was raised on the walls of Baku city.*

*And in the place where Apostle Bartholomew boldly faced death in the name of Jesus Christ and where the noble Russian Army under Prince Tsitsianov's command fought against deceit and treason, and the Prince himself died for the sake of justice and truth, now God's temple is there, and Orthodoxy is freely accepted"<sup>18</sup>.*

Certainly, increasing the number of Russians, and generally Christians in the recently occupied Muslim majority lands, along with the spreading of Orthodoxy was in the interest of Tsarism. Because the Russian Empire was trying to strengthen its position in the region by Christianizing it and Russifying it, Orthodoxy was considered the Empire's main ideology, and the Russian Church defended Tsarism's interests in various places.

With regard to the social position of Russians settling in our country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first Russian Orthodox settlers were mostly military, bureaucrats with the colonial government, and family members. This affected the character of the first Russian Orthodox foundations, because the military and bureaucrats needed not civil but military parishes for their religious needs. A. Yunitski talking of the Russian Orthodox temples in Shamakhi noted that military parishes were formed because of historical necessity: *"...of course, in Shamakhi first of all a military parish with a military priest had to be formed. At first Orthodox civil bureaucrats and Orthodox Russian people settled near there"<sup>20</sup>.*

Speaking of the history of Orthodox Russians in Azerbaijan, special mention should be made of Baku, because the first Russian church was built there. In fact, more churches were built there than any other places.

## **The First Russian Church**

The first Russian church in our country was built in Baku in 1815. Then, the territory of Baku was limited to the Old City area inside the city walls, and the surrounding areas. The city had a smaller population.

<sup>19</sup> - Yunitski A. *Istoriya tserkvey i prikhodov Bakinskoy gubernii: 1815-1905 gg.* – Baku: Izd. Bakinskogo Bratstva zakonouchiteley, 1906. – p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> - See: Əhədov A. *Azərbaycanda din və dini təsisatlar.* – B.: Azərneşr, 1991. – p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> - Yunitskiy A. *Ibid.* – p. 88.

Also, in the 1840s Baku had less administrative importance than Shamakhi and Ganja, because these cities were the centers of provinces. Despite that, the first Russian Orthodox church in Azerbaijan was built not in Shamakhi or Ganja, but in Baku, showing the city's geographic and strategic significance.

One may ask why Baku was so significant? Baku had the best port on the Caspian Sea, and Baku hosted important trade routes. Because of that, the Russian settlers of Baku were not only military and bureaucrats, but also merchants who were trading with Iran<sup>21</sup>. For instance, A. Yunitski in his book wrote that till the 1870s, there were only Azerbaijanis and Russians living peacefully in the city, Armenians settled there later. Here's what he wrote about the activity of the Russian population: *“At that time almost all the trade and production in the city was concentrated in the Russians' hands; Russians were bakers, shoemakers, carpenters, cabmen, postmen, cloth sellers, etc”*<sup>22</sup>.

At first, there was just a mobile military church in Baku. In 1815, hearing of the Russians' need of a church, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian troops, Lieutenant General F. Rtishchev, took the initiative to build Orthodox churches in Baku and Ganja, and about three years later “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker of Myra,” was built through donations from the city population. (the temple was also called “the old” or “the very first church”)<sup>23</sup>.

According to the book “Baku and Bakuities,” the “Church of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” was built inside the city walls, in the city center, on the site of an old mosque by the market (close to the Maiden Tower – A.A.), in order to reduce construction expenses. After Russians seized Baku, that old mosque was turned into a prison, and later became the military food store. The furnishings of that church were brought from Tbilisi, as well as the priest, an ethnic Georgian David Ivanov was invited ~~from the same city~~<sup>24</sup>.

22 - See: Tserkov' Sv. Nikolaya Miro-Likiyskogo Chudotvortsya (Staraya, ili Pervonachal'naya) [Electronic resource]. –

URL:[https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь\\_Св.\\_Николая\\_Чудотворца\\_\(Старая,\\_или\\_Первоначальная\)](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь_Св._Николая_Чудотворца_(Старая,_или_Первоначальная)) (retrieval date: 31.08.2016).

23 - Yunitskiy A. Ibid. – p. 52.

24 - See: Tserkov' Sv. Nikolaya Miro-Likiyskogo Chudotvortsya (Staraya, ili Pervonachal'naya)//Ibid.

24 - See: Qılman İlkin (Musayev Q). Bakı və bakılılar (dördüncü nəşr). – Bakı: Kitab Klubu, 2015. – p. 115-116.

The first Russian Orthodox church in Baku was not large. There were two domes on the church walls. One dome had four windows. It was decorated by a gilded iron cross. The other stone dome had an iron cross on top. Right near the temple, on stone pillars, there was a wooden bell-tower<sup>25</sup>.

It should also be mentioned that this place of worship was also known as the “battalion church.” So, in 1868 the name of the Caucasian Regular Battalion No. 21 was changed to the Baku Province Battalion No. 66 (future Salyan Regiment), and this army division was moved from Lankaran to Baku. The battalion had fully employed priests. Because those priests served at “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” church, the first Russian Orthodox church was named the “battalion church”<sup>26</sup>. The destiny of that house of worship is described in the book “History of Churches and Parishes in the Province of Baku,” which explains that in the year 1869 the church was closed down because the building was too old. In 1879 the building completely fell apart. In 1858 the issue of turning the old church into a Catholic church or a mosque was raised. Finally, it was decided that the house of worship should be taken apart and a shop be opened instead for the benefit of the Orthodox Church. Later “St. Bartholomew” church was built on the site of the ruined house of worship<sup>27</sup>.

A. Pashazade, emphasizing that Muslims made large contributions to the construction of the temple of “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker,” writes about the end of this small church: *“In 1892 the old Orthodox temple was taken apart, because the building was no more needed. When the foundation and the floor of the “old” church were taken apart, it was discovered that the depth of the foundation was about two and a half meters. There was a grave of a child under the floor. The remnants were moved to the common Orthodox cemetery”*<sup>28</sup>.

Thus the first Orthodox temple in our country ceased to exist, and as mentioned above, another Russian church was built on its site – “St. Bartholomew” church.

25 - See: Tserkov' Sv. Nikolaya Miro-Likiyskogo Chudotvortsia (Staraya, ili Pervonachal'naya)// Ibid.

26 - See: Tserkov' Sv. Nikolaya Miro-Likiyskogo Chudotvortsia (Staraya, ili Pervonachal'naya)// Ibid.

27 - Yunitskiy A. Ibid. – p. 33.

28 - See: Mecheti i tserkvi starogo Baku / E.M. Pashazade; rets.: M.F. Jalilov, R.R. Abdullayev.

- Baku: Elm, 1997. - p.110-111.

## Chapels of Baku



*“St. Bartholomew” Chapel*

It was built of stone in 1892 from the donations of devout believers, by the architect Edelin. Its construction cost two thousand rubles. The chapel was designed in traditional Russian architectural style. A mirrored cross was set up on top of this small church. The temple was open to believers every day from morning until night, and a special store room contained icons and Orthodox literature<sup>29</sup>.

“St. Bartholomew” Church was not the only Orthodox chapel in Baku. Another small church had appeared even earlier becoming the first Russian Orthodox chapel ever built in Baku. Here is the story of its construction: During the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the building of “St. Alexander Nevsky” church, a special wooden pavilion was constructed for the reception of Russian Tsar Alexander III and his family. The wooden construction was later turned into a chapel. This chapel erected in honor of Alexander Nevsky, was built in 1889 through personal offerings and contributions by the church organization. The pavilion-shaped chapel was covered with iron<sup>30</sup>. Since the chapel was wooden, in 1903 it was taken apart and a new small stone church was built on its site<sup>31</sup>.

### **The Victory of the Dominant Church: From the Documents of Archives**

In Tsarist Russia, Orthodoxy had the status of being the state religion. Orthodoxy was one of the political and ideological pillars of Tsarist absolutism. Therefore in the Russian Empire Muslims, Catholics, and

<sup>29</sup> – Yunitskiy A. The quoted work. – p. 32-33.

<sup>30</sup> – Ibid. - p. 32.

<sup>31</sup> – Chasovn'a Aleksandro-Nevskaya [Electronic resource]. – URL:

<https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/>

Часовня\_Александрo-Невская (retrieval date: 13.08.2016).

Russian sectarians enjoyed less rights than the Orthodox. Those who spread other beliefs among the Orthodox population were even punished. Orthodox priests were zealous in their persecution of unwanted religious elements, and they were ready to provide the Tsar's officials with all kinds of help. In short, the Tsarist regime gave the highest priority to the interests of Orthodoxy, even if it required violating the rights of the adherents of other religions and sects.

Secret correspondence stored in the State Historical Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in the folder titled "Correspondence with the Governor of Baku Regarding the Provision of Land for the Construction of an Orthodox Cathedral" (f.389, p.70, case 54, v.68), presents clear evidence for these assertions. Whilst studying confidential documents began to realize how Orthodoxy was defended by the tyrannical Tsarist regime. Overriding laws, and violating local Muslim population's rights, the Tsar ordered the construction of a large Russian church on the site of an old Muslim cemetery. A short look at the historical documents will show us the great turmoil and intrigue which took place in Baku over an old Muslim cemetery.

I learned that on April 26, 1879 the Governor of Baku Valerian Mikhailovich Pozen sent a private letter to Baku City Mayor Stanislav Ivanovich Despot-Zenovich, informing him of the need for the construction of a large Russian church in the city and mentioning that the chief priest of St. Nicholas Cathedral Lyapidevski proposed building a large Russian church on the site of the old Muslim cemetery<sup>32</sup>. This choice of the chief priest was not accidental. The old Muslim cemetery was located at the most attractive point of the city and the temple to be constructed there would be seen from everywhere in Baku. After considering Lyapidevski's proposition, the Governor of the city S.I. Despot-Zenovich asked him to meet privately with influential Muslims and find out their opinion about the construction of a large Russian church on the site of the Muslim cemetery. The City Mayor in his turn sent V.M. Pozen a confidential letter No 1742, dated July 27, 1879, informing him of his meeting with the influential Muslims and of their opinion. This letter informs us that the authoritative Muslim spiritual leaders

<sup>32</sup> - ARDTA, f. 389, list 3, case. 54, v. 2.

answered the issue of the construction of a Russian church on the site of the cemetery from the perspective of Islamic law in the following way: “Any place of burial is considered sacred and untouchable until the bones in the graves have rotted fully.” At the same time, the Muslim spiritual leaders announced that they had no objections to the construction of a Russian church on the site of the cemetery, and they would even preach in all the mosques preparing their people for this sensitive issue. They emphasized that Muslims “...have absolute respect for the Christian cathedral as a place of worship to the Most High Creator, just as they respect their mosques”<sup>33</sup>.

During the City Mayor’s discussion with the Muslims it became clear that the last burial in that Muslim cemetery took place in 1859. Therefore there were still a lot of families whose relatives had been buried at that cemetery, and the cemetery’s destruction could cause a deep discontent among the population. The Muslim delegation headed by Hajji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev advised to erect the large Russian church in another place, close to the seaside, behind the Mariinsky Garden (today Khagani Garden), because that would both prevent the complaints and “make the city look nicer.” Still the Muslim delegation was noble and expressed willingness to gather contributions from the Muslim population for the construction of the large Russian temple, saying that they just wanted to fence off the Muslim cemetery, to plant cypress and fig trees there, and to build a Muslim religious school in the area where there were no graves<sup>34</sup>.

As we can see from this correspondence, the local senior Azerbaijanis showed understanding in such a sensitive issue as the construction of a large church on the site of the Muslim cemetery. They demonstrated good judgement showing an example of tolerance and even expressing willingness to make contributions to the construction of the large Russian temple. The only thing they asked was permission to fence off the area where their fathers had been buried and to plant some trees there. Baku City Mayor, Polish Despot-Zenovich judged the Muslim delegation’s wishes and propositions to be just, and Baku City Duma began considering other places (Kolyubakin Square (today Fountains Square), Theatre Square,

33 - ARDTA, f. 389, list 3, case. 54, v. 2.6-7.

34 - ARDTA, f. 389, list 3, case. 54, v. 7-8.

Terminal Square etc.) for the construction of the church and offered different areas for Orthodox Russians to build the cathedral. And then the turmoil began. There were some people who insisted on building the large church on the territory of the Muslim cemetery. Those people slandered the City Mayor Catholic Despot-Zenovich accusing him of joining with the Muslim members of City Duma against the Orthodox people in Baku. One of the main agitators in the events surrounding the old Muslim cemetery was archpriest A. Yunitski, who was one of those who made such accusations. He even wrote about it in his book: *“The situation even reached a point where the city authorities did not want to allocate a good place (Muslim cemetery – A.A.) for the construction of the Baku Orthodox Cathedral; The Duma stopped providing money for the Orthodox priests’ rent expenses and took other actions to minimize Russian Orthodox influence in Baku city. The City Duma was headed by a Polish man, and his closest assistants were local people with authority. It is worth noting that since the beginning of Baku Educational Committee, among its members there was no-one from the local Orthodox clergy”*<sup>35</sup>.

In short, the chief priest of the city A. Yunitsky began an open fight with the City Mayor’s office, and tried to get the Georgian Exarch on his side. The Tsar’s local officers were not idle either. For instance, Kachurin, the Chairman of the Baku Review Chamber, wrote a report accusing the Baku City Mayor’s office. Azerbaijani historian A. Pashazade comments on it: *“The fuss about the construction of the cathedral before it even started reached its highest point, and everything went crazy. The Governor of Baku began receiving fabricated petition letters from “Russian Orthodox” people, and Kachurin, Chairman of Baku Review Chamber, sent the next denunciation letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs. Archpriest A. Yunitski actively corresponded with Georgian Exarch Metropolitan Pavel etc. etc.”*<sup>36</sup>.

Mikhail Kachurin’s denunciation letter sent on March 4, 1884 to the Minister of Internal Affairs D.A. Tolstoy reveals us the contempt of the Tsar’s officials for the local Muslim population. In his letter M. Kachurin

<sup>35</sup> - Yunitski A. The quoted work. - p.53.

<sup>36</sup> - Pashazade A. The quoted work. - p. 171.

complained of the city mayoralty and the Catholic mayor, accusing Baku City Duma of “negligence and disrespect” in their approach to such an important issue for the Orthodox church as “building the divine temple of the state church.” Later this Tsar’s official slandered the Muslims by writing in his letter that they supposedly were intolerant toward Christians. Furthermore, regarding the issue of fencing off the old Muslim cemetery he wrote that allowing them to do it would encourage the local Muslims to “isolate themselves from the others, become more fanatical, even feel themselves somewhat superior to the other inhabitants of the city”<sup>37</sup>.

In his letter to the Baku City Mayor dated March 2, 1884, M. Kachurin once again touched on the issue of fencing off the cemetery with even stronger words: “*And this fence could become a new source for Tartars to develop their narrow Mohammedan self-perception which is tantamount to fanaticism*”<sup>38</sup>. These denunciation letters illustrate the fact that even minor issues such as fencing off a Muslim cemetery were bothering the Tsar’s officials’ minds as they were suspicious that these efforts might awaken the people’s sense of national identity.

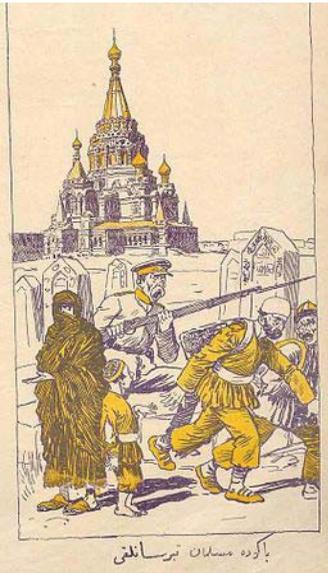
Outraged at these denunciation letters by M. Kachurin, Despot-Zenovich on May 9, 1884 wrote an explanation letter to the Governor of the Caucasus Prince Dondukov-Korsakov. In the letter he provided proof that Kachurin’s claims were unfounded and exposed his true intentions. The City Mayor emphasized that Kachurin’s true goal was to remove local Muslims who constitute the majority of population from the city government and to fully submit the mayoralty to Russians rule. He wrote: “*I consider it an honor to give Your Excellency information regarding the letter of the Chairman of Baku Review Chamber Mr. Kachurin addressed to the Minister of Internal Affairs; his goal was to vilify the local element’s dominance in the public administration and then to show the necessity of suppressing this element, fully subjecting it to Russians.*” In his answer to Kochurin’s accusation of the local people’s fanaticism the Mayor wrote historical words which remain relevant even today: “*the noble local Muslim population is not fanatic at all; their mosques have been turned into churches and ammunition depots, and they have never objected against it; the young generation is studying together with Russians at the*

37 - ARDTA, f. 389, list 3, case. 54, v.37-40.

38 - ARDTA, f. 389, list 3, case. 54, v.29.

*high-school, popular schools, and nautical classes. Despite that, certain individuals from the Russian community bring up such sensitive issues which, if they grow, can cause religious controversy...*"<sup>39</sup>.

Furthermore, in his answer to M. Kochurin, Despot-Zenovich also stated that City Duma is right in its decision regarding the Muslim cemetery, because according to Russian legislation construction work may not be carried out on a cemetery any earlier than 40 years after its closure. The Mayor also noted that Duma would readily allocate a large piece of land in any other part of Baku for the construction of a large church for all the Orthodox people in the city<sup>40</sup>.



*A caricature criticizing the construction of a huge Russian Orthodox church on the site of the old Muslim cemetery. "Molla Nasraddin" magazine. 1908.*

It should be noted that the Head of the Caucasus Orthodox, Georgian Exarch Pavel, on his visit to Baku in April 1884 reviewed the controversy over the Muslim cemetery and did not welcome the idea of erecting a church on the site of the cemetery. He proposed that a large church in honor of Alexander Nevsky be erected on Parapet – Kolyubakin Square (today Fountains Square)<sup>41</sup>.

However, further developments showed that those who desired to build the Russian church on the site of the cemetery eventually managed to get the Georgian Exarch Pavel on their side. An active role in it was played by archpriest Yunitski.

In the letter No 160 sent to Baku City Duma on February 20, 1886 he demanded removal of the "former Tartar cemetery"<sup>42</sup>, because Georgian Exarch Metropolitan Pavel and the Governor of Caucasus Prince Dondukov-Korsakov gave permission for the

39 - ARDTA, f. 389, list 3, case. 54, v.10-28.

40 - ARDTA, f. 389, list 3, case. 54, v.35.

41 - See: Gumbatova T. Baku i nemtsy. – Baku: Chashioglu, 2008. – p. 153-154.

42 - ARDTA, f. 389, list 3, case. 54, v.47.

construction of a great church on the site of the Muslim cemetery. Despite all its efforts, the Baku City Duma was not able to prevent this from happening. On July 10, 1886, Emperor Alexander III himself approved the decision of the Governor of the Caucasus concerning the construction of the church<sup>43</sup>.

In this way, those who desired to build the church on the site of the Muslim cemetery prevailed. It could not have been otherwise in Tsarist Russia. Azerbaijani historian A. Pashazade wrote this about it: *“It was not a secret from the very beginning that the cathedral was conceived as a temple which embodied “the triumph of Christians over Muslims”*<sup>44</sup>. As he said, “Alexander Nevsky” church was conceived for the praise of Russian tyranny – “the ruling House of Romanov,” and the Russian Orthodox Church<sup>45</sup>. The letter of the Committee for the Construction of the Cathedral in Baku city No. 784, dated October 5, 1886 clearly states that this large Orthodox temple was erected as an embodiment of the Russian Emperor’s power<sup>46</sup>. This great temple built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on the site of the present Bulbul Music School, and general education schools No. 189 and 190 is known as “Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral or the “Gilt” Church.

## The “Gilt” Church



“St. Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral was erected on the most attractive point of the city. This cathedral is thought to have been the largest Russian temple in the Caucasus. It was so great that it could be seen from anywhere in the city. Although the church has not survived, we can understand its greatness from the photos of old Baku. Certainly, the presence of such a cathedral in the center of the city clearly illustrated the importance of Orthodoxy to Tsarism. Q. Ilkin wrote this

43 – For more detailed information see: Mecheti i tserkvi starogo Baku. – p. 171-172.

44 - Ibid. - p.166.

45 - Pashazade A. The quoted work. - p.180.

46 - ARDTA, f. 389, list 3, case. 54, v.57.

about it: *“Of course, completing such a magnificent construction was a triumph of the Tsar’s colonial policy. When the church was completed, Muslims decided to build the Juma Mosque in the place where later, Taghiyev’s School for Girls would be built and which then was still empty. However, the Mayor’s office and Tsar’s officials did not let that happen. They argued that if such a mosque was built in that place, it would eclipse the greatness of Alexander Nevsky Church. Thus, the Muslims’ desire remained unfulfilled”*<sup>47</sup>.

The foundation stone-laying ceremony for “St. Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral is also remembered as a significant event. In 1888 the Russian Emperor Alexander III, Prince Nikolay Alexandrovich (Tsar-to-be) and other members of the Tsar’s family came to Baku in order to participate in the foundation laying ceremony. The foundation of the temple was solemnly laid on October 8, 1888. Each of the honorable guests put a brick and a gold coin into the foundation of the future church. A gilded board was placed with an inscription about when and who laid the stones into the church’s foundation, and pieces of holy relics were inserted into the altar wall opposite the throne. The first bricks of the great temple were laid by the Tsar himself<sup>48</sup>.



47 - “Bakı və bakılılar”. – p. 352.

48 - Pashazade A. The quoted work. - p. 173.

It is interesting that during the excavations for laying the foundation of “Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral the cemetery’s history was found to be even more ancient than thought, with the discovery of stone box graves possibly dating back to the Bronze Age<sup>49</sup>.

The plans of the church were drawn by the academician, R.R. Marfeld. A great construction, such as the “Alexander Nevsky” church needed finance, and so 300,000 rubles were allocated from the state’s budget in 1891. That same year D.A. Tesmin arrived in Baku to oversee the church’s construction. However, after studying the project and the work conditions, the architect refused to oversee the construction work. Then, a 25-year old Polish civil engineer Joseph Vikentievich Goslavski, a graduate of Petersburg Institute and a Catholic courageously shouldered this difficult and responsible task. At that time no one could predict that this inexperienced young architect who first came to Baku in 1891 would by his talent and hard work beautify the city with his buildings. One of his most famous works is the beautiful building of the Baku City Executive Authority (formerly Baku City Duma)<sup>50</sup>.

The project of “Alexander Nevsky” church was modelled on the Cathedral of Vasily the Blessed, which stands on Red Square in Moscow. Even though I. Goslavski considered the construction of “St. Alexander Nevsky” church in every detail, the construction work progressed with great difficulty. The doors of this great Orthodox temple opened for the inhabitants of the city exactly 10 years after the foundation stone-laying ceremony, that is in 1898. The church was dedicated on October 8, 1898. The ceremony began at 9.00 a.m. and was attended by the Georgian Exarch Archbishop Flavian, influential people of Baku, leaders of different churches, and numerous inhabitants of the city<sup>51</sup>. Although “Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral was built on the site of an ancient Muslim cemetery, Azerbaijanis did not hold any bitterness, and even made contributions to the construction of the church. The committee responsible for church construction reported in 1891 that 12 thousand rubles were collected for the construction of “Alexander Nevsky” church. *The largest part of this collection consisted of offerings given by Baku’s Muslim population*<sup>52</sup>.

49 - See: Mecheti i tserkvi starogo Baku. – p. 166-167.

50 - See: Pasha-zade A. Ibid. – p. 173-174.

51 - Ibid. – p.173-175.

***Hajji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev even gave 10 thousand rubles for the opening of the church. The Azerbaijani Philanthropist allocated 3,000 rubles from this amount for the needs of the Orthodox parochial schools in Baku***<sup>53</sup>.



*Hajji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev*  
(1823-1924)

When looking at this glorious Orthodox temple, one's attention was first of all attracted by the strikingly shiny golden-colored domes. Therefore, Baku people called it the "Gilt" church. Built with four towers in the shape of the cross, the "Gilt" church was decorated with canopies, smaller towers, and rising pinnacles. The temple was surrounded with a covered gallery with three exits. From the outside it resembled "Vasily the Blessed" temple in Moscow, whilst from the inside it looked like the "Cathedral of Christ the Savior." The church was designed to fit 1,700 worshippers, and it was

surrounded with a garden and a fence. Inside the church there were three thrones in honor of Great Prince Alexander Nevsky, St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, and Saint Bartholomew, plus icons<sup>54</sup>.

"St. Alexander Nevsky" Cathedral was 85 meters tall, about 55 meters long, and 44 meters wide. The interior of the temple was decorated with various kinds of expensive marble, paint and sculptures, and later with the works of the artist, Yarov. In a prominent place inside the church, there was hanging, a record of gratitude in a very beautiful frame, written on parchment by the Russian Tsar Alexander II to the inhabitants of the Province of Shamakhi for their courage and heroism in the Eastern War in the years 1853-1855. In general, all the objects inside the church were quite expensive. For instance, worship garments for priests were bought from "Sytova Nasledniki"

52 - Pashazade A. The quoted work. - p. 173.

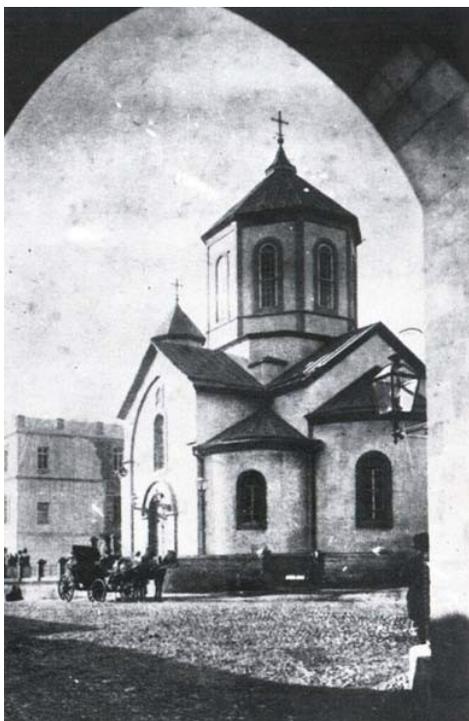
53 - See: "Bakı quberniyasının kilsə və prixodlarının tarixi". – p. 31.

54 - See: Süleymanov M. Eşitdiklərim, oxuduqlarım, gördüklərim. – Bakı: Azərnaşr, 1987. – p.21; Gumbatova T. Ibid. – p. 380.

store in Moscow, and all the church furnishings, precious silver vessels, and even the Bible were bought from a Moscow factory owner Khlebnikov. The church bells were produced on Finlandsky's Moscow Bell Foundry<sup>55</sup>.

“Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral was highly valued. It was considered by many the most important building in the city. Therefore, only beautiful buildings were allowed around it, and on the condition that none of them were to be taller than the cathedral. Another indication of the significance of the church was that there was a time when only two places in Baku had asphalt road covering – the area in front of “Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral, and the area in front of Mayor's Office. Both of these areas were 500 meters<sup>56</sup>.

### The First Cathedral



Besides “Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral there was another active Russian Orthodox church in Baku. In fact, it had been built even earlier. The first Russian Orthodox church was built in Azerbaijan back in 1815. It was the Church of “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker,” which was rather small and ill fitting, and therefore it was decided that a larger church had to be built. To this end a construction committee was formed on June 29, 1821. The committee purchased a piece of land from a local person and decided to build an Orthodox temple there. However, later it changed its mind and considered instead erecting a

55 - See: Pashazade A. Ibid. – p.177-181.

56 - See: Süleymanov M. The quoted work. - p.25.

large Orthodox temple on the historical site of the Palace of the Shirvanshahs. However, fortunately, the Governor of the Caucasus A.P. Yermolov opposed this idea. Then the committee wanted to turn one of the two mosques near the Palace into a church. But the engineer named Truzson realizing the sensitivity of this issue recommended that they not do it. Finally, after long discussions, the committee decided to build the new church in the Old City, near the Paired Fortress Gates, next to the old baths. A solemn foundation stone-laying ceremony for the worship house took place on March 18, 1850, and a silver and gold plate with the date of the foundation stone-laying engraved on top of it was placed inside the foundation, as well as silver coins from the offerings of the city population. The foundation stone-laying ceremony was attended by civil and military government representatives<sup>57</sup>.



The construction of this Orthodox house of worship was completed on October 28, 1857, and it was given the name of the first Russian church in Baku, thus the temple remained through history, “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” Cathedral. The cathedral was dedicated on May 4, 1858 by Metropolitan Isidor. Apart from the iconostasis (the wall where icons are hung), the total cost of the construction of “St. Nicholas” Cathedral was 14,436 rubles. Out of this sum

1,000 rubles was given by Emperor Aleksandr I. 8,000 rubles was allocated from the budget, and the remaining amount came from city inhabitants’ offerings. It is notable that offerings for the construction of the temple were given not only by the Orthodox population, but also by Muslims of Baku. Another interesting fact is that the offerings collected from the inhabitants of Baku in 1848 (2,000 rubles) were used for the construction of the Cathedral of the Caucasus Office<sup>58</sup>.

- See: Pashazade A. Ibid. – p. 114, 119.

52 - See: Pashazade A. The quoted work. – p. 119-120, 122.

53 - See: Pashazade A. The quoted work. – p. 119-120, 122.

The temple project was designed by architect Belov of Tiflis Governorate. “St. Nicholas’s” Cathedral was built in Georgian and Byzantine style in the shape of the cross and could fit about 400 worshippers. The church was covered with an iron roof, and both its exterior and interior were painted with oils, and the edges were fit with metal fences. The Cathedral was about 45 meters tall, and its dome had 5 bells. The largest bell weighed 1970 kg, and the smallest one weighed 32 kg<sup>59</sup>.

We will finish our discussion of this temple with an interesting fact: underground tunnels were discovered during the renovation works in “St. Nicholas” Cathedral in 1888. People in Baku said that those secret tunnels started from the Palace of the Shirvanshahs and went through the Fortress wall<sup>60</sup>.

### **Churches for Different Purposes**

If we consider the number of Orthodox institutions in Baku in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we will clearly see that the Orthodox Church enjoyed a privileged position. The website <https://www.ourbaku.com> presents the statistics of the divisions of Baku city police with reference to the newspaper “Kaspiy” (No 41, 1893). The statistics show that 106,467 people lived in the city in 1893. 47,015 of them were Muslims, and 21,744 people were Orthodox. As we see, the Muslim population in Baku was twice that of the Orthodox population. Nevertheless, the number of Orthodox Church institutions in the city that year was almost equal the number of mosques. 25 Orthodox institutions (6 Orthodox churches, 2 chapels, and 17 church buildings) and 28 mosques<sup>61</sup>. It is true that the 17 church buildings were not places of worship, yet still they were forms of church property intended for meeting the religious needs of Orthodox clergy and believers. If we consider the fact that most of the mosques in the city were medieval constructions, while all those Orthodox institutions had appeared within the last 78 years, it becomes clear, how great the authority enjoyed by the Russian Orthodox Church was.

59 - Ibid. - p. 119, 121.

60 - Ibid. - p. 121.

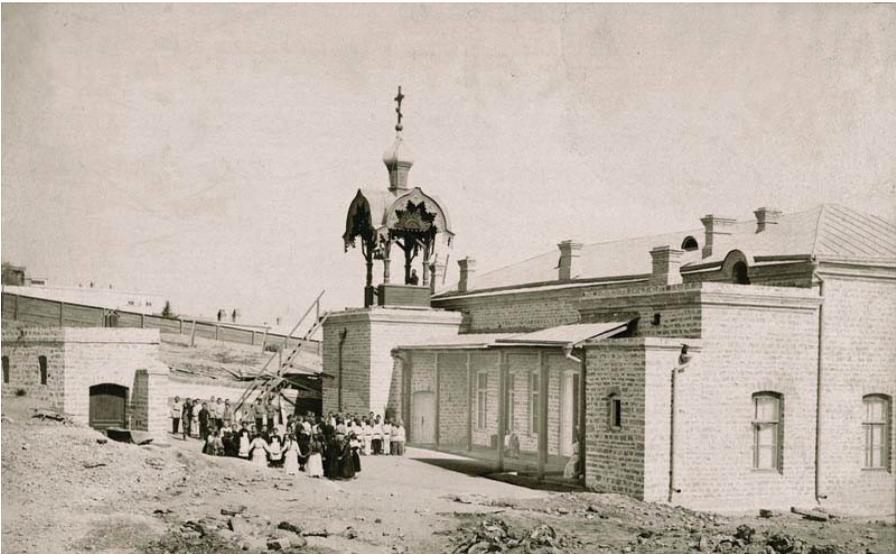
61 – Gorod Baku v 1892 g. (politseyskaya statistika)//sayt Nash Baku: Istoriya Baku i bakintsev [Electronic resource]. – URL:[https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Город\\_Баку\\_в\\_1892г.\\_\(полицейская\\_статистика\)](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Город_Баку_в_1892г._(полицейская_статистика)) (retrieval date: 06.09.2016).

It should also be noted, that Russian churches belonged to different categories depending on their purposes: attached churches, military churches, railroad churches, house churches, military railroad churches, parish (quarter) churches, temporary temples, cemetery churches. Let us shortly review these kinds of churches in Baku and surrounding areas.

### The Attached Churches

St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, which used to stand on the highest point of Baku had four Russian Orthodox temples functioning under it:

#### *The Church of the Icon of “Our Lady of Kazan”*



This temple was located opposite the Azerbaijani millionaire Murtuza Mukhtarov’s house (today the Palace of Happiness), on the site of Baku Parochial School No 1. It was built in 1889 according to the plans of the civil engineer D.D. Buynov, in honor of the icon of “Our Lady of Kazan.” The construction of the temple cost 2,000 rubles, and it was the first attached church in Baku. It was dedicated by A. Yunitsky on August 27, 1889. On November 15, 1889 oberprocuror Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev presented the church with a very beautiful icon<sup>62</sup>.

62 - See: Pashazade A. The quoted work. – p. 189.

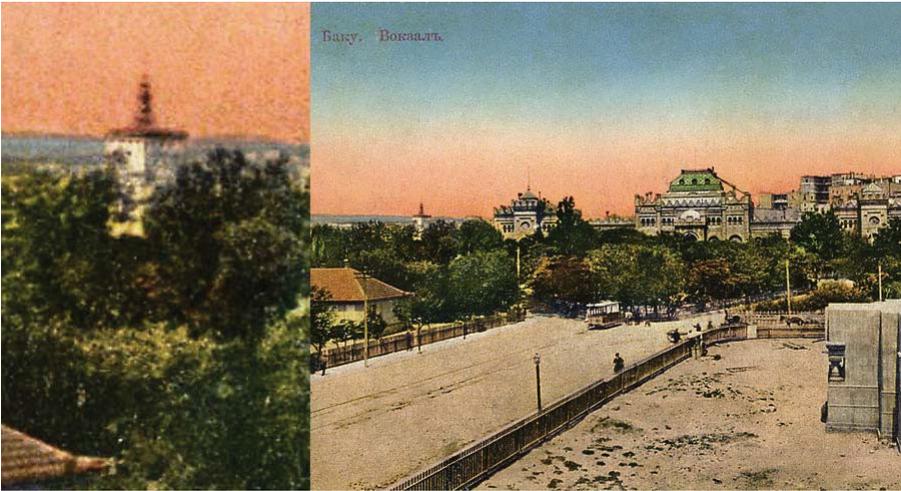
“Holy Myrrhbearers” Church



A Russian cemetery was located on the place where the present day National Assembly (Milli Majlis) building is located. In 1890, the temple of “Holy Myrrhbearers” was built on that site with voluntary offerings from believers. The architect of the church was Buynov. There’s an interesting fact related to this church. *The Azerbaijani philanthropist Hajji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev heard about the lack of funds for the temple’s construction, and contributed 500 rubles, which was a significant amount at that time<sup>63</sup>. Another interesting fact is that in the years of independence another Muslim philanthropist Aydin Gurbanov renovated and restored a cathedral with the same name located in Salyan Barracks. We must admit that these examples show the rare tolerance of the Azerbaijani people.*

63 - ‘Tserkov’ Kladbishenskaya Sv. Zhon Mironosits [Electronic resource]//Nash Baku: Istoriya Baku i bakintsev. – URL: [https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь\\_Кладбищенская\\_Св.\\_Жен\\_Мироносиц](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь_Кладбищенская_Св._Жен_Мироносиц) (retrieval date: 27.08.2016).

*The Church of “the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary”*



This church was built by the architect I.V. Edel, in 1896, with voluntary offerings, and it was located on the site of the present day Sabunchu Terminal. This Russian temple constructed in Russian-Byzantine style, used to be one of the most beautiful buildings in Baku. A “House of the Industrious,” and a parochial school operated under this church. At first, classes were held in the church. Therefore, a separate building was built in the yard of the church for the school (2<sup>nd</sup> parochial school). The new school building was dedicated on September 22, 1896. In 1898, another church was built right next to the Church of “the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary.” Then, in 1925, the Church of “the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary” was demolished because of the construction of Sabunchu Terminal<sup>64</sup>.

*Russian Orthodox Temple of “the Holy Archangel Michael”*

The church was built by Mrs. Rilskaya, the wife of an important entrepreneur in Baku, from 1901-1902 on the Yarmarka Square (today Samed Vurgun Square) to commemorate Nicholas II’s enthronement<sup>65</sup>.

64 – Tserkov’ Rozhdestva Presv’atoy Bogoroditsy (Kani-Tapinskaya) [Electronic resource]// Nash Baku: Istoriya Baku i bakintsev. – URL: [https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь\\_Рождества\\_Пресвятой\\_Богородицы\\_\(Кани-Тапинская\)](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь_Рождества_Пресвятой_Богородицы_(Кани-Тапинская)) (retrieval date: 13.11.2016).

65 - Yunitski A. The quoted work. – p. 32

## Parish Churches

### *“The Savior’s Transfiguration” Church*

This Orthodox temple was located in the area of Baku called “Agh Shahar” (White City), on the property of the company “S.M. Shibayev and Co.” Lots of employees who worked in the factory were from Russia, so the factory management gave them a building there to be used for their religious needs. An altar, a belfry, and a church threshold were built on the Eastern part of the building (the foundation was laid on January 15, 1892)<sup>66</sup>.



The church looked simple, its roof was covered with bricks, and was built in Russian-Byzantine style. A gold-plated octagonal cross was erected on top of the green dome of the church’s belfry. Both sides of the belfry had two beautiful and elegant domes in the shape of round stone towers. The domes were covered with iron, and adorned with gilded copper crosses. There were five bells and a precious icon in “The Savior’s Transfiguration” Church. The largest bell weighed 985 kg<sup>67</sup>.

This house of worship had only 1 priest who was paid by the factory (500 rubles yearly salary). At the same time, the temple library had 67 books while the library of the church school had 633 books.

66 - See: Pashazade E. Ibid. – p. 133,134.

67 - Ibid. - p. 134,135.

Two times in a year – at Easter and the Lord’s Transfiguration holidays – the church parishes performed the traditional procession in the factory area<sup>68</sup>.

### *The Church of “St. Macarius of Egypt”*

Balakhani-Sabunchu oil mines with their high wages, attracted a significant labor force from different countries. The number of these temporary workers exceeded 40,000 people. There were many Orthodox believers among them (between 10,000-12,000). Certainly, the religious needs of so many Orthodox believers could not be neglected in the place where Tsarist Russia had absolute power. Therefore, in 1899, a temporary wooden church in honor of St. Macarius of Egypt was built in Balakhani-Sabunchu oil mines. A regular clerical staff formed in the church included a priest and a “psalomshik” (a person responsible for reading and singing). They received 675 rubles salary from the budget. In 1904 another church was



erected in honor of St. Macarius of Egypt. It was constructed in Byzantine architectural style. The construction of this new temple cost 100,000 rubles that was mostly covered by the Council of Baku’s Oilmen Congress and the entrepreneurs of oil mines. The church of “St. Macarius of Egypt” was built on the highest point of the mines and dedicated on January 22, 1904 by the Georgian Exarch Alexiy.

68 - See: - Yunitski A. Ibid. – p. 60-62.

69 - Yunitski A. Ibid. – p. 68-68.

Pretty ornaments engraved on local stones, marble icon wall, concrete floor with mosaics made the temple especially beautiful. And as regards the wooden temple, according to A. Yunistki's report, this temporary church was moved to the other side of the oil mines. After the second priest, staff were employed in the mines in 1904, religious rites were performed on Sundays and on Christian feasts in the temporary wooden church named after St. Macarius of Egypt<sup>70</sup>.

### **Military Churches** *"Port Bayil" Church*



This church was sometimes called "The Cathedral of the Sea." It was built with funds from the Ministry of the Maritime, and its foundation stone was laid on May 6, 1868 in the military port in Cape Bayil in Baku. The foundation stone-laying ceremony was attended by Great Prince Alexei Alexandrovich Romanov. The dedication took place on November 28, 1871. The church had an amazingly beautiful, huge silver chandelier, which was gilded and shone at night<sup>71</sup>.

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*“Navy” Church*

Formerly it belonged to the Caspian Navy. Therefore, it was called the Navy church (Russian “Flotskaya”). However, later a larger church was built for the navy in Bayil, and in 1873 this temple was given to the local battalion in Baku. In subsequent years, the temple began functioning under Salyan regiment, and it was named the Church of Salyan Regiment. A. Yunitski studied the church archives regarding this church and reported that it was not known who built this church or when<sup>72</sup>. The church may have been built some time between 1841-1849. From 1891-1892 the church was restored and renovated. Artistic works were performed by Emts. On November 1, 1892 a dedication ceremony took place<sup>73</sup> in the renovated church.

This temple in the center of the city on former Spasskaya Street (today Zargarpalan Street) is now named after the Archangel Michael.

*“Alexander Nevsky” Church of Baku Border Guard Brigade*

This mobile church began functioning in 1886. It was built at the request of the Baku Border Department, with funds from the Ministry of Finance. On February 23rd, 1886 the church was dedicated by priest Ilya Dzampayev in honor of Alexander Nevsky. Up till 1898 it was located in a rented house at the intersection of “Targovaya” and Guberniya street (present day Nizami street). The church functioned under the Baku Border Guard Brigade. In 1898 the mobile church was brought together with the brigade to the Goytapa area of Lankaran county. In 1906 “Alexander Nevsky” mobile church was brought back to Baku and placed in a rented house on Shamakhi Street (today J. Jabbarli Street). The church looked simple and had little property. It had only three precious icons and a library<sup>74</sup>.

71 - Yunitski A. Ibid. – p. 71; Pashazade E. The quoted work. – 138-139.

72 - Yunitski A. Ibid. – p. 72; Pashazade E. Ibid. – 138.

73 – Tserkov’ Mikhaylo-Arkhangel’skaya (byvshaya Sal’yanskogo polka, byvshaya Morskaya, ili Flotskaya). Baku. [Electronic resource]// Nash Baku: Istoriya Baku i bakintsev. – URL: [https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/ Церковь Михайло-Архангельская \(Флотская\). Баку#cite\\_ref-3](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/ Церковь Михайло-Архангельская (Флотская). Баку#cite_ref-3) (retrieval date: 14.11.2016).

74 - Pashazade E. The quoted work. – p. 139-140.

*The Church of the “Holy Archangel Michael” of Salyan Infantry Regiment No 206 (today “Holy Myrrhbearers” Cathedral)*

It was built in 1909 with funds from the Ministry of War of the Russian Empire. Its construction cost 42,000 rubles. The foundation stone was laid on May 6, 1908, and the church was dedicated on December 6, 1909. The “Navy” Church located on Zargarpalan Street (today “Archangel Michael” Church) came under the authority of the military church<sup>75</sup>.

This church was built in 1901 according to the standard for military churches under a church building plan prepared by architect Fyodr Mikhailovich Verzhbinsky, approved by the Construction Commission. Over 60 military churches were built in the Russian Empire before 1917 on the basis of this plan. Yet every church also had unique features, and each military church became a unique architectural monument. Another interesting fact related to this church is that on April 10, 1910 the commander of the Salyan Regiment, General Mayor Mechislav Konstantinovich, was solemnly buried in the chapel built next to the “Archangel Michael” church<sup>76</sup>.

## **Railway and Military Railway Churches**

*“The Savior’s Transfiguration” Railway Church*



75 – Tserkov’ 206-go pekhotnogo Salyanskogo polka v chest’ Sv. Arkhistratiga Mikhaila [Electronic resource]//Nash Baku: Istoriya Baku i bakintsev. – URL: [https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь\\_206-го\\_пехотного\\_Сальянского\\_полка\\_в\\_честь\\_Св.\\_Архистратига\\_Михаила](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь_206-го_пехотного_Сальянского_полка_в_честь_Св._Архистратига_Михаила) (retrieval date: 13.11.2016).

76 - Tserkov’ 206-go pekhotnogo Salyanskogo polka v chest’ Sv. Arkhistratiga Mikhaila //Ibid.

Built in 1898 with voluntary offerings of believers, the church was constructed of wood for temporary use. It wasn't large: barely 30 meters long, 9 meters wide, and about 5 meters high. It had seven windows with iron bars. The church was dedicated on October 11, 1898 by Father Iradion Nanabov. On the next day, October 12, 1898 the foundation for a new stone church for the railway station was laid close to the wooden church, on Stanislavskaya Street (today's Azadliq Avenue). The dedication ceremony for the foundation's stone-laying was performed by the Georgian Exarch Archbishop Flavian. The construction of the stone church took over 8 years. Finally, around the beginning of 1907, Baku had a railway church made of stone<sup>77</sup>.



77 - See: Yunistki A. The quoted work. – p. 62-63; Pashazade E. Ibid. – p. 140.

*The Church of “St. Bartholomew the Apostle” in Bilajary*



After the Transcaucasian Railway was opened in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and especially following the opening of the Petrovsk-Baku route in 1900, Bilajary became the main railway junction. By 1900, there were 534 railway workers in Bilajary, and 460 of them (245 married, 215 single) were Orthodox. At the initiative of archpriest Yunitski, with the approval of the Georgian Exarch Alexiy an Orthodox temple was opened for the religious needs of those people. The foundation of the church was laid on April 23, 1903, and the construction of a single-domed house of worship was completed by August of that year<sup>78</sup>.

“St. Bartholomew” Church was built by Marchenko, the architect of the Department of the Province of Baku. The temple was built of wood and erected on a stone foundation that could hold 300 people. The church was dedicated by archpriest A. Yunitski on November 2, 1903 in honor of St. Bartholomew. The dedication ceremony was attended by the Head of the Province of Baku D.A. Odintsov. On December 1, 1903 a single-class parochial school for women for 26 students, was opened at “St. Bartholomew” temple. On January 25, 1904 a fire caused great damage to the upper part of the temple’s belfry. Yet the temple was completely restored by Easter, and a new 2-room watchman’s hut was built and the

<sup>78</sup> - See: Yunitski A. The quoted work. – p. 69.

whole church area was surrounded by a wooden fence<sup>79</sup>.

The building of “St. Bartholomew’s” Church in Bilajary village has survived to this day. It is interesting that the building was made of stone, though A. Yunitski said it had been built of wood. It appears that after 1905 local Orthodox believers demolished the wooden church and built a new stone building<sup>80</sup>. It should also be mentioned that for the zealous Orthodox missionary A. Yunitski, the church in Bilajary had special symbolic meaning. He likened this house of worship to a bright shining cross. He said: *“Thus, 19 centuries later, in the mountains of Apostle Bartholomew – where Russia and the Caucasus meet together – the cross of Jesus Christ began to shine again”*<sup>81</sup>.

## House Churches

### *The Church in St. Nina’s School for Girls*

This house of worship was the first house church in Baku. It was founded at the initiative of Baronesse von Tornauw with the efforts of archpriest Dmitri Zotikov. The short history of the church is as follows: After the earthquake in Shamakhi in 1861, St. Nina’s School was moved to the country house of Freigang, a flagman of the Caspian Navy in Baku (later to the place of Mikhailov City Hospital). On October 15, 1862 the Georgian Exarch Yevsevi blessed the institution of a house church in the school for girls. Since Freigang’s house consisted of just a living-room, a dining-room and rooms for work and guests, the living-room was given to the house church. An altar was set up in the semicircular part of the room which had the shape of a terrace. Only 630 rubles were spent for the institution of the house church. Initially that amount was sufficient. In January 1863 priest Zotikov dedicated the house church at St. Nina’s School, and the church was attached to the Church of “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” in Baku. In 1888 the school for girls was moved to Nikolayevskaya Street (today’s Istiqlaliyyat Street), and the house church began functioning in a better and more convenient places<sup>82</sup>.

79 - Yunistki A. The quoted work. – p. 69-71.

80 – Balajarskaya sv. Apostola Varfolomeya tserkov’//Nash Baku: Istoriya Baku i bakintsev. – URL: [https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь\\_Баладжарская\\_Варфоломеевская](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Церковь_Баладжарская_Варфоломеевская) (retrieval date: 26.08.2016).

81 - Yunitski A. Ibid. – p.71.

82 - See: Yunitski A. The quoted work. – p. 78-79.

*“St. Alexander Nevsky” House Church  
Under Baku Technical School*

The history of this temple began with Alexander II City Professional School, which was founded in Baku on November 8, 1888. Inspector Mikhail Iosifovich Mikhalevski and theology teacher priest Mikhail Zemski desired to open a house church for the students of this educational institution. Hence on December 30, 1892 the Baku City Duma made the decision to open a house church in honor of Alexander Nevsky in the school and to allocate 1,500 rubles as one-time aid and 400 rubles monthly as financial aid to that church; in 1893 the Georgian Exarch Vladimir gave his blessing for the construction of that house of worship, and on February 19, 1894 archpriest A. Yunitski dedicated the temple, and the dedication ceremony was attended by the Chairman of Duma Despot-Zenovich, the Orthodox members of City Mayor’s office, and other important guests<sup>83</sup>.

For thirteen years the professional school functioned under very poor conditions, in a rented place. Therefore “St. Alexander Nevsky” House Church was also located in a one-floor stone building, under an asphalted roof, on Balakhani Street (today Fuzuli Street). A wooden cross was erected on top of the roof. The hall of the house church was small and dark. On September 1, 1896 the City Professional School was changed into a minor technical educational institution and moved to a building with better conditions. Certainly, this decision had a positive affect on the church functioning under that educational institution. The school church was even given a place for the construction of its new building. On Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich’s coronation day, on May 14, 1901, the students and many other people took part in a “cross procession” toward that place. On February 10, 1902 priest Bidzina Gabarayev dedicated the new building of the church. It should be noted that the size of the new temple was almost twice the size of the former church<sup>84</sup>.

83 - Ibid. - p. 73-75.

84 - Ibid. - p. 75-76.

*The Church in Baku Classic High School named after Emperor Alexander III.*

The formation of a house church in the building of the high school took place in November-December 1897. The house church was built at the instigation of the director of the high school A.I. Pobedonostsev and the priest of Alexander Nevsky Cathedral Piotr Potashev. Two Baku merchants N.A. Terentyev and A.N. Likhushin, along with some other Christians from the city made contributions for equipping the house church. On December 14, 1897 the house church was dedicated by the Georgian Exarch Vladimir. The dedication ceremony was attended by influential people of the city, and the parents of the high school students. The temple's appearance was very simple, but the distinguished icons made a very good impression on people coming to the church. All the icons, except for the "Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord," were painted by the artist, Yarov<sup>85</sup>.

*The Church in Baku Prison*

Baku Prison used to be a little above the present-day building of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In 1893, the prisoners in that prison asked the chairman of the Baku Court to open an Orthodox church in the prison. The Provincial Guarding Committee for Prisons agreed, and gave instructions for the allocation of a suitable place for worship in the prison. The decision was made to build a church on top of the workshop in the prison. A provincial architect was charged with the project and asked to present an estimate. He produced plans for a church for 240 people and calculated that the construction of the church would cost 12,477 rubles. Because all the work related to the construction, including documentation, would take a long time, a temporary church was built in the prison. The Baku merchant Nikolai Alexeyevich Terentyev proposed that a temporary church should operate in the prison until the permanent church was built. Although his proposition was accepted, no place was found for a temporary church at Baku Prison. Finally, a small stone building in barrack No 26 (which was at the disposal of the prison's engineering department) was turned into a church at Terentyev's expense. The salary of the priest working in that temple was 750 rubles, and the salary of the singer of religious songs was 250 rubles; the priest was also paid 240 rubles per year for rent expenses<sup>86</sup>.

85 - Yunistki A. The quoted work. – p. 72-73.

On May 19, 1897 the Georgian Exarch gave his blessing to the construction of an Orthodox church in the prison, and a graduate of Tbilisi Classic High School, Vladimir Gurgenzidze, was appointed to be the priest of that church. On October 1, 1897 the foundation stone of the temporary church in Baku Prison was laid, and work was started to extend the state building in order to turn it into a church. The construction of the temple was completed in March 1898, and all the necessary furnishings for the church were purchased with Terentyev's financial aid. On March 8, 1898 with the Georgian Exarch's blessing archpriest A. Yunitski together with priest Vladimir Gurgenzidze dedicated the church in Baku Prison in honor of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker of Myra<sup>87</sup>.

The stone building of the Russian Orthodox Temple of "St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker of Myra," in the prison was in the shape of a long rectangle. The walls of the church were built from unhewn stones. Both the interior and the exterior of the church were plastered and painted. The temple had no belfry, but it had 5 bells hanging under a canopy on two pillars<sup>88</sup>.

### **Churches in the Other Regions**

During the Tsarist period, Russian Orthodox temples were built in other regions of our country as well. In his book discussing Russian Orthodox places of worship functioning in the Province of Baku A. Yunitski mentions over 40 temples. He states that in Javad county in the Province of Baku nine Russian Orthodox temples were opened: a temporary church in Bojji Promisel village (dedicated in 1838); "St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker" church in Petropavlovka village (1875); "St. Gregory" chapel in N.O. Goltug village (1898); a church in Z.O. Goltug village (1890); "St. Nicholas" church on Kura Island (1891); a small church in Salyan named after "St. Nina Equal to the Apostles" (1900); a temple in Aleksandrovskoye village (dedicated in 1904); a temple in Nikolayevskoye village (dedicated in 1904); Church of "The Holy Mother Mary's Protection" in Nikolayevsk village (1904)<sup>89</sup>.

There were also Russian temples in (the) other towns and villages of the Province of Baku. Among them Russian churches in Shamakhi county were built earlier. Let us briefly review these churches.

<sup>86</sup> - Yunitski A. The quoted work. – p. 63-65, 67.-

<sup>87</sup> – Ibid. 65-66

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. - p. 66.

<sup>89</sup> - For more detailed information see: "Istoriya tserkvey i prikhodov Bakinskoy gubernii" – p. 145-172.

In 1845 about 300 Orthodox believers lived in Shamakhi city, which was the center of the Province of Shamakhi from 1846-1859. First they used to gather to worship in a regular building. On November 29, 1858 the Cathedral of “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” was built for the religious needs of the Orthodox Believers in the shape of the cross, on the basis of architect Kombiadzhio’s plans. However, the church was destroyed by powerful earthquakes in Shamakhi in 1859 and 1902. Thus, in 1902 a temporary church for 150 people was built in the city on the basis of architect Marchenko’s plans. At the same time, a military railway Russian Orthodox church was also built in Shamakhi in 1904. The church had a parish of 207 soldiers. Besides that, a stone Russian Orthodox temple in the shape of a long cross was erected in Altiagac village of Shamakhi county in 1855 in honor of St. Nicholas. The church was closed down in 1893 because of damage created by ground water and an earthquake<sup>90</sup>.



*Russian Orthodox Church in Goytapa city.  
1887.*

Russian temples functioned also in the other towns and villages of the Province of Baku. For instance, in Guba the first Orthodox temple was built in 1834. However the church building became inoperable, and in November 1871 a new church was opened in Byzantine architectural style in honor of “the Death of the Holy Mother Mary.” And again, in 1885 a Russian church was built in Mikhailovka village of Guba county replacing the old wooden Russian Orthodox chapel built there in 1872. This church was named

90 - For more detailed information see: “Istoriya tserkvey i prikhodov Bakinskoy gubernii” – p. 80-101.

“The Lord’s Ascension.” At the same time, other churches functioned in the north of Azerbaijan in Tsarist Russia. For example, a church built in 1897 in Yelenovka village of Guba county, a military Russian Orthodox church built in Gusar in 1851, and “Gusar Kazan” house of worship located in Gusar school building and dedicated on December 15, 1902 by A. Yunitski. There was also a Russian temple opened in 1903 in Nikolayevka village of Guba county which according to A. Yunitski “was beautiful both inside and outside, spacious and bright,” and “was seen from everywhere,” the church of the “Protection of the Holy Mother Mary” founded in Shirvan village in 1905, “St. Seraphim of Sarov” in Yermolovka village, and a wooden church founded in 1906 in Aleksandrovka village of Guba county<sup>91</sup>.

In the Russian Empire period, there were also churches in the southern part of the Province of Baku. First of all, Lankaran city should be mentioned. A wooden church was built there in 1839 by the Russian Regular Battalion No 21. However, over time that church became inoperable, so in 1889 “Archangel Michael” church was built on the basis of engineer Bilfeld’s plans, and in 1892 it was dedicated. The church was built with the funds of the Holy Synod, it was designed in the shape of the cross, in Byzantine architectural style. Its construction cost 33,000 rubles. At the same time the stone church of “The Holy Mary Magdalene” was erected in Lankaran cemetery. There was also a small Russian church in Sara peninsula on the east of Lankaran. It was built of reeds by merchant Kekin and covered with an iron roof. There were also other churches in Lankaran county: a temple in Russian style by architect Marchenko in Mikhailovka village (1869); the school-church of “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” in Novogolitsino village (1903); “Alexander Nevsky” church of Baku brigade of the special corps of the 6<sup>th</sup> division of Goytapa Border Troops (in 1898 this place of worship was moved from Baku to Goytapa and in 1906 it was moved back to Baku)<sup>92</sup> etc.

When talking of Russian temples opened in Azerbaijan during the period of Tsarist Russia the large number of Russian villages is striking. The question may be raised as to the reason for this. The reason is that the Tsarist

<sup>91</sup> - Yunitski A. The quoted work. – p. 101-128.

<sup>92</sup> - Ibid. - p. 128-143.

government pursued a policy of Rusification and Christianization in Azerbaijan with its Muslim majority. And as a part of this policy lots of Russians were moved to our country, and many Russian villages appeared. As a result of this migration policy, the local Muslim population's rights were violated, and their lands were seized by the settlers. Even A. Yunitski admitted it in his writings: "...because when Russians settled there Muslims had to lose a lot of their plots of land"<sup>93</sup>. At the same time the colonial government established all kinds of good conditions for the settlers and tried to open a church in almost every Russian village: *"the government was helping the settlers in their hard days for the sake of a more successful and thriving colonization... And the most important is that the government in its desire to meet the Russians' religious needs kept finding funds for the construction of churches. Then the crosses of Orthodox temples started shining in Mugan plain, and the sound of church bells started to spread far away over the vast wilderness"*<sup>94</sup>.

When speaking of the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in our country, we should touch on an important matter: some researchers in their writings on the Russian churches built in the Tsarist period mention only the temples listed in A. Yuntiski's book "History of Churches and Parishes in the Province of Baku" while forgetting the Russian churches functioning in other parts of our country. However, in the period of the Russian Empire there were also Russian temples functioning in Ganja ("Alexander Nevsky" Cathedral), Zaqatala (a military church, 19<sup>th</sup> century), Sheki ("Nukha Three Saints Church" built on the foundation of a "Round" Albanian temple dated back to the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries, 1863<sup>95</sup>), Ordubad (military church, 1829)<sup>96</sup> and in other places.

93 - "Istoriya tserkvey i prikhodov Bakinskoy gubernii" – p. 158.

94 - Ibid. - p. 153.

95 - For more detailed information see: Abdullayevə S. Azərbaycanın dövlətçilik və mədəniyyət tarixində Şəkinin yeri və rolu [Electronic resource]//525-ci qəzet – 2015 – March 14. - p. 6. – URL: <http://www.anl.az/down/meqale/525/2015/mart/427085.htm> (retrieval date: 01.09.2016)

96 - For more detailed information see: Əliyev R. Ordubad məbədi xalqımızın multikulturalizm və tolerantlıq dəyərlərini özündə yaşadır (30.07.2016) [Electronic resource]. – URL: [http://azertag.az/xeber/Ordubad\\_mebedi\\_xalqimizin\\_multikulturalizm\\_ve\\_tolerantliq\\_deyerlerini\\_ozunde\\_yasadir-978559](http://azertag.az/xeber/Ordubad_mebedi_xalqimizin_multikulturalizm_ve_tolerantliq_deyerlerini_ozunde_yasadir-978559) (01.09.2016).

## Other Institutions

Besides Russian churches, chapels and houses of worship, in the period of the Russian Empire Azerbaijan had the following Russian Orthodox institutions:

### *“The Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus”*

The activity of this missionary organization founded on July 9, 1860 was controlled directly by the Governor of Caucasus. The society was supported by the government. For the purpose of strengthening the Orthodox tenets in the Caucasus the society translated the Bible and other religious literature into the languages of the peoples of the Caucasus, tried to meet the needs of Orthodox educational institutions, provided the Orthodox priests with material support, restored old temples or opened new ones. The Society built or restored several churches in Qakh (“St. George,” “Holy Sameba,” “St. Michael,” “St. Nino”) and Zaqatala (in 1892 the Society restored and renovated “Kurmuk” temple which had been built on the foundation on an ancient Albanian church and turned it into a Russian church)<sup>97</sup>.

### *Orthodox Charitable Societies and Fraternities*

“The Baku Cyril and Methodius Fraternity of the Lovers of Church Songs” was opened on May 23, 1902 in Baku under “St. Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral. The Fraternity opened 28 church schools, a foster home for ten children, and a large library. Furthermore, it founded the Baku Cemetery Charitable Society in 1897 to control the well-being of cemeteries in the city, and the “Fraternity of Religion Teachers” was founded on October 1, 1898. These organizations held meetings to host scientific and religious discussions, lectures, and book reviews<sup>98</sup>.

### *Parochial Schools*

28 schools of this kind functioned in 1905 in the Province of Baku alone. Baku city had five such parochial schools. Four of them were under “Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral, and one of them was under the church at Shibayev Factory. Up to three hundred boys and girls studied every year

97 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoi Arkheologicheskoi komissiyei. - Tiflis: Tip. kants. glavnonach. grazhd. chastiyu na Kavkaz'e, 1904. Vol XII. - p. 1357, 1363 - 1364.

98 - Yunitski A. The quoted work. - p.48 - 49.

in Baku religious schools. The parochial schools had students from different peoples and religions. According to 1905 statistics, out of 574 students of the parochial schools in the Province of Baku 470 people were Orthodox, 78 people were Russian sectarians, 8 people were Muslims, 5 people were Catholics and adherents of other beliefs<sup>99</sup>.

### **The Republican Period and the Years of Soviet Rule**

The abovementioned facts clearly show that in the period of the Russian Empire the Russian Church was given wide opportunities and great privileges. This lasted until the February Revolution of 1917. As a result of the revolution, Tsarism fell and the former colonies of the Empire declared independence. The nation of Azerbaijan did not escape these great historical and political events, but took steps toward restoring statehood, and on May 28, 1918 the Azerbaijan People's Republic was established. A new page was turned in the relationship between state and religion in our country. The Russian Empire had given the Russian Orthodox Church a dominant position in suppressing "alien" religions and sects, but the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (ADR) where the religion of the vast majority was Islam, did not give official status to any religion or belief, announcing complete freedom of conscience. We must admit that it was quite a progressive step for that time. The Declaration of Independence accepted by the Azerbaijani National Council in Tbilisi on May 28, 1918 clearly affirmed religious liberty:

*4. The Azerbaijani Democratic Republic guarantees to all its citizens within its borders full civil and political rights, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, class, profession, or sex.*

*5. The Azerbaijani Democratic Republic encourages the free development of all nationalities inhabiting its territory<sup>100</sup>.*

During the ADR period Orthodox temples functioned with full freedom, the Russian Orthodox population never faced any discrimination and enjoyed the same rights as all other citizens.

<sup>99</sup> - Ibid - p 49, 188 - 189.

<sup>100</sup> Azerbaijan Democratic Republic Declaration of Independence [Electronic resource]//site: Wikisource. URL: [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Azerbaijan\\_Democratic\\_Republic\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Independence](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Azerbaijan_Democratic_Republic_Declaration_of_Independence) (retrieval date: 21.08.2017).

The Parliament of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic had a faction named “Slavic-Russian Society” (the faction included deputies Viktor Klenevski, Vasili Kravchenko, Sergey Remizov, M.N. Vinogradov, Fyodor Kotilevski)<sup>101</sup>.

Freedom of conscience in the Republican period ended when the of 9<sup>th</sup> Red Army division occupied Azerbaijan on April 28, 1920, and Soviet rule was established in our country against the people’s will. Bolsheviks with their extreme atheistic ideology started a rigorous fight against all religions. One of the greatest blows fell on the Russian Orthodox Church.

The history of Baku clearly illustrates it. Bolsheviks savagely destroyed the “Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral, which stood on the highest point of Baku as the embodiment of the dominant religion (in 1936), “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” Cathedral near the Paired Fortress Gates (in 1930s), “St. Bartholomew” Chapel by the Maiden Tower (in 1936) and several other Russian temples<sup>102</sup>.



*Holy Martyr  
Ioann*

Besides that, during the years of repression many Muslim, Jew, and Christian religious leaders were imprisoned, exiled or sentenced to death for their beliefs. One of the victims of those repressions was the chief priest of the Russian Orthodox Church of “the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary” Ioann Ilyich Ganchev. He faced hard trials in the Soviet period; on March 20, 1933 he was imprisoned on false charges, and on November 2, 1937 he was executed by firing squad. In 2000 the Jubilee Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church included Holy Martyr Ioann of Baku in the list of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russian Church in the 20th century. It should be noted

that Russian churches in Azerbaijan commemorate him every year on November 2<sup>103</sup>. There were other Russian Orthodox priests who faced

- See: Parliament and its members [Electronic resource]//site: The Azerbaijani Democratic Republic. – URL: [http://axc.preslib.az/az\\_a3.html](http://axc.preslib.az/az_a3.html) (retrieval date: 04.09.2016).

102 - For more detailed information see: Pravoslavnyie khramy Baku (spisok) [Electronic resource]//Nash Baku: Istoriya Baku i bakintsev. – URL: [https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Православные\\_храмы\\_Баку](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Православные_храмы_Баку) (retrieval date: 04.09.2016).

103 - For more detailed information about Martyr Ioann of Baku see: The official website of the Baku and Azerbaijan Dioces. – URL: <http://baku.eparhia.ru/history/eparchy/ganchev/> (retrieval date: 01.09.2016).

persecution in Azerbaijan. The names of Andrey Yeremin (1929), Yevfimi Savelyev (1932) and others should be mentioned<sup>104</sup>.

In the period of Stalin's bloody repressions, in April 1937, this was the only Russian Orthodox temple functioning in Baku. Later it was also closed down and turned into military barracks. During World War II, the religious policy of the Soviet government slightly softened. In 1944, "Archangel Michael" chapel in Baku was given back to the Orthodox believers. At that time the "Reserve Labor Force Society" had its accounts department in there. After the building was returned to the Orthodox believers, they restored some decorations on the wall. However, since the chapel building was too small, in 1944 the believers were given the Church of "the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary," and the church was given Cathedral status. In 1946, the doors of "Archangel Michael" church were opened again for Orthodox believers, and in 1946 even a new "Saint Nikolski" temple was built in Khachmaz with the voluntary offerings of local Russian villagers<sup>105</sup>.

### New Development Stage

After the USSR fell and the Azerbaijani people regained independence, the Russian Orthodox Church in our country stepped into a new development stage. Our republic declared freedom of religious beliefs, and all citizens regardless of their nationality, religion, and belief were given equal rights. Especially after Heydar Aliyev's return to power, the Orthodox community in Azerbaijan enjoyed some positive changes. The National Leader's care for the ethnic and religious minorities' needs opened up great possibilities and broad prospects for the largest Christian branch in our country – the Russian Orthodox community. During his rule the state took care of the local Orthodox believers in every way.

- See: Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov' v Azerbaidzhan'e: istoriya I sovremennost'//Azerbaidzhan i azerbaidzhantsy v mir'e: Kul'turologicheskiy zhurnal, No 1, June 2007. – p. 61.

105 - Gumbatova T. Baku i nemtsy. – Baku: Chashioglu, 2008. – 398-399; Sobor Rozhd'estva Presv'atoy Bogoroditsy (Baku); Sobor Rozhd'estva Presv'atoy Bogoroditsy (Baku) [Electronic resource] //Nash Baku: Istoriya Baku i bakintsev. – URL: [https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Собор\\_Рождества\\_Пресвятой\\_Богородицы\\_\(Баку\)](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Собор_Рождества_Пресвятой_Богородицы_(Баку)) (retrieval date: 03.11.2016); Əfəndiyev M., Əlizadə A. Azərbaycanca Rus Pravoslav Kilsəsi: tarix və müasirlik//Azərbaycanda ənənəvi din. - Bakı: Elm və təhsil, 2014. - p. 311-312.

After the Azerbaijani people restored their statehood on October 18, 1991, several significant events happened in the life of the Orthodox community. Let us review those events.



*The National Leader Haydar Aliyev's Meeting With Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Aleksey II*

On December 28, 1998 the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Aleksey II and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church issued a historical decision for the restoration of the Baku and Caspian Diocese. In May 2001 Aleksey II came to our country, visited the Baku and Caspian Diocese, and gave his blessing. During his visit the Patriarch was also received by the President<sup>106</sup>.

In September 2005, the Patriarch paid his second visit to our republic at President Ilham Aliyev's invitation. During the meeting the Head of State talked about the importance of relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Caucasian Muslims Office, and awarded Patriarch Aleksey II the highest state award the "Shohrat Order" (Order of Glory) for his contribution to friendly relationships between the Russian and Azerbaijani people. The Patriarch in turn wished peace and security to President Ilham Aliyev and to all the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and awarded the Head of the State the highest award of the Russian Orthodox Church "St. Sergius of Radonezh" First Class Order. Then a Joint Declaration was signed for the development of positive relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Caucasian Muslims Office<sup>107</sup>.

<sup>106</sup> - See: Afandiyev M., Alizade A. The quoted work. - p. 313 – 314.

<sup>107</sup> - See: Afandiyev M., Alizade A. The quoted work. - p. 314-315.

On November 6, 2009 the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Kirill paid a one-day visit to Baku. During the visit the Patriarch was received by the Head of State President Ilham Aliyev. Then Patriarch Kirill visited “Holy Myrrhbearers” Cathedral and participated in the International Conference “Interreligious Dialogue: From Mutual Understanding To Cooperation”<sup>108</sup>.



*Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Kirill in “Holy Myrrhbearers” Church*

From April 24-26, 2010, the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Kirill visited Baku for the second time. During the visit he was received by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. During the meeting, the Head of State Ilham Aliyev awarded Patriarch Kiril the “Sharaf” state order. Patriarch Kirill thanked the President saying: “*On behalf of the Orthodox community in Azerbaijan I want to express my gratitude to you for the peaceful spirit in your people’s lives.*” Later the Patriarch awarded the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the First Class “Glory and Honor” Order of the Russian Orthodox Church. In addition, on April 25, 2010 Patriarch Kirill participated in the meeting of the CIS Interreligious Council which took place in the conference hall of the Caucasian Muslims Office, and then took part in the World Summit of Religious Leaders from April 26-27, 2010<sup>109</sup>.

<sup>108</sup> - The official website of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese. – URL: [http://www.baku-eparhia.ru/eparchy/istoricheskiy\\_vizit\\_svyateyshego\\_patriarcha\\_kirilla\\_v\\_azerbaydjan\\_6\\_noyabrya\\_2009/](http://www.baku-eparhia.ru/eparchy/istoricheskiy_vizit_svyateyshego_patriarcha_kirilla_v_azerbaydjan_6_noyabrya_2009/)

<sup>109</sup> - For more detailed information see: zhurnal Bakinsko-Prikaspiyskoy ieparhii: “Pravoslavnyi vestnik”, 2010. No 4-5.



*Orthodox Religious-Cultural Centre of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese*

On November 15, 2013 the Russian Orthodox Church opened the Orthodox Religious-Cultural Centre of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese. This Russian Orthodox Centre was built at the behest of the Head of State Ilham Aliyev. He ordered that a plot of land near the “Holy Myrrhbearers” Church be allocated for the construction of the above mentioned religious-cultural center, and its building be constructed with funds from the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic<sup>110</sup>.

Presently, the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese is supportive of the development of interreligious relations and the strengthening of a tolerant environment in our country. The religious leader of the Orthodox Russians living in our republic Archbishop Alexander Ishein was awarded the “Shohrat” and “Dostluq” orders of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and thus received the highest appreciation for his efforts in this area<sup>111</sup>.

The facts above indicate that all necessary conditions have been created for the activity of the Russian Orthodox Church in modern Azerbaijan. Cooperation between the government of Azerbaijan and the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese is developing at the highest level, and Orthodox Russians’ needs are always the focus of attention of the state.

<sup>110</sup> - <http://az.president.az/articles/10086>

<sup>111</sup> - Afandiyev M., Alizade A. The quoted work. - p.316.



*The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev at the opening ceremony of the Orthodox Religious-Cultural Centre of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese November 15, 2013.*



*Traditional Christmas Concert Organized by the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese. The Choir of Archangel Michael Church. "Chapelhouse." January 11, 2016.*

## THE BAKU AND AZERBAIJAN DIOCESE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

### Brief Historical Overview

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, following the occupation of Georgia by the Russian Empire, the Georgian Orthodox Church was abolished, and instead the Georgian Exarchate (under the leader titled, Georgian Exarch) was formed. Churches in the Caucasus submitted directly to this religious organization. The center of the Exarchate was located in Tbilisi city.

The Exarchate controlled Russian churches in the Province of Baku by means of so-called “blagochinni.” From 1904, the Province of Baku was divided into two blagochinnis. One of them included the churches in Baku, Goychay, Guba, and Shamakhi counties, and the other one included the Orthodox temples in Lankaran and Javad counties<sup>112</sup>. On May 19, 1905, the Vicariate of Baku was formed under the Kartalin and Kakheti Diocese of the Georgian Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church. Russian churches functioning in the Provinces of Baku and Yelizavetpol were submitted to that vicariate<sup>113</sup>.

After the fall of Tsarist Russia, in March 1917, the Georgian Orthodox Church regained its independence. The Georgian Exarchate was abolished, and the Caucasus Exarchate was formed to manage the Russian churches. The Head of this Exarchate Platon was titled “the Caucasus Exarch of Tbilisi and Baku.” The next Exarch, Kirill, was appointed to the Caucasus on April 19, 1918, and he stayed in Baku because of the ongoing war. He remained there for a month, working on the preservation of the churches. The Caucasus Georgian Exarchate did not last long, and in 1920 this church ceased to function<sup>114</sup>.

After the Caucasus Exarchate was established on July 10, 1917, the Vicariate of Baku was replaced with the Vicariate of Yelizavetpol on September

112 - Yumitski A. Istoriya tserkvey i prikhodov Bakinskoy gubernii: izdatel'stvo Bakinskogo Bratstva zakonouchiteley. 1815-1905 gg. – Baku: Tipogr. Gub. Pravleniya, 1906. – c. 190.

113 – Bakinsaya i Prikaspiyskaya Ieparhiya [Electronic resource]//Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya: pod redaktsiyey Patriarkha Moskovskogo I Vseya Rusi Kirilla. – URL: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/77394.html> (r:07.11.2016).

114 – Gruzinskiy ekzarkhat [Electronic resource]//DREVO: otkrytaya pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya. – URL: <https://drevo-info.ru/articles/508.html> (retrieval date:07.09.2016).

(or November) 13, 1917 (according to some sources it was called the Yelizavetpol or Kirovabad Diocese). The center of this vicariate was Ganja, and later Tbilisi. The Vicariate of Yelizavetpol included Russian and other Non-Georgian Orthodox parishes in the Provinces of Baku and Yelizavetpol. In 1919 the Vicariate of Yelizavetpol was replaced by the Caspian and Baku Diocese with the center in Baku city (according to some sources, Baku and Yelizavetpol Diocese). Then in 1934, Russian churches on the territory of Azerbaijan were subject to the Stavropol Diocese<sup>115</sup>. On December 28, 1998, by resolution of the Holy Synod the Baku and Caspian Diocese resumed its activities, and on March 22, 2011 its name was changed to the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese.

It should be noted that after the 1917 February Revolution a movement emerged for renewal, modernization and democratization in the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox religious leaders who comprised the movement did not recognize Tikhon, the official Head of the Moscow Patriarchate, and sincerely supported Bolsheviks. Thus, the Russian Church split after the February Revolution. Several Russian priests from the Moscow Patriarchate formed the Orthodox Russian Church. Later this organization was called the Orthodox Church in USSR (the movement was also known as “Renovationist Church”), and for a period of time it was the only Orthodox church recognized in the Soviet Union. The schism in the Russian Orthodox Church affected the Russian churches in Azerbaijan as well. In 1923, the Transcaucasia Metropolitanate of Renovationist Churches was formed, and the Baku Diocese was opened under the Metropolitanate. Thus, in Azerbaijan two Russian Orthodox organizations functioned under the same name: the Caspian and Baku Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Baku Renovationist Diocese of the Transcaucasia Metropolitanate of the Orthodox Russian Church<sup>116</sup>.

Bolsheviks who first supported the “Renovationist Church” later changed their policy and abolished this religious organization. Therefore, the Baku Renovationist Diocese ceased activity in 1930s. This diocese was led by the following bishops:

1. Piotr Danilov (1922 - 1925);
2. Piotr Sergejev (1925 - 1927);

<sup>115</sup> - Bakinsaya i Prikaspiyskaya Ieparhiya //Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> - Bakinsaya obnovlencheskaya ieparhiya [Electronic resource]// DREVO: otkrytaya pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya. – URL: <https://drevo-info.ru/articles/21127.html> (retrieval date: 13.11.2016).

### 3. Mikhail Orlov (1930 - 1934)<sup>117</sup>.

It should be noted that the Orthodox religious community of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church was re-registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations in 2009.



*The Icon "Holy Mother Mary of the Caspian" With the Map of Azerbaijan*

## **The Bishops Who Led the Russian Church in Azerbaijan**

### ***The Vicariate of Baku of the Kartalin and Kakheti Diocese:***

Nikandr Fenomenov (1905)  
Piotr Konchuyev (1905-1907)  
Gregory Vakhnin (1907-1910)  
Pimen Pegov (1911-1912)  
Gregory Yatskovski (1912-1917)

### ***The Yelizavetpol Diocese:***

Gregory Yatskovski (1917)  
Theophilact Klementyev (1918-1922)

### ***The Caspian and Baku Diocese:***

Pavel Vilkovski (1919-1923)  
Dimitri Dobroserdov (June-September 1923) Mitrophan  
Ogiyenko (January-August 1924) Arseni Sokolovski  
(1924-1928)  
Seraphim Protopopov (1928-1930)  
Nikon Purlevski (April-October 1930) Valeri  
Rudich (1930-1931)  
Mitrophan Polikarpov (1931-1934)  
Alexander Rayevski (February-August 1933)

### ***The Vicariate of the Baku of Stavropol Diocese***

Valentin Mishuk (1994-1995)

### ***The Baku and Caspian Diocese; later the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese***

Archbishop Alexander Ishein (From January 14, 1999 until present)<sup>118</sup>

118 - The official website of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese: <http://baku.eparhia.ru/history/eparchy/arh/>  
(retrieval date: 13.08.2016).

## Organizational Structure

The organization is led by those titled “bishop” or “archbishop.” The present Head of the Diocese is Archbishop Alexander Ishein. The Diocese is subject directly to the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church.



*Archbishop Alexander Ishein of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese*

According to 2016 information the organization carried out internal structural reforms. As a result of the structural changes the Diocese was divided into three blagochinnis, and the following staffing table was set:

1. Baku city blagochinni – 14 staff priests, 3 supernumerary staff priests, 1 non-staff priest;
2. Western blagochinni – 7 staff priests and 2 supernumerary staff priests;
3. Caspian blagochinni – 3 staff members.

## Churches Under the Diocese

### *Russian Orthodox “Holy Myrrhbearers” Cathedral*

*(The chapter “Russian Orthodox: Past and Present” of this book contains detailed information on the history of the construction of this church).*

Formerly it was the Church of “Holy Archangel Michael” of Salyan Infantry Regiment No 206. The church was built in 1909, and was closed down in 1920 by the Soviet government. In 1923, a Soldier’s House of the Red Army was opened in the empty church building, in 1970 it became a topographic maps storehouse, then a gymnasium, and in 1988-1989 it was used as a barracks for paratroopers.

During the bloody January events of 1990, the roof of the church was hit by two shells. As a result, the roof was completely destroyed, the floor collapsed, and the walls cracked. In 1991 the damaged building was put at the disposal of the Russian Orthodox Church. After establishing the

Bishop's Throne in Baku, the restoration of the church became possible. The temple was restored and renovated with the care and support of the Bishop of the Baku and Caspian Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church, Alexander Ishein.

On May 27, 2001, the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Aleksy II visited this church and performed the dedication ceremony. It is worth noting that the church was restored with the financial support of Aydin Gurbanov, former Vice-President of the All-Russian Azerbaijani Congress, who used to live in Moscow. He provided most of the financial and material means required for the renewal of the main church of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese. The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Aleksy II awarded the Muslim benefactor with the "Orthodox Order" for his services for the restoration of the Russian Orthodox temple in the capital of Azerbaijan.

Parts of the "holy relics" of St. Bartholomew who is considered the protector of Baku city are kept in this church.

*Russian Orthodox Church of "the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary"*



This church was built in 1926 in the Basilica architectural style instead of the church-school of "the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary" which was demolished in 1925 because of the construction of Sabunchu Terminal. The new building of the Church of "the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary" which was erected on Verkhniaya Priyutskaya Street (today Shamil Azizbayov Str., 205.) was the only Russian Orthodox temple functioning in Baku in April, 1937.

However, later it was also closed down and turned into military barracks. In 1944, this house of worship was returned to the Russian Orthodox Church and given the status of the Cathedral Church of the Stavropol-Baku Diocese.

In 1946, at the initiative of the blagochinni of the Orthodox churches in Azerbaijan, archpriest Sergiy Kazanski, an additional altar was built in the church. From 1999 to 2001 the church did further restoration work. On May 26, 2001 the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Aleksey II visited the Church of “the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary” and performed a prayer ceremony there. The Church has a large library of Orthodox literature, and a Sunday school for children.

*Russian Orthodox Church of “Michael the Archangel”  
(The chapter “Russian Orthodox: Past and Present” of this book contains  
detailed information on the history of the construction of this church).*



“Archangel Michael” church is one of the most ancient Orthodox temples in Baku. The church was built in the 1840s. After Soviet rule was established it was closed down in 1936 and turned into a dormitory. After the victory over fascism, in 1946, the temple building was returned to the Russian Orthodox Church.

On May 25, 2001 the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Aleksy II visited the “Archangel Michael” church and performed a prayer ceremony there. Presently an additional construction in honor of the Apostle Bartholomew has been built in the lower floor of the temple at the initiative of the Archbishop of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese Alexander Ishein<sup>119</sup>.

*“Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral in Ganja city.*



The temple was erected in 1887 on the site of the old cemetery with the charitable contributions of both local Orthodox and Muslim people. The church was built of bricks in Byzantine architectural style. Prior to the Bolshevik revolution, this Orthodox temple had the status of Cathedral. In 1920s the temple was closed down by the Soviet government and used for other purposes. In 1946 it was returned to the local Russian Orthodox church. Different icons from the old interior of the church have survived until today. The icons of “St. Alexander Nevsky” and “The Holy Mary Magdalene” should be mentioned especially. The church has religious services on Saturdays and Sundays, and on Orthodox feast days<sup>120</sup>.

119 - The official website of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese: [http://baku.eparhia.ru/church/arh\\_mihail/](http://baku.eparhia.ru/church/arh_mihail/) (retrieval date: 14.11.2016).

120 - The official website of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese: [http://baku.eparhia.ru/church/al\\_nevskii/](http://baku.eparhia.ru/church/al_nevskii/) (retrieval date: 14.08.2016).

*The Church of  
“St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” in Khachmaz city*



In 1946, a private house began to function as a house church. The area of the church is 64 m<sup>2</sup>. The yard has been renovated, and three additional rooms have been built for the performance of religious rites<sup>121</sup>.

*“Saint Seraphim of Sarov” House of Worship in Sumgayit city*

The church was opened on April 2, 2006, in Quarter 19, House 24/5, Apt. 18. The opening ceremony was attended by the akhoond of “Juma” Mosque of Sumgayit city, the representatives of the executive committee, and other guests<sup>122</sup>.

*The Chapel of “Great Prince Alexander Nevsky”*

It is located on the territory of the Russian Embassy in Azerbaijan.

### **Humanitarian Activity**

The Diocese is involved in a broad range of charitable work. For instance, the Russian Orthodox Church of “Michael the Archangel” has a soup kitchen for the poor. At the same time, the Diocese organizes charitable concerts every year.

<sup>121</sup> - The official website of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese: [http://baku.eparhia.ru/church/st\\_nicolas/](http://baku.eparhia.ru/church/st_nicolas/) (retrieval date: 14.08.2016).

<sup>122</sup> - The official website of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese: [http://baku.eparhia.ru/church/serafim\\_sarovskii/](http://baku.eparhia.ru/church/serafim_sarovskii/) (retrieval date: 14.08.2016).

## Religious Education



*The first graduates of the course “We Learn Azerbaijani Language”*

Sunday schools and catechism courses function under the Diocese. We should note that our Russian citizens in Russian churches are taught the Azerbaijani language within the project “We Learn Azerbaijani Language” which is being implemented by the Knowledge Fund Under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Service of the State Adviser on Multinational, Multicultural

and Religious Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

## Publication

The Diocese issues a quarterly magazine “Pravoslavniy Kaspiy,” and a bi-monthly newspaper “Pravoslavniy Vestnik.”

## The Number and National Composition of Orthodox People

The Russian Orthodox Church is the largest non-Muslim organization in our country. However, it is difficult to identify the exact number of adherents of this church, because the number is identified based on ethnoreligious indicators. Members of Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Greek, and similar minorities are automatically considered members of this church. According to information given on the official website of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in 2009 the number of Russians in our republic was 119,300 people, and the number of Ukrainians was 21,500 people<sup>123</sup>. Based on these statistics you could conclude that the Russian church in our country has over 140,000 members. However, counting all those minorities as adherents of the Russian Orthodox Church is wrong, because there are Russian sectarians, Protestants, atheists, and secular people among them who do not belong to any church. It may be better to use the number provided by the press secretary of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox

Church Konstantin Pominov in his interview with the internet portal “Kavpolit.” K. Pominov believes that the Russian Church has about 50,000 members<sup>124</sup>.

The Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese is probably the only Christian religious organization in our republic which is not involved in missionary activities among Azerbaijanis. Few Azerbaijanis have converted to Orthodox Christianity. According to K. Pominov, the number of Azerbaijanis baptized in Russian churches in the years 1992-2014 does not exceed one thousand people. And most of those Azerbaijanis, come from mixed families<sup>125</sup>.

### Source of Funding

The Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese functions mainly, with the voluntary offerings of believers, the sales of religious items, and primarily by the financial support of the state of Azerbaijan. In 2016 alone, 250,000 Manat was allocated out of the reserve fund of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan’s state budget to the religious organization of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev.

### Holy Place



*Commemoration ceremony of  
St. Bartholomew near the  
Maiden Tower*

Besides other Christian and Orthodox feasts, Orthodox believers in our country celebrate a unique religious holiday, which holds a special significance for them. According to tradition, Christ’s disciple Bartholomew, was crucified upside down near the Maiden Town, in the year 71 a.d. Therefore, each year on June 24, local Orthodox Russians gather near the Maiden Tower at the ruins of “St. Bartholomew” chapel, which was destroyed by the Soviet government. There they hold a

triumphant religious ceremony under the leadership of the Head of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese Archbishop Alexander Ishein.

<sup>124</sup> - [http://kavpolit.com/articles/protoierej\\_konstantin\\_azerbajdzhan\\_ne\\_primet\\_total-755/](http://kavpolit.com/articles/protoierej_konstantin_azerbajdzhan_ne_primet_total-755/) (retrieval date: 13.09.2016).

<sup>125</sup> - [http://kavpolit.com/articles/protoierej\\_konstantin\\_azerbajdzhan\\_ne\\_primet\\_total-755/](http://kavpolit.com/articles/protoierej_konstantin_azerbajdzhan_ne_primet_total-755/).

## Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church

When speaking of Orthodoxy, we must also mention the history of those Orthodox Russians in our country who do not recognize the Moscow Patriarchate, that is “the old ritualists,” (“staroobryadtsy,” “staroveriy,” “raskolniki”), because they were the first “sectarians,” who came to Azerbaijan in the Tsarist Russian period.

The first “raskolniki” came to our country even before the 1830s. The very first “staroveriy” settled in the Altiagac area of the Province of Baku and hid in caves from Tsarist government persecution. Molokans living there would provide them with food.

From the 1830s-1850s, the Tsarist government exiled “staroveriy” from Voronezh, Chernigov, Perm, Kursk, Saratov, Samara, Ryazan, Moscow and other provinces to the Province of Shamakhi. They settled in Andreyevka, Astrakhanka and Vali villages of Lankaran county, in Chukhuryurd village of Shamakhi county, and in Baku, Shamakhi, and Lankaran cities. Eventually, Vali village of Lankaran county became the main center of sectarians from various “staroveriy” sects. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the village had 42 “old ritualist,” 67 “chasovenniy starover,” and 47 “bespopovets.”

The State Historical Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan contains an interesting historical document related to “staroveriy.” The document reveals that in 1910 “staroveriy” lived in Baku, and in Gara Shahar, Bibiheybat and Balakhani. Seventy-five “raskolniki” asked the government to grant state registration to the “Alekseyev Staroobryadets Community.” The Community’s house of worship was located in Baku city, Telefonnaya Street (today’s 28th May Street), No 54, in Prikashikovs’ house. The members of “Alekseyev Staroobryadets Community” were subjected to the Belokrinitisk Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Staroobryadets Church<sup>126</sup>.

The religious community under the Belokrinitisk Diocese existed even during Soviet rule. For instance, in the 1980s a religious community of “staroveriy” under the Belokrinitisk Diocese was granted state registration at the address Baku city, October district, Gasim Ismayilov Street 38 (today Yasamal district, Zargarpalan Street)<sup>127</sup>.

<sup>126</sup> - ARDTA, f.389, case 259, v. 4-5.

This religious community consisted mainly of elderly people. Over time the “starobryadets” religious community ceased to exist because most of the “starovery” passed away.

The number of “starovery” presently living in our republic is unknown. Perhaps, there are just a few aged “starobryadets.” This is confirmed by the words of the presbyter of the “Molokan Spiritual Christians” religious community Valeri who says that the children of a “starover” who died in 2016 asked the Molokan community to bury the deceased according to the Christian tradition, because the Russian Orthodox Church considers “starobryadets” unbaptized and refuses to bury them. It is interesting that Molokans in Baku have helped “starovery”’s families bury their dead.

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127 - The Council on Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR. The list of Christian organizations registered by the state on August 10, 1987 (The list is presently kept at the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan).

## The Georgian Orthodox Church

*This church has had a significant impact on the formation of Georgian culture, the preservation of the ethnic religious identity of Georgian people, and the development of Georgian national identity. Georgian people show great respect to their national church (officially named Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church) and the Catholicos as the Head of the Georgian Orthodox Church, and they try to receive the blessing of their religious leaders in crucial matters related to the fate of their community.*

### Overview

Christianity began spreading on Georgian territory from the 1<sup>st</sup> century. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century most Georgians had already accepted this religion. At that time, the Georgian Church was under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church of Antioch, and by the 8<sup>th</sup> century it gained independence. Its autocephality was approved by a local Church Council in Antioch in 1057. After Georgia became a part of the Russian Empire in 1811, the Georgian Church lost its independence, was attached to the Russian Orthodox Church, and received the status of exarchate in it. After the February Revolution and the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917, the Georgian Orthodox Church regained its independence, held a local Church Council, and elected their Catholicos-Patriarch. In 1943 the Georgian Church was recognized by the Russian Orthodox Church<sup>128</sup>. In 1989 the autocephality of the Georgian Church was confirmed by the Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome in Istanbul and the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitri I<sup>129</sup>.

### Organizational Structure

The Georgian Orthodox Church has about 3,5 million members. Georgians constitute the overwhelming majority. Worship is performed in

128 - See: Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Religioznye organizatsii sovremennogo mira: Uchebnoye posobiye. — Moscow: Moscow University Publication, 2010. — p. 43.

129 - Kratkaya istoriya Gruzinskoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi [Electronic resource] //site: The Georgian Orthodox Church. — URL: [http://georgiaorthodoxy.info/index.php?cat=\\_history](http://georgiaorthodoxy.info/index.php?cat=_history) (retrieval date: 27.10.2016).

the Georgian language

The Head of the Church is titled the “Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, Archbishop of Mtskheta and Tbilisi.” From 1977 up to now this highest religious position has been taken by Iliya II<sup>130</sup>. The Catholicos-Patriarch’s residence is in Tbilisi city. Besides that, the organizational structure of the Georgian Orthodox Church includes the Holy Synod and 47 Dioceses. The religious rites of the Georgian Orthodox are performed by the priests of the Khornabuji and Hereti Diocese. The Diocese is located in Dedoplistskaro town and headed by Dimitri Kapanadze<sup>131</sup>. And in our country religious rites are performed by Piotr Khumarashvili who was sent by the Diocese and became a citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

### Georgian Orthodoxy in Azerbaijan

The following four Georgian Orthodox temples<sup>132</sup> function on the territory of our republic:

#### 1. *Georgian Orthodox Church of “St. George”*



<sup>130</sup> - Patriarkh-Katolikos vsey Gruzii Iliya II [Electronic resource] // site: The Georgian Orthodox Church. – URL:[http://georgiaorthodoxy.info/index.php?cat=\\_today&ii=1&jj=0](http://georgiaorthodoxy.info/index.php?cat=_today&ii=1&jj=0) (retrieval date: 27.08.2016).

<sup>131</sup> - The official website of the Georgian Orthodox Church: <http://patriarchate.ge/geo/wmindasinodi/wevrebi/> (retrieval date: 27.10.2016).

<sup>132</sup> - The information about the Georgian Orthodox temples in Azerbaijan was taken from the official website of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations: <http://scwra.gov.az/structures/61/2/0/?> (retrieval date: 27.08.2016).

This house of worship is located in Qakhingiloy village of Qakh district. It was built in 1888 in honor of the Christian Martyr George with the voluntary offerings and the funds of the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus.” The area of the church building is 120 m<sup>2</sup>. The church is protected by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as a historical monument. A Georgian Orthodox Christian religious community is functioning in “St. George” Church in Qakhingiloy village of Qakh district which was re-registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations (SCWRO) of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2010.

## *2. Georgian Orthodox Church of “St. Nino”*



It is located in Alibeyli village of Qakh district. The area of the church is 0,32 Ha. This church was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1888) with funds from the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus,” and is protected by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as a religious and historical monument. A Georgian Orthodox Christian religious community functions in “St. Nino” Church in Alibeyli village, in Qakh district which was re-registered by SCWRO in 2010.

### 3. *Georgian Orthodox Church of “The Holy Trinity”*



Holy Sameba church is located in Kotuklu village of Qakh district. Its area is 0,06 Ha. This church was built from 1892-1894 with funds from the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus.” The church is protected by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as a religious and historical monument. The church building is in a satisfactory condition.

### 4. *Georgian Orthodox Church of “St. Michael”*



It is located in Meshabash village of Qakh district. Its area is 0,03 Ha. This church was built from 1892-1894 with funds from the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus.” It was renovated from 1992-1993. The church is protected by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as a religious and historical monument. The church building is in a satisfactory condition.

### Statistics

Based on the results of the 2011 population census, the number of Georgians living in our republic was 9,900 people. That is, Georgians constitute 0,1 percent of the country population<sup>133</sup>. They live mainly in Qakh district. Although the number of Georgians in Azerbaijan exceeds nine thousand people, the number of those who attend worship services in the Georgian temples in our republic is much lower. On the main religious holidays (for instance, *St. George’s Birth*, *Day of Remembrance of St. Nino’s Death*) the temples are attended by 100 people at the most.

It should also be noted that most people come to the temples on “Kurmukoba” holiday which is celebrated in May and November.

### Source of Funding

The local Georgian Orthodox religious organizations function with believers’ personal contributions, and mainly with financial support provided by the state of Azerbaijan. In 2011-2015 thirty thousand manat was granted to the Georgian Orthodox Christian religious community of “St. Nino” Church in Alibeyli village of Qakh district, and twenty eight thousand manat was granted to the Georgian Orthodox Christian religious community of “St. George” Church in Qakhingiloy village of Qakh district. This fact clearly illustrates that the state of Azerbaijan treats each person’s religious needs with attention and care, regardless of their nationality and religion. At the same time, the Caucasian Muslims Office has also been giving significant financial assistance to the Georgian Orthodox people, and that also illustrates the tolerance of our country.

Also, by order of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, every year a certain amount of natural gas is granted free of charge to mosques and temples of religious organizations, including Georgian Orthodox places of worship.

<sup>133</sup> The official website of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/> (retrieval date: 27.10.2016).

# **CHAPTER III**

## **CATHOLICISM**

## THE LARGEST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Catholicism (from Greek “katholikos” meaning “universal”) has a very interesting and controversial history, and even, so to speak, is shrouded in mystery. Passing judgment on the centuries-old complicated historical journey of the Roman Catholic Church requires some responsibility and skill. Because on the one hand this Church has made a significant contribution to European civilization and world heritage, whilst on the other hand, at some stages of its history, has committed shameful actions in the name of God. Before we touch on these controversial matters, we should review the history of the origins of Catholicism.



*The Centre of Catholicism – the Vatican City State*

The Roman Catholic Church associates its origins with the name of St. Peter, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, and considers him the first Roman Pope. And this is not accidental. Catholics believe that the

following words of Jesus Christ addressed to Peter mean that the church would be built by this apostle: *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”* (Matthew 16: 18-19)<sup>1</sup>.

However, scholars have a different view of the origin of Catholicism. They say that this Christian church began in 1054. In that year the Western Church (centered in Rome and worshipping in Latin) and the Eastern Church (centered in Constantinople and worshipping in Greek) cursed one another, and Christianity divided into two large branches: Catholicism and Orthodoxy. In fact, this great schism began much earlier, long before the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In 395 A.D, the ancient Roman Empire was divided into the Western and the Eastern parts, and that eventually caused the split in the unified Christian church<sup>2</sup>.

We should especially touch on the history of the Papacy here. In the latter period of the ancient Roman Empire, churches in its cities and provinces were still governed by bishops. They had great power in their hands. The bishop in the city of Rome had special authority. From the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries the bishops of Rome were titled “Pope” (Greek “pappis” means “father”). In fact the first leader of the Roman church who called himself Pope was Bishop Marcellinus (296-304 A.D.). However, at that time the title had no special meaning, because bishops in the East were also called Popes<sup>3</sup>.

Because of his greater authority the bishop of Rome later gathered all the Western Christians around himself. The greatest role in this was played by Pope Leo I (440-461 A.D.), as he announced the bishops of the church in Rome St. Peter’s heirs. At his initiative the Roman Emperor issued a special decree, which demanded that all Christians should submit to the bishop of Rome<sup>4</sup>. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century Popes owned rich lands around the “eternal city” of Rome and on the Isle of Sicily. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century the King of the Franks Pepin the Short (714-768 A.D) gave the Pope more land

1 - See: Tikhomirova G. Khristianstvo i kul'tura. – Riga: iznachalniyi kompyuternyi variant, 2011. - p. 403

2 - For more detailed information see: Vseobshaya istoriya religiy mira: ill'ustrirovannaya entsiklopediya/ Yakovleva L., Dubrovskiy I., Ovs'annikova A. i t.d./ Moscow: Eksmo, 2008. - p. 600-605.

3 - See: Tikhomirova G. Ibid. – p. 403.

4 - See: Mary Pat Fisher. Licing religions/ Fisher M.P., Trifonova T.I., Medvedeva R.K. i t.d./ Moscow: «Respublika», 1997. - p. 222.

and extended the bishop's territory. In 756 the Papal state or the Papal province appeared (this church state existed until it was abolished by the "Italian unification" revolutionary movement in 1870). After that, the person who had the title of Roman Pope was both the head of the church and the head of the states.

The Popes' authority grew more and more. In 800 Pope Leo III (795-816A.D) bestowed the Imperial crown upon Charlemagne (768-814A.D). The reason being that the great king of the Franks wanted to demonstrate to everyone that he had been appointed by God. Thus, spiritual and secular authorities were united. After this important historical event, the feudal lords had to get Papal consent in order to come to power and confirm their "divine" rights<sup>6</sup>.

*Henry IV and Gregory VII at Canossa in 1077.*

*Artist Carlo Emmanuelle*

5 - See: Tikhomirova G. The quoted work. – p. 403.

6 - Ibid.



In the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Roman Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) declared the divine government higher than the secular government. He claimed that he had been given the privilege to remove emperors and kings from their thrones and that the rulers should kiss the Pope's feet, because the Pope was the Lord's vicar on the earth<sup>7</sup>. The Head of the Holy Roman Empire Henry IV (1050-1106) was filled with rage and opposed the Pontiff<sup>8</sup>. When Gregory VII saw the emperor's rebellion, he ejected him from the Church and called the population of the empire to disobey the king. As a result, many princes turned away from the emperor. Desperate and faced with the danger of a rebellion, Henry IV had to walk barefoot to Canossa Castle, the Pope's temporary residence, in order to receive forgiveness from him, and after repenting and fasting for three days at the Castle wall and kneeling down in front of the Pontiff, he was forgiven<sup>9</sup>. The religious government won. After this historical event of 1077, the expression "walk to Canossa" appeared, meaning the act of repentance and humiliation.

Thus, in the early Middle Ages the heads of the Catholic Church obtained absolute power. And in the period of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), papal power reached its peak, and the Pope's state became the most powerful state in Europe.

When speaking of the history of Catholicism in the Middle Ages, we should touch on an important matter. Usually only the most horrible scenes and the most negative events are remembered in a discussion about the past of the Catholic Church with its long and complicated history. Such an approach is unbalanced and biased. Indeed, many tragic events that happened in the "Dark Middle Ages" were caused by Catholics. This cannot be denied. For instance, Pope Innocent III ordered brutal massacres and the total destruction of the cities of the "heretic" Albigensians (Cathars) who opposed the greedy, selfish, and luxurious lifestyle of the Catholic clergy in France, and preached a modest and honest life, spread a pacifist and dualist religious teaching. Or, Urban II in 1095 who initiated crusades against the Eastern world (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries), and crusaders who slaughtered Muslims, Jews, and Orthodox Christians in Jerusalem (1099) and Constantinople (1204).

7 - Mary Pat Fisher. Ibid.

8 - Pontiff – Roman Popes in the Catholic Church were officially called pontiffs, and the period of their rule was called "pontificate." Another title is the Holy Throne and Crown. The term Pontiff originates from the Latin "pontifices" meaning "high priest," or "bridge-builders."

9 - For more detailed information see: Talberg N. Istoriya khristianskoy tserkvi: iz tsykla «Religiya v



It is also well-known how during the crusades, Catholic spiritual military orders initially created to protect the weak, the pilgrims, to heal the sick, and to protect the grave of Jesus Christ (Hospitaliers, Templiers, Teutons etc.) were spreading the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Muslim East with



fire and the sword, and were possessing such riches with their plunder and usury that they were envied even by Europe's powerful kings.

*Roman Pope Urban II announcing the 1<sup>st</sup> crusade.*

*A Medieval miniature.*

When the Catholic Church struggled against Protestantism (the Counter-Reformation movement), Spanish Ignatius of Loyola founded the Catholic male spiritual Order of Jesuits in 1534. The Order played a controversial role in history, because Jesuits as professional spies in their fight against the possible dangers for Catholicism used all possible methods, even deception.

Besides that, according to historical sources, in the Middle Ages the Church practiced nepotism (Roman Popes giving lucrative positions and properties to their relatives), Catholic priests sold indulgencies, religious

positions and titles, imposing different heavy taxes on simple people, thus robbing them and increasing their own riches.

One of the dark sides of the history of Catholicism was the Inquisition courts (Latin “inquisitio” means “interrogation”) which functioned widely from the 12<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Hundreds of thousands of innocent people lost their lives in the brutal tortures of the Inquisition, burned at the stake, or in the “witch hunts.” It is also historically true that in the distant past, the Catholic Church was involved in politics and used dirty and insidious means for its own purposes.



*Auto-da-fé. Pedro Berruguete. 1475.*

The Avignon Captivity (1309-1377)<sup>10\*</sup>, the Great Western Schism (1378-1417)<sup>11\*\*</sup> and the absolute moral decline of Catholic clergy with their orgies during the Renaissance are undeniable. Pope Alexander VI de Borja (who ruled 1492-1503) is well known for his immorality.

The massacre of thousands of Huguenots by Catholics in Paris on “St. Bartholomew’s Night,” on August 24, 1572, and the Index Librorum Prohibitorum (List of Prohibited Books) issued by Pope Paul IV (1555-1559) and the banning of certain books written by some famous thinkers and scientists remain dark spots in the history of this Church. These facts are undeniably true.

10 - \* The King of France Philip IV the Fair in his desire to control the head of the church initiated moving the residence of Roman Pope Clement V to the town of Avignon in 1309. The pontiffs who lived in that French town until 1378 became dependent on the king of France. Therefore, this period is called “The Avignon Captivity of the Popes.”

11 - \*\* In years 1378-1417 three popes appear at the same time as a result of the internal controversies and the struggle for power between Italian and French clergy. Each of those Pontiffs living in different places (Rome, Avignon, and Pizza) cursed the others and claimed to be the head of the church. This division caused the division between the European states. In 1414-1418 King of Germany Sigismund I initiated the 16<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council in Constance city, and Martin V was elected the Roman Pope, while other pontiffs were removed from the throne, and thus the division ended. The modern Church recognizes only the popes who were sitting in Rome as popes, and identifies the others as “antipopes.”

However, despite these facts, it is wrong to call the Catholic Church a “nest of evil” or to follow French philosopher Voltaire who named the Holy Throne and Crown “the serpent whose head must be crushed,” and to see only the dark side of the past history of Catholicism. Historical truth requires objectivity. And the reality is that Catholicism played a significant role in the formation of Western civilization.

Even in the Middle Ages Catholic monasteries were considered centers of science and healing. The Catholic monks there, led ascetic lives for centuries and carefully copied and stored rare antique manuscripts. The greatest credit for the preservation of ancient Greek and Roman heritage until today belongs to the Catholic monks. The monasteries served as the largest libraries in Europe. Both in the Middle Ages and in the later periods, monks of Franciscan, Carmelite, Dominican, Augustine, and other Orders considered it their moral duty to reach out to the hungry and destitute people from the lowest layer of society, and provide medical care and education. Such large and famous European universities as The Paris-Sorbonne and Oxford were created on the scientific basis of church schools and monasteries, and with the support of spiritual orders.



*The interior of St. Peter's Basilica. Vatican. 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

The Catholic Church has enriched world culture with many famous philosophers and scientists. These include Italian philosopher Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), German scientist Saint Albert (1200-1280), English scientist Roger Bacon (1214-1292), theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Scottish scholastic Duns Scotus (1266-1308), English philosopher William of Ockham (1285-1347), Catholic cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) who had an encyclopedic knowledge, German philosopher Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469-1536), English utopist writer Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), and other prominent persons.



*Pietà. Michelangelo. 1498 – 1499.*

Catholicism has had an undeniable impact on Western arts and architecture. For instance, the Church of Our Lady of Paris (Notre-Dame de Paris) with its mystical appearance and the glorious St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican are considered masterpieces of world architecture. German artist

Dürer's paintings "Praying Hands," "Apocalypses," "The Life of the Virgin," "The Passion of Christ," "Saint Jerome," and other symbolic, profound religious and philosophical engravings and paintings bear the traces of Catholicism. The significant contributions of the Catholic Church to the world's cultural heritage include Michelangelo's sculpture "Pietà" which expresses the cry of the soul of a person who has lost their child; his frescoes "The Creation of Adam" skillfully painted on the Sistine Chapel's ceiling and still amazing the visitors, "The Fall and Expulsion from Garden of Eden," and "The Last Judgment"; famous Italian artist Raphael's "Sistine Madonna" which unites the joy of divine victory with maternal compassion etc.

Western music has also been impacted by Catholicism. Gregorian chant, organ music, requiem (mass for the dead), and "Ave Maria" by Franz Schubert are just some of the pearls of world culture from that category. When speaking of the effect of Catholicism on European literature, the Italian poet Dante Alighieri should be mentioned first. This powerful master of the pen in his "Divine Comedy" skillfully described terrifying scenes of the Last Judgment and Hell, and took his place among the classics of world literature. There are many other prominent Catholics like these who have made a significant contribution to humanity.

It is also known that Roman Popes have supported many famous sculptors, artists, architects, and scientists. Pontiffs themselves were distinguished by their education and worldview. Some popes even played a significant role in the history of social thought. One of such Popes was humanist philosopher Adrian VI (ruled in 1522-1523).

When we look at history, we can see that despite all the dangers, troubles, and serious challenges faced by the Roman Catholic Church, the Papacy has survived thanks to its ability to consider the demands of the time, to apply a flexible policy, and to renew itself. It is true that the Reformation movement which covered the whole of Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the social and philosophical ideas against the Church in the Age of Enlightenment of the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the French bourgeois of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the triumph of secularity in the West have all shaken the foundations of the Holy Throne and Crown, and the Church has lost some of its former might. In France, one of the greatest Catholic countries, during

the Jacobin dictatorship of 1793-1794, the revolutionists wanted to completely erase Catholicism from history by means of terror, and they tried to impose on the ordinary people an artificial atheistic religion of the so-called “cult of the mind” instead of Christian ideals. Nevertheless, the fanatical revolutionaries’ dreams of burying Catholicism in the past failed, because it was not so easy to rob the ordinary Catholics of their religious feeling rooted deep in their hearts and of their love for the Church. Time has shown that absurd ideas such as the “cult of the mind” meant to erase Christianity from people’s memories, were doomed to fail and remain in the past.

As we review the historical path of the Roman Catholic Church, the history of its development, and its present activities, we see that the Holy Throne and Crown is very different from the Medieval Catholic Church. The Vatican demonstrates its boldness to ask for forgiveness for past mistakes, the ability to keep pace with the changing world and to address the masses, and a willingness to engage in dialogue with representatives of other beliefs. Especially after the Second Vatican Council called by Pope John XXIII in the years 1962-1965 the Church experienced a renewal and a new openness to the world.



*The 266th Roman Pope Francis (Jorge Mario Bergoglio)*

Pope John Paul II played a significant role in improving the Vatican’s image in the world arena. He demonstrated repentance for the past sins of the Church, and he tried to build relationships of mutual respect and honor with the representatives of other religions and churches. The present Head of the Holy Throne and Crown the 266<sup>th</sup>

Pope Francis has also been demonstrating progressive ideas, and a liberal and reformative spirit with respect to some issues.

It is appropriate to mention here the sacrificial service and charitable activities of Catholic clerics and missions in poor and dangerous regions, because Catholic monks’ efforts to help the destitute in Africa and other places show the church in a positive light.

After briefly touching on the policy of the Roman Catholic Church in the world, the question may be raised as to how many people on earth belong to this church now. The answer may be found in the Vatican's statistical yearbook "Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae 2014." According to this report, 1,272,000,000 believers consider themselves Catholics. Most Catholics live in Latin America (nearly half of the Catholics in the world). The largest Catholic countries are Brazil (78,95%), Mexico (86,67%), Philippines (81,03%), and Italy (96,55%). At the same time, the USA takes (the) fourth place in the number of Catholics in the world (64,621,000 people). Catholics constitute 22,63% of the United States population<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, due to its tendency to progressive reforms and its ability for self-preservation, the Roman Catholic Church has not lost its attractiveness for more than 1 billion people and has kept its holy image. The Pope's visits are always met with great crowds, joy, and excitement by Catholics all over the world, from Africa to Europe, from America to Asia. The Holy Throne and Sword still remain a source of hope and refuge for hundreds of millions of people.

<sup>12</sup> — Statistic information <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/sc1.html> and <http://sib-catholic.ru/v-vatikane-ozvuchili-svezhuyu-statistiku-tserkvi-na-planete-rastet-chislo-katolikov/> (retrieval date: 31.07.2016)

## BASIC BELIEFS <sup>13</sup>

- Catholics accept the Holy Scriptures (Bible), writings of the Church Fathers, and Holy Tradition (Creed, Ecumenical Councils, and the Roman Pope's dogmatic statements) as their foundation of faith.

- Catholics accept the decisions of twenty-one Ecumenical Councils, i.e. they recognize as ecumenical even the councils held by the Catholic Church after the schism of 1054. The last of these councils (The Second Vatican Council) was held from 1962-1965.

- The Catholic Church is characterized by a strong centralized system of governance. The common center of the Catholic world is the Vatican. The religious leader of all Catholics – the Roman Pope – lives there. His full title is: Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the Vatican City State. Papal authority is even higher than Ecumenical Councils.

- Catholics make Mary equal to Jesus Christ. Other Christians believe that only Jesus Christ came into the world immaculate, but Catholics consider Mother Mary born immaculate as well.

- Unlike the Orthodox and Protestants, Catholics believe in Purgatory.

- “Filioque” (Latin, “and the Son”) is a Catholic teaching which states that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from God the Father, but also from God the Son.

- According to the teaching of the Catholic Church, Roman Popes never make mistakes in their decisions regarding spiritual matters. Based on this dogma, which was accepted at the First Vatican Council, the Pontiff receives a special gift of the Holy Spirit during his formal proclamations regarding doctrinal and moral issues. This gift keeps the head of the church from expressing wrong opinions on doctrinal subjects.

<sup>13</sup> - The basic beliefs are presented according to the book: Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Religioznyie organizatsii sovremennogo mira: Uchebnoye posobiye. – Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 2010. – p. 71-77, 79.

- The Roman Catholic Church recognizes seven sacraments, but some of them are performed in a different way than the Orthodox. Catholics baptize people by sprinkling or pouring water on them.

- Catholics use leavened bread in the ritual of the Lord's Supper.

- The sacrament of absolution is performed in a special confessional booth.

- Catholic priests, except for deacons, are not allowed to get married.

This religious rule is called "celibacy."

- Divorce is next to impossible in Catholicism.

- Catholics, like Orthodox believers, have a monastic system. The Catholic monastic system is divided into different orders.

- Catholics venerate angels, holy relics, saints, "holy" objects, and icons. However, they do not venerate icons as much as Orthodox believers.

- The main language of worship in Catholicism is Latin; however, the Second Vatican Council decided to allow worship in national languages as well.

- The cross of Catholics is four-pointed.

- The Catholics of the Latin tradition cross themselves from left to right with all five fingers extended.

- The main holiday is Christmas, which is celebrated every year on December 25<sup>th</sup>. The unique Catholic religious holidays are Corpus Christi, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Feast of Christ the King, etc. Besides these, Catholicism has 16 holidays dedicated to the Mother Mary. Especially important is the Feast of the Holy Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception celebrated on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

## CATHOLICISM IN AZERBAIJAN

*The largest branch of Christianity, Catholicism, has existed in our country for over 600 years and had a difficult and very different path of development. It is worth noting that this branch of Christianity spread in our country anew in different periods. The history of Catholicism in our country can be divided into four parts: the period of Ilkhanid rule, the period of Safavid rule, the period of Tsarist Russia, and the period of modern Azerbaijan. Let's review these periods.*

### The Period of Ilkhanid Rule

The initial stage of the spread of Catholicism took place from the 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, beginning from Tabriz, the capital of Hulakus (Ilkhanid) Empire. At that time, Azerbaijan was the main administrative and political center of this huge Turk-Mongol empire. Economic and political relations developing between Ilkhanid rulers and some Western states, as well as the Holy Throne and Crown, served as the background for the spread of Catholicism throughout the territory of the empire.

We should especially touch on the trade contract between Venice and Hulakus. The contract allowed Catholics to act freely on the territories of the Ilkhanid Empire. Thus, on the basis of trade relations between Venice and Hulakus, from the years 1289-1290, monks of the Dominican and Franciscan orders came to Tabriz city<sup>14</sup>. Later, the Tabriz custody of Eastern Tartary was formed which was governed by Franciscans<sup>15</sup>.

14 - Mammadov E. L'annuncio cristiano nel contesto islamico. Esperienza con i giovani nella missione sui iuris di Baku in Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]: Tesina di Magistero in Scienze Religiose (Catechesi Missionaria) / Mammadov E.; Moderatore: Prof. Scognamiglio Edoardo., Correlatore: Prof. Meddi Luciano; Istituto di Catechesi e Spiritualità Missionaria – Sezione di Catechesi. – Rome: 2009. – p. 32 - URL: <http://docplayer.it/14930532-L-annuncio-cristiano-nel-contesto-islamico-esperienza-con-i-giovani-nella-missione-sui-iuris-di-baku-in-azerbaigian.html> (retrieval date: 14.06.2016).

15 - Posle Marko Polo. Puteshestviya zapadnikh chuzhezemtsev v strany tr'okh Indiy [Electronic resource]/

Perevod s latinskogo i staroitalyanskogo yazikov, vvedeniye i primechaniya Ya. M. Sveta. - sor. Moscow: Nauka, 1968.//Vostochnaya literature: srednevekoviyе istoricheskije istochniki Vostoka i Zapada [site]: - URL: <http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/rus7/Montekorvino/framevved.htm> (retrieval date: 14.06.2016).

The area of influence of the custody included Azerbaijan, southern Georgia, Mesopotamia, and the east of present-day Turkey<sup>16</sup>.



*The Period of Ilkhanid Rule (1256-1353)*

On April 1, 1318, Pope John XXII issued the bull *Redemptor Noster*, decreeing the establishment of an archbishopric at Sultaniyya (a city in Southern Azerbaijan) which was the Ilkhanids' new capital. The decree placed the territory of Hulakus Empire, as well as the Chagatai Khanate, India, and Ethiopia under the jurisdiction of the archbishopric of Sultaniyya. It is notable that Dominican monks were charged with governing the archbishopric. Thus, the Ilkhanid state, including Azerbaijan as an integral part, was removed from Franciscan influence, and Dominicans were charged with missionary activities in the region<sup>17</sup>.

Another interesting point is that the Catholic Church in its far-reaching plans for spreading Catholicism in Asia viewed Azerbaijan as the *de facto* gateway of the East, and regarded our region as a strategic bridge.

16 - Johannes Preiser-Kapeller. *Civitas Thauris: The significance of Tabriz in the spatial frameworks of Christian merchants and ecclesiastics in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century// Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Century Tabriz/ Edited by Judith Pfeiffer. - Leiden-Boston: "Brill", 2014. – p. 281.*

17 - See: Posle Marko Polo//Ibid.

The fact that one of the largest Medieval Catholic centers, the Archbishopric of Sultaniyya, was established in the Southern Azerbaijan gives us reason to say this.

This is further confirmed by the fact that out of the six episcopates immediately subjected to the archbishopric, three were located in Azerbaijan – namely in Tabriz, Maragha, and Dakhikeran<sup>18</sup>; and later a Dominican episcopate was established in Nakhchivan.

According to the ethnic identity of the suffragan bishops appointed to these episcopates, the Catholics coming to our region were mainly Italian and French. For instance, the first head of the Dakhikeran episcopate Gerald Calvet from Montpellier was French, while the chief of the Maragha episcopate Bartolomeo da Poggio from Bologna and the bishop of the Tabriz Diocese Bartolomeo Abaglati from Siena were ethnic Italians<sup>19</sup>.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, major steps were taken for the spread of Catholicism in the Northern Azerbaijan. In 1320, a French Catholic missionary named Jordan of Severac visited Baku and other cities, and soon after that, a Franciscan monk, Odorik Pordenonski, came to our country and established Catholic missions, monasteries, and schools in Baku, Shamakhi, Ganja, and Nakhchivan. Twelve monasteries were opened in the city of Nakhchivan alone<sup>20</sup>.

Although the Southern Caucasus was put under the jurisdiction of Dominicans, some places in Northern Azerbaijan, namely Shamakhi and Salyan regions were included in the Franciscans' area of activity. Franciscan monks opened monasteries to spread Catholicism there. The Franciscan priests serving under the authority of the Saray custody under the Vicariate of Aquilony worked mainly in areas close to the Caspian sea<sup>21</sup>.

The founding of the episcopate of Nakhchivan was one of the most significant events in the history of Catholicism in our country.

18 — See: Gregor Prikhodko. Istoriya khristianstva v Kazakhstane i Sredney Azii v sredniye veka [Electronic resource] / © Karaganda, 2000. - URL:

<http://birmaga.ru/dost/История+христианства+в+казахстане+и+средней+азии+в+средние+века/part-15.html> (retrieval date: 25.06.2016).

19 - Gregor Prikhodko // Ibid.

20 - See: F. Mamedova, A. Abasov. Azerbaidzhan//Katolicheskaya ensiklopediya. – Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Fransiskantsev, 2002. - v. 1 (A-3). - p. 105.

21 - Melenberg A., Kozlov-Strutinskiy S. Kavkaz//Katolicheskaya ensiklopediya [Electronic resource]. - URL: <http://catholic.ru/modules.php?name=Encyclopedia&op=content&tid=244> (retrieval date: 16.06.2016).

The episcopate established in 1350 (French historian Jean-Paul dates its establishment to 1356<sup>22</sup>) was subject to the archbishopric of Sultaniyya. After the Ilkhanids' capital Sultaniyya lost its former glory and declined, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the archbishops' headquarters was moved to Nakhchivan<sup>23</sup>.

Despite the efforts of the Holy Throne and Crown to spread Catholicism in the East, the plans of the Catholic Church failed. The plague from 1346-1353 and Tamerlane's wars put an end to Catholic missions in the region<sup>24</sup>. Thus, the Dakhikeran episcopate was able to function up until the year 1349, the Catholic office in Maragha – until 1374/1384, the Archbishopric of Sultaniyya – until 1425, and the Tabriz Diocese – only until 1476<sup>25</sup>. The Episcopate of Nakhchivan was the longest surviving body under the Archbishopric of Sultaniyya – it existed until the year 1746<sup>26</sup>.

### **The Period of Safavid Rule**

With the emergence of the Azerbaijan Safavid state, Catholicism in our country entered a new stage of development. High diplomatic relations between the Safavid Empire and the Holy Throne and Crown brought about the revival of Catholic missions in the region. Especially favorable conditions for preaching Catholicism were created during the rule of Shah Abbas I (1587-1629) who searched for an ally in the Pope in his struggle against the Ottoman Empire.

This great ruler was well aware of the plans of the Holy Throne and Crown for his country. He understood that the Pope wanted to spread Catholicism among the Christian subjects of the Safavi state.

22 – Jan-Pol Ru. Tamerlan [Electronic resource]. - URL: [http://royallib.com/read/ru\\_ganpol/tamerlan.html#860160](http://royallib.com/read/ru_ganpol/tamerlan.html#860160) (retrieval date: 20.06.2016).

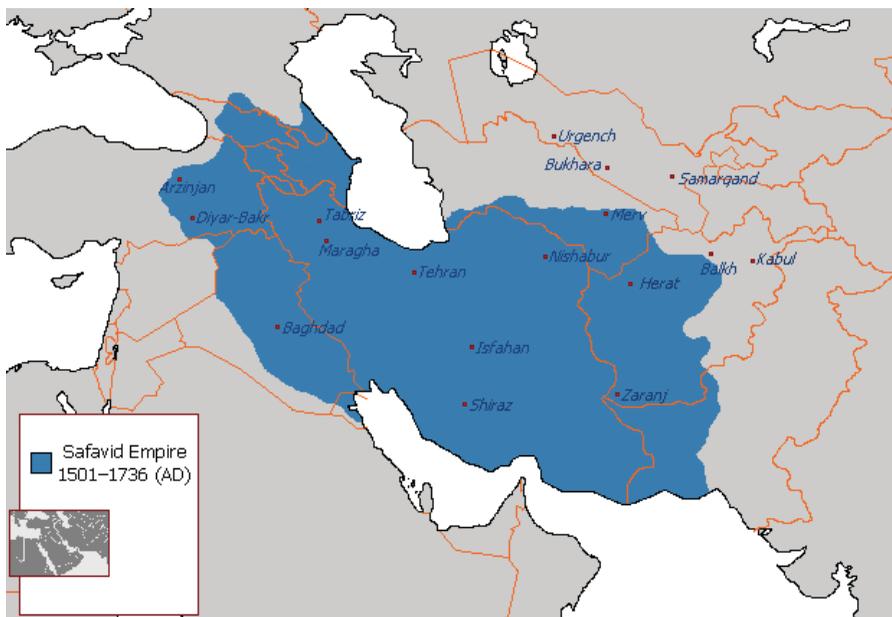
23 - Laurence Lockhart. European contacts with Persia, 1350-1736//The Cambridge history of Iran: The Timurid and Safavid periods/ edited by Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart. - Cambridge University Press, 1986. - Volume 6. – p. 374.

24 - Kalinichenko E. Aziya//Katolicheskaya ensiklopediya. – Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Fransiskantsev, 2002. - v. 1 (A-3). - p. 109.

25 - Johannes Preiser-Kapeller. Op.cit. - p. 287.

26 - Laurence Lockhart. Op.cit. - p. 374.

In an effort to use the Pontiff's desire in his own interest, the great Shah Abbas addressed the Pope, informing him of the increase of "worthy houses" for Christian priests in the Safavi state and advising him to send a high-ranking church minister<sup>27</sup>. As a result of his tolerant attitude towards Catholicism, the number of Catholic missionaries increased. Augustinians, Carmelites, and members of other spiritual orders came to the Safavid Empire<sup>28</sup>. Also, Dominicans who used to serve in the Ilkhanid state resumed their activities.



*The Safavid state during the rule of Shah Abbas I*

Periods of activity of Catholic spiritual orders under the Safavid state:

Augustinians (1573-1747);

Carmelites (1604-1775);

Capuchins (1628-1765);

Jesuits (1653-1760);

Dominicans (1677-1764)<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> - Makhmudov Ya. Vzaimootosheniya gosudarstv Akkoyunu i Sefevidov s zapadnoyevropeyskimi stranami. /polovina XV – nachalo XVII veka. – Baku: Izdatel'stvi Bakinskogo universiteta, 1991. – p. 202.

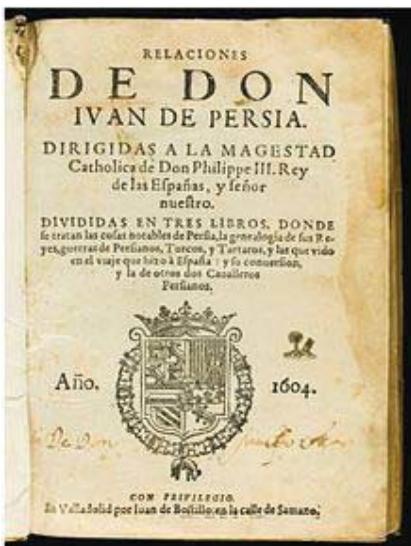
<sup>28</sup> - Laurence Lockhart. Op. cit. - p. 374.

<sup>29</sup> - Mammadov E. Op.cit. – p.33.

Then in 1680, following French and German missionaries, Polish Jesuits started their mission. The first mission was established in Ganja city<sup>30</sup>.

The King of France, Louis XIV (1643-1715) played an important role in the spread of Catholicism in Southern and Northern Azerbaijan. He asked the Safavid Shah Sultan Husayn (1694-1722) to treat his Christian subjects with mercy, and Pope Clement XI sent a letter with a similar message. As a result, the Safavid and French state signed two contracts. Based on the first agreement, the missionaries of the Catholic Church and the local Catholics would be under the protection of the Safavid government<sup>31</sup>.

When speaking of the history of the Catholic Church under Safavid rule, we should mention an Azerbaijani Turk named Uruch Beg Bayat (1560-1604) who became famous as the “Don Juan of Persia.” He was born to a noble Qizilbash tribe. He was part of a diplomatic delegation sent to the West by Shah Abbas I. After his arrival to Spain, he turned from his religion, accepted Catholicism, and never returned to his homeland.



*of the book “Don Juan of  
Persia’s Account”*

Uruch Beg settled in Europe. His book “Don Juan of Persia’s Account” was published in Spanish. The book, written by the famous Azerbaijani Catholic is important as a study of Safavid history. Besides that, the author gives interesting information about the countries he visited and different peoples’ customs.

As for the history of Catholic missions under Safavid rule, a book of the famous French traveler of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Jean Chardin (1643-1713), who visited Azerbaijan and Iran, contains some notable facts about Catholics living in our

<sup>30</sup> - See: F. Mamedova, A. Abasov. Op. cit. - p.105.

<sup>31</sup> - F. Mamedova, A. Abasov. Op. cit. - p.105.

country. For instance, in his description of Nakhchivan, the French traveler mentioned Dominican villages in this ancient land and wrote that Don Bartholomi from Bologna laid the foundation of Catholicism there in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. He also mentioned the number of local Catholics. *“The followers of the Roman church... are decreasing in number every day.”*<sup>32</sup> His memories reveal that, despite the reduction of tax for Catholics by the Safavid ruler, local feudal lords, ignoring the orders of the central government, kept taking heavy taxes from the Catholic villages, and that hindered the development of Catholic missions<sup>33</sup>.

Catholic missionary activity in the Safavid Empire also met resistance from the Gregorian Church<sup>34</sup>, because many Armenians living in Iran were converting to Catholicism. The Armenian Church, reluctant to agree with this situation, applied strict measures against the Catholics. The Armenian clergy's oppression resulted in the ruining of Catholic centers. Thus, both the arbitrariness of the local feudal lords and persecution from the Armenian Gregorian Church put an end to the development of Catholicism in the Safavid Empire.



*Jean Chardin (1643-1713)*

Although Catholic monks and emissaries were unable to have success in the region, their charity, translation, and medical activities left their mark on history<sup>35</sup>. Notably, the letters sent to Europe by Carmelites and Jesuits are important for the study of Safavid-Western relations<sup>36</sup>.

32 - Путешествиye Shardeny po Zakavkaziyu v 1672-1673 gg./Perevod Ye.V. Bakhutovoy i D.P. Kosovicha//Iz zhurnala “Kavkazskiy Vestnik” za 1900 i 1901 gg. - Tiflis: Skoropechatnaya M. Martirosiantsa, 1902. – p. 298.

33 - Ibid.

34 - See: F. Mamedova, A. Abasov. Ibid.

35 - Mamedova, A. Abasov. Op. cit. - p.105.

36 - Laurence Lockhart. Op. cit. - p. 374.

## The Period of Tsarist Russia

### *Polish Prisoners and Soldiers*

During the Russian Empire period, the Catholic community in our country consisted mainly of Polish people. Therefore, we should especially review the history of their settling in Azerbaijan. Polish soldiers came to our country during the Russian Empire's wars for military occupation of the Caucasus; they were forced to serve in the Russian army. The Polish men who took part in the Kościuszko Uprising of 1795, the first Polish political prisoners, were sent to the Caucasus in the year 1823. After the occupation of Azerbaijan by Tsarist Russia, in 1813, 10,000-12,000 Polish people were settled in Azerbaijan. Those were soldiers from the defeated Napoleonic army who were taken prisoners while fighting Russia (they belonged to the military corps of the Marshal of France, ethnic Polish Prince Józef Poniatowski). The next group of repressed Polish people came after the rebellions in Poland from 1830-1831/1863<sup>37</sup>. Historic documents in the Makhachkala Archive inform us that many Polish people were exiled to our country in the 1830s. These prisoners were sentenced to almost life-long military service and faced difficult living conditions in new places. They would often lose their lives due to infectious diseases or wounds in battle<sup>38</sup>. Some of the exiled Polish people lived in extremely miserable conditions; they were imprisoned in places like the Zaqatala Fortress or Nargin Island. This policy of the resettlement of Polish people continued until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>39</sup>.

With the coming of Polish soldiers, Polish military garrisons were formed all over the Caucasus, including Zaqatala and Gusar<sup>40</sup>. In the places of the garrisons, Catholic chapels were built<sup>41</sup>. The churches were basically meant for soldiers, and religious rites were performed by chaplains (military priests).

37 - See: Istoriya pol'skoy obshiny «Poloniya – Azerbaidzhan» [Electronic resource]. - URL: <http://www.polonia-azeri.org/history1.html> (retrieval date: 28.06.2016).

38 - See: Chaplitskiy B. Istoriya Katolicheskoy Tserkvi v Rossii. 2002 [Electronic resource]. - URL: [http://www.krotov.info/libr\\_min/24\\_ch/ap/lizky\\_01.html](http://www.krotov.info/libr_min/24_ch/ap/lizky_01.html) (retrieval date: 28.06.2016).

39 - Istoriya pol'skoy obshiny «Poloniya – Azerbaidzhan»/Ibid.

40 - Zeynalova S.M. Formirovaniye yevropeyskikh etnicheskikh obshin na Kavkaze (XIX-pervaya polovina XX vv.). – Baku: Mutarcim, 2010. - p. 83.

41 - Istoriya pol'skoy obshiny «Poloniya – Azerbaidzhan»/Ibid.

The chaplains performing baptism and other religious rites in churches and houses in Baku, Shamakhi, Guba, and Gusar were subordinate to the Catholic Church in Temirkhan-Shura (present-day Buynaksk town) of the Province of Dagestan. The religious leader of this Catholic organization was titled “Military Chaplain and Parochial Administrator of the Province of Dagestan and Baku”<sup>42</sup>.

Generally, the Temirkhan-Shura parish and Catholics in the Caucasus were governed by the “Visitation of the Province of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia” under the Tiraspol Diocese, and the religious and administrative center of Catholicism in the Russian Empire as a whole was the metropolitanate of Mogilev. The head of the metropolitanate – the metropolitan archbishop – was based in the imperial capital Saint Petersburg<sup>43</sup>.

It should be noted that the small Catholic church opened under the regiment in Baku city in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was subject to the large Roman Catholic military parish in Agbulaq settlement (present-day Tetrtsqaro town, Georgia). From 1882, the Catholic church in Zaqatala was also subject to the military parish in Agbulaq<sup>44</sup>.

When talking of the Catholics resident in our country in the 1850s, we should note their number. Particularly interesting are the statistics of Catholics in Shamakhi city, which at that time was the center of a large province with the same name. According to “Kavkazski kalendar” magazine, 200 Catholics lived in Shamakhi in the year 1850<sup>45</sup>. The center of Shamakhi Province had just a small number of Catholics. Nevertheless, those Catholics, feeling the need of a church, requested the provincial government grant them permission for the construction of a church. In 1860, the construction plan of the Catholic place of worship was approved. A total of 584 rubles was collected for the project. However, the provincial authorities postponed the construction of the church, pointing to the small number of Catholics and the insufficiency of the collected funds<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> - See: Chaplitskiy B. *Istoriya Katolisheskoy Tserkvi v Rossii*/Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> - See: Chaplitskiy B. *Istoriya Katolisheskoy Tserkvi v Rossii*/Ibid; Gumbatova T. *Katoliki na Kavkaz'e* [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://www.proza.ru/2016/07/08/2014> (retrieval date: 28.07.2016). <sup>44</sup> - *Istoriya katolisheskogo prikhoda v Baku (1880-1931)* [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://www.rc.net/azerbaijan/baku.html> (retrieval date: 14.08.2016).

<sup>45</sup> - See: *Kavkazskiy kalendar' na 1850 god/ Izdanniy ot kantselyarii namestnika Kavkazskogo*. – Tiflis: v tipografii kantselyarii namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1849. - p. 94.

<sup>46</sup> - See: Ibragimova D. *Zdes' zvuchala «Ave Maria»/ Azerbaidzhan No. 14-15, 2003/ crp.174-179* [Electronic resource]. - URL: <http://www.catholic.az/ru/archives/518> (retrieval date: 02.07.2016).

Although Shamakhi was the provincial center, more Catholics lived in Gusar. This is confirmed by the 1864 catalogue of the Tiraspol Diocese. The statistics in the catalogue show that Gusar church had 1,200 parishioners<sup>47</sup>. After Catholic soldiers ceased to come to the Caucasus, this Catholic parish lost its significance and was disbanded<sup>48</sup>.

It is notable that Catholic church buildings in Gusar and Zaqatala have survived to this day and are under state protection as historical monuments of architecture. Presently, the former Catholic church in Gusar is used as the State Picture Gallery.



*Gusar. Former Catholic church building. 19<sup>th</sup> century.*



*Former Catholic church in Zaqatala. 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

47 - See: Chaplitskiy B. Istoriya Katolisheskoy Tserkvi v Rossii//Ibid.

48 - See: Chaplitskiy B. Istoriya Katolisheskoy Tserkvi v Rossii//Ibid.

### *The Largest Catholic Community*

As stated earlier, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from the 1860s, a small Catholic church was opened in Baku under the authority of the Catholic military parish in Agbulaq. Eventually the number of Catholics in Baku increased, attracted by the oil boom in Baku, as the mighty fountains of oil turned the “City of Winds” into the capital of the industrial revolution, promising new life and success to foreign specialists.

The first specialists who arrived to Baku were Polish. Following them, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many doctors, chemists, engineers, clerks, and other professionals of Polish descent, who had graduated from higher education institutions in Russia, were sent to Azerbaijan. The largest Polish community was concentrated in Baku. Polish people with high educational levels held important positions in the city, and had success in business. For instance, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Baku City Duma was, for a certain period, chaired by Stanislav Despot-Zenovich, who was of Polish national background, and the Polish Ryłski family owned several oil fields<sup>49</sup>.

The increase in the number of Catholic specialists in Baku increasingly led to the spread of Catholicism in the city. Documents stored in the State Historical Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan reveal that back in 1863, Catholics in Baku requested the city authorities let them build a Catholic house of worship. The General Administration of the Caucasus Viceroyalty granted the Catholics their request by letter No. 5152, dated July 24, 1863, giving its consent to construction of a Catholic house of worship in the place marked as A5 site in the city plan <sup>50</sup>. It should be noted that site A5 was located on the area of an old Muslim cemetery, which used to be located in the neighborhood of the present-day Palace of Happiness<sup>51</sup>.

However, due to lack of finances, Catholics in Baku were unable to build the house of worship, and later, in 1884, when Catholics wanted to build a church on site A5, it was impossible, because a Russian Orthodox parochial school had already been built there. In 1891, the Catholic community requested that city authorities let them build a church in another area of Baku.

49 - Zeynalova S.M. Op. cit. - p. 89.

50 - A copy of the correspondence of the General Administration of the Viceroy of the Caucasus, dated July 24, 1863, No 5152 to Baku Military Governor. - ARDTA, f. 389, l. №2, st.un.153.

51 - The Baku City Department’s (December 9, 1908) report on the issue of the land allocated for the construction of a Catholic church. – ARDTA, f. 389, l. №2, st.un.153, v. 83.

On December 29, 1891, Baku City Duma issued a resolution allocating a piece of land of 640.31 square sazhen (about 1,366 m<sup>2</sup>) for the construction of the Catholic church on Birzha Street (present-day Uzeyir Hajibeyov Street)<sup>52</sup>. Archival documents show that Catholics in Baku erected a building on Birzha Street, which included a Catholic church and an apartment for the priest. Nine years later, in 1900, the chief priest of the Roman Catholic parish appealed to Baku City Duma again, requesting they allocate land at the corners of Kaspiy (Present-day Rashid Behbudov Avenue) and Merkuruyev (present-day Zarifa Aliyeva Avenue) for the construction of a large Catholic church. In November of the same year, the municipality gave its consent for the construction of the Catholic church on the requested site. At the same time, the authorities made the condition that the construction should be completed within four years<sup>53</sup>. Thus, on April 27, 1903, the Bishop of Saratov, Eduard Ropp, dedicated the foundation of the church. The construction plans were approved on August 18, 1905. And Haji Qasimov was chosen as the contractor. A solemn foundation stone-laying ceremony for the church took place in May of 1909<sup>54</sup>.

The long-awaited day for the Catholics finally came. A Polish church was opened in one of the most attractive places in Baku. This new church added beauty to the city with its unique architectural style, and not only gave pleasure to the local Catholics, but also breathed new life into the Baku architecture, where Eastern and Western traditions merged.

Researchers express different views on when the construction was finished and who authored the plans. The popular belief is that the construction of the church finished in the year 1912, but there are other opinions regarding the date. For example, J. Ibrahimova states that the construction work continued until 1915, emphasizing that although the civil engineer named Yuzef Ploshko had been mentioned as the architect of the church, there's also another opinion that the plans were authored by a Polish specialist named Dzenkovski, and Ploshko merely carried out the plans<sup>55</sup>.

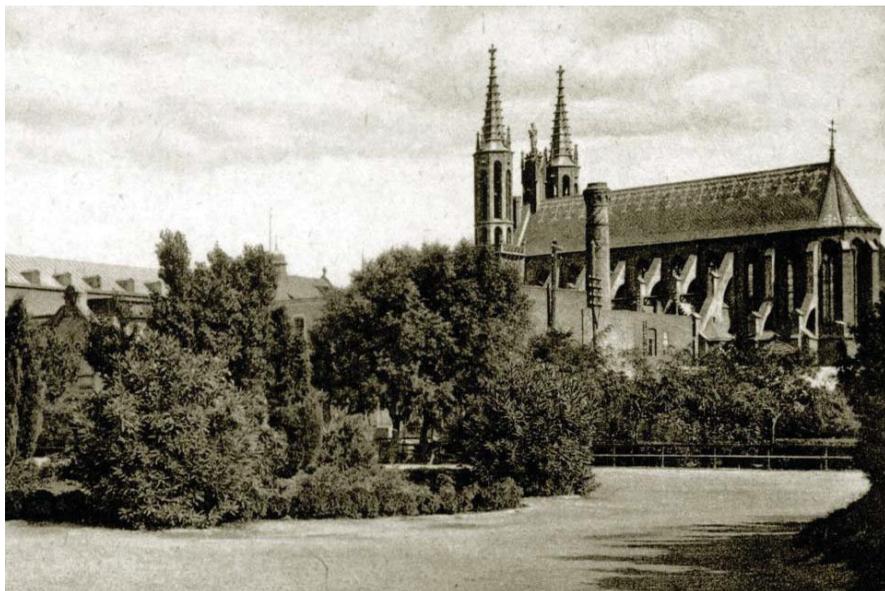
52 - The Baku City Department's Report, December 19, 1891. – ARDTA, f. 389, l. №2, st.un.153, v. 20-21.

53 - The Baku City Department's Report, December 9, 1908. – ARDTA, f. 389, l. №2, st.un.153, v. 153., v.83.

54 - Zdes' zvuchala «Ave Maria»// Ibid.

55 - Zdes' zvuchala «Ave Maria»// Ibid.

According to the book “Formation of European Ethnic Communities in the Caucasus,” the construction of the church was finished by 1911<sup>56</sup>.



*The Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception.” Baku. 1912.*

The Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception,” built in the Polish Gothic style, was about 50 meters high and 30 meters wide and had a capacity of up to 1,200 worshippers<sup>57</sup>. A majority of the worshippers was Polish. The Rylski family and the famous oil expert and Polish philanthropist Witold Zglenitski gave large financial contributions towards the construction of this church<sup>58</sup>.

Speaking of the history of Catholics in Baku, we should mention the “Roman Catholic Charitable Society” and “Open House – Polish Catholics Society,” which Polish people opened in Baku. For instance, the “Roman Catholic Charitable Society” not only provided poor Catholics with material and spiritual assistance, but also opened a library and a primary school. The Society’s reading-room was the only free reading-room in the city<sup>59</sup>.

In 1903, another significant event took place in the life of Catholics

56 - Zeynalova S.M. Op. cit. - p.95.

57 - Zdes’ zvuchala «Ave Maria»// Ibid.

58 - Zeynalova S.M. Ibid. - p.95.

59 - Zdes’ zvuchala «Ave Maria»// Ibid.

in Baku. A small Catholic church of the “Holy Cross” was erected in one of the cemeteries<sup>60</sup>. In 1904, a one-class four-year school of the Catholic parish was opened on Nikolay (Istiqlaliyyat) Street. Pater Demurov performed the dedication ceremony of the school in the room for 23 people<sup>61</sup>. On August 17, 1909, “Polish House in Baku” was established for the cultural development of the Polish population, and a school was opened under this organization. When World War I began, Polish refugees came to Baku, and another Polish society was formed: The “Polish Committee of Baku for the Organization of Aid to the War-Ravaged Population of the Kingdom of Poland.”<sup>62</sup>. Quite naturally, the local Catholic community in Baku increased due to these Polish refugees.



*The Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception.” Baku. 1912.*

During the period of Tsarist Russia, the following priests governed the Catholic church in Baku:

1. The Military Chaplain of the Provinces of Baku and Yelizavetpol, Grzegorz Mayer (until the late 1870s);
2. Wladyslaw Kubik (1899-1900);

<sup>60</sup> – Istoriya Katolicheskoy Tserkvi v Baku [Electronic resource]. - URL: <http://www.polonia-azeri.org/catol.html> (retrieval date: 08.07.2016).

<sup>61</sup> - Zdes' zvuchala «Ave Maria»// Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> - See: Istoriya pol'skoy obshiny «Poloniya – Azerbaidzhan»//Ibid.

3. Wasili Mutapow (1900-1904);
4. Stefan Demurow (1904-1920)<sup>63</sup>.

Regarding the number of believers attending the Catholic Church in Baku during the period of Russian Empire, the statistics are as follows:

1885 – 2,840 people;

1886 – 2,126 people;

1888 – 2,298 people;

1900 – 1,401 people;

1902 – 1,151 people;

1907 – 1,694 people;

1916 – 2,550 people.

According to the information of the Catholic Diocese of 1917, the worshippers at the Catholic church in Baku included Catholics from Balakhani, Bibiheybat, Darband, Hajigabul, Kurdamir, Chalakan island, Salyan, Shamakhi, Guba, and Shusha<sup>64</sup>.

We should bear in mind that the statistics above reflect only church attenders. Generally, the number of Catholics living in Baku was much higher. For example, in his letter to the Baku City Administration, the chief priest of the Baku Roman Catholic parish W. Kubik stated that between 9,000-10,000 Catholics lived in Baku alone. They were made up of different nationalities including Polish, Armenian, French, German, Italian, Czech, etc.<sup>65</sup>.

As we see, there were quite a number of Catholics in Baku, but when Bolsheviks seized power, this large religious community ceased to exist.

### ***The Destruction of the Catholic Community***

The Catholics' joy over the opening of the church didn't last long, because a few years later, more precisely, on April 28th, 1920, the Bolsheviks, who were militant atheists, seized power by force and annexed our country to the Soviet Union. This was a great blow to Catholicism, and generally to religious life in our country.

<sup>63</sup> - Istoriya katolicheskogo prikhoda v Baku (1880-1931)//Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> - Istoriya katolicheskogo prikhoda v Baku (1880-1931)//Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> - ARDTA, f. 389, l. №2, st.un. 153, v. 54-56.

All believers, irrespective of religion, were persecuted; mosques, churches, and synagogues were closed down; religious leaders were executed by firing squad or imprisoned. In short, under the slogan “Religion is the opium,” even the mention of God was forbidden, and total war was waged against any kind of religious belief. Included amongst those repressed were Catholics. Let's look at the course of events. In 1934 (according to some sources, 1931), Bolsheviks blew up the Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception,” and built in its place “Dzerzhinski Club” (Shahriyar House of Culture). The priest of the Catholic parish Stefan Demurow was imprisoned and executed by firing squad<sup>66</sup>. In place of the Catholic school, which was built in 1911, a music museum was opened<sup>67</sup>.



*The Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception.” Baku. 1912.*

66 - Tserkov' v Azerbaidzhane [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://www.catholic.az/ru/церковь/церковь-в-азербайджане> (retrieval date: 12.07.2016).

67 - See: Zdes' zvuchala «Ave Maria»// Ibid.

68 - See: Zeynalova S.M. Op. cit. - p.97.

There were also other reasons for the decline of Catholicism in our country. The nationalization of private property, or “dekulakization,” and the return of Polish people during the Polish-Soviet War, along with the forced repatriation policy of 1930-1940s resulted in a decrease in the number of Polish people, who constituted the majority of Catholics<sup>68</sup>. Finally, the ruthless atheistic Soviet regime put an end to the Catholic community.

## The Period of Modern Azerbaijan

After the Azerbaijani people broke free of the chains of imperial captivity, regaining their independence, conditions became favorable for the revival of Catholicism. Our national leader Heydar Aliyev played a special role in the development of the Catholic community. We can say with confidence, that his attentive and caring attitude towards the needs and desires of local Catholic believers gave impetus to the flourishing of the Catholic community in our republic.

The present Head of State, Ilham Aliyev, successfully continues this policy. We can say this because the Catholic community enjoys the full support of the state with the backing of high level diplomatic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Vatican. It is notable that in some neighboring states where certain Christian churches are elevated to the status of the official church, Catholicism is discriminated against, and Catholics' religious activities are hindered. At the same time, in our traditionally Muslim country, Catholics do not face any problems, on the contrary, they receive significant financial assistance from the government every year.

In order to see how the Catholic community in independent Azerbaijan was virtually built from the ground up and rose to prominence within a short period of time, we need to go back to the years of Soviet rule, remember the Catholics' situation at that time and compare it with their present situation. The fact is, during the period of the USSR, Orthodox, Molokan, Baptist, Adventist, and Pentecostals in our country managed to survive, despite countless challenges. However, the Catholic community was fully destroyed in those years of dominant atheistic ideology. There were just a few individual Catholics who had not forgotten their religious roots.

After the collapse of the USSR, in 1992, a small group of believers wrote a letter to the Vatican, asking them to send a priest to conduct worship; from that point on, the revival of Catholicism in our republic began. Acting on the local Catholics' request, the Secretary of the Embassy of the Holy Throne and Crown, which was established in Tbilisi from 1996-1997, Timon Titus Hmeletski, came to Baku to meet with those who desired the Catholic community's restoration. At first, the Vatican wanted to send monks of the Order of Jesuits to Azerbaijan.

Nuncio Jean-Paul Gobel and the Apostolic Administrator of the Caucasus Giuseppe Pasotto, began his spiritual ministry in our republic<sup>69</sup>.

First of all, J. Pilyus gathered people of Polish descent around himself, who had been baptized in the demolished church, plus their descendants. Later, he worked for the registration of the Catholic community, preparing its bylaws; Tahir Garayev, whose mother was Polish, was elected chairman of the Catholic community. On April 2, 1999, the Baku Roman Catholic religious organization was registered by the state at the Ministry of Justice, and a new chairman was elected. At this time Ofil Ismayilov was designated as the leader of the community. On September 26, 1999, three members of the community became catechumens (candidates for baptism). In the same year, on November 9<sup>th</sup>, Catholics from Baku took part in the Holy Mass in Tbilisi, conducted by Pope John Paul II<sup>70</sup>.

In addition to that, J. Pilyus opened a soup kitchen for the poor. These efforts towards the revival of Catholic community in Baku finally bore fruit. In 1999, the community had 36 members, and in 2000, their number increased to 47 people. At that time, local and foreign Catholics worshipped in the priest's apartment. Therefore, they began looking for a place of worship for the parish. The chairman of the community found a two-storied house with a yard on Mammad Araz (formerly Teymur Aliyev) Street, 69/b/1. J. Pilyus and a Slovak with Belgian nationality, Daniel Pravda (SDB), both liked the place<sup>71</sup>. In April 2000, the house was purchased with a contribution from the Order of Salesians, and after renovation, a small church was established there, and rooms for priests and monks were built<sup>72</sup>.

On October 11, 2000, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples assigned the leadership over the Catholic mission in Azerbaijan to the Order of "Salesians of Don Bosco" (SDB). D. Pravda became the Ordinary of "Missio Sui Iuris" (Latin, "Bakuensis") in our country, and several Salesian monks were sent from Slovakia to our country. They opened a free soup kitchen for the poor, provided aid to IDPs, and were involved in other charitable work<sup>73</sup>.

69 - II İoann Pavel Azərbaycanda. Katolik Kilsəsinin Apostol Prefekturası. Bakı: «Oskar», 2012. - p. 85  
70 - İstoriya katolisheskoy tserkvi v Baku//Ibid.

71 - İstoriya katolisheskoy tserkvi v Baku//Ibid. 72 - II İoann Pavel Azərbaycanda. - p.86.

73 - Ibid.

On January 14, 2001, a Slovakian, Štefan Karmanchik was appointed the community's chief priest. Then, under the leadership of D. Pravda, a house with a garden was purchased in Dubandi village for children and youth summer camps. On January 31, 2002, the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations registered the Catholic community. In April of the same year, the number of Catholics in our republic increased to approximately 120 people<sup>74</sup>.

In May of 2002, one of the most memorable events in the history of Catholicism in our country took place. At the invitation of the President Haydar Aliyev, on May 22, 2002, the Roman Pope, John Paul II made an official visit to our country. The Pontiff's visit turned a new page in the history of Catholics in Azerbaijan. The Head of the Catholic Church was received at the airport by Haydar Aliyev, and after numerous ceremonies and meetings he conducted mass at the Palace of Hand Games<sup>75</sup>. The event was attended by 5,500 people, the vast majority of whom were not Catholic<sup>76</sup>.



*Our National Leader Haydar Aliyev's Meeting  
With Roman Pope John Paul II. May 22, 2002.*

During the Roman Pope's visit, another event took place, which was highly important for local Catholics. The President, Haydar Aliyev ordered the allocation of a piece of land for the construction of a catholic church in the area of Baku called "Gara Shahar." As a result, in February 2007, the church was erected in the center of the city.

74 - Istoriya katolisheskoy tserkvi v Baku// Ibid.

75 - II İoann Pavel Azərbaycanda. - p.86, 87.

76 - Istoriya katolisheskoy tserkvi v Baku//Ibid.

This new church, named after the church that was blown up by Bolsheviks,<sup>77</sup> is presently adding beauty to our capital city.

As a result of these favorable conditions, in March 2003, the total number of Catholics in our country reached 200 people (half of them foreign citizens), and the number of community members grew to 58 people. In June 2003, a Slovakian, Ján Čapla (SDB) became the new ordinary of the Catholic mission in Azerbaijan. During his time, the “Mary” Charitable Training Center was founded; a group of Azerbaijani Catholics participated in the Catholic festival “The 20<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day,” which was held in Köln, Germany, on August 16-21, 2005; in 2006, The “Saint Teresa of Calcutta” Mercy Home was opened in Baku’s Zigh village; in February of 2006, Lyudmila Rahimova (Petrovskaya) was elected as the Chair of the Catholic community, and, most importantly, the construction of the Church of the “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception” was completed<sup>78</sup>.

On February 5, 2009, by the decree of Pope Benedict XVI, the Slovakian, Vladimir Fekete (SDB) was appointed the ordinary of “Missio Sui Iuris,” replacing J. Čapla. Since then he has been governing Catholics in our republic. The greatest event in the period of his leadership happened in 2011. An International Agreement “On the Juridical Status of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Azerbaijan” was signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Holy Throne and Crown<sup>79</sup>. This certificate of state registration of the “Apostolic Prefecture of Roman Catholic Church” was issued on July 7, 2011. At the presentation ceremony attended by the Chairman of SCWRO Hidayat Orujov, the Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy Throne and Crown in Azerbaijan Claudio Gugerotti, and the Ordinary of the Catholic Church in our country, V. Fekete, official status was granted to the Apostolic Prefecture in our republic, and this was considered a significant event<sup>80</sup>.

At the presentation ceremony, C. Gugerotti noted the historical significance of the ratification of the Agreement. He expressed gratitude to the government for creating the conditions that made it possible, emphasizing that our country always remained committed to the

77 - II Ioann Pavel Azərbaycanda. - p. 87.

78 - Istoriya katolicheskoy tserkvi v Baku// Ibid.

79 - II Ioann Pavel Azərbaycanda. - p. 87, 88.

80 - [http://azertag.az/xeber/Roma\\_Katolik\\_Kilsesinin\\_Apostol\\_Prefekturasi\\_dini\\_qurumu\\_dovlet\\_neydiyayatina\\_alinmisdir-530164](http://azertag.az/xeber/Roma_Katolik_Kilsesinin_Apostol_Prefekturasi_dini_qurumu_dovlet_neydiyayatina_alinmisdir-530164) (retrieval date: 11.07.2016).

principles of tolerance, and noting that the agreement was the first document of its kind, because the Vatican had never signed such an agreement with any state before. In his speech, the Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy Throne and Crown in Azerbaijan said, *“Azerbaijan has proved its tolerance once again. Now the whole world has witnessed it. I am sure that this document will receive a positive response in the international world and will be remembered as a great historical event. The reaction of the press from the first day gives us reason to say that. On behalf of the Holy Throne and Crown, I extend my deep thanks for all this to President Ilham Aliyev and the government of Azerbaijan*<sup>81</sup>.

By the Papal Bull of August 4, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI appointed V. Fekete the Apostolic Prefect. Thus he became the first Catholic leader appointed to this position in the history of Azerbaijan<sup>82</sup>.

Speaking of the history of Catholicism in modern Azerbaijan, we must mention the Haydar Aliyev Foundation, because this charitable organization headed by the First Lady of Azerbaijan, the goodwill ambassador of UNESCO and ISESCO Mehriban Aliyeva has undertaken important work to bring relations between Azerbaijan and the Vatican to a new and higher level.

On September 26, 2008, the Haydar Aliyev Foundation signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Catholic community in our country. The document envisages implementation of numerous development and reconstruction projects in the field of social and religious structures, actions directed to development of ethno-cultural components of nations living in Azerbaijan<sup>83</sup>.

As a part of this memorandum, the Haydar Aliyev Foundation granted the Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception” a classical mosaic depicting the Holy Spirit’s descent upon the Apostles and a ceramic panel presenting the mysteries of the prayers of the Holy Rosary<sup>84</sup>.

81 - [http://azertag.az/xeber/Roma\\_Katolik\\_Kilsesinin\\_Apostol\\_Prefekturasi\\_dini\\_qurumu\\_dovlet\\_qeydiyatina\\_alinmisdir-530164](http://azertag.az/xeber/Roma_Katolik_Kilsesinin_Apostol_Prefekturasi_dini_qurumu_dovlet_qeydiyatina_alinmisdir-530164) (retrieval date: 11.07.2016).

82 - II İoann Pavel Azərbaycanca. - p. 88.

83 - <http://mehribanaliyeva.preslib.az/media-9377ecd5d4.html> (retrieval date: 12.07.2016).

84 - Tserkov' v Azerbaidzhane [Electronic resource]//Ibid.



*The classical mosaic granted to the Catholic church in Baku by the Haydar Aliyev Foundation*

Significant cultural projects were implemented in light of the developing relations between the Foundation and the Holy Throne and Crown. For example, on June 3, 2014, the Foundation signed two agreements on the restoration of a monument to Zeus and reconstruction work in Sistine Chapel at the Vatican Museum. On June 2, 2014, Mehriban Aliyeva and Jean-Louis Brugues signed another agreement on “Restoration and digitalization of the new manuscripts in 2015-2016.” Besides that, based on the bilateral agreement with the Vatican signed in 2012, the Foundation funded the restoration of the Sacred Marcellino and Pietro catacombs, and the inauguration of the Roman catacombs took place on February 23, 2016<sup>85</sup>.

85 - For more detailed information see: The official website of the Haydar Aliyev Foundation. – URL: <http://www.heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/az> (retrieval date: 12.07.2016).



*The First Lady of Azerbaijan and the President of Haydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva at the inauguration of the Sacred Marcellino and Pietro catacombs in Rome. February 23, 2016.*

The aforementioned facts give us reason to say that our state does not build its relations with the Catholic community in our republic and with its center, the Holy Throne and Crown, in the format of mere state-religion relationships, and this cannot be deemed as the common state of affairs. In fact, the number of Catholics in our country is relatively small, even smaller than other Christian groups. However, history shows that among the branches of Christianity represented in Azerbaijan, Catholicism is the second most ancient branch after the Albanian Church. This tradition was interrupted only because of the course of history.

It must be stressed again that Catholicism had a very difficult and interesting path of historical development in our region, its traditions were broken in the past, but in independent Azerbaijan they gained an opportunity of a revival thanks to the political will of the government of Azerbaijan and the tolerant environment. This is what makes our country different from other Muslim states and even some countries with dominant Orthodoxy.

## THE APOSTOLIC PREFECTURE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AZERBAIJAN

### Organizational Structure

The Catholic community is represented in our country by the religious organization “The Apostolic Prefecture of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Azerbaijan” (Latin “Azerbaigianiensis”). The Apostolic Prefecture is a territorial unit of the Roman Catholic Church which is equal to a diocese. This type of religious organization is established with a temporary status on the territories where a diocese cannot be formed.

The Apostolic Prefecture in Azerbaijan submits to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, one of the nine major organizations of Roman Curia (the main administrative body of the Holy Throne and Crown). The head of the Prefecture has the ecclesiastic title of “ordinary.” In the administrative works, ordinaries are helped by priests who act as their assistants and secretaries. Their organizational work is regulated by the Pastoral Council, the Presbyteral Council, and the Council for Economic Affairs. Under the Prefecture, there is a recreation house, a publications department, and various charitable societies for the church members.

### Places of Worship



*The Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception”*

This church with a capacity of 250-300 worshippers was built from plans drawn by a professor of Napoli University of Architecture Paolo Ruggiero and the Chief Architect of Baku Akif Abdullayev. In April of 2007, the Apostolic Nuncio of the Roman Catholic Church in the Southern Caucasus, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti dedicated the church, performing the first worship there. The official opening of the church took place in March 2008 during the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone's official visit to Azerbaijan. The opening ceremony was attended by the Head of State Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Haydar Aliyev Foundation, a Member of Milli Majlis Mehriban Aliyeva, the secretary of the Caucasian Muslims Office Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh, the Bishop of the Baku and Caspian Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Alexander Ishein, leaders of religious organizations, representatives of the diplomatic corps, and foreign guests.<sup>86</sup>

Religious rites in the church are performed in Russian for local believers and in English for foreign worshippers.



*The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
at the opening ceremony of the Catholic Church March 7, 2008.*

<sup>86</sup> - The information about the church was taken from the official website of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

*The Small Catholic Church of “The Intercessor Jesus Christ”<sup>87</sup>*

The church is located near “Ganjlik” metro station, in the two-floor house of the Catholic parish. The house has seven rooms, and the large hall in the first floor is separated for the church of “The Intercessor Jesus Christ.” This place of worship can seat up to 42 people. The religious rites are conducted in Russian.

Besides that, the building includes the ordinary’s office and the monastery of the Salesian monks.

*The Small Catholic Church in the Shelter for the Homeless*

It is intended to be used by nuns from African countries, Slovakia, Italy, India, and other countries, who come to live a monastic life and help homeless people. The total area is 28 m<sup>2</sup>. This small church can seat up to 20 worshippers.

**Diplomatic Representation**

As a result of the developing diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and the Vatican, the Holy Throne and Crown has its permanent diplomatic mission – the Apostolic Nunciature – in our republic. The Nunciature heads are called Apostolic nuncios. The first apostolic nuncio in our country was Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti. He held the position of the Vatican’s Ambassador in Azerbaijan from December 13, 2001 to July 15, 2011. He was succeeded by Archbishop Marek Solczyński who has been on this position since April 14, 2012.

87 - The information about Catholic institutions in Azerbaijan is based on the Apostolic Prefecture’s reports and the official website of the Catholic Church in our country.

## Charitable Organizations

### *“Caritas Azerbaijan” International Charitable Organization*

It is run by Salesian monks. A soup kitchen is operating under the organization which implements various social projects (free legal assistance, cultural entertainment programs, summer camps for children, etc.)

### *“Mary” Charitable Training Center*

The center was created in 2004 with the support of “Catholic Relief Services,” “Jugend eine Welt,” “Austrian Development Cooperation,” and “Renovabis,” as well as the Order of Salesians of Don Bosco and the Irish Community of Baku with the purpose of providing the children of poor families with quality education. Besides “CISCO Networking” course, the center has courses of English, Russian, Italian, German languages, Azerbaijani language and literature, mathematics, history, chemistry, physics, guitar, drawing, dances, computer programming, and carpet weaving. According to 2015 information, the center has about 400 students and 25 teachers, and other workers.

### *Destitute Mercy Home*

It is operated by nuns from the Order of “Saint Teresa of Calcutta.” The sisters of mercy have been functioning in Azerbaijan since the year 2005. The head of the Apostolic Administration of the Roman Catholic Church Giuseppe Pasotto and a sister of mercy Albina sent a letter to Mother Teresa with the request to open a shelter in Baku. As a result, in May of 2006, a Catholic mercy home for people in need was established.

Almost 40 people found shelter in the two-floor house of the mercy home. The shelter accommodates homeless people for 2-3 months. They are provided with three meals per day, medical aid, assistance in issues related to their personal documents and to their need in a place to stay. The sisters of mercy even take responsibility for providing lonely and abandoned people with a decent funeral.

The shelter has separate rooms for men and women. According to 2016 information, there are five nuns working in this charitable institution.

It is interesting that the sisters of mercy serve homeless people selflessly, and in their desire to gain more merit they deliberately refuse to use washing machines and continue to wash the homeless people's clothes with their hands.

Although the nuns of the mercy home function within the Apostolic Prefecture, they submit not to the ordinary, but directly to their centers.

### *“Social Assistance to Families” (“PAD”)*

The main goal of “PAD” is to provide single mothers with assistance to raise their children. For that goal, Salesian monks look for volunteers from Slovakia, Italy, and other European states. Those who volunteer to take care of the fatherless children in need, give the single mothers a certain amount of temporary financial assistance every month, to help them overcome their life challenges.

## **Monastic Institute**

Catholic priests in Azerbaijan come from three different orders:

### *The Order of “Salesians of Don Bosco” (SDB)<sup>88</sup>*

The order was founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by an Italian priest named John Bosco. He was born in an ordinary peasant family. After finishing his theological education, in June 1841, he became a priest. On January 25, 1854, he established the monastic society of St. Francis de Sales. Presently this organization is known as the Order of “Salesians of Don Bosco.” Its statute was approved by Pope Pius IX in April 1874.

The main goal of the order is to help children and young people who are in need of care and social protection. Presently, the Salesian fraternity is the second largest order of the Catholic Church with over 28,000 members. This religious organization functions in over 130 countries of the world.

According to 2016 information, there are 10 Salesians in leadership of the Catholic mission in our country.

88 - For more detailed information see: The official portal of the Catholic Church in Azerbaijan. – URL: <http://www.catholic.az/ru/церковь/селезианцы-дона-боско>; The official website of the Salesian missions. – URL: <http://www.salesianmissions.org> (retrieval date: 27.07.2016).

*“The Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians” (Italian, “Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice” – FMA)*

This sister order was founded in the north of Italy in 1872 by Don Bosko and Saint Maria Mazzarello (1837-1881). This female monastic organization, which is a part of the Salesian Order, exists with the main purpose of spreading the worship that brings joy; conducting catechization in kindergartens, schools, summer camps, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and foreign language courses; and promote ecumenical cooperation<sup>89</sup>.

The nuns of “FMA” have been functioning in Azerbaijan since 2015. Presently, there are only two nuns of this order in our country. They work in the Prefecture’s Sunday school and in the “Social Assistance to Families” (PAD) organization.

*The Order of “The Missionaries of Charity” (Latin, “Congregatio Sororum Missionarium Caritatis”)<sup>90</sup>*

This monastic organization was founded by the Albanian nun Mother Teresa (original name: Agnes Bojaxhiu). On August 17, 1948, when she was 38 years old, she left the monastery of Loreto and went to Calcutta, India in order to help the poor, the destitute, and the severely ill. This selfless Catholic nun in a white cotton sari with a blue border founded a school for homeless children who lived in an abandoned house in the garbage place. She considered it her moral duty to reach out to the people who were about to die. In 1949, 12 nuns (mostly her disciples) began helping her in this sacred mission. In 1950, Mother Tereza’s monastic order was recognized by the Roman Catholic Church. Presently, over 4,000 nuns from this order reach out to needy people in 125 countries.

One of Mother Teresa’s greatest dreams was to open “Rosary” (from Latin “crown of roses”) houses in the former Soviet republics. Her dream came true, and shelters named after the nun from Calcutta were founded in the post-Soviet countries, including Azerbaijan.

<sup>89</sup> - Female monastic orders and congregations//The monastic orders and congregations of the UGCC. – URL: <http://www.christusimperat.org/ru/node/22730> (retrieval date: 27.07.2016).

<sup>90</sup> - Information about the order was taken from the following website: <http://catholic.tomsk.ru/vocation/missionariesofcharity/about> (retrieval date: 28.07.2016).

## Numbers and National Composition

It is difficult to identify the exact numbers of Catholics in our country. However, it is obvious that the Catholic community, which was virtually built from the ground up following the time of our independence, continues to grow. According to 2016 information, about 300 Catholics in our country are citizens of Azerbaijan. The overwhelming majority of these Catholics are those who were born in mixed families where one of the parents is Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, etc. Most members of the Catholic parish – about 500 people – are foreigners who work at different international organizations (citizens of the USA, Mexico, Italy, Slovakia, the Philippines, etc.).

In modern Azerbaijan, about 300 of the believers were baptized in the Catholic Church (mostly children of mixed families and foreigners). The average number baptized is about 10-12 people per year.

The number of those where both parents are Azerbaijani is low, and mostly belong to lower income or social levels. The reason for the small number of Azerbaijani Catholics is that priests of the Apostolic Prefecture do not engage in any active religious propaganda among representatives of other beliefs and do not accept anyone to Catholicism merely to increase the number of their members. According to the “Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy” (“Sacrosanctum Concilium”) of the Second Vatican Council, those who want to convert to Catholicism must undergo the process of catechumenate. This preparation period varies in different countries and dioceses. In Azerbaijan, the catechumenate period is one year. During this trial period, delegates (catechumens) are instructed in the principles of Christianity and tested for their sincerity of faith and their attendance at worship services. Only those who successfully complete this trial year are baptized. Obviously, only a few people make it through this hard preparation until the end.

When speaking of Azerbaijani Catholics, we should mention Behbud Mustafayev, who studies in the Catholic Theological Seminary “Mary – Queen of the Apostles.” On May 29, 2016, in the “Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary” in Saint Petersburg, Russia, Archbishop Pavel Petsi granted B. Mustafayev the ecclesiastic title of deacon; thus, B. Mustafayev became the first Azerbaijani priest in the history of Catholicism<sup>91</sup>.

91 - For more detailed information see: The official website of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Holy Mother Mary in Moscow. - URL: <http://www.cathmos.ru/content/ru/publication-2016-05-30-01-18-51.html#.V5hY0dLfrIW> (retrieval date: 27.07.2016).

In our republic, Catholics live mainly in Baku. There are however, some followers of this Christian Church in Ganja and Sumgayit, too.

### **Source of Funding**

The Prefecture is funded by various Catholic organizations. At the same time, since 2011, religious organizations in our country, including Catholics, get financial assistance from the government of Azerbaijan. By the decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated July 5, 2016, a large amount of funds (100,000 Manat) was allocated to the Catholic religious organization. This clearly shows the attention and care of our state towards the adherents of all religions in the country.

### **Forms of Worship**

The clergy and believers of the Apostolic Prefecture belong to the Latin/Roman Rite Catholics. Thus, they mainly worship in Latin. However, the Second Vatican Council gave permission to perform religious rites in national languages along with the Latin, and Catholics in Africa, Asia, and America were even allowed to add to their rituals, elements of the beliefs of the local peoples. It should be noted that Catholic churches in our country worship in Latin, English, and Russian<sup>92</sup>.

Latin or Roman ritual is relatively simple and short. Catholics call their main service of worship Mass. Mass is always performed at daytime, and only on Christmas Eve and Easter Eve is it performed at night. Catholic religious rites are usually accompanied by choir, organ, or orchestra. Catholics cross themselves from left to right with all five fingers extended<sup>93</sup>.

### **Interfaith Relations**

The Apostolic Prefecture tries to cooperate and maintain friendly relations with different religious organizations in our republic, including the Caucasian Muslims Office, the Albanian-Udi Christian religious community, and the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church.

92 - Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Religioznye organizatsii sovremennogo mira: Uchebnoye posobiye. – Moscow: Moscow University Publication, 2010. — p. 79.

93 - Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Ibid. – p. 79.

It has become a tradition to invite the head of the Prefecture to government activities and solemn religious ceremonies. It is notable that the ordinary of the Apostolic Prefecture makes joint statements with other religious organizations to support our state's just position with regard to the issues of so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and Armenian separatism, and to inform the world of the atmosphere of tolerance in our country. For instance, the Apostolic Prefecture, together with other non-Muslim religious organizations in our republic, officially protested against the biased statements on religious freedom in Azerbaijan in the Democracy Act bill introduced by the chairman of the US Helsinki Commission, Chris Smith, in December 2015; and they also protested against the last paragraph of the resolution named "Fundamental global changes – Christian Orthodox perspective" accepted by the participants of 23<sup>rd</sup> annual General Assembly of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, held in Thessaloniki, Greece on July 4-8, 2016, which questioned the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and contained absolutely false information regarding the April War.

The Catholic Church in Azerbaijan also cooperates closely with Protestant churches, especially with Lutheran, Charismatic, and Nondenominational communities, helping them overcome their challenges.



*The first Azerbaijani Catholic priest Behbud Mustafayev*

### **Publication**

The Prefecture publishes a Russian weekly bulletin "Voskresnoye slovo" ("The Sunday Message").

## **“MARGINAL” CATHOLICISM**

*Marginal Catholicism is the name of a group of religious movements which have separated from the Roman Catholic Church, embracing elements of other Christian churches, especially Protestantism. Azerbaijan has some adherents of Marginal Catholicism, as well. They belong to the New Apostolic Church.*

### **“The New Apostolic Church – International Apostle Unity”**

#### **Brief Historical Overview**

The “New Apostolic Church” originated from the “Catholic Apostolic Church” movement, which emerged among Catholics in England in the 1830s. The leaders of this movement claimed they had received a revelation from God about the end of the world. They called people to turn away from the modern church, which was distorting the pure basic beliefs of a Christian lifestyle and falling short of the ideals of the ancient apostolic church, in order to be saved and enter the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in the last times. The followers of this new religious movement allegedly received a revelation to choose eleven apostles and one chief apostle, refuse the titles used by other Christian churches, and establish new religious offices: apostles, messengers, evangelists, teachers, etc. They took those titles from the New Testament<sup>94</sup>.

Thus, a new religious movement emerged in England in the light of their eschatological (eschatology – a system of beliefs regarding the end of the world and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ) expectations; even in Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, some Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant church ministers joined the movement. When the apostles elected by means of this so-called “revelation” died and the coming of Jesus Christ did not happen, the “Catholic Apostolic Church” decided to dissolve itself. However, some members of the movement, especially the Hamburg congregation governed by German apostles, disagreed with the decision. In 1863, this religious group separated from the “Catholic Apostolic Church.” Thus, on January 27, 1863, the leader of the Hamburg congregation Friedrich Wilhelm Schwartz was expelled from the “Catholic Apostolic Church.”

94 - See: Protestantizm: istoriya, napravleniya i kazakhstanskiye realii (informatsionnyi spravochnik). – Astana: «Nauchno-issledovatel'skiy i analiticheskiy tsentr po voprosam religii» Agentstva Respubliki Kazakhstan po delam religiy, 2012. - p. 31-32.

This date is considered the beginning of the “International New Apostolic Church.” However, this religious organization was officially formed in 1867, after long arguments and structural reforms<sup>95</sup>.

According to information published on the official website of the “New Apostolic Church” in 2016, the church exists in about 180 countries, has 8,923,420 members, 59,816 congregations, and 256,812 ministers<sup>96</sup>.

### “The New Apostolic Church” in Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan, the “New Apostolic Church” began operating in the early 1990s. In 1992, the Baku New Apostolic Church religious organization was registered by the state under the Ministry of Justice, and by 1999, a house of worship for 300 people was built with the financial support of the religious center of the church at this address: Narimanov district, Ashig Ali Str. 10. A special room in the house was set apart for meetings. That same year, the apostle of the New Apostolic District Church of North Rhine-Westphalia, Klaus-Dieter König dedicated the house of worship. At the dedication ceremony, apostle Klaus-Dieter König ordained Aydin Farajullayev as the head of the congregation. The ceremony was attended by 166 believers and guests<sup>97</sup>.



*The Baku New Apostolic Church religious organization*

95 - See: Protestantizm: istoriya, napravleniya i kazakhstanskiye realii. – p. 32; The official website of the New Apostolic Church: <http://www.nak.org/ru/oznakomlenie/istorija/> (retrieval date: 29.08.2016).

96 - <http://www.nak.org/ru/nac-vo-vsem-mire/> (retrieval date: 29.10.2016).

97 - See: V Baku osv’ascheno tserkovnoye pomescheniye// Nasha semya (jurnal Novoapostol’skoy Tserkvi). Frankfurt am Main: Published by “Friedrich Bischoff GmbH,” July 1999. 9<sup>th</sup> year publication. No 7 – p. 13.

In 2002, the Baku New Apostolic Church religious organization was registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations. In 2006, the congregation opened a house of worship for 160 people in Baku, in the Garachukhur settlement of Surakhani district. Special rooms were set apart for priests and the Sunday school. On August 2, 2006, the district apostle, Armin Brinkmann dedicated the church. The dedication ceremony was attended by New Apostolic Christians from Khachmaz, Ganja, and Goygol. At the end of the ceremony, the district apostle ordained two people (Mahir Isayev and Yuri Kotlyarov) as deacons of the Ganja congregation<sup>98</sup>.

Notably, in its most active period, the “New Apostolic Church” increased the number of its members in our country by giving humanitarian aid. To aid their propagation, they chose to target people of German descent. The Baku New Apostolic Church religious organization has also managed to win some Lutherans over to their side.

In recent years, the activity of the “New Apostolic Church” in our republic has weakened, and as a result, the number of its members sharply declined.

### **Organizational Structure**

The head of the “New Apostolic Church” international organization is entitled the “Chief Apostle” (from 2013, Jean-Luc Schneider has been the Chief Apostle of the church). The international headquarters of the organization is in Zürich, Switzerland. The Chief Apostle has absolute power in the organization, because church members believe that he receives “divine revelation” and is God’s vicar on earth. The Chief Apostle presides over the Coordination Group, which is the highest governing body of the “New Apostolic Church.”<sup>99</sup>

In the religious hierarchy of the organization, the Chief Apostle is served by district apostles. According to the official website of the “New Apostolic Church,” 19 district apostles serve in the church with their 11 assistants. The district apostles preside over the largest administrative and territorial units – apostolic districts (in German, Apostolbezirke).

98 - See: Baku: Osv’ascheniye novoy tserkvi// Nasha semya (jurnal Novoapostol’skoy Tserkvi). Frankfurt am Main: Published by “Friedrich Bischoff GmbH,” July 2007. 17<sup>th</sup> year public. No 7 p. 14.

99 - Novoapostol’skaya tserkov (spravka) [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://pravbeseda.ru/library/index.php?page=book&id=534> (retrieval date: 29.10.2016).

The districts include religious organizations functioning in various countries or regions<sup>100</sup>. For instance, *the Baku New Apostolic Church religious organization is under the jurisdiction of North Rhine-Westphalia district (the district apostle is Rainer Storck)*.

Besides that, the “New Apostolic Church” international organization has some apostles who do not govern any district, but are responsible for certain areas of church activity. According to the official website of the “New Apostolic Church,” the total number of apostles in this international religious organization is approximately 320 people. All the apostles gather for an international general assembly, which is held every three years<sup>101</sup>.

Apostolic districts are divided into church districts (in German, Kirchenbezirke), which are headed by district elders. Based on the hierarchy of the “New Apostolic Church,” district elders are followed by district evangelists. The church districts include individual churches (Kirchen). Religious organizations are governed by pastors, and by evangelists or priests, who take a lower position than pastors. They are assisted by deacons in this work<sup>102</sup>.

### Basic Beliefs

The “Creed of the New Apostolic Church” consists of ten articles that summarize the basic beliefs of the church. According to the Creed, members of the New Apostolic Church believe in one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting. Unlike other Christians, New Apostolic Christians believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is governed by living apostles sent by Christ. They are convinced that members of the “New Apostolic Church” are “bridal souls” who are ready for Christ’s return and whom Christ will take to God’s Kingdom. This is the first resurrection. In heaven, there will be a “wedding” between Jesus Christ and the “bridal souls,” then Jesus Christ will return to the earth together with the transformed souls to build His Kingdom and reign with the New Apostolic Christians. After the end of Jesus Christ’s Millennial Kingdom, God’s

100 - See: Strukova A. Novozpostol’skaya tserkov (NATs)// Sovremennaya religioznaya zhizn Rossii. Opyt sistematicheskogo opisaniya. Vol. 2. – Moscow: Logos, 2003. – p. 400-401; <http://nak.org.ua/2014/01/170/#more-170> (retrieval date: 29.10.2016).

101 - See: Strukova A. Op. cit. – p. 400-401; <http://nak.org.ua/2014/01/170/#more-170> (retrieval date: 29.10.2016).

102 - See: Strukova A. Ibid. – p. 401; <http://nak.org.ua/2014/01/330/#more-330> (retrieval date: 31.10.2016)

judgment will take place, and those who didn't rise at the first resurrection will be judged and punished. After that, God will create a new world instead of the former one, and heaven and earth will be no more. The Kingdom of Jerusalem will be established in the new world<sup>103</sup>.

New Apostolic Christians accept the Bible, but put Biblical commentaries written by their apostles, allegedly under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, above the Bible. Thus, reading the Bible independently is not recommended to church members. The repeatedly republished "Questions and Answers concerning the New Apostolic Faith" is the New Apostolic Christians' main religious book, besides the, "History of the New Apostolic Church," which is published for the clergy's use<sup>104</sup>.

### **Religious Rites**

The New Apostolic Church conducts its main worship services on Sundays. The form of worship is simple, as it is in Protestant denominations. The New Apostolic Church also has its unique forms of religious rites. For instance, three times per year, New Apostolic Christians have services for the "unsaved dead," praying for their salvation and symbolically performing the Lord's Supper over the dead. The ritual is performed in this way: two church ministers approach the apostle, then the apostle crosses them, "strengthens" them with the Holy Spirit, and performs the ritual of the Lord's Supper<sup>105</sup>.

### **Publication**

The "New Apostolic Church" international organization has its official publication – "Our Family" magazine. Besides that, the organization publishes a children's magazine called "We Children"<sup>106</sup>.

### **Humanitarian Activity**

This international religious organization does not have any humanitarian institutions functioning under it.

103 - See: Protestantizm: istoriya, napravleniya i kazakhstanskiye realii. – p. 32.

104 - See: Protestantizm: istoriya, napravleniya i kazakhstanskiye realii. – p. 32 – 33.

105 - <http://pravbeseda.ru/library/index.php?page=book&id=534> (retrieval date: 31.10.2016).

106 - The information about the New Apostolic Church's publication, humanitarian activity, source of funding, and attitude towards education and politics have been taken from the website <http://pravbeseda.ru/library/index.php?page=book&id=534>, and from A. Strukova's research work titled "The New Apostolic Church."

However, it is also true that the New Apostolic foreigners, who started their activity in Azerbaijan back in the 1990s, won their followers with humanitarian aid. Especially by helping elderly people, they were able to increase the number of their church members. For example, they would buy medicine for elderly people, provide them with medical aid and clothes free of charge, help them financially, and as a result, the number of New Apostolic Christians in our country actually reached 160 people at one point of time. However, with the decrease of humanitarian aid provision, the number of members of the New Apostolic Church in Baku sharply declined.

### **Source of Funding**

The “New Apostolic Church” functions by the voluntary offerings of believers, instructing them to give one-tenth of their income (a tithe) every month to the organization’s needs.

The members of the Baku New Apostolic Church religious organization are very poor; most of them are elderly people. Therefore, the religious community in Baku receives financial and humanitarian aid from the center for the needs of the house of worship and the elderly members. In recent years, this aid has decreased significantly. The situation had even reached a point where the community had no means to maintain the house of worship in Bakikhanov settlement, and was forced to close it down.

### **Public Position**

The New Apostolic Church observes neutrality in issues of politics, preferring to not interfere into politics at all. The religious congregations of this organization try to act within the law, respect local traditions and customs, and are not involved in active missionary work.

The Baku New Apostolic Church religious organization treats other religions and churches relatively well, and with tolerance. Some of the New Apostolic Church members are even known to attend meetings of other Christian churches. And even though this church does not belong to Protestantism, it maintains friendly relations with members of Protestant and other Christian communities.

## **Religious Education**

The New Apostolic Church does not have any educational institutions and generally does not accept the idea of religious education. This organization adheres to the principle that believers should imitate the disciples of Jesus Christ who were uneducated. The New Apostolic Church rejects theology as a matter of principle, and does not provide any religious education for its ministers. However, this international religious organization does have Sunday schools functioning in their churches.

## **Numbers**

According to information from 2016, the number of New Apostolic Christians in Baku, not counting children, is 84 people; 55 of them are Russian, 24 are Azerbaijani, and 5 are Tatar.

Besides that, the church has small groups in Ganja, Goygol, and Khachmaz.

# **CHAPTER IV**

## **SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY**

**S**piritual Christianity is a generic name given to Russian sects (Khlyst, Doukhobor, Molokan) which emerged in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the villages of the Russian Empire, opposing the clerical class and religious rituals of the Russian Orthodox Church, calling people to return to the early Christians' lifestyle and to worship God "in Spirit and in truth."

## DOUKHOBOR

### Slavyanka

Gadabay district with its fertile soil, mineral waters, beautiful nature, and historical monuments, is also notable for its ethnographic diversity. People who are interested in Russian sectarianism are well aware that the district of Gadabay in the Lesser Caucasus was one of the main areas of Russian sectarians and Protestants during the period of Tsarist Russia. The villages of Slavyanka, Novosaratovka, and Novoivanovka, which were built by Russian sectarians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are rich areas for ethnographic research. For example, a small village of Novoivanovka has had members of different movements and sects such as "Staroveriy," "postoyanniy Molokans," "Pryguny," "Subbotniki," Adventists, loyal and "unregistered" Baptists.

But our interest is in Slavyanka village. From the outside, it looks like any Molokan village in our country. Slavyanka's houses are typical of Russian sectarians: white walls, blue porches, blue window shutters. Yet the village is unique, because it is the only Doukhobor village in our country.

The ancient Doukhobor cemetery at the entrance of the village is particularly interesting. This long abandoned cemetery, covered with grass, shrubs, and trees, has become a thick jungle. The ancient gravestones look like ordinary stones, bent to the ground by natural impacts, some of them covered with ground. Writings on the old graves, washed off by frequent rains, are unreadable. A symbol of the sun on the graves draws our attention, because the same symbols are found in ancient Molokan cemeteries in our country. It seems to be an ancient Slavic symbol.



*An ancient headstone at the entrance of the Doukhobor cemetery. Slavyanka village.*

The ancient headstone at the entrance of the cemetery is particularly interesting, because the inscription says that in 1805 Doukhobors were placed in the Province of Tavria, then in 1844 they were moved to the Caucasus where they built Slavyanka village. Showing Doukhobors came to our country back in 1844.

Presently (in 2016), 43 Russians live in Slavyanka. All the Russians in the village consider themselves Doukhobor. Some researchers state that today's Doukhobors in the Caucasus, unlike their ancestors, represent not a religious group, but an ethnic one. For instance, this is what V. Franchuk says in his book (See: "*Probuzhd'eniye: ot tsentra Odessy do okrain Rosssii*" - p.215). The author also states that the Doukhobors and Molokans living in the Caucasus perceive their ethnic identity not as Russian, but Doukhobor or Molokan. This statement does not seem to reflect reality. Our interviews with the Russian residents of Slavyanka village prove the opposite. For instance, Galina Pavlovna Chivildeyeva (date of birth July 01, 1948) considers herself Russian, and Doukhobor by religion:

**Anar Alizade:** *Which religion do you belong to?*

**Galina Chivildeyeva:** *We consider ourselves Russian.*

*And Doukhobor is like someone without a religion. We believe in God, but we do not recognize priests.*

*A.A.: What's your attitude towards the Russian Orthodox Church?*

*G.Ch.: It's good. Sometimes I go to the Russian church in Ganja.*

*A.A.: But you don't consider yourself Orthodox, do you?*

*G.Ch.: No, I don't. I only go there sometimes, when I feel like doing it.*

*A.A.: Do all Russians in Slavyanka consider themselves Doukhobor?*

*G.Ch.: Yes, of course, all.*

*A.A.: And do you accept the Bible?*

*G.Ch.: No, we don't use the Bible. Our ancestors' Bible is "pasalma."*

*A.A.: Do all Russians in Slavyanka reject the Bible?*

*G.Ch.: Yes, yes! No one accepts it. And no one has the Bible at home... We have some Molokan friends. Well, they do have the Bible. For them it is something holy...!*

The interview illustrates that Doukhobors reject the Bible. Their holy book is the "Psalms" (praises and prayers in poetry, which they passed orally from generation to generation. The villagers of Slavyanka pronounce the word "Psalms" in the ancient Russian dialect: "pasalmy."



*Slavyanka village. Gadabay district.*

A particularly interesting point in the interview with G. Chivildeyeva is that though she does not consider herself Orthodox, she goes to the Russian church in Ganja.

<sup>1</sup> - The author's personal archive (audio recording).

However, her ancestors – the early Doukhobors – would never go to the Russian Orthodox Church. In fact, that’s why they were persecuted by both the Tsarist government and the Orthodox clergy. G. Chivildeyeva’s moderate attitude towards the Russian Church illustrates that the Doukhobors who live in Slavyanka today have forgotten their old religious traditions. It’s true to say that presently, (in 2016) only one person in the whole village knows Doukhobor’s holy texts, “pasalmy” by heart – Maria Fyodorovna Ivanova (born in 1937). So, local Doukhobors call her to conduct funeral ceremonies.

Presently, Azerbaijanis and Russians in Slavyanka live together peacefully. The local Doukhobors speak fluently in Gadabay dialect, and this illustrates how much they have mixed with the local Azerbaijani population.

### **A Brief Historical Outline and Basic Beliefs**

This Russian sect emerged in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century among the villagers of the Provinces of Yekaterinoslav and Kharkov. The sect was founded by Siluan Kolesnikov, an educated Cossack from the village of Nikolskoye (the Province of Yekaterinoslav). The leaders who spread the sect were a rich wool trader Illarion Pobirokhin, and a retired corporal of the guard, Saveli Kapustin<sup>2</sup>.

The sectarians were first named “Doukhobor,” by Ambrosius, the Archbishop of Yekaterinoslav. As the sectarians opposed the Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodox rituals, in 1785, the Archbishop called them “Doukhobors” (from Russian, “wrestlers against the Holy Spirit”). Doukhobors did not object to this name, but interpreted it in a positive way, saying, “Yes, we are Doukhobors, because we wrestle with spiritual weapons against the enemies who do not want us to be saved.” Thus, the word Doukhobor was used in the sense of wrestling for the Holy Spirit, not against Him<sup>3</sup>.

According to the teaching of Doukhobors, the Russian Orthodox Church, with its magnificent religious rites and clerical class, living in luxury, had distorted true religion. Doukhobors did not accept the Russian Church, and perceived God as the embodiment of wisdom, bliss, and love, and believed that each believer has these divine characteristics.

2 - O dukhoborcheskoy sekte//Smolin I. Kratkkiye istoricheskiye sv’edeniya o russkikh s’ektakh i ikh v’erouchenii. – Saint Petersburg: Tipografiya T-va «Sv’et», 1911.

3 - Smolin I. Kratkkiye istoricheskiye sv’edeniya o russkikh s’ektakh i ikh v’erouchenii.

That's why early Doukhobors bowed down before each other, believing that believers are "living icons," who combine in themselves divine characteristics<sup>4</sup>.

Early Doukhobors believed that people were created free and equal. As we have already mentioned, these Russian sectarians did not accept the Bible as their holy book. They believed written religious texts to have been distorted by people. Doukhobors accepted only oral sacred texts as the divine revelation, memorizing their "Psalms" and passing them from generation to generation. The collection of psalms preserved by them as oral tradition are called "Zhivotnaya kniga" ("The Living Book"). Russian revolutionary Vladimir Dmitriyevich Bonch-Bruyevich, who researched the history of religions, collected these oral texts and published them as a book.

Doukhobors reject the clerical institute, worship to icons, church rituals, and religious rites; they don't believe in going to temples built with human hands, don't accept Christian tradition, and interpret religious service and concepts in a symbolic, metaphorical ways.

Sectarians in the Russian Empire were persecuted and severely punished by the tyrannical government and the Russian Church. During the rule of Russian Emperor Aleksandr I, the treatment of Doukhobors became less severe, and they were granted some freedom of religion. Their leader Saveli Kapustin appealed to the Russian government several times to give them the permission to build a Doukhobor settlement. Finally, in 1804, the Tsar issued a special manifest recognizing religious freedom for Doukhobors, including the ones serving their sentences in prisons, in the army, and in exile, giving them permission to settle in the Melitopol district of the Province of Tavria and to establish a settlement there. Thus, the sectarians built a communal village *with no private property* in that province, in the area named Molochnye Vody along the Molochnaya River; they shared all the property there as communal. They named their settlement "Doukhoboria." Doukhoboria was governed by Saveli Kapustin, after his death by his son Vasili Kalmykov, then by his grandson Larion<sup>6</sup>.

4 - Dukhobory//Pravoslaviye: Slocar' ateista/ Pod obsch. red. N.S.Gordienko. – Moscow: Politizdat, 1988. – p.78.

5 - Zhivotnaya kniga dukhobortsev/Zapisal i sobral Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich. – Saint Petersburg: 1909. – p. XXII-XXIII, XXVI.

6 - See: Franchuk V. Probuzhd'eniye: ot tsentra Odessy do krain Rosssii. – Odessa: «SIMEKS-PRINT», 2011. – p.203,205.

As we have seen, the sectarians were governed by the Kalmykov dynasty. The dynasty's founder S. Kapustin was the son of the main ideologist of Doukhobor movement, and its prominent representative Illarion Pobirokhin. Some sources state he was his spiritual son. Doukhobors believed that the spirit of Jesus Christ passed from generation to generation in the Kalmykov dynasty. Therefore, the sectarians considered representatives of this family holy, and highly respected them. Thus, although Doukhobors dreamed of building a utopian society on the basis of the ideas of brotherhood and equality, ultimately they had their class divisions, too.<sup>7</sup>

When Nicholas I came to power, persecution resumed. This Tsar ordered about four thousand Doukhobors exiled from the Province of Tavia to the Caucasus from 1841-1844. As a result, eight Doukhobor villages were built in Georgia and one in Azerbaijan. All these settlements constituted Doukhororia, which looked like a real "theocratic state." Its "capital" was the village of Goreloye (Gorelovka) in Georgia. From 1864-1886, this "theocratic state" was ruled by a woman named Lukerya from the Kalmykov dynasty. She had limitless power, and the sectarians considered her the "Mother of God"<sup>8</sup>.

The "house of orphans" in Gorelovka was the residence of the head of the sect and its material and spiritual center. Many orphans and elderly people found refuge in this house of worship. The "house of orphans" possessed huge pieces of land, herds of cattle, and a large farm. The sectarians gave offerings to support this house and worked for free on the land and the farm<sup>9</sup>.

Physical punishments were widely used in the administrative life of Doukhororia. This "theocratic state" even had its own military organization. It was called "Kazachki," and its military units held regular exercises<sup>10</sup>.

After Lukerya Kalmykova's death, a schism occurred among Doukhobors in the Caucasus. The dissension was caused by class divisions and social inequality in the Doukhobor community.

7 - See: Smolin I. *Kratkiye istoricheskiye sv'edeniya o russkikh s'ektakh i ikh v'erouchenii; Dukhobory// Pravoslaviye: Slovar' ateista.* - p.78.

8 - See: Bezhentseva A. *Strana Dukhoboriya.* – Tbilisi: «Russkii klub», 2007. - p. 46, 48, 51; O dukhoborcheskoy s'ekt'e//Smolin I. *Kratkiye istoricheskiye sv'edeniya o russkikh s'ektakh i ikh v'erouchenii; Dukhobory// Pravoslaviye: Slovar' ateista.* - p.78.

9 - Bezhentseva A. *Op. cit.* – p. 53-54.

10 - See: Klibanov A.I. *Religioznoye s'ektantstvo v proshlom i nastoyaschem.* – Moscow.: Izdatel'stvo «Nauka», 1973. - p. 128.

On January 26, 1887, the Doukhobor community split into two groups called the “Large Party” and the “Small Party.” The “Large Party” consisted mainly of poor people, while the “Small Party” consisted of the rich. However, the “Large Party” included some rich people, and the “Small Party” had some of the poor<sup>11</sup>.

In reality, the dissension happened over a half million rubles and a large property owned by the “house of orphans.” The “Small Party”’s leaders (Petty Officer Zubkov, Lukerya’s brother Mikhail Gubanov, and other relatives) wanted to register it in their name. However, the “house of orphans” belonged to the Doukhobor community<sup>12</sup>.



*Peter Verigin (1859-1924)*

The “Large Party”’s leader Peter Verigin was born in Slavyanka village in the Province of Yelizavetpol (present-day Gadabay district). He was informally married to Lukerya Kalmykova, and at the same time, he was her secretary and the head of her “Kazachki” military organization. Therefore, Lukerya named him as her heir.

The leaders of the “Small Party” managed to get the local Tsarist government on their side by means of a bribe, so the government would recognize that the “Small Party” had a right to the “house of orphans.”

At the same time, Verigin and other leaders of the “Large Party” were arrested and exiled to Siberia. Seeing such injustice by the local Tsarist officials, the “Large Party” completely lost all trust in the secular government<sup>13</sup>. The Doukhobors of this group became radical in their views, denouncing the government with its institutions. The Doukhobors of the “Large Party” were also influenced by religious ideas of the great writer Leo Tolstoy.

11 - Ibid. - p. 129.

12 - See: Materialy k istorii i izucheniyu russkogo s'ektantstva. Vyp. 2. “Razyasn'eniye zhizni khristian” i “Byl u nas, khristian, sirotskiy dom...” (dve dukhoborcheskiye rukopisi) /Red. Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich. – Hants: “Svobodnoye Slovo”, 1901. - p. 22.

13 - “Razyasn'eniye zhizni khristian” i “Byl u nas, khristian, sirotskiy dom...” – p. 22-23.

Their leader P. Verigin became familiar with this genius writer's religious ideas, while he was still in exile. As a result, he opposed the secular state, private property, rich people, social injustice, and military service; he preached pacifistic ideals and vegetarianism; he called his followers to abstain from drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco<sup>14</sup>.

Not all of his followers obeyed their leader's instructions. About half of them formed a new group, the "Middle Party" under the leadership of A. Vorobyov. The "Middle Party" tried to exercise moderation, balancing the traditional ideas of the "Small Party" with Verigin's new teaching<sup>15</sup>.

As for Verigin's followers, on June 29, 1895, during the holiday of the Apostles Peter and Paul, the adherents of the "Large Party" put Leo Tolstoy's pacifistic ideas into practice and were severely punished by the Tsar's tyranny. On that day, the Doukhobors, because of their religious beliefs, refused to take weapons and go to the army, and protested against the war by singing spiritual songs and burning all their weapons in a cave near the village of Orlovka. Doukhobors' seven villages and about two thousand people took part in this protest<sup>16</sup>.

The Tsarist government considered it a rebellion and sent armed Cossacks against the peaceful Doukhobors. The Cossacks attacked the Doukhobors' homes and resorted to torture, violence, and insults. Some Doukhobors were murdered. With the permission of the government, horrible events took place in the villages of "Doukhororia" for six days. The Doukhobors' houses were plundered, 330 sectarians were sent to a disciplinary battalion, their wives and daughters were shamefully abused. Later, the Tsar ordered the Doukhobors' villages to be destroyed and the sectarians to be sent to the mountains. About a thousand Doukhobors lost their lives as a result of the persecution<sup>17</sup>.

In August 1896, Russian Emperor Nicholas II approved the Internal Affairs Minister's decision to exile those Doukhobors evading military service, to the most remote parts of the empire for 18 years.

14 - Dukhobortsy [Electronic resource]//Pravoslavnyaya entsiklopediya: pod redaktsiyey Patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseya Rusi Kirilla. – URL: <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/180628.html> (retrieval date: 27.01.2016).

15 - Dukhobortsy//Ibid.

16 - Bezhentseva A. Op. cit. – p. 67.

17 - Bezhentseva A. Op. cit. – p. 67-68.

By this decision, 180 Doukhobors were exiled to Siberia. 4,300 Doukhobors were resettled from Georgia to uninhabitable places, where they had to live in dugouts in large groups. The sectarians were fined and put in prisons. About half of the exiled Doukhobors died from hard living conditions<sup>18</sup>. Let me reiterate that the persecuted Doukhobors were from the “Large Party,” that is P. Verigin’s followers. Seeing the horrible persecution of the Doukhobors, Leo Tolstoy and Tolstoyans rose up in defense of the sectarians. The Tsarist’s violence enraged the world community. In the end, the Tsar’s tyrannical regime allowed the Doukhobors who did not want to serve in the army to migrate abroad at their own expense. By the end of 1898 – beginning of 1899, most of the “Large Party,” including P. Verigin, that is the Doukhobors who would not bow down to the government – migrated to Canada, leaving their homeland for good. Leo Tolstoy and his followers provided the Doukhobors with material and spiritual assistance to help them migrate to Canada<sup>19</sup>. Only the adherents of the “Small” and “Middle” parties, cooperating with the government, remained in the Tsarist Russia<sup>20</sup>.

The dissension between Doukhobors in the Tsarist Russia did not pass by the village of Slavyanka in Azerbaijan. It should be noted that in the mid-1880s, 1,426 Doukhobors lived in Slavyanka<sup>21</sup>. After Lukerya’s death, the sectarians there also divided into “Large” and “Small” parties. A Baptist believer Y.N. Ivanov, who had been exiled to the Caucasus for preaching “Shtundism” among the Orthodox, wrote that in Slavyanka, one of the authoritative leaders of the “Small Party” was Yevsey Vasilyevich Konkin. His son, Ivan Yevseyevich Konkin, on the contrary, was one of the leaders of the “Large Party.” The father and son were enemies. In 1894, Y.V. Konkin’s son was exiled for belonging to the “Large Party”<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> – Ibid. - p. 68-70.

<sup>19</sup> - Bezhentseva A. Ibid. - p. 76-82; Dukhobortsy//Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> - Dukhobortsy//Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> - Klibanov A.I. Istoriya religioznogo s'ektantstva v Rossii (60-ye gody XIX v. – 1917 g.). – Moscow: «Nauka», 1965. - p. 90.

<sup>22</sup> - Materialy k istorii i izucheniyu russkogo s'ektantstva i razkola /Materiaux pour servir a l'histoire des sectes russes/ (v 5 vyp.) Vyp. 1. Baptisty. B'eguny. Dukhobortsy. L. Tolstoy o skopchestv'e. Pavlovtsy. Pomortsy. Staroobr'adtsy. Skoptsy. Shtundisty / pod red. Bonch-Bruyevicha V. – Saint Petersburg: Tip. B. M. Vol'fa, 1908. - p. 49.

In Y.N. Ivanov's memoirs, we find some other interesting information about Slavyanka. He reports that Baptist missionaries did not want to evangelize this village, because they considered Doukhobors absolutely lost and immoral<sup>23</sup>. At the same time, Baptist missionaries actively shared their faith in the villages of other spiritual Christians, that is in the Molokan villages. Speaking of the "Large" and "Small" parties in Slavyanka during the period of Tsarist Russia, it is revealing to quote our interview with M. Fyodorovna, the only person in the village today who knows the Doukhobors' holy texts – "pasalmy" – by heart. In the interview, this woman revealed some interesting facts about the "Large Party" leader Verigin's activity in Slavyanka. From what M. Fyodorovna says, it is possible to conclude that in Slavyanka, the "Large" and "Small" parties used to worship in separate places, and Verigin's followers built a larger house of worship. Here's the interview:

**Anar Alizade:** *Did Doukhobors have a house of worship in Slavyanka?*

**Maria Fyodorovna:** Yes, they had, in the past. They met there to pray... My mom told me that *it was close to Alekseyevna's place... Then a certain Verigin, I don't know if you've heard about him or not, he built a taller house a little bit further. That was a nice house.*

**A.A.:** *So, then you had two houses of worship in Slavyanka, right?*

**M.F.:** Yes. Then this *Verigin, my mom told me, he would go to Tbilisi and give commands there and everywhere*<sup>24</sup>.

In the period of Tsarist Russia, after the adherents of the "Large Party" migrated to Canada, Doukhobors suffered an enormous blow. After the establishment of Soviet power, Doukhobors, just like other religious groups, were subject to repression and persecution, and began hiding their beliefs. During the period of the Soviet Union, the state never registered a Doukhobor religious organization or community. The Soviet Union claimed that there were no more Doukhobors in the country, because all of them had migrated to Canada during the period of Tsarist Russia.

<sup>23</sup> - Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> - The author's personal archive (audio recording).

However, our interview in the village of Slavyanka shows that Russians in Slavyanka have always considered themselves Doukhobor by faith and never forgot their religious identity.

Doukhobor religious organizations have never obtained state registration in our republic, because they haven't requested it. The reason is that the Doukhobors in Slavyanka haven't developed as a religious organization: they have no house of worship, and they only sing "pasalmy" on funerals.

Finally, we should say that the needs of the Russian population of Slavyanka are the focus and brought to the attention of the state. This is demonstrated by the fact that on November 1, 2006, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva visited the village of Slavyanka, met with the Russians living there, and inquired about their living conditions and needs<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> - For more detailed information see: Slavyanka Kəndində Görüşlər [Electronic resource] // Azərbaycan Dövlət İnformasiya Agentliyi. – URL: [http://azertag.az/xeber/SLAVYANKA\\_KANDINDA\\_GORUSLAR-360220](http://azertag.az/xeber/SLAVYANKA_KANDINDA_GORUSLAR-360220) (retrieval date: 01.01.2016).

## The Molokan Faith

### Their Origins and the Etymology of the Word

This sect emerged in the late 1760s among peasants, and later spread among townsmen and traders. The founder of the Molokan sect was a villager from Borisoglebsk county, named Semen Matveev Uklein, a tailor by occupation. Earlier, he had left the Russian Orthodox Church and joined the Doukhobors. A Doukhobors' ideologist Illarion Pobirokhin was Semen Uklein's father-in-law. Uklein then created his own sect and was followed by a large number of Doukhobors. He announced himself to be the Messiah as he, together with his seventy "elected apostles," and the singing of spiritual songs (psalms), jubilantly entered the city of Tambov to publicly preach his religious teaching and to destroy "idolatry," that is icons. However, the police seized and imprisoned him. In order to escape prison, he pretended to return to the Orthodox Church, and was soon released. Later Uklein preached his teaching more carefully, visiting the provinces of Tambov, Saratov, Yekaterinoslav, and Astrakhan; meanwhile his followers spread the Molokan faith in Kursk, Kharkov, Ryazan, Penza, Nizhegorod, Simbir, Orenburg, and Siberia<sup>26</sup>.

Uklein's religious teaching was mainly spread by: an escapee Isidor Andreyev, a fugitive landowner Isaiah Krylov, Nikolay Bogdanov, Nikita Ivanov, Terenti Belozarov, Lukyan Petrov, Yevstigni Yakovlev, and Nikofor Filippov<sup>27</sup>.

It should be noted that the first person who called Uklein's religious teaching "Molokan" (from Russian "moloko" – milk) was the Tambov Clerical Consistory of the Russian Orthodox Church. This term was used in the Consistory's denunciation letter to the Holy Synod in 1765. The Consistory gave Uklein's followers this name because these sectarians drank milk during the Orthodox fast, breaking the rules of the fast. However, Molokans themselves interpreted this term in a different sense.

26 - Bulgakov S.V. Spravochnik po yeres'am, s'ektam i raskolam. – Moscow: «Sovremennik», 1994. – p. 46 [Electronic resource]. - URL: <http://www.eparhia-saratov.ru/Content/Books/20/125.html> (retrieval date: 05.01.2016).

27 - Smolin I. Kratkiye istoricheskiye sv'edeniya o russkikh s'ektakh i ikh v'erouchenii. – *Saint Petersburg: «Svet», 1911.*

Based on the New Testament text “*like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation*” (1 Peter 2:2), they interpreted the word “moloko” (milk) in a spiritual way, saying they are Molokans in the sense that they drink the “milk of the word,” that is they love God’s Word and keep their faith pure as milk. It should also be mentioned that Molokans initially called themselves spiritual Christians<sup>28</sup>.

There are other versions of the possible etymology of the term “Molokan.” Some believe the term originates from the name of the Molochnaya River in Melitopol district of the Province of Tavria. Because the Tsarist Russia persecuted Molokans and exiled them there, and Molokans settled along that river<sup>29</sup>.

There have been other theories. For instance, when the Russian Tsar heard that the Molokans who had been exiled to the Caucasus were dying (“kanut”) on the way, he supposedly responded, saying, “*malo, pust’ bol’she kanut!*” (“not enough, let them die more”), and the words “malo” (not enough) and “kanut” (die) make up the term “Molokan”<sup>30</sup>.

However, such theories seem to be unconvincing. As we have already said, the term Molokan was used for the first time in 1765 by the Tambov Clerical Consistory. Apparently, the Orthodox used this word for criticizing Uklein’s followers, but later Molokans accepted the name, interpreting it in a positive and figurative sense.

### Basic Beliefs

The Molokan movement emerged as a protest against the abuses of the Russian Orthodox Church; Molokans accept the Bible as the only source of faith. The founder of the Molokan movement Uklein said that seeking a way of salvation outside the Bible is wrong. Thus, they rejected the Holy Tradition, that is the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils and the religious teachings of the Holy Fathers<sup>31</sup>.

28 – Smolin I. Op. cit.; Kak vzniklo molokanstvo [Electronic resource]//Website «O s’el’e Ivanovka». – URL: <https://ivanovka.net/?p=1713> (retrieval date: 05.01.2016); **Dukhovnyie khristian’e (molokan’e)** [Electronic resource]. – URL: [http://molokan.narod.ru/index\\_long.html](http://molokan.narod.ru/index_long.html) (retrieval date: 05.01.2016).

29 - Dukhovnyie khristian’e (molokan’e)//Ibid.

30 - Kak vzniklo molokanstvo// Ibid.

Molokans are against spiritual institutions, church hierarchy, and monasticism; they consider it a sin to worship icons, saints, and their relics; they don't accept any mediator between God and man, and they don't recognize mainstream church rituals such as the Lord's Supper, baptism, and repentance. Members of this sect do not accept external forms of Christian rituals, but interpret them symbolically. According to Molokans, baptism is performed not by means of water, but by studying the words of Jesus Christ. They believe that receiving sanctified bread and wine in the ritual of the Lord's Supper (Eucharist) is meaningless. Molokans interpret this ritual figuratively, saying that true Eucharist is to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ with all your heart and obeying His commandments<sup>32</sup>.

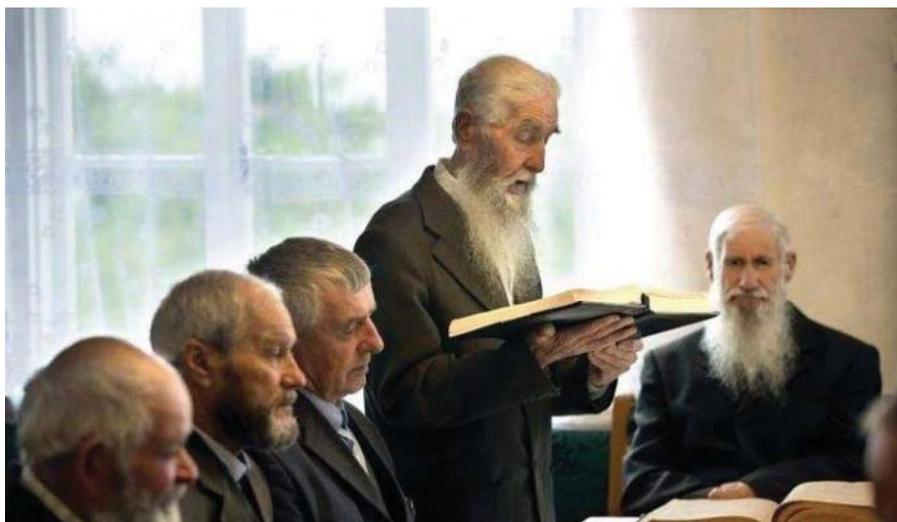
Molokans have no concept of church. Unlike other Christian movements, for Molokans the concept of religious community contains no sacred sense, but means merely a gathering of believers. A Molokans' worship service is quite simple. They call it a "gathering." Molokans usually gather on Sundays and read passages from the Bible, especially the Book of Psalms, in the ancient Russian language, slowly and in a solemn voice. This sect's creed states that believers should pray only with the words of the Bible. With their emphasis on Bible study, after prayer, Molokans interpret the Holy Scriptures. They tend to the figurative interpretation of the Bible. Usually this is done by the leader of the Molokan community, called "starets" (elder) or "presbyter," who is believed to know the Bible perfectly. However, in Molokan community, everyone has the right to interpret Scripture. As we have seen, even though Molokans don't recognize church hierarchy, they do have authoritative people who act as church ministers – presbyters or elders<sup>33</sup>.

Molokans believe in one God in three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, according to their teaching, the Person of the Father is above the persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Molokans hold that Jesus Christ's body was not a human body, but similar to angel Raphael's body.

32 - Smolin I. Op. cit.; Pravoslaviye: Slovar' ateista/Pod obsch. red. N.S.Gordienko. – Moscow: Politizdat, 1988. - p. 133.

33 - Prokofyev A. Soyuz dukhovnyh khristian – molokan Rossii//Sovremennaya religioznaya zhizn Rossii: Opyt sistematicheskogo opisaniya. Vol I. – Moscow: «Logos», 2004. – p. 283.

That's why he didn't pass away like ordinary people, but died in a unique way<sup>34</sup>.



*Molokan elders. Ismayilli district, the village of Ivanovka.*

The followers of this Russian sect believe that a person can be saved by doing good works. They strictly obey the Old Testament laws; they do not eat pork, fish with scales; do not smoke; do not drink alcohol; have negative attitude towards theater, cinema, and television<sup>35</sup>.

### **Molokan Faith in Azerbaijan**

After Russian Emperor Aleksandr I's enthronement, the state mitigated its attitude towards spiritual Christians who were persecuted for not recognizing the tenets of the Orthodox Church, namely Molokans and Doukhobors. In 1805, Aleksandr I signed the decree, recognizing religious freedom for Molokans<sup>36</sup>.

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At the same time, in order to separate the Russian sectarians from the Orthodox population and avoid confrontations between them, the Tsarist government allowed the spiritual Christians to settle in the Melitopol district of Province of Tavria and to build their villages there.

34 - Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Religioznyie organizatsii sovremennogo mira: Uchebnoye posobiye. – Moscow: Moscow University Publication, 2010. — p. 63.

35 - Ibid.

36 - Franchuk V. Probuzhd'eniye: ot tsentra Odessy do okrain Rossii. – Odessa: «SIMEKS-PRINT», 2011. – p. 213.

Thus, from the year 1802, Molokans, Doukhobors, and Mennonites moved to this province, and the first Molokan settlement was built in the area of Molochnye Vody. Although both Doukhobors and Molokans considered themselves spiritual Christians, they didn't want to live closely together. Because Molokans followed the Bible, but Doukhobors didn't recognize any scriptures written by humans<sup>37</sup>.

The Tsarist government took certain measures to encourage the resettlement of the sectarians: each sectarian was given a piece of land on 15 desiatinas; the Molokans and Doukhobors who settled in the province of Tavria were exempt from taxes for the first five years; each sectarian family could get a loan of 100 rubles at low cost<sup>38</sup>.

Thus, Russian sectarians enjoyed relative freedom during the rule of the Russian Emperor Aleksandr I, but with Nicholas I's enthronement their situation deteriorated again. This Russian Emperor exiled followers of different sects to the most remote place – the Caucasus. On October 20, 1820, Nicholas I issued a decree on the resettling of Molokans to the Caucasus. It should be noted that Molokans did not suffer as much as Doukhobors did. The Tsarist government treated Molokans more tolerantly than the other sectarians, granting them favorable conditions, because Molokans, unlike Doukhobors, didn't come into conflict with the government and the Orthodox population<sup>39</sup>.

Thus, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, adherents of the sects of Starovery, Skoptsy, Doukhobors, Molokans, Subbotniks, and others were resettled to the Caucasus. A new period began in the history of Molokans.

37 - SAMARINA O. Obschiny molokan na Kavkaz'e: istoriya, kul'tura, byt, khoz'aystvennaya deyatel'nost' [Electronic resource]: dissertatsiya na soiskaniye uchenoy stepeni kandidata istoricheskikh nauk: Severo-Kavkazskiy Gosudarstvennyi Tekhnicheskii Universitet: Spetsial'nost' 07.00.02 – Ot'chestvennaya istoriya/ Samarina Olga Ivanovna ; nauch. ruk. Navskaya T.A. – Stavropol, 2004.

- p. 39-40. – URL: [http://dshinin.ru/Upload\\_Books3/Books/2009-04-05/200904051925291.pdf](http://dshinin.ru/Upload_Books3/Books/2009-04-05/200904051925291.pdf) (retrieval date: 08.01.2016); Zhukova L. Khlysty, skoptsy i molokane: chem oni otlichayutsa [Electronic resource]//Website Arzamas. – URL: <http://arzamas.academy/mag/377-sekti> (retrieval date: 08.01.2016); Klibanov A.I. Istoriya religioznogo s;ektantstva v Rossii (60-ye gody XIX v. – 1917 g.). – Moscow: Izdatel'stvo «Nauka», 1965. - p. 124.

38 - SAMARINA O. Op. cit. - p. 40.

39 - Franchuk V. Op. cit. – p. 213; Sovremennaya religioznaya zhizn Rossii: opyt sistematicheskogo opisaniya. – Moscow: «Logos», 2004. - Vol I. - p. 279.

The Molokans living in our country can be divided into two groups: those who were exiled through the court from the central provinces of the Russian Empire and those who came to the Caucasus of their own accord. It's interesting that the number of those resettled of their own accord is greater<sup>40</sup>.

The question is, what attracted the Molokans who settled in the Caucasus voluntarily? The answer is that in the 1830s Molokans became familiar with Heinrich Jung-Stilling's "Triumphalist History of the Christian Religion," where the author claimed that Jesus Christ would appear in 1836 near Mount Ararat. Influenced by this idea, in the 1830s, "prophets" appeared among the Molokans in the provinces of Samara, Saratov, Astrakhan, and Tavria. The prophets declared the approaching end of the world and called believers to move to the blessed land, that is the Caucasus, in order to be closer to Jesus Christ's coming and to build God's Kingdom – the New Jerusalem. Responding to their call, Molokans moved in large numbers to the Caucasus. They travelled long distances on carts in order to see the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, singing spiritual songs with great enthusiasm<sup>41</sup>.



*Russian settlers on Mugan plain. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Russian photographer Sergey Mikhaylovich Prokudin-Gorski.*

40 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey/ Arkh. gl. upr. namestnika Kavk.; Pod obsch. red. A. D. Berzhe. Vol XII. – Tiflis, 1904. – p. 552; Yunitski A. Gnyozda s'ektantstva na Kavkaz'e. – Saint Petersburg: Sankt-Petersburgskaya pravoslavnaya dukhovnaya akademiya, 2009. – p. 146// Opublikovano: Khristianskoye chteniye. 1895. No 1-2. - p. 142-164.

41 - Klibanov A.I. Op. cit. – p. 130-131.

As a result of the exile of Molokans through the court and their voluntary resettling, these Russian sectarians formed villages in various parts of Azerbaijan. The first Molokans settled in our country in 1832, in the Varanda district of Karabakh county, and the first Molokan settlement in the Province of Baku appeared in 1834 in the area called Altiagac. The sectarians who settled there came to Azerbaijan voluntarily, not through the court. From 1834-1839, 1681 people or 310 families settled in Altiagac. Those people came from the provinces of Saratov, Tambov, Orenburg, Vladimir, Tavia, and Bessarabia. In 1840, a group of those who had settled in Altiagac built Khilmilli village. Besides that, Molokans founded the villages of Nikolayevka (1838) and Prishib (1840) in Lankaran county, Chukhur-Yurd (1843), Maraza (1843) and Chabany (1844) in Shamakhi county, Kululi (1843) and Karamaryan (1843) in Goychay county, and other villages<sup>42</sup>.



*A typical Molokan house. Gobustan district, Hilmilli village.*

42 - Vypiska iz arkhivnykh materialov//Azerbaydzhan i azerbaydzhantsy v mire: kul'turologicheskii zhurnal. Religii Azerbaydzhana. No 1. June 2007. – p. 117.

## Molokan Sects Which Formed or Spread in Azerbaijan

After resettlement to the Caucasus, Molokans divided into different sects. It's interesting that some of these sects formed in Azerbaijan. Let's review the Molokan sects which spread in our country.

### *Nazarei (Nazarene)*

This sect formed in 1840s amidst the Molokans living in Khilmilli village, and in 1850s, the members of the sect completely separated from the traditional Molokans. The sect, is believed to have been founded by Kozma Kabinetov. His followers who spread his teaching were Semyon Gulin, Yakov Vologin, and Mikhail Severov. The Nazarei's teaching was accepted mostly by Molokans living in Chabany, Astrakhanka, Chukhur-Yurd, and Baku. The majority of Nazarei (814) people lived in the village of Kazlichay.

What were the Nazarei's beliefs? What made them different from other Molokans?

The members of this sect believed that Jesus Christ lived in each one of the Nazarei. In their opinion, the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ meant that He was born, suffered, and rose from the dead in the heart of the repentant sinner. Nazarei believed that Jesus Christ neither ate nor drank. Therefore, they fasted for forty days to obtain the spirit of Jesus Christ. While fasting, they ate just a little bread and drank a little water. They completely abstained from salt, believing that through salt, Satan can enter their body. Nazarei didn't eat meat (except for fish) and onions and didn't have a haircut.

The members of this sect had a negative attitude towards sex and marriage, didn't recognize the clerical institute, didn't cross themselves, sang Molokan spiritual songs, didn't believe in icons and saints, and considered Kabinetov and Gulin prophets. They preached a healthy life and humility, and interpreted religious concepts in a figurative way. For instance, they interpreted the resurrection of the dead as the gathering of strong believers, faithful to the Lord

### *Believers in Jesus Christ's Appearance in Lankaran*

The members of this Molokan sect were called “Obschiye” (in Russian, “the common ones”), because they rejected private property and held everything in common. These sectarians called themselves “Zionites.” This sect emerged in 1830s in Nikolayevsk district of the province of Samara. This Molokan sect is believed to have been founded by Mikhail Akinfiyevich Popov<sup>43</sup>.

In 1833, by the decision of the court, 23 Molokans of the sect of “the common ones” were resettled from the province of Saratov to the Caucasus. They were placed at Qizilagac post station in the Lankaran district of the province of Shamakhi. Here the sectarians began to live as a commune<sup>44</sup>.

Thus, the sect of “the common ones” formed their village and named it Mikhaylovka (after Mikhail Popov). Later the Tsarist government changed the name of this village to Nikolayevka (present-day Kalinovka village, Masally district). Nikolayevka soon became the center of the sect of “the common ones.” The sectarians opened a school where they taught their 7-12 year-old students to read and write, and instructed them in the basic beliefs of their sect<sup>45</sup>.

“The common ones” thought they were God’s only chosen people and expected the end of the world to come soon. They believed that Jesus Christ would establish His Millennial Kingdom near Lankaran and that “the common ones” would be the unique heirs of God’s Kingdom<sup>46</sup>.

The sectarians considered M. Popov, who was exiled to Siberia in 1843, a martyr and saint. They believed that Popov would return from Siberia to save his followers from captivity and gather them all together. After that, God’s Kingdom would come and Popov would reign<sup>47</sup>.

It should be noted that in the year 1854, 645 members of the sect of the common ones lived in the Caucasus (305 men and 340 women).

43 – Obschiye molokan’e [Electronic resource]// Pravda o Katolicheskoy Tserkvi. – URL: <http://www.apologia.ru/mddb/314> (retrieval date: 30.01.2016).

44 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p. 545.

45 - Dingelshedt N. Zakavkazskiyе s’ektanty v ikh s’emeynom i religioznom bytu. – Sankt-Peterburg: Tipografiya M.M.Stas’ulevicha, 1885. – p.55.

46 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p. 545.

47 - Ibid.

There were also 185 followers of this sect living at that time in the provinces of Saratov, Yenisey, and Tomsk<sup>48</sup>.

The Tsarist government considered the common ones to be the most dangerous among Molokan sects, because they promoted Communist ideas, rejecting private property and gathering in a “common fraternal union.” All moveable and immoveable property of “the common ones” belonged to the commune. This union built common houses for the sectarians, where they lived in groups of thirty, forty, or fifty people, formed separately for unmarried people, families, widowers, and widows. Besides that, the “fraternal union” chose civil and spiritual “starshina”s (overseers) to manage the commune’s economy and property, and to organize the division of labor<sup>49</sup>.

“The common ones” called their sect “the Church of Christ” and compared their time with the days of the Apostles. They elected 12 people to govern the church, and those people had the following religious titles: 1) sudya (judge); 2) zhertvennik (altar); 3) rasporyaditel (administrator); 4) viditel (seer); 5) slovesnik (sayer); 6) chlen (member); 7) myslennik (thinker); 8) taynik (hider), and four unnamed positions taken by women. Besides that, the sectarians used titles corresponding to the names of the parts of the body<sup>50</sup>.

The sectarians didn’t eat foods prohibited by the “Law of Moses” and abstained from tobacco and sugar<sup>51</sup>.

### *“Zionites” or “Pryguny”*

Russian ethnographer N. Dingelshtedt refers to Ukol Lyubavin, the member of the sect of “the common ones” who lived in Andreyevka village of Lankaran county, as the founder of “Pryguny” sect (in Russian “pryguny” means “jumpers”). His real name was Osip Petrov Yudin. In 1840, he was a clerk in Shamakhi Chamber Civil and Criminal Court.

48 - Ibid. - p. 546.

49 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p. 545; Dingelshtedt N. Op. cit. – p. 46.

50 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p. 545; Dingelshtedt N. Op. cit. – p. 46.

51 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p. 545.

In 1842, he was imprisoned for converting Orthodox people to the Molokan faith, and in 1845 he was sent to the Siberian Regular Battalion No 62 as a punishment. There he performed military service until the year 1848. In September of that year, Yudin escaped military service, and in October 1849 he came to Shamakhi. From 1850, he hid in Andreyevka village of Lankaran county under the name of Ukol Lyubavin. Yudin fell gravely ill, and after he recovered, in 1852, he went to the province of Iravan to earn money. When he was there, in Nikitin and Voskresensk villages of Aleksandropol County, his body began to shake in a strange way during worship. In ecstasy, he called everyone to repent and announced the approaching end of the world. Such raptures happened many times. At first, the local Molokans laughed at Yudin's ecstatic seizures, but eventually they believed he was a prophet. Some even thought he was Jesus Christ! Thus, he formed a new Molokan sect. By January 1853, news spread that "Pryguny" sect was growing in the abovementioned Molokan villages. The situation even reached a point where the whole village of Nikitin and a part of the village of Voskresensk converted to the new sect. The events in those villages received due attention from the government, and in 1853, Yudin was arrested for spreading a new sect. The court indicted him for escaping military service, falsifying documents, and hiding under a false name, and sentenced him to eight years' imprisonment. Besides that, Yudin was made to pass between two rows of 500 soldiers two times and be beaten with sticks. Later, he was sent to Stavropol to serve with other prisoners in Unit No 51<sup>52</sup>.

Actually, the first "prygn" Osip Petrov Yudin never called anyone to jump during religious services. He claimed this ecstatic seizure happened to him involuntarily, as his body shook independently of his will, and he was not aware of what he was saying at those times. In general, Lyubavin said he didn't bring a new religious belief, but was a member of the Molokan sect of "the common ones"<sup>53</sup>.

However, by his actions, he formed a new Molokan sect. The adherents of this sect claimed their religious belief to be based on Ezekiel, chapter 13.

52 - Dingelshedt N. Op. cit. - p. 42, 57-58.

53 - Ibid. - p. 45; 47.

The members of the new Molokan sect became known as “Pryguny,” that is “jumpers,” because they jumped during their worship services. However they called themselves “spiritual Christians”<sup>54</sup>.

During worship, “Pryguny” danced till they drop, shake their hands, lay on the floor for a long time, made indistinct sounds, tapped their feet on the floor, and their bodies trembled. The sectarians said their odd body movements were caused by the Holy Spirit<sup>55</sup>.

The person who played the main role in the spreading of the “Pryguny” sect in the Caucasus was Lukyan Petrovich Sokolov, who lived in Novyi Dilizhan village of the province of Yelizavetpol. Some sources even name him as the founder of “Pryguny”<sup>56</sup>. Thanks to his preaching, the sect spread beyond Aleksandropol county of the province of Iravan. In 1854, he came to Yelenovka village of Yeni Bayazid county in the province of Iravan. He preached there, and converted two Molokan families to “Pryguny.” It is interesting that the “Pryguny” in Yelenovka called themselves “members of Zion.” Later, Lukyan Sokolov’s followers became known as “Zionites.” In 1855, “Zionism” spread to Molokans living in Shusha county of the province of Shamakhi<sup>57</sup>.

This is how the Russian researcher Dingshtedt described the ecstasy of “Zionites” who lived in Konstantinovka village of Yeni Bayazid county: every night they meet at homes, call the Spirit, then jump, not sparing themselves, screaming loudly and making weird noises. The sectarians would go into ecstasy, fall on the floor, convulse until they bleed, tear their clothes, and pull their hair out. The “Zionites” would eagerly wait for the Spirit, and when He didn’t come, they would try to speed up His coming by leading ascetic lifestyle. They would stay hungry, neither eating nor drinking anything for 4-5 days, fasting to the point of exhaustion<sup>58</sup>.

“Zionites” based their beliefs on the Bible, particularly on Psalms.

54 - Ibid. - p. 44.

55 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p.546; Dingshtedt N. Ibid. – p. 44.

56 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p.558.

57 - Dingshtedt N. Op. cit. – p. 48, 51; Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p.546.

58 Dingshtedt N. Ibid. – p.49.

Apart from that, the sectarians' religious beliefs were set out in the secretly distributed handwritten books "Paradise Lost and Restored," "The Spirit's Mirror," "Letters and Admonitions." The members of the sect were preparing for the end of the world and rejected religious positions and titles. The sectarians believed that God-chosen people who are able to comprehend the divine truths under the influence of God's Spirit should play a greater role in the destiny of the church<sup>59</sup>.

"Pryguny" were convinced that God would soon send an implacable divine fighter, who should punish most of all the followers of "Obschiye" Molokan sect, because they had chosen judges and religious leaders from among themselves and killed the Holy Spirit in their hearts. "Zionites" also believed that the fighter sent by the Lord should exalt "Pryguny," and then the Spirit would come to build Zion, that is God's Kingdom. Then "Zionites" would have power and great privilege in the millennial Kingdom of God<sup>60</sup>.

In 1856, "Zionites" were officially called "Pryguny" for the first time. In the same year, a strong movement began inside "Pryguny," and they started calling themselves "the sect of the spirits"<sup>61</sup>. Therefore, their belief was identified as "teaching about the spirit"<sup>62</sup>.

As time went on, the sect of "Pryguny" spread among the Molokans living in Yeni Bayazid and Aleksandropol counties of the province of Iravan, and later into other parts of the Caucasus. The new sect was accepted more readily in Nikitin and Voskresensk villages of Aleksandropol county.

### *"Maksimisty"*

As we have mentioned, the sect of "Pryguny" spread among the Molokans living in Yeni Bayazid and Aleksandropol counties of the province of Iravan, and later in other regions of the Caucasus, especially in Nikitin village of Aleksandropol county. That village had a group of the "Pryguny" sect functioning under the leadership of Maxim Rudomyotkin. He was Lukyan Sokolov's disciple and had the nickname "Komar."

59 - Ibid. - p. 49-53.

60 - Ibid. - p. 51, 53-54.

61 - Dingelshedt N. Op. cit. – p. 59.

62 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p. 546.

Later he left Sokolov and made some additions to the beliefs of “Pryguny,” gaining many supporters in Molokan villages, declaring himself “king of spirits,” and on December 19, 1857, he was crowned in front of the crowd in his village, Nikitino<sup>63</sup>.

M. Rudomyotkin predicted that Christ’s Millennial Kingdom would be established in 1857. The expected event did not happen that year, and the “Pryguny’s “king” appointed a new date for the establishment of the Divine Kingdom – 1860.



*Maxim Rudomyotkin's house.*

M. Rudomyotkin called the Divine Kingdom “Zion” and told his disciples that they would meet with Christ on Mount Zion and reign with Him for a thousand years in the Divine Kingdom. He promised his followers that in the Millennial Kingdom there would be no more illness, no more grief, no more suffering, and that each of them would have one or two young wives in the next world. For that reason, although M. Rudomyotkin was married, he also lived in relationship with two other young women who he called “my spiritual wives.” “Pryguny” called those two women “tsarina.” M. Rudomyotkin advised his married followers to have “spiritual wives” as well. He taught that his disciples should enter God’s Kingdom not with their “carnal” (that is true) wives,

63 - Dingelshedt N. Ibid. – p.59, 61; Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Tiflis: Tipografiya kantsel'arii Glavnonachalstvuyuschego grazhdanskoyu chastyu na Kavkaz, 1904. Vol. XII. – p. 558.

but with these so-called “spiritual” women. Thus, he preached polygamy. At the same time, the “king of Pryguny” threatened those who didn’t obey him with divine punishment, saying that because they came under the influence of the Antichrist, they would be forced to carry the “Pryguny” on their shoulders to God’s Kingdom<sup>64</sup>.

M. Rudomyotkin skillfully took advantage of people’s ignorance. He visited his followers in many parts of the Caucasus. The “spiritual tsar”’s visits were very costly to “Pryguny,” because those who were visited by M. Rudomyotkin had to give their “king” money and gifts, and make feasts for their leader and his “retinue”<sup>65</sup>.

On his visits, M. Rudomyotkin was accompanied by 12 people. Most of them were young boys and girls. The group of boys were headed by Fetiska and Alyoshka, whom M. Rudomyotkin considered his right and left hands; the group of girls was headed by his “spiritual wives” Stepanida and Varvara<sup>66</sup>.

In order to demonstrate his power, M. Rudomyotkin had two Russian letters on his shoulders – letter “Ц” on the right side, and letter “Д” on the left. These two letters stood for the Russian “tsar dukhov,” which means “king of spirits.” M. Rudomyotkin’s “spiritual wives” had the same letters on their shoulders<sup>67</sup>.

The head of “Pryguny” developed a unique reward system. He rewarded those who prayed earnestly and gave large contributions with a triangle and round stamps, inscribing the awarded person’s initials in the center of the stamp. The round stamps were given to his closest associates. In addition to that, each house of worship had its own stamp. However, in most cases, M. Rudomyotkin awarded his followers ordinary mint-scented handkerchiefs. There was also a widespread custom of awarding colorful and shiny belts. Finally, the sectarians who had at least once in their life experienced the Spirit’s gentle touch had the right to wear the Order “D” (referring to “dukhovnyi,” which is the Russian term for “spiritual”). “Pryguny” had their own “state” flag with the image of two wings and the writing “the majesty of the Sun.”

64 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. – p. 558-559.

65 - Ibid. - p. 559.

66 - Ibid.

67 - Ibid.

This flag was stored in Nikitino village, and M. Rudomyotkin carried it with him on all his visits<sup>68</sup>.

This sect had strict discipline. M. Rudomyotkin used force against his followers. For instance, if a person didn't want to admit his or her "mistakes," M. Rudomyotkin's close assistants or servants tied a towel to that person's neck and dragged them on the floor of the house of worship, while M. Rudomyotkin himself commanded, "Repent! Repent!" In order to escape violence, the "sinner" had to demonstrate their repentance by giving M. Rudomyotkin money or gifts and providing a feast for him and his retinue<sup>69</sup>.

The sect had many other odd beliefs and religious rituals. For example, during worship, one of "Pryguny" would gather rubbish with a spade, and the sectarians danced, cursing all those who were not "Pryguny," and burn that heap of rubbish. Or, a man would walk around with a sectarian woman sitting on his back. This odd ritual supposedly symbolized Mother Mary's flight to Egypt<sup>70</sup>.

As time went on, M. Rudomyotkin's claims increased. He commanded all "Pryguny" in the Caucasus to give him a tenth of their income every year. Then in 1858, M. Rudomyotkin decided to set up a huge pole in his yard. "Pryguny" obeyed his command, erected a huge pole and prepared two triangle banners, which they wanted to hang on the pole. The banners had some strange signs and writings proclaiming the pole's "miraculous" and "divine" power, and the Millennial Kingdom. But this time the sectarians' plans didn't succeed. The Tsar's local officers confiscated the huge pole from the sectarians, so the "Pryguny" had to erect another pole, much smaller than the previous one<sup>71</sup>.

After this event, M. Rudomyotkin was arrested and imprisoned in the Solovetsky Monastery. He lived there for nine years in hard conditions, and in 1869 we was transferred to Suzdal fortress under Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery. M. Rudomyotkin was kept in that fortress until his death (in 1877). Presumably, he didn't die of natural causes.

68 - Dingelshedt N. Op. cit. - p.75.

69 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. - p.559.

70 - Ibid.

71 - Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey. - Vol XII. - p.559; Dingelshedt N. Op. cit. - p. 68-71.

In general, during the period of Tsarist Russia, the main leaders of “Pryguny” were murdered<sup>72</sup>.

M. Rudomyotkin’s teachings, religious poems, and prayers are found in his “Book of the Sun.” This book, along with the main Molokan texts, is included in the collection titled “Spirit and Life, Book of the Sun”<sup>73</sup>.

In the 1920s M. Rudomyotkin’s followers separated from the other “Pryguny,” calling themselves “Maksimisty” after the name of Maxim Rudomyotkin. In the Soviet period, “Maksimisty” wouldn’t be a part of collective farms and Soviet farms and wouldn’t let their children wear Pioneers’ scarf<sup>74</sup>.

In the archive of the Council on Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers<sup>75\*</sup> there is interesting information on the “Maksimisty,” and “Pryguny” in general. In the 1990s, according to the list of the unregistered religious organizations (Christian) functioning in the Republic of Azerbaijan, dated 01.07.1995, the number of “Pryguny” living in Baku city, Nasimi district was about 25 people; in Oghuz district, Vladimirovka village – 15 people; Oghuz district, Boyuk-Soyudlu village – 27 people; Gadabay district, Novoivanovka village – 22 people; Gadabay district, Novosaratovka village – 59 people; Tar-Tar district, Rus Borisi village – 40 people. Apart from that, there were 23 “Maksimisty” in Novoivanovka village of Gadabay district.

The number of “Pryguny” and “Maksimisty” presently living in our republic is unknown. There may be no more living members of this sect, because all of them were elderly people. It is possible that the sectarians passed away and the sect has no more followers.

#### *“Vodniye Molokane”*

In 1840-1850s, a new Molokan sect emerged in the Lankaran and Shamakhi counties of the province of Baku. Unlike other Molokans, who did not perform Christian rituals, understanding them figuratively, these members of the sect performed baptisms. Therefore, they were called “Vodniye Molokane” (lit. “water Molokans,” i.e. they recognized the ritual of baptism).

72 - Avraam Shmulevich. MONITORING SMI: Russkaya religiya: tsar dukhov i vozhd' sionskogo narida// «RUSSKIY ZHURNAL», 12 fevral'a 2007 g. [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=51856> (retrieval date: 26.01.2016).

73 - Avraam Shmulevich//Ibid.

74 - Avraam Shmulevich//Ibid.

75 - \*The archive is stored at the State Committee for Work with Reli. Org of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

This sect teaches that only adults may be baptized. It should be noted that the teaching of “Vodniye Molokane” spread in the 1860s from the province of Baku to Astrakhan, and later to the central provinces of Russia<sup>76</sup>.

### **Molokans’ Socio-Economic conditions in Tsarist Russia**

As we have seen, after their resettlement to the Caucasus, including Azerbaijan, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Molokans divided into different sects. Although members of the Molokan sect weren’t able to stay united, they found a new homeland and adapted to our society. They made a contribution to the development of agriculture and were successful in trade. They produced rich merchants, owners of large factories and land (e.g., the brothers Skobolev who produced flour and cereals in Baku, Kolesnikovs who made large vessels, the rich family of the Kosheys, etc.).

In Baku, Molokans preferred engaging in trade. They sold agricultural products there, transported goods with large carts inside the city and outside (to Tbilisi, Batumi, etc.)<sup>77</sup>.



*An old photo of “Molokan Garden” (present-day Khagani Garden).*

76 - «Istoriya yevangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR». - Moscow: Izdaniye vsesoyuznogo soveta yevangel'skikh khristian-baptistov, 1989. - p.42.

77 - Istoriya molokan Azerbaydzhana [Electronic resource]//sayt «O sel'e Ivanovka». – URL: <https://ivanovka.net/?p=687> (retrieval date: 25.01.2016).

In the 1850-1860s, it was mainly Molokans from Shamakhi county that built a village close to the Old City, on the outskirts of Baku. At that time, large wooden barrels were needed for the transportation of oil products. The Molokan villagers began producing the necessary barrels. In the process, they had to soak the wooden parts, so they dug numerous wells in front of the workshops and always kept them full of water. They didn't change the water in the wells for a long time, so it stank and became a source of Malaria<sup>78</sup>.

The Molokan village, which initially was on the edge of Baku, over time became the center of the city. In 1872, the Governor of the city V. Pozen decided to move the foul-smelling village from the center to the "Zavagzalni" area (behind the Railway Terminal) and plant a beautiful garden on its spot. Bakuites still call that place "Molokan Garden" (present-day Khagani Garden)<sup>79</sup>.

### **Molokan Communities during Soviet Rule**

After the forceful establishment of Soviet power on April 20, 1920, the fight against religion and atheist propaganda was raised to the level of state policy, and materialistic Marxist-Leninist philosophy became the state ideology. Quite naturally, this had an adverse effect on the country's religious life and believers' activities. The regime imprisoned many religious leaders, regardless of their religion, executed many by firing squad, and closed down or destroyed their houses of worship.

Of course, Molokan religious communities also faced trouble and difficulties. In these years of bloody repression, the most active members of Molokan communities were imprisoned, and some were executed by firing squad<sup>80</sup>.

When World War II started, Stalin's regime mitigated its attitude towards religion, and Molokan communities became more active. During the war and following, the number of people attending Molokan houses of worship increased.

78 - *Istoriya molokan Azerbaydzhana*//Ibid.

79 - *Istoriya molokan Azerbaydzhana*//Ibid.

80 - *Istoriya molokan Azerbaydzhana*//Ibid.

In 1955 the Molokans in Baku held a congress dedicated to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the granting of religious freedom to Molokans by Russian Tsar Aleksandr I<sup>81</sup>.

However, as time passed, traditional Molokan life was challenged, by the modernization of society, scientific and technological development, the opening of secular schools in Molokan villages, and a higher level of education. Youth who came from Molokan families moved away from their religious traditions, didn't obey Molokan principles, adapted to modern society, received higher education, pursued careers, preferred secular life, and forgot their religious identity. Atheist propaganda had its impact on them, too. They could not be considered Molokan anymore, because Molokan is a religious worldview and lifestyle. There were also many cases of Molokans converting to other Christian movements, especially to the Baptist church. Some Molokans became Orthodox. In short, the very foundation of the Molokan faith was shaken, and during Soviet rule, only elderly people attended Molokan gatherings<sup>82</sup>.

### Current Situation

On October 18, 1991, our country broke free from the chains of Soviet rule and embarked on a path towards building a secular, democratic, law-based state; an enabling and supportive environment was created for all religions and sects, including local Molokans. For instance, our then Leader Haydar Aliyev ordered the preservation of the collective farm in Ivanovka of Ismayilli district, with a Molokan majority<sup>83</sup>. This was crucial for the villagers, because this collective farm named after Nikolay Vasilyevich Nikitin helped the Molokan community survive. It's no coincidence that today Ivanovka village is well-known for its ecologically clean agricultural products. The year 2005 was especially memorable for the Molokans living in our republic. In the summer of that year, Molokan communities in our country celebrated the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their resettlement in Azerbaijan<sup>84</sup>.

81 - Istoriya molokan Azerbaydzhana//Ibid.

82 - Istoriya molokan Azerbaydzhana//Ibid.

83 - The official website of the Executive Power of Ismayilli district of the Republic of Azerbaijan. – URL: <http://ismayilli-ih.gov.az/page/46.html#2> (retrieval date: 25.01.2016).

84 - V Chukhuryurd'e torzhestvenno otmeceno 200-letije pereseleniya molokan v Azerbaydhan. – URL: <http://news.day.az/society/28889.html> (retrieval date: 25.01.2016).

As to Molokans' religious life in modern Azerbaijan, we should first of all note the following Molokan religious organization reregistered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations:

1. Baku "Molokan Spiritual Christians" religious community (2009)
2. Sumgayit "Molokan Spiritual Christians" religious community (2009)
3. Gobustan district, Hilmilli village "Molokan Spiritual Christians" religious community (2010)

Besides this, in 2015, the state registered the religious community of "Molokan Spiritual Christians" in Ismayilli district, Ivanovka villages.



*Molokan house of worship. Ismayilli district, the village of Ivanovka.*

Since the year 2011, at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, every year financial aid is allocated from the national budget to Muslim and non-Muslim religious organizations, including the Molokan religious communities.

Although every provision is made for the Molokan religious communities' activities, this religious minority group has been decreasing in number. It is estimated that the total number of people attending Sunday gatherings in Molokan houses of worship all over the country is about 200 people.

85 - The official website of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. – URL: <http://scwra.gov.az/pages/96/> (retrieval date: 26.01.2016).

Thus, every Sunday about 90-120 people attend the house of worship in Ivanovka village of Ismayilli district, about 30-50 people attend the gathering in Baku, 14 people in Hilmilli village of Gobustan district, and 15 people in Chukhuryurd village of Shamakhi district. The overwhelming



majority of them are elderly people.

*The Molokan house of worship. Baku city.*

The Molokans who presently live in our republic belong to the branch named “Postoyaniye.” This Russian term means “constant” or “unchanging.” The members of this sect are called “constant,” because they are faithful to the teaching of Semyon Uklein, the founder of Molokan sect, and do not make any additions.

Finally, we should also emphasize that the decrease in the number of Molokans is observed not only in our republic, but in other countries, too. In fact, this tendency began during Tsarist Russia, when there were many cases of Molokans converting to Baptist, Adventist, Orthodox, and other Christian churches. One of the reasons the Molokan faith is decreasing is its lack of missionary activities; the members of this sect live in closed communities and do not adjust to the modern world. For example, they still wear old Russian peasant clothes. Another reason for the Molokans’ decline is their lack of any organization that could unite them, provide discipline or guidance for the sect’s development.

Most likely, the number of Molokans will continue to decrease until the Russian sect is relegated to history.



*The Head of State Ilham Aliyev and the First Lady of Azerbaijan, President of Haydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva, on the Harvest Festival. Ismayilli district, the village of Ivanovka. October 29, 2009.*



*Former Molokan house of worship in Baku. Built by Serebryannikov, the leader of Molokans in the Period of Tsarist Russia.*

# **CHAPTER V**

## **PROTESTANTISM**

## Overview

*“Since your majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason – I do not accept the authority of popes and councils for they have contradicted each other – my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.”*

*M. Luther*

**O**n October 31, 1517, in Wittenberg, the administrative center of the Province of Saxony, German theologian Martin Luther prepared his Ninety-five Theses. In his thesis, written in Latin, he spoke out against the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church, especially indulgencies (“buying your way to heaven”); he declared that priests cannot serve as mediators between God and men, that God didn’t give the Roman Pope the privilege to forgive peoples’ sins; thus, he called for reform in the Catholic Church.

He didn’t want to create a new church, but in 1520, the Roman Pope announced M. Luther a heretic, and in 1521, by the Edict of Worms, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire Charles V declared Luther a criminal. Nevertheless, some German princes supported M. Luther, and The Elector of Saxony, Frederick III protected him. In 1529, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Diet of Speyer approved the Edict of Worms, which had declared M. Luther a criminal. Then Luther’s supporters – six princes and representatives of 14 free cities – prepared a document called “the Protestation of Speyer” and presented it to the Diet. After that, in accordance with the name of that document, the adherents of reforms in the Roman Catholic Church became known as “Protestants”<sup>2</sup>.

1 - Ignatenko Ye. Protestanty – kto oni? Iztoriya protestantskikh tserkvey g. Komsomol’ska-na-Amure. - Komsomol’sk-na-Amure, 2012. – p. 5.

2 - Ignatenko Ye. Op. cit. – p. 5-6.



*Luther at the Diet of Worms. By A. von Werner. 1877.*

Thus, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the German monk and doctor of theology, Martin Luther, brought about a religious and socio-political movement against the Catholic Church in Western Europe, which later became a new branch of Christianity – Protestantism. The emergence of the Reformation movement caused a bloody inter-faith war in the Western world. As a result, on August 24, 1572, Catholics murdered about 30,000 Protestant Huguenots in Paris.

Eventually Protestantism itself was divided into different denominations and sects, and in some Western countries it acquired a dominant position. Presently Protestantism is the second largest branch of Christianity. The approximate number of Christians in the world is 2.2 billion people, and about 800 million of these Christians are Protestants.

### **Quinque sola**

Protestantism is a complex, colorful, and multi-faceted branch of Christianity. In the modern world it includes Lutheranism, the Reformed church, and numerous new religious movements and sects. But all of them are united under five principles of Protestant foundations, which are called in Latin “Quinque sola” (“quinque” means five, and “sola” means alone or only).

3 - <http://internetsobor.org/tserkov-i-mir/tserkov-i-mir/statistika-v-mire-2-2-milliarda-khristian-polovina-iz-nikh-katoliki> (retrieval date: 20.08.2016).

These five Protestant tenets are:<sup>4</sup>



*M. Luther. By Lucas Cranach. 1525.*

1. *Sola Scriptura* – “*Scripture alone.*” By this principle Martin Luther rejected the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and stated that religious dogmas and experiences must come from the Holy Scriptures. Protestants accept the Bible as the only source of faith and reject all church traditions and the Church Fathers’ teachings, which are not in accord with God’s Word.

2. *Sola fide* – “*faith alone.*” By this principle Protestants mean that a person can receive God’s grace and live a godly life not by fulfilling religious laws, but only by believing in Jesus Christ.

3. *Sola gratia* – “*only grace.*” This principle says that salvation comes only by divine grace, i.e. a sinner is saved not by his merit, but by the Lord’s mercy.

4. *Solus Christus* – “*only Christ.*” That means Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man.

5. *Soli Deo gloria* – “*glory to God alone.*” This Protestant principle says that only God should be worshipped and adored. As we can see from the principles listed above, Protestants consider the Bible to be the only source of faith. They are convinced that the teaching of the Church Fathers, the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils, and the Popes’ decrees are not the absolute truth. For Protestants, the only source of truth and product of revelation is the Bible, especially the New Testament. Therefore, Protestants emphasize the importance of studying the Bible, and they translate it into national languages to make God’s Word available to all peoples.

Unlike Catholics and Orthodox, Protestants teach that religious ministers cannot be mediators between God and men, do not get any privileges from God, and are no different from ordinary believers.

<sup>4</sup> Ignatenko Ye. *Ibid.* – p. 7; Marcus Braybrooke. *Beacons of the light: one hundred people who have shaped the spiritual history of humankind.* – Hants: John Hunt Publishing Ltd., 2009. – p. 341.

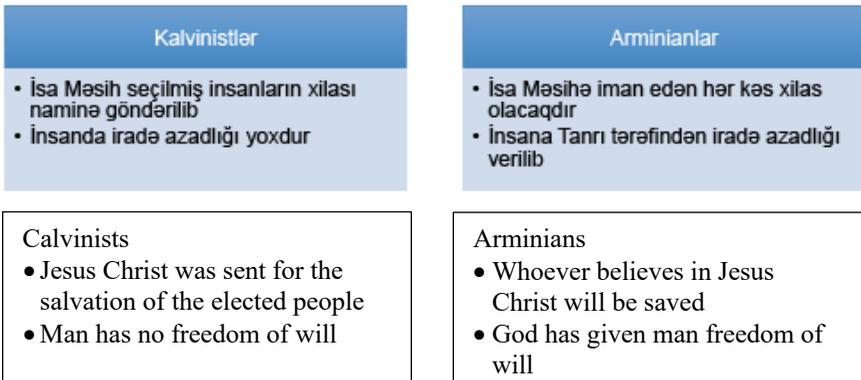
5 - Ignatenko Ye. *Op. cit.* – p. 7-8.

Protestants have a principle of “common priesthood,” which means that any Christian can perform religious rites. Therefore, it is wrong to divide the church into clergy and laity<sup>6</sup>.

Protestants believe in the Holy Trinity and accept only two of the seven sacraments (baptism and the Lord’s Supper). They consider it a sin to worship religious symbols or objects such as crosses and icons, holy relics and saints in general. Their main worship services take place on Sundays and are quite simple. The preacher delivers a sermon, the church sings religious songs with the accompaniment of instrumental music, people pray spontaneously in their own words, and sometimes, religious poems are recited. Protestant churches are led by presbyters, (a pastor or preacher) elected by the congregation, but, as we have mentioned, they have no privileges. They are merely the elders of the congregation, that is any person in the congregation may be elected as a presbyter<sup>7</sup>.

It should also be mentioned that Protestants divide into two major groups: Calvinists and Arminians. Calvinists hold to a French theologian, John Calvin’s teachings on salvation, predestination, and human free will, while Arminians follow a Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius’s teachings. The main points of these teachings are illustrated on Diagram 1.

***Diagram 1. Doctrinal differences between Calvinists and Arminians***



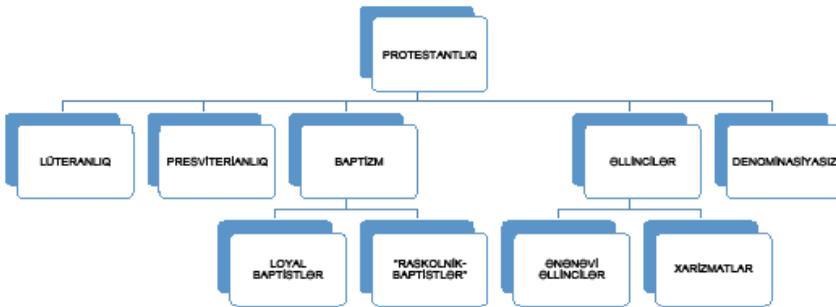
<sup>6</sup> - Ibid. - p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> - Ignatenko Ye. Op. cit. – p. 8.

## Protestantism in Azerbaijan: Schematic Outline

Protestantism in our country has a rich and interesting history. It's notable that Azerbaijan was one of the main centers in the formation of Russian Baptists. Protestantism began to emerge here from 1819, when German settlements were built. Presently, Protestantism in our country is represented by traditional denominations such as Lutherans and Presbyterian, and new movements such as Pentecostal and Charismatic churches (see Diagram 2). According to our calculations, the total number of members of different Protestant churches in Azerbaijan is about 6,100-6,300 people.

*Diagram 2. Protestant movements and denominations in Azerbaijan*



It should be noted that Protestant denominations in Azerbaijan had a unique path of development. In fact, Molokans provided fertile ground for the formation of Protestantism in our country. In order to understand this, let us look at Diagram 3.

*Diagram 3. The Formation of the Main Protestant Movements in Azerbaijan*



As we can see from Diagram 3, Russian Baptists formed from 1871 out of Molokan settlements built in Azerbaijan from the 1830-1840s. During the Soviet period, beginning from 1932, the Pentecostal religious movement spread among local Baptists.

Concerning the history of Protestantism in Azerbaijan, we should touch on the activity of foreign missionaries, because Protestantism spread in our country due to their efforts. The first Protestant missionaries who came to our country were sent by the “Basel Society.” The Basel missionaries who came to Azerbaijan in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the period of Tsarist Russia, were German and spread the Lutheran brand of Protestantism. After the Basel preachers, other missionaries came to Azerbaijan. They can be divided into three groups:

1. Russian/Ukrainian missionaries.
2. Western missionaries.
3. South Korean missionaries.

Diagram 4 will help us get an idea of some of the religious movements emerging from these missionaries’ activities.

#### ***Diagram 4. Protestant Missionaries in Azerbaijan in Different Historical Periods***

Rus - Ukrayna missionerləri	Qərbli missionerlər	Cənubi Koreyalı missionerlər
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Şərq Baptizmi (XIX əsr)</li> <li>• Ənənəvi əllincilik (XIX əsr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lüteranlıq (XIX əsr)</li> <li>• Xarizmatizm (XX əsrin 90-cı illəri)</li> <li>• Denominasiyasız Xristianlıq (XX əsrin 90-cı illəri)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presviterianlıq (XX əsrin 90-cı illəri).</li> <li>• İlk presviterian missionerlər hələ çar Rusiyası dövründə fəaliyyət göstərsə də, onların təbliğatı bir nəticə verməmişdir. Odur ki, bu məzhəbin təməli müasir Azərbaycanda Cənubi Koreyalı missionerlər tərəfindən atılmışdır.</li> </ul>

Russian/Ukrainian missionaries \* Eastern Baptists (the 19<sup>th</sup> century) \* Traditional Pentecostalism (the 19<sup>th</sup> century)

Western missionaries \* Lutheranism (the 19<sup>th</sup> century) \* Charismatic movement (1990s) \* Non-denominational Christianity (1990s)

South Korean missionaries \* Presbyterianism (1990s) \* Although the first Presbyterian missionaries appeared even in the period of Tsarist Russia, their activity did not produce results. Therefore, this denomination was established in modern Azerbaijan by South Korean missionaries.

After the review of the history and development of Protestantism in Azerbaijan, it is appropriate to present the following chart with some information on Protestant movements and denominations that currently exist in our republic.

*Chart 1. Protestant Movements and Denominations in the Republic of Azerbaijan, in the Year 2016*

Dini cərəyan/ denominasiya	Azərbaycan da yayılma tarixi	Yayılma arealı	Əqidə	Kilsə idarə sistemi	Say
Lüteranlıq	XIX əsrin əvvəli	Bakı	-	Yepiskopal	80 nəfər
Baptizm	1871-ci il	Bakı, Sumqayıt, Gəncə, Şamaxı, Şirvan Zaqatala, İsmayilli, Gədəbəy	Arminian	Kongregatsionalist	Təqribən 1100 nəfər
Yeddinci Günün Adventistləri	1894-cü il	Bakı, Gəncə, Tovuz, Naxçıvan, Gədəbəy	Arminian	Presviterian/ kongregatsionalist	528 nəfər
Ənənəvi əllincilər	1932-ci il	Bakı, Sumqayıt, Şabran, Yevlax, Bardə, Gəncə, Xaçmaz, Qusar, İsmayilli, Siyəzən, Qazax, Şəmkir	Kalvinist	Kongregatsionalist	1000-dən yuxarı
Xarizmatlar	1994-cü il	Bakı, Sumqayıt Ağdaş, Xudat Quba, Gəncə İsmayilli, Göyçay Yevlax, Goranboy, Qəbələ, Mingəçevir, Naftalan, Ucar, Xaçmaz	Arminian	Kongregatsionalist	2000-dən yuxarı

<b>Bakı şəhəri Presviterian dini icması</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>Bakı</b>	<b>Kalvinist</b>	<b>Presviterian</b>	<b>Təqribən 30 nəfər</b>
<b>Denominasiyasız</b>	<b>XX əsrin 90-cı illəri</b>	<b>Bakı</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Təqribən 650 - 900 nəfər</b>

As seen in Chart 1, Protestantism in Azerbaijan is quite colorful and diverse. In the following chapters of this book, we will try to provide detailed information on the past and present situation of these different Protestant denominations in our country. Let us chronologically review their histories.

Religious movement/ denomination	The year of the emergence in Azerbaijan	The area of the spread	Doctrine	Church governance	Number of members
Lutheranism	Early 1800s	Baku	-	Episcopal	80 people
Baptists	1871	Baku, Sumgayit, Ganja, Shamakhi, Shirvan, Zaqatala, Ismayilli, Gadabay	Arminian	Congregationalist	Appr. 1,100 people
Seventh Day's Adventists	1894	Baku, Ganja, Tovuz, Nakhchivan, Gadabay	Arminian	Presbyterian/ Congregationalist	528 people
Traditional Pentecostals	1932	Baku, Sumgayit, Shabran, Yevlakh, Barda, Ganja, Khachmaz, Gusar, Ismayilli, Siyazan, Qazakh, Shamkir	Calvinist	Congregationalist	Over 1,000 people
Charismatics	1994	Baku, Sumgayit, Aghdash, Khudat, Guba, Ganja, Ismayilli, Goychay, Yevlakh, Goranboy, Qabala, Mingachevir, Naftalan, Ujar, Khachmaz	Arminian	Congregationalist	Over 2,000 people
Baku Presbyterian Church	2001	Baku	Calvinist	Presbyterian	Appr. 30 people
Non-denominational	1990s	Baku	-	-	Appr. 650-900 people

## LUTHERANISM: THE FIRST PROTESTANT MOVEMENT

*Lutheranism emerged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Germany, incorporating into itself the German people's character and traits. With its characteristic simplicity, seriousness, quietness, and almost emotionlessness worship, Lutheran churches feel inadvertently "German."*

### A Truly German Faith



*Luther's Rose – the Famous Symbol of Lutheranism.*

Lutheranism was the first Protestant denomination. Its emergence was related to the name of the founder of Protestantism Martin Luther, who started the Lutheran Church on October 31, 1517, by announcing his Ninety-five Theses in Wittenberg, Germany. Soon, Lutheranism spread beyond Germany, to other European countries. Eventually, it began to hold the dominant religious position in society in some Western countries, especially in Scandinavia<sup>8</sup>. Today, for example, Lutheranism has the status of state religion in Sweden and Denmark.

The basic beliefs of Lutheranism are presented in the “Book of Concord” (1580). The book includes three historical Christian creeds (The Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed), the “Augsburg Confession” and the “Apology of the Augsburg Confession,” the “Small Catechism of Martin Luther” and his “Large Catechism” (1529), “the Smalcald Articles,” and the “Formula of Concord” (1577). Among these documents, there is also the “Augsburg Confession” written by Martin Luther’s close associate Philipp Melancthon and printed in 1530; and Luther’s “Small Catechism,” which is highly important for Lutherans<sup>9</sup>.

Though it emerged as a movement of protest against the Roman Catholic Church, Lutheranism did retain some elements of Catholicism. For instance, Lutheran churches use candles during worship, though some burn incense.

8 - St’opina A., Filatov S. L’uteranstvo//Sovremennaya religioznaya zhizn Rossii: opyt sistematicheskogo opisaniya. – Moscow: «Logos», 2003. Vol. II. - p. 11, 13-14.

9 - Kaz’mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Religioznye organizatsii sovremennogo mira: Uchebnoye posobiye. — Moscow: Moscow University Publication, 2010. p. 105-106.

Religious rites are performed with the accompaniment of organ music and church choir. Although Lutherans are against icons, they allow Biblical paintings on the walls of their churches. This Protestant denomination has other traces of Catholicism, too. For instance, Lutheran churches have altars, special garments for priests, and the same form of church governance as the Catholic church<sup>10</sup>.

### German Settlements



*German houses in Goygol.*

When walking in the well-planned broad streets of Goygol and Shamkir, among their neat and orderly houses covered with red tiles, we feel as if we have travelled to a small town in Germany. These houses remain as a memory of the German colonists who came to our country 200 years ago. As they travelled East in their desire to move away from the Antichrist's schemes and be closer to the Holy Land, they settled in the west of Azerbaijan.

<sup>10</sup> - Kaz'mina O.Ye., Puchkov P.I. Op. cit. – p. 107; Young J. Khristianstvo. - Moscow: Agenstvo «FAIR», 1998. – p.223.

The German immigrants found their second homeland in our country and, with their diligence and enterprise, not only made a contribution to our agriculture and urban development, but laid the foundation of Protestantism in Azerbaijan.

Unfortunately, the beginning of World War II and the deportation policy of Stalin's regime brought an end to the German settlements and significantly reduced the number of Germans in our land. However, the rich cultural and historical heritage of German immigrants has remained to this day. Presently, this heritage has been under the special protection of the state of Azerbaijan.

Which denomination did the German immigrants belong to? Why did they leave their homeland? In order to answer these questions, we should review the social and political events and religious processes which happened in far-away Germany from the late 1600s – early 1700s.



*Goygol city. A building of Germans from Schwaben.*

### **Who Were the Württemberg Separatists?**

The formation of German colonies in the Caucasus, including Northern Azerbaijan, is related to the name of the Württemberg “Separatists.” In scientific literature, different titles are used for the adherents of this sect: Württemberg “separatists,” Swabian sectarians, the members of the “Exodus Society,” etc. Württemberg “separatists” rejected Lutheranism and opposed the church's rules.

In a way, they are like Molokans and Doukhobors, who rejected the Russian Orthodox Church.

The sect of “Separatists” in Württemberg was a radical wing of the Protestant movement of Pietism. Pietism started from the late 1600s – early 1700s among Lutherans in Germany. The followers of this religious movement deemed religious feelings higher than church dogma and rituals, opposing the cold dogmatism, which was dominant in the traditional Lutheran churches. Pietists tried to experience high spiritual feelings and achieve fellowship with God by meditating on Biblical passages and praying earnestly, and they were convinced that this was the only way to reach moral perfection and obtain divine grace. They believed Jesus Christ would return soon, prepared for His second coming, and wanted to build a church community of saints on earth. The followers of Pietism said that Christians should never yield to the temptations of the world. Thus, Pietist societies considered theater, dancing, singing, playing games, even joking to be sins<sup>11</sup>.

Pietists themselves were divided into different movements. As we said, the Pietists who migrated to Azerbaijan were adherents of a radical Pietist group called “Separatists,” which emerged in Württemberg. Since these radical Pietists lived in Württemberg, in the Schwaben region, a historical province of Germany, they were called Württemberg or Swabian “separatists.” These Swabian “separatists” had a custom of spending extended time in Bible study. This extended time for Bible study was called in German “Andachtsstunden,” which means “hours of worship”<sup>12</sup>. So, for them, these hours of Bible study were a form of worship.

Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) is considered the founder of the Swabian movement of Pietism. He called people to get ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ by self-perfection and ascetism. He also declared that Jesus Christ would appear in the East in the year 1790. Later, a German author named Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling (1740-1817) corrected Bengel’s calculations, announcing Jesus Christ’s return in the year 1836.

11 - PIYETIZM, techeniye v protestantizme [Electronic resource]// Novaya ill'ustrirovannaya ensiklopediya n'emtsev Rossii (NIEENR). – URL: <http://www.enc.rusdeutsch.ru/articles/1262> (retrieval date: 16.11.2016).

12 - PIYETIZM, techeniye v protestantizme//Ibid.

Jung-Stilling's close associate and Russian Emperor Aleksandr I's lover Baroness Barbara Juliane von Krüdener (1764-1825) claimed Jesus Christ would come to Mount Ararat in the Caucasus. Thus, influenced by these predictions about the last days, radical Pietists in Württemberg formed a Protestant movement called "The Exodus Society." The followers of this movement built German settlements in the Caucasus, including Azerbaijan, in order to live closer to the place of Jesus Christ's appearance, and to the city where God's Kingdom would supposedly be established (Jerusalem)<sup>13</sup>.



*J.H. Jung-Stilling*

It should be noted that J.H. Jung-Stilling's prediction regarding Jesus Christ's appearance in the Caucasus in 1836 is found in his work "The History of the Victories of the Christian Religion," published in 1799. The author's calculations were based on the "Book of Revelation of St. John." This work by Jung-Stilling influenced not only the German Pietists, but also the Doukhobors and Molokans who migrated to our country and built numerous villages here. For example, an

Orthodox priest, A. Yunitski, gave the following information about the Molokans in

the Province of Baku: *"In the 1830s, their ancestors read Jung-Stilling's book "The History of the Victories," where he proved that Jesus Christ would appear in 1836 "near Mount Ararat, in the cradle of the human race." This factor caused many Molokans to voluntarily migrate from Russia to the Caucasus"*<sup>14</sup>.

As we have seen, a mystical religious book published in Germany not only stirred up a religious movement among German Pietists, but led to the change and enrichment of the religious and ethnic composition of Northern Azerbaijan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In fact, the emergence of the "separatist" sect was not accidental. This religious movement was caused by some sociopolitical factors. Firstly, Emperor Napoleon's bloody wars in Europe led to the emergence of the "separatist" sect.

<sup>13</sup> - ПИЙЕТИЗМ, теcheniye v protestantizme//Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> - Yunitski A. Gn'ozda sektantstva na Kavkaz'e (opublikovano: Khristianskoye chteniye. 1895. No 1-2. - p. 142-164.). - SPbPDA: Sankt-Peterburg, 2009. - p. 147.

It's no coincidence that the separatist Pietists called Napoleon "the beast coming out of the earth" from the Book of Revelation. They deemed the wars waged by the French ruler to be a sign of the end of the world. Thus, the "prophets" of the "separatist" sect announced the Antichrist's coming and migrated to the East, fleeing from the Antichrist's schemes<sup>15</sup>.

Besides Napoleon's wars, another historical event influenced the emergence of the "separatist" sect. In 1804, during Frederick III's rule, Lutheran Consistory (a spiritual office which has the right of administration and court) he applied new worship rules for the churches and made a resolution to stop them using old religious songs, Catechism and prayer books. This created discontent among certain religious people. The "separatists" didn't want to recognize this resolution, and King Frederick III was outraged by this. Seeing a sign of the end of the world in the Lutheran Consistory's resolution, the "separatists" decided to migrate<sup>16</sup>, because they were persecuted in their homeland for opposing the local religious laws. Their most active members were imprisoned, and their property was confiscated<sup>17</sup>.

The emergence of the "separatist" sect had other reasons, too. Germany didn't have its own state at that time, but was divided into more than 30 kingdoms. Ordinary German people, especially peasants, groaned under the oppression of the ruling forces, and lived a hard life. Azerbaijani historian N. Ibrahimov wrote about it, *"The German peasants were weary, suffering from lack of land in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, consequently, they experienced several famines. In 1816, they were especially badly shaken by the famine. Moved by hunger and misery, the peasants without land went to cities, but the underdeveloped industry had no need of these hard-working peasants' rough, calloused hands. So only one thing remained for them – to migrate, seeking work and food in strange far-away lands"*<sup>18</sup>.

15 - See: Verdiyeva Kh. N'emtsy v S'evernom Azerbaydzhan'e. – Baku: Elm, 2009. – p. 14.

16 - See: Gumbatova T. Zhizn' n'emtsev-kolonistov za Kavkazom. Baku, 2005 [Electronic resource]. – URL: <https://www.proza.ru/2012/07/19/817> (retrieval date: 16.11.2016); Ibrahimov N. Azerbaijan tarixinin alman səhifələri. – Baku: "Azərbaycan nəşriyyatı," 1997. – p. 61; Verdiyeva Kh. Op. cit. – p.14.

17 - Litsenberger O. A. Iskhoda Obschestvo [Electronic resource]/Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya/ pod redaktsiyey Patriarkha Moskovskogo i Vseya Rusi Kirilla. – URL: <http://wwwpravenc.ru/text/1237707.html> (retrieval date: 19.11.2016).

18 - Ibrahimov N. Op. cit. - p. 57-58.

Thus, the Swabian “separatists” migration to Northern Azerbaijan was not only for religious reasons. From 1816-1817, the famine and hunger all over Germany<sup>19</sup>, and the persecution of the Württemberg sectarians during Frederick III’s rule, encouraged their tendency to migrate.

### **Going to the Holy Land...**

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as Germany was heading towards a deep political and socioeconomic crisis, the Swabian “separatists,” who lived in harsh living conditions, facing persecution and famine, decided to migrate to the Caucasus to flee from the evil of the “Antichrist” and to see the appearance of Jesus Christ; then fate sent them a savior in the person of Russian Tsar Aleksandr I.

On February 20, 1804, Aleksandr I signed a manifesto ordering the migration of Germans to Russia, creating all the conditions necessary for them to develop agriculture, vine-growing, and cattle-breeding. The Russian Tsar promised to help provide migrants with settlements and land, to exempt them from military service and taxes, and to ensure their religious freedom. The Swabian “separatists” responded joyfully to the Russian ruler’s invitation. Some Swabian Germans even called Aleksandr I the “Eastern Star” and “King David leading his people”<sup>20</sup>.

After the Russian Emperor’s manifesto, in 1804, from 1816 to 1842, a huge number of people migrated from Württemberg to Russia and settled in different provinces of the empire. At the initiative of the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasus Army, General A.P. Yermolov, a part of the Swabian Germans was settled in the Northern Caucasus, including the land of Azerbaijan<sup>21</sup>.

In 1816, forty Swabian families who desired to accept the Russian Emperor’s offer, gathered in Ulm under the leadership of Gottlieb Lefler and Adam Schuler, and set off for the East to travel to the “wild Caucasus” and settle there. For the Swabian “separatists,” the Caucasus was the promised land, where the human race was to be regenerated and where God was to appear<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> - Litsenberger O. A. Iskhoda Obschestvo//Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> - İbrahimov N. Op. cit. - p. 71, 77.

<sup>21</sup> - Ibid. – p.77-78.

<sup>22</sup> - Ibid. – p.71.

Thus, the “separatists” left their homeland and their houses behind, and set off for the Caucasus. But they faced many difficulties on their way. “They travelled the long and dusty roads. Their journey was hard. The Russian government had allocated each family a horse, a cart and travel expenses of 148 ruble and 85 kopecks in silver. This helped them on their way, but did not spare them hardship. It took the settlers two and a half months to travel from Odessa to the Caucasus. Many died from disease during the journey. However, the wheels kept squeaking, taking people farther and farther from the Swabian mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, and their abandoned houses... In spite of it all, the Germans kept saying, *weite Reise macht weise* (“He that travels far knows much”), and continued their journey”<sup>23</sup>.

Finally, on September 21, 1817, the first group of Swabian Germans (181 people) arrived at Tbilisi. In October of that year, they set up a German colony near Sartichala village (in Georgia). The colony was named Marienfeld. The Tsarist government allocated each immigrant family 60 desiatina of land<sup>24</sup>.

### **Finding Their Homeland In a Strange Land**

In the fall of 1818, another group of Swabian Germans (486 families) came to Georgia. However, not all of them could find a suitable place around Tbilisi. The Tsarist government decided to allocate fertile lands in the Province of Yelizavetpol for the Swabian settlers. However, the Germans protested against such an offer. Then, in the fall of 1818, a group of Swabian “separatists” was brought to Yelizavetpol (Ganja) city by force, surrounded by Cossack military units. In the summer of 1819, they were settled on the right bank of Ganjachay River, 7 verst, (7.4676 km) away from Yelizavetpol, and they became the first German colony in our country. This German settlement was named Helenendorf (present-day Goygol town) in honor of Grand Princess Yelena Pavlovna, the grand duchess of Mecklenburg–Schwerin. At first, 118 immigrant families lived in Helenendorf. In 1819, a second German colony was formed in Azerbaijan.

<sup>23</sup> - İbrahimov N. Op. cit. - p.78

<sup>24</sup> - Verdiyeva Kh. Op. cit. – p. 15.

This German colony was named Annenfeld (present-day Shamkir) in honor of Grand Princess Anna, the Queen of Netherlands. That year 67 German families settled in Annenfeld<sup>25</sup>.

Apart from Helenendorf and Annenfeld, there are other colonies in Azerbaijan. Some German immigrants left Helenendorf and in 1888 built Georgsfeld colony (present-day Shamkir district, Chinarli vil.); in 1902 they built Alekseyevka village (present-day Hasansu village) in Qazakh county; then in 1912 they built Traubefeld (present-day Tovuz town); and in 1914 they built Yelizavetinka (present-day Aghstafa town). Besides that, in 1906, German colonists in Georgia set up the following settlements in our country: Grünenfeld colony (present-day Aghstafa district, Vurghun village); Eigenfeld (present-day Shamkir district, Irmashli village)<sup>26</sup>.

The emergence of such German settlements in different regions of the Russian Empire was in the Tsar's interest, because the Tsar wanted to develop agriculture by settling hard-working and industrious Germans in different regions of the empire.



*A Swabian German family in Helenendorf. 1910.*

<sup>25</sup> - Ibid. - p.16.

<sup>26</sup> - Deutsche in Azerbaidshchan: ornamente aus aserbaidshchan. – Baku, 2016. - p. 2,4.

Therefore, the Tsarist government attached great importance to the issue of German settlements and spent large amounts of money on the implementation of this plan. Russian Emperor Aleksandr I ordered the allocation of 100,000 silver rubles from the state budget for the settlement of German immigrants, the state spent 697,428 silver rubles on the provision of homes for Germans in Transcaucasia, and besides that, each German family was given a long-term loan of 3,000 rubles. The Russian Empire had high hopes for the German immigrants and provided Württemberg settlers in the Caucasus with all kinds of material support. For instance, financial assistance was given towards the construction of a church in Helenendorf. The Germans living there were exempt from all service obligations for 10 years, and during that period, the Russian government spent 211,604 rubles and 98 kopecks<sup>27</sup> on them.

Unfortunately however, the Tsarist tyrannical regime took the local people's land and gave it to the immigrants to meet their needs. For example, on May 15, 1866, the Tsarist government took 1,700 desiatina of land from Azerbaijanis and gave it to the Germans in the Helenendorf colony. In short, German immigrants had special privileges in the Russian Empire<sup>28</sup>.

The hard-working and industrious Swabian Germans were mainly engaged in agriculture. They made a great contribution to the development of vine-growing in our country. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, German immigrants planted the first vineyards in Helelnendorf. The development of vine-growing helped improve wine-making. The formation of the wine-making industry is associated with the names of German entrepreneurs from Helenendorf, Christopher Vohrer and Christian Hummel. The history of the Vohrer family goes back to 1847, when Ch. Vohrer planted the first vineyard. In 1870, he established a company named "Christopher Vohrer and the Sons" together with his sons Christoph, Gottlieb, Friedrich, and Heinrich. In 1892, the company was renamed "The Vohrer Brothers." That year, the Vohrer family opened the first cognac plant in Northern Azerbaijan (Helenendorf). In 1895, "The Hummel Brothers" put into operation the second cognac plant in the same colony.

27 – German A.A., Illarionova T.S. «Istoriya n'emtsev Rossii» [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://www.geschichte.rusdeutsch.ru/16/57>; İbrahimov N. Op. cit. – p. 95.

28 - German A.A., Illarionova T.S.// Ibid.

The plants operating in Helenendorf produced not only cognac, but also different wines awarded with golden and silver medals and honorary diplomas at exhibitions in foreign countries<sup>29</sup>.

*“The Helenendorf colony is the best place a man can find. A few kilometers away from Ganja, in the midst of the district well-known in Azerbaijan for its nature, you meet with a piece of real Germany. The village, which may be considered a city from an Azerbaijani point of view, has several thousand inhabitants, who built for themselves 2-3 storied villas and erected a large church from red bricks right in the middle of the village.*”

The German immigrants’ activities were not limited to vine-growing and wine-making, but they also developed silkworm-breeding and flour-grinding industries. In 1845 alone, forty silkworm enterprises were registered in Helenendorf. In 1880s, this German settlement had seven windmills, ten juice factories, one beer factory, and one mineral water factory<sup>30</sup>. This shows that Helenendorf had a high-level of agriculture and industry.

### **The Spiritual Administration and Basel Missionaries**

As previously mentioned, German colonies in the Caucasus were established by members of the sect of “separatists.” Despite belonging to one sect, the German immigrants didn’t have religious unity. The colonists were divided into several religious groups arguing with each other about doctrinal issues. Each party interpreted the Bible as it wished. T.N. Chernova-Dyoke described the religious situation in the German colonies in the following way: *“Although the German immigrants belonged to one denomination, the Evangelical colonists didn’t share a common religious worldview. There were different groups among them who followed teachings and sermons of great theologians of Württemberg. There were supporters of the Lutheran Church, “separatists” who had left the church, fanatic religious Chiliasts, and the sectarians who moved away from them and rejected Agenda, the colonist Synod, and the Statute of 1829.*

<sup>29</sup> – Verdiyeva Kh. – Op. cit. – p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> – Ibid.

*In the labyrinth of their faith and desires, each person interpreted the Bible as they wished*<sup>31</sup>.

Even in the German settlements there were some “separatist” groups who completely rejected the main Christian rituals – baptism, confirmation, the Lord’s Supper, – or did not allow their children to go to school, and did not want to give money for the maintenance of the church<sup>32</sup>.

Württemberg “separatists” didn’t have a unified church organization or spiritual institution. Each “separatist” religious community was governed by a spiritual teacher or elder (elected by the community members). Those leaders didn’t have religious education or enough authority among the sectarians<sup>33</sup>.

In an effort to manage the German colonies well, the Tsarist government tried to put an end to dissensions among the German settlers and to organize their religious life; to this end, the government wanted to return the German immigrants to the Lutheran Church. Therefore, the chief commander of the Russian troops in the Caucasus, General Yermolov requested a pastor be sent to the colonists from the Lutheran Church. In response to Yermolov’s request, the Saratov Evangelical Lutheran Consistory sent a fifty year-old pastor C.F. Gan to bring the “separatists” to the right path. The pastor arrived in Tbilisi on July 10, 1825, but soon had to go back, because the “separatists” recognized only the teachers they chose from among themselves<sup>34</sup>.

Nevertheless, the efforts to return the “separatists” to the fold continued. Missionaries from the “Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel” helped the Tsar in this work. Thus, in January of 1821, the first Basel missionaries came to the Caucasus – August Dietrich and Count Felician Zarembo (a former Russian diplomat). They expressed their desire to Christianize Muslims, pagans, and Jews in the Caucasus, and requested permission from the Russian government to let them create missionary colonies in the Caucasus, open religious schools, and set up printing-houses for the publishing of Christian literature. On January 7, 1822, the Tsarist government gave permission for their activities, hoping to strengthen

31 - See: T.N. Chernova-D’oke. Nemetskiye poseleniya na periferii Rossiyskoy imperii. Kavkaz: vzgl’ad skvoz’ stoletiy (1818-1917) (K 190-letiyu osnovaniya nemetskiikh koloniy). – Moscow: «MCNK-press», 2008. - p. 94.

32 - See: Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey, vol. IX. – p.689-690.

33 - Ibid. - p. 704.

34 - T.N. Chernova-D’oke. Op. cit. – p. 88.

the Christian presence in the Caucasus and for the Christianization of Muslims. After that, the Basel missionaries looked for a place to start their activity. Having considered many places in the Caucasus, they chose Shusha city and opened a missionary school and a printing-house there. Thus a center of Basel missionaries was formed in the Caucasus<sup>35</sup>.



*The printing-house built by the Basel missionaries in Shusha city.*

*As seen on the picture, Armenian vandals caused serious damage to this historical monument during the Shusha occupation on May 8, 1992.*

Before we touch on the activity of the Basel missionaries in the German colonies, it would be appropriate to give some brief information about the history of the “Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel” (“Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft in Basel”). The society was formed on September 25, 1815, in the house of the pastor of “St. Martin” church in Basel, Switzerland. The purpose of this missionary organization was to spread Protestantism in the Caucasus and all over the world. In 1816, the society opened their first missionary seminary – the Evangelical Missionary Institute. In the summer of 1819, the seminary had its first graduates, who were sent to the Caucasus<sup>36</sup>.

35 - Ibid. - p. 88-89.—

36 - See: Kuznetsov O. Kalvinisty na Kavkaz'e: istoriya religioznoy ekspansii yevropeyskikh protestantskikh missionerov v otnoshenii narodov severnogo i yuzhnogo Kavkaza//Azərbaycan MEA-nın Xəbərləri. İctimai elmlər seriyası, 2016, No 1. - p. 76.

During their 200 years of activity, Basel missionaries worked not only in the Caucasus, but also in Iran, China, India, Cameroon, Borneo, Nigeria, Sudan, Latin America, and present-day Ghana. In 1865, as the “Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel” celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it claimed to have brought 100,000 gentiles to Christianity. In 1893, the society had an income of 249,200 Dollars and gave the new Christian converts a total of 34,600 Dollars worth of gifts of property. According to that year’s statistics, the “Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel” included 290 schools where 11,000 students were studying, and had 352 missionary stations where 179 missionaries (174 men and 5 women) worked. Besides foreigners, the stations had 651 local workers. The religious communities under the stations had a total of 12,300 members. The “Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel” existed until the year 2007, when it merged with the “Evangelical Churches and Missions Society” and formed an international Protestant religious corporation named “Mission 21”<sup>37</sup>.

Having provided some short information about the “Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel,” we will review the activities of the missionaries sent by this organization to the German settlements. The German colonies in the Caucasus drew the Basel missionaries’ attention from the beginning. They wanted to convert the “separatists” back to the Lutheran faith, so they visited the German colonists’ homes and were welcomed as “guests” and “brothers.” After a while, their efforts bore fruit, and by 1827, Lutherans far outnumbered the “separatists” in the German colonies<sup>38</sup>.

The Basel missionaries, closely cooperated with the Tsarist government, and took certain measures to put in order the Lutherans’ religious life. A. Dietrich prepared a statute for the German colonies. At a meeting in Tbilisi in August 12-22, 1823, a delegation of 19 people from different colonies accepted this statute and formed a Synod – a supreme council of delegates governing religious life.

37 - Kuznetsov O. *Op. cit.* – p. 76-77.

38 - See: Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey, vol. IX. – p.704.

This supreme council, convened every year, was to be attended by three delegates from each German colony. According to the statute, no one could interfere into the German colonies' religious rites. Six people were elected to the church convention overseeing the implementation of the statute in the German settlements<sup>39</sup>.

In order to manage the German colonies' religious life, the Tsarist government instituted the position of ober-pastor in 1827. At the German elders' request, this position was given to Johann Wernhard Zeltat, and in 1824, he was sent from the "Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel." The ober-pastor acted as the connecting person between the Tsarist government and the German colonies and gave pastors' character references to the relevant authorities<sup>40</sup>.

From January 3rd-4th, 1828, the Synod convened by the ober-pastor J.W. Zaltet accepted a church statute, which consisted of nine articles regulating religious activity in the German colonies. On February 6th, 1829, the Russian Emperor approved the statute. According to the statute, the ober-pastor was given more authority. He was charged with informing the higher authorities about all religious issues. Based on the statute, only Basel missionaries had the right to act as pastors in German settlements, because they were the German colonists' compatriots. Similar to the statute of 1823, the new statute gave the German colonists autonomy in their church governance. The German colonies still had the authority to elect their elders and representatives. Besides that, based on the statute of 1829, the Basel missionaries acting in the German colonies had to act independently from their center in Switzerland, but swear loyalty to the Russian Emperor<sup>41</sup>.

In 1833, Basel missionary A. Dietrich was elected the ober-pastor of the colonies. Some significant events took place in his period. On February 12, 1835, the Law of the Council of Ministers "Regarding the Application of the Statute of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Russia to the "Separatists" Who Settled in Georgia" came into force<sup>42</sup>; by which, the Tsar tried to make the Lutheran communities in the German colonies submit to one religious center – the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia, which was officially recognized by the Russian Empire.

39 - T.N. Chernova-D'oke. Op. cit. – p. 90.

40 - Ibid. - p. 91-92.

41 - Ibid. – p.93.

42 - Ibid. - p. 94-95.

The religious communities affiliated with this church, were governed by the Chief Consistory in Saint Petersburg. However, forcing the submission of the German colonists was not an easy task. The Germans of Württemberg wanted to enjoy a free spiritual life, independent from anyone.

Therefore, a new statute was prepared under the ober-pastor A. Dietrich's leadership. The new statute contained some phrases from the statute of 1829. On November 25, 1841, the Russian Tsar Nicholas I approved the new statute of the Evangelical Lutheran parishes in the German colonies. By approving the new statute, the Tsarist government recognized the independence of the Lutheran communities in the German colonies. Thus, the German colonists in the Caucasus were accountable not to the Chief Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Saint Petersburg, but directly to the Caucasus office of the imperial Religious Department for Work with Foreign Beliefs in the Ministry of Internal Affairs; and their activities were to be controlled only by the ober-pastor and Synod<sup>43</sup>.

According to the new statute, the German colonists in the Caucasus did not submit to any religious center, but were accountable directly to the state bodies, and had the right to make their own independent decisions regarding spiritual issues and elect their spiritual leader. The ober-pastor and Synod acted as a link between the colonists and the government.

*“...The pastor of Helenendorf was a real baron for Baltic Germans whom the community revered. The whole village would come to church on Sundays to listen to his sermons and to sing psalms with great excitement.”*

*Muhammad Essad Bey. "Blood and Oil in the Orient."*

It should be noted that the Lutheran communities in the German settlements were a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod district of the Transcaucasian German colonies (Transcaucasian Colonial Synod district).

<sup>43</sup> - T.N. Chernova-D'oke. Op. cit. – p. 96-97.

This provincial synod never submitted to the Chief Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia. However, in the same period, Baku Lutheran religious community submitted to the Transcaucasian district of the Evangelical Lutheran community (Moscow Evangelical Consistory district). Thus, in the Caucasus, there were two separate Lutheran religious administrations: the one where the German colonies belonged, not submitted to any center, making independent decisions, governed by the ober-pastor and Synod; and the other one where the Baku Lutheran religious community belonged, the Transcaucasian district of the Chief Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia (Moscow administration)<sup>44</sup>.

The question may be raised as to why Tsarist Russia gave such privileges to the German colonists, while the Baku Lutheran religious community submitted directly to the Chief Consistory. The reason is that the German immigrants' majority – despite their conversion to Lutheranism – still had a sectarian spirit in their hearts. Some sectarians in the German colonies at times, strongly resisted the Basel missionaries and the statute accepted by the Synod.

The “Deeds of the Caucasus Archeological Commission” inform us that in the fall of 1842 the sect of “separatists” was able to win some more people in the German settlements. In 1843, an old woman called Shpon, who lived in the German settlement of Yekaterinenfeld, Borchaly county, influenced 366 sectarians with her messages about the last days, and they got ready to leave all their possessions and travel to Jerusalem. They considered this woman the “innocent prophetess” receiving divine revelations. The critical situation in the German colonies of that period was described in the following way: *“The sectarians are quitting their jobs, selling or giving away their property, and waiting for the instruction to begin the journey. Fields are not planted, vineyards are not cared for; blacksmith shops and barrel workshops are closed down; masters have released their apprentices”*<sup>45</sup>. The Tsarist government was able to dissuade the Württemberg “separatists” from moving to Palestine<sup>46</sup>. But this event illustrates that the sect of “separatists” existed in the German colonies for a long time.

44 - T.N. Chernova-D'oke. Op. cit. – p. 106.

45 - See: Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheologicheskoy komissiyey: Vol IX. – p. 689-690, 698.

46 - Ibid. - p. 698-709.

Finally, the Basel missionaries' preaching, the measures taken by the Tsarist government, and the failure of the predictions about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in 1836 shook the positions of the "separatists" in the German colonies. Eventually the sectarians returned to the Lutheran Church, and Württemberg "separatism" ceased to exist in the German colonies.

As for the Basel missionaries, in 1835 the Tsarist Russia prohibited their activities in the Caucasus, because the Tsarist government had allowed them to come on the condition that they convert the local Muslim population, but they had not converted a single Muslim person in Northern Azerbaijan. Seeing this, the Tsar's tyrannical regime considered this missionary organization useless. In 1835, not only Basel missionaries were prohibited in the Caucasus, but also the "Scottish Missionary Society"<sup>47</sup>.



*"St. John" Lutheran church in Helenendorf (present-day Goygol town).*

In the short period of their activity in Northern Azerbaijan, Basel missionaries did a lot of works in the area of propagating their faith.

<sup>47</sup> - Verdiyeva Kh. *Op. cit.* – p.22.

First of all, they translated Christian literature into the local Caucasus peoples' languages. For instance, in 1841, the "Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel" published the Gospel of Matthew in Azerbaijani language (translator F. Zarembo). We recall that F. Zarembo was the first missionary the Basel Society sent to our country. He learned Azerbaijani language in order to preach to the Azerbaijani Muslims<sup>48</sup>.

We should also mention that the full New Testament translation into Azerbaijani was published in 1878 in London. The first Azerbaijani translation of the Old Testament was released in 1891.

### Lutheran Churches



*The building of the former German Lutheran church in Shamkir.*

Religion played an important role in the German colonies. Therefore, the opening of houses of worship in the German settlements was quite natural. For example, in Helenendorf a house of worship was built back in 1820s, and in 1834 a separate building for pastors was built. On April 24, 1854, the foundation of a Lutheran church was laid in that German colony, and in 1857 the church was opened. On March 10, 1857, this church named "St. John" was dedicated with a ceremony. Then in 1909, a church was

48 - For more detailed information see: *Istoriya yevangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR*. Moskva: izdaniye Vsesoyuznogo soveta Yevangel'skikh khristian-baptistov, 1989. - p. 38-39.

erected in Annenfeld on the basis of the plans of an architect named F.A. Lemkul. Both of the churches were built in the Roman Gothic architectural style. These German churches have survived to this day and are being preserved by the state of Azerbaijan. Their form is modest and simple<sup>49</sup>.

In Helenendorf, apart from the church, there was a parochial school. At first, the students from Helenendorf used to go to Pastor Johann Jacob Kraus's house to learn to read and write and gain religious knowledge. But in 1842, a separate school building was built. Both boys and girls studied there, and the head of the school was Christopher Gottlieb Kraus, and later Georg Heinrich Hummel. The language of instruction was German. However, on November 22, 1890, the Tsarist government ordered all the Protestant Lutherans to submit their schools to the Ministry of Public Education. Thus, the pastors lost their control over the educational institution in Helenendorf, and the parochial school was turned into a two-class school; Russian became the language of instruction for all the subjects, except for the mother tongue and religion<sup>50</sup>.

### **German-Swedish Parish in Baku**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Azerbaijan, there were not only Germans of Württemberg, but other Germans, too. However, they had come to our country for other reasons. The Germans of Württemberg had come to Azerbaijan in order to be closer to the Holy Land, to move away from the Antichrist's schemes, and to escape religious persecution, while the other Germans had moved to our country for purely economic reasons. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the oil boom in Baku opened wide prospects for the successful development of industry in the country. That attracted a lot of foreigners, including Germans; among them were businessmen, manufacturers, engineers, architects, doctors, scientists, teachers, and other professionals.

It should be noted that the Germans who had come to Azerbaijan for economic reasons had moved here not only from Germany, but also from the central provinces of Russia<sup>51</sup>. There were also Swedish specialists among them, first of all the Nobel brothers. Both the Swedish specialists and most of the Germans were Lutherans.

49 - See: Zeynalova S.M. Nemetskiye kolonii v Azerbaidzhane (1814-1941). – Baku: «Araz», 2002. - p. 58-60.

50 - See: Zeynalova S.M. Nemtsy na Kavkaz'e. – Baku: Mutarjim, 2008. - p. 70-71.

51 - See: Sudaba Zeynalova. Yevangelicheskoye-l'uteranskaya obschina v Azerbaydzhanе: retrospektivnyi analiz// zhurnal «Kavkaz i Globalizatsiya». – SWEDEN: Central Asia & Central Caucasus Press AB, 2007. Vol 1 (5). - p. 124.

This led to the establishment of the German-Swedish Evangelical parish in Baku.

Before reviewing the history of this parish, we should mention that the Swedish people who came to our country at that time made a great contribution to the development of industry, architecture, and science. There's a lot to say about the Nobel brothers who were successful in the area of oil industry, the Siemens brothers who helped significantly to develop mining industry, and the German architects who decorated Baku with their beautiful buildings.

However, our focus is on the Lutheran Germans and Swedes in Baku, and on their religious life. In 1868, Germans in Baku gathered for worship in a rented house. At that time there was no Lutheran pastor in Baku. In spite of that, from 1870-1871, the Lutheran religious community performed rituals such as baptism, confirmation, and funeral. The Lutherans' wedding ceremonies were performed in the Russian Orthodox church – “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” Cathedral<sup>52</sup>.

In 1873, Swedish Lutherans came to Baku together with one of the famous Nobel brothers – Robert. Thus, a German-Swedish Evangelical parish emerged in Baku.

The Lutheran religious community in Baku became a part of the Moscow Evangelical Lutheran Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia. On April 17, 1877, the church held a religious meeting with 58 participants, and N.G. Tol was elected the Chairman of the church council. Lutherans wanted to build a house of worship and a church school in the area of the present-day Executive Power of Baku City, and on May 2, 1878 they requested the Baku City Administration to allocate them a piece of land there. Their request was not granted. Then in February of 1879, the Lutheran community sent another request to the city administration, asking for permission to build the church in the east of the old Muslim cemetery (present-day area of “Monolit” building and above it). However, the community's request was denied again. On June 28, 1879, the Lutheran community made another application for the land allocation. This time the Lutherans asked for a piece of land anywhere in Baku, but not very far from the center<sup>53</sup>.

52 - See: Gumbatova T. *Baku i nemtsy*. – Baku: Chashioglu, 2008. - p. 93.

53 - Gumbatova T. *Op. cit.* – p. 92, 102 - 112.

Finally, on November 30, 1885, the Baku City Duma decided to allocate 1,400 square sazhen on Telefon Street (present-day 28 May Street), close to the Masumov Factory and Vermischev Mill, for the construction of a Lutheran house of worship and a school. On August 16, 1886, the plans for the pastorate and Lutheran school buildings to be built on that land were approved. The plans were authored by Ivan Vasilyevich Edel. However, the plans were never implemented, due to lack of finances. Therefore, it was decided to build a one-floor church and school building on Surakhany Street (present-day Dilara Aliyeva Street). The plans of the building were authored by 24 year-old Adolf Vasilyevich Eichler (1869-1911)<sup>54</sup>.

In 1880, the Lutheran community became the Baku Evangelical Lutheran parish. L.M. de Bur became the president of the parish. That same year, on March 16, Herman Hansen was appointed the pastor adjunct of the Lutheran community. On June 25, 1888, Richard Werner Theodor Simmerman was appointed the pastor of the Baku Evangelical Lutheran religious community<sup>55</sup>.

The construction of the “Church of the Savior” or Lutheran “Kirche” (present-day Organ and Chamber Musical Hall of the Azerbaijan State Philharmonic Hall) in our country was the most significant event in the history of Lutheranism in our country. On March 14, 1896, the Russian Imperial Ministry of Internal Affairs gave permission for the construction of a Lutheran church in Baku.



*Adolf Eichler (1869-1911)*

On March 21, 1896, the church’s foundation was laid. The dedication ceremony for the foundation’s stone-laying was attended by the famous Emmanuel Nobel. On June 24, 1898, a 213 kg gilded cross, costing 15,000 ruble, was raised atop the church. On March 14, 1899, the dedication ceremony of the church took place<sup>56</sup>.

The architect of the church was A. Eichler. However, later A. Loter managed its construction. The church was built with the

54 - L`uteranskaya kirkha: gotika v Baku [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://olaylar.az/news/blog-oksana/169782> (retrieval date: 23.11.2016).

55 - Tamara G. Ibid. - p. 116, 207.-

56 - L`uteranskaya kirkha: gotika v Baku//Ibid.

the voluntary offerings of believers.

The famous Nobel brothers also contributed a significant amount of money for the construction of the church. The total cost of the construction was 70,000 rubles<sup>57</sup>.



*The Evangelical Lutheran "Church of the Savior." Baku. Construction year: 1899.*

There are some interesting facts related to the construction of the church. For example, Lutherans in Baku asked Eichler to build the church in a style similar to the Lutheran church in Helenendorf. But A. Eichler didn't want to copy someone else's work, so he made his own masterpiece in the best traditions of the German Gothic<sup>58</sup>. This church building has survived to this day and is still standing in the center of Baku, adding beauty to the city.

57 - L'uteranskaya kirkha: gotika v Baku//Ibid.

58 - L'uteranskaya kirkha: gotika v Baku//Ibid.

It is notable that the Azerbaijani millionaire and famous philanthropist H.Z. Taghiyev gave a gift of 100 rubles to the Lutheran “Church of the Savior” and the same amount of money to the Lutheran religious community<sup>59</sup>.

Speaking of the history of Evangelical Lutherans in the period of Tsarist Russia, we should mention their number. According to a newspaper “Kaspiy” (No 41, 1893), in 1893, Baku alone had 1,455 Lutherans<sup>60</sup>. Besides that, in 1890, a Lutheran religious community in Shamakhi had 272 people, mostly Germans, and a community in Lankaran had 41 people<sup>61</sup>.

At that time, there were also Armenian Lutheran communities in Shamakhi and Baku, which had emerged as a result of Imperial Russia’s policy of resettling Armenians to Azerbaijan. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Tsarist Russia, trying to strengthen its position in the Northern Caucasus, placed its loyal servants, Armenians, in different parts of our country, changing the demographic situation in the region in their favor. The Armenians who came from Iran and Turkey were settled in Karabakh, Nakhchivan, and Western Azerbaijan, spreading from there all over our land. The Armenians who were resettled to our country came first to Shamakhi, and then to Baku. Influenced by the preaching of Western missionaries, some Armenians converted to Lutheranism or other Protestant denominations.

Consequently, an Armenian Lutheran community emerged in Shamakhi. However, in Baku, Lutheran Armenians at first worshipped together with Germans and Swedes, but later they didn’t get along with their coreligionists, left the German-Swedish parish, and in 1881 formed the Armenian Evangelical Lutheran community<sup>62</sup>.

### **The Destruction of the Lutheran Community**

In 1920, Azerbaijan was occupied by the Red Army, and Soviet rule was established in our country. As soon as they seized power, the Bolsheviks, alongwith their extreme atheistic ideology started a rigorous fight against religion<sup>63</sup>.

59 - Gumbatova T. Op. cit. – p. 409.

60 - The statistics are based on the website «Nash Baku: istoriya Baku i bakintsev». – URL: [https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Город\\_Баку\\_в\\_1892г.\\_\(полицейская\\_статистика\)](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Город_Баку_в_1892г._(полицейская_статистика)) (retrieval date: 23.11.2016).

61 - Gumbatova T. Ibid. – p. 228-229.

62 - Gumbatova T. Op. cit. – p. 93.

In January of 1924, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist (Bolshevik) Party formed an Anti-Religious Commission and established the “Society of the Godless” in cities, towns, and villages; then in 1929, it established the “Union of the Militant Godless.”

In the early years of the Soviet rule, there were still come Lutheran communities in Azerbaijan. For example, in Helenendorf (present-day Shamkir), on November 25, 1924, the Union of Transcaucasian Evangelic Churches accepted its statute. Based on the statute, the Union is governed by an executive committee consisting of the ober-pastor and his two representatives. Besides that, the Baku German-Swedish Evangelical Lutheran religious community was active in 1927 and had 1,173 members<sup>64</sup>.

Beginning from the second half of 1920, and especially the 1930s, the Soviet government took an even more severe attitude towards religion. Just like adherents of other religions, Lutherans were persecuted. In 1931, the pastor in Helenendorf, Vensel and the pastor in Annenfeld, Roisch were arrested. In 1937, the pastor of the Baku church Paul Hamberg was oppressed. In 1936, the last pastor of the Helenendorf church, Otto Vensel, was imprisoned. And the last pastor of the Annenfeld church, Emil Roisch, was executed by firing squad in 1937. The oppressed Lutheran priests were usually accused of being supported by Germany and collaborating with it<sup>65</sup>.

In 1930s, all Lutheran churches were closed down, and by 1937, there was no operating Lutheran church. The church buildings were used for other purposes. For instance, the “St. John” church in Helenendorf was used as a gym<sup>66</sup>. The Lutheran church in Baku (“Kirche”) was used as a sculpture workshop to produce a huge monument to Kirov in the 1930s.

Despite pressures and persecution, Lutherans preserved their religious traditions. However, the beginning of World War II inflicted a fatal blow upon the Lutheran community in Azerbaijan. Stalin’s bloody regime treated Germans as a “fifth column” and resettled them to the most remote areas of the USSR. The Germans who lived in Azerbaijan were deported as well.

63- Sudaba Zeynalova. Yevangelicheskoye-l'uteranskaya obschina v Azerbaydzhanе: retrospektivnyy analiz. – p. 129.

64 - Ibid. - p. 129-130.

65 - Sudaba Zeynalova. Op. cit. – p. 130-131.

66 - Ibid. – p.132.

Let's review the consequences of the deportation: In 1939, there were 23,133 Germans in our land. On October 8, 1941, the Defence Committee adopted a resolution "On the Resettlement of Germans from Georgian, Azerbaijan, and Armenian SSR." This resolution led to the resettlement of 22,741 Germans from our land to the deserts of Kazakhstan. As a result, there were just a few Germans left in Azerbaijan<sup>67</sup>.



*The pastor of the Baku Lutheran religious community, Paul Hamberg, oppressed in 1937.*

The resettlement of Germans put an end to Lutheran traditions in Helenendorf, Annenfeld, and other German colonies. In order to understand the extent of the blow inflicted upon the Lutherans by the deportation, it is enough to know that in the period of the Tsarist Russia Lutheranism was the largest Protestant denomination in Azerbaijan, and because it was mostly represented by Germans, after their resettlement, the number of Lutherans in Azerbaijan sharply decreased. Presently, they are a very small religious community.

Although they were deported, the Germans left a rich deposit and cultural heritage, and the state of Azerbaijan has been approaching the issue of the protection of this heritage with great sensitivity. For instance, the buildings left by the German colonists and former Lutheran churches in Baku, Shamkir, Goygol, and Ganja have been renovated and restored.

<sup>67</sup> - Ibid.

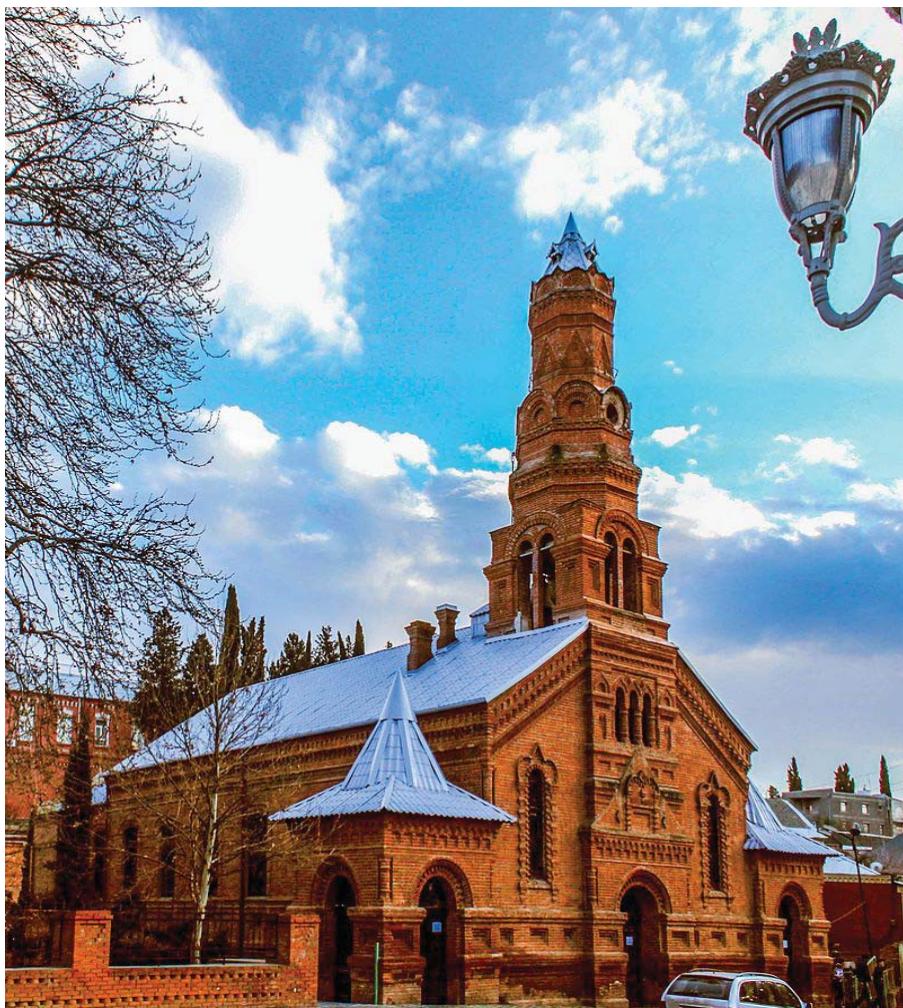
One of these historical monuments is the former Lutheran church in Ganja (present-day Ganja State Puppet Theater). The building was built in 1885 in the style of eclectic architecture, mainly from tuffeau stone. In 1915, the Lutheran church building was handed over to the Orthodox. It consists of a hall, a foyer, and 15 rooms, and its total area is 650 m<sup>2</sup>.

Great care for Lutheran heritage was demonstrated with the restoration of the former German church in Baku (present-day Organ and Chamber Musical Hall of the Muslum Magomayev Azerbaijan State Philharmonic Hall). At the initiative of the President Ilham Aliyev, the total renovation and restoration of the building was started in 2010. The head of our state, treating cultural values with attention and care, issued a decree to allocate 1 million manat out of the President's Reserve Fund for the renovation of this historical monument. After its total renovation and restoration, the Organ and Chamber Musical Hall was officially opened on December 30, 2010. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva took part in the opening ceremony.

One of the greatest marks of appreciation to the German heritage was the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev dated August 30, 2016. The year 2017 will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the emergence of German settlements in the Southern Caucasus, and the head of state Ilham Aliyev issued a decree to ensure the proper celebration of the anniversary<sup>68</sup>.

Certainly, the events to be organized under this decree will play an important role in the promotion of multicultural traditions in Azerbaijan and in continuing the history of tolerance of our country.

68 - The official website of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. – URL: <http://www.president.az/articles/20900> (retrieval date: 01.09.2016).



*The former Lutheran church in Ganja. Construction year: 1885.*

## THE REVIVAL OF THE COMMUNITY

In 1991, the Azerbaijani people broke free from the chains of atheism and Communism and regained their independence; our country announced freedom of conscience, and different religious groups gained the opportunity to practice their faith freely, without fear or obstacle. The proclamation of religious freedom in Azerbaijan created the conditions for the revival of Lutheranism.

The German pastor Achim Reiss took the initiative to restore the Lutheran religious community in Baku and took action in this regard<sup>69</sup>. A significant role in the revival of the Lutheran religious community belongs to Tamara Humbatova, a member of the International Association of the Researchers of the History and Culture of Germans from Russia. The Embassy of the German Federal Republic in Azerbaijan supported her in this endeavor.

As a result, in 1993, The Baku Evangelical Lutheran religious community, was registered by the Ministry of Justice. T. Humbatova became the Chair of the community, which consisted mainly of Azerbaijani citizens of German descent and people interested in German culture.

On May 14, 1999, the Baku Evangelical Lutheran religious community celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Church in our country. The ceremony was attended by the Bishop of the Baku, and Caspian Diocese A. Ishein, the German Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Zibek, and other honorable guests. The religious rite of the ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of the Russian Evangelical Lutheran Church Krechmer, the superintendent of the church Stefan Reder, pastor Hünter Oborski, and pastor Reiss<sup>70</sup>.

In February of 2002, the Baku Evangelical Lutheran religious organization, “Church of the Savior,” was registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations. Natalya Gaydarova was elected the Chair of the community. In 14.05.2010 the community was re-registered by the state, and Vera Nesterova became the Chair.

From January 1, 2003, Lutherans in Baku have been holding their

69 - Humbatova T. Op. cit. – p. 415.

70 - Ibid. - p. 415-416.

main worship services on Sundays, between 10-12 a.m. in the Organ and Chamber Musical Hall of the Azerbaijan State Philharmonic Hall (former Lutheran “Church of the Savior”). Religious rites are conducted in Azerbaijani, German, and Russian. The Baku Evangelical Lutheran religious organization “Church of the Savior”’s office is located on Azadliq Avenue 39.



*The Baku Lutheran religious community's office.*



*The Baku Lutheran community's traditional Sunday service.*

*The first from the left: Pastor M. Ismayilova*

The appointment of Manzar Ismayilova, a graduate of Saint Petersburg Theological Seminary, as the pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran “Church of the Savior” was a significant event for Lutherans, because no one from the community had been able to perform religious rites, and pastors coming from Germany had conducted the service. However, the appointment of the theologically educated M. Ismayilova completely changed the situation. It should be noted that M. Ismayilova is the first Azerbaijani woman who has the privilege of pastorhood.

Another significant event for the Lutherans living in our republic took place in 2015. That year, Martin Luther’s “Small Catechism” was published in Azerbaijani.

### **Organizational Structure**

Lutheranism is divided into two main branches: liberal and conservative. Liberal Lutheranism, is mainly represented by pastors and churches of Germany. The main difference between the conservative and liberal Lutherans is that the liberals view ordaining women to pastorhood as normal, while the conservatives would never recognize women as pastors.

The Lutheran church in Baku is liberal, because it was established and has been functioning with the support of Lutheran churches in Germany. Hence the church has a woman pastor.

With regards to the form of governance, Lutheran churches practice episcopal polity. The Baku Evangelical Lutheran “Church of the Savior” submits to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Georgia, governed by a person with the title of bishop. Presently, the church in Georgia is governed by bishop Hans-Joachim Kiderlen. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Georgia in its turn belongs to the Union of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (official name: The Union of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Russia and other countries). The union is headed by an archbishop, (presently Dietrich Brauer), whose residence is in Saint Petersburg, at the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. In the same city the Union’s educational institution functions – the Theological Seminary. The Union of Evangelical Lutheran Churches is a member of the Lutheran World Federation.

## Relations With Other Denominations

Lutheranism in our country is a traditional Protestant movement. Lutherans in Azerbaijan have always respected the local traditions and customs and supported Azerbaijan's just position in religious events abroad.

They have also tried to maintain good relationship with Christians from other denominations. Quite naturally, being Protestant, they tend to cooperate more with local Protestant communities, especially with Presbyterians whom they find closest to themselves.

## Source of Funding

The Baku Lutheran religious community's financial situation is very poor. The main reason being that most of their members are poor and elderly people. Therefore, the Baku Evangelical Lutheran "Church of the Savior" functions with the financial support of Lutheran churches in Germany.



*The Baku Lutheran church celebrating Christmas.*

Besides that, since 2011, at the behest of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, financial aid has been allocated from the national budget to Muslim and non-Muslim religious organizations, including the Baku Evangelical Lutheran religious organization of “Church of the Savior.” The financial support given by the government plays an important role in the Lutheran community’s survival. This shows the sensitivity of the state of Azerbaijan in approaching the needs of different religions and denominations.

### **Numbers**

Protestant Christianity is characterized by active missionary work. But we can say with confidence that Lutherans are the only Protestant community in our country, which is not engaged in religious propaganda. That affects their number and age composition. The Lutheran community is relatively small – a total of 80 people (34 Azerbaijanis; 31 Azerbaijan citizens of German descent; and 15 Russians).

The total number of Lutherans in the world is thought to be about 85 million people.

## BAPTIST FAITH: OVERVIEW

The term “Baptist” comes from the Greek “Baptizo” which means “immersing in water.” This Protestant movement started in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is related to the name of John Smith who was a priest in the official Anglican Church. In 1605, he joined a separatist sect of Puritans called “Independent,” which was characterized by extreme views and called the state church to radical reforms. After he joined the separatist sect, J. Smith was chosen to be the pastor of an “Independent” religious congregation in Gainsborough town<sup>71</sup>.

The “Independent” Christians were persecuted in England, therefore in 1609, J. Smith and his group moved to Holland where they studied the Bible in a deep way and were exposed to the religious teachings of Mennonites. Smith got convinced that infant baptism was wrong and believers should be baptized only after they reach the age of maturity and are able to discern between good and bad. He believed that only those who have consciously received the teaching of Jesus Christ could be baptized. Therefore, J. Smith, his assistant Thomas Helwys, and the other members of the congregation baptized themselves again. Thus, in 1609, a Baptist congregation of 40 people emerged in Amsterdam, on Baeckerstrasse Street<sup>72</sup>.

Around 1612, J. Smith’s assistant T. Helwys with a group of Baptists returned to England and established the first Baptist church there. It should also be mentioned that J. Smith and T. Helwys founded the “General” branch of the Baptist movement. The General Baptists believed in the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius’s doctrine of “general atonement.” According to that doctrine, humanity possesses free will and whoever believes in Jesus Christ shall be saved. Because of their belief in the atonement for all men, the followers of J. Smith and T. Helwys were called “General Baptists”<sup>73</sup>.

Besides that, in 1638, “Particular Baptists” emerged in England.

71 – Популярно о баптизме (100 иллюстраций) [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://rusbaptist.stunda.org/popularno-o-baptizme.pdf> (19.08.2016).

72 - Ibid.

73 - ПРОТЕСТАНТИЗМ: история, направления и казахстанские реалии (информационный справочник). – Астана: РГУ «Научно-исследовательский и аналитический центр по вопросам религии» Агентства Республики Казахстан по делам религий. – с. 22 [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://din-almaty.gov.kz/uploads/protestantizm.pdf> (retrieval date: 19.08.2016).

They were called “Particular” because of their belief in the French theologian John Calvin’s doctrine, which states that Jesus Christ was sent only for the elect and God didn’t give humans free will. It should be noted that the number of “Particular Baptists” in the world is higher than the number of “General Baptists”<sup>74</sup>.

In 1630, Roger Williams emigrated from England to North America and founded the Baptist church there. Eventually the Baptist church became the largest and most influential Christian denomination in the USA. Presently, almost a half of the world’s Baptists (approximately 49 million) live in the USA<sup>75</sup>.

Like other Protestants, Baptists consider the Bible their only source of faith, reject the clerical class, regard veneration of saints and religious objects as a sin, do not recognize any mediators between God and man, and call for a return to the pure early Christian faith. Apart from that, Baptists have their particular characteristics.

First of all, Baptists are strongly against infant baptism. They declare that a person should be baptized consciously, only after he or she has reached the age of maturity and is able to discern between good and evil. Because of their emphasis on baptism, they were named Baptists<sup>76</sup>.



#### *Baptism Ceremony*

74 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Религиозные организации современного мира: Учебное пособие. – М.: Издательство Московского университета, 2010. – р. 123; ПРОТЕСТАНТИЗМ: история, направления и казахстанские реалии (информационный справочник) // Там же.

75 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Указ. соч. – р. 123, 126.

76 - Ibid. - р. 124.

The principle of “priesthood of all believers” also occupies an important place in the basic beliefs of Baptists. According to that principle, all church members have equal rights and do not divide into clergy and laity, and everyone can perform the priestly function. In short, Baptists don’t believe in the institution of a God-chosen clergy<sup>77</sup>.

One of the Baptists’ peculiar characteristics is the Congregational form of church governance. According to this principle, each Baptist congregation is independent and not subject to any center. All members participate in church governance<sup>78</sup>. It is interesting that one of the Baptists’ basic beliefs is absolute secularism. They support the separation of state and religion<sup>79</sup>.

Baptists do not consider their children church members. The number of Baptists in the world, not counting children, is about 50 million people. Nearly half of them live in the USA. There are many Baptist organizations in the world. The largest of them is “The Baptist World Alliance”<sup>80</sup>. It includes 231 Baptist organizations functioning in 121 countries<sup>81</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup> - Ibid. - p. 125.

<sup>78</sup> - Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> - Популярно о баптизме (100 иллюстраций) // Там же.

<sup>80</sup> - Популярно о баптизме (100 иллюстраций) // Там же; Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Указ. соч. – p. 125-126.

<sup>81</sup> – The Baptist World: <http://bwanet.org/about-us2/intra-baptist-relations> (retrieval date: 19.08.2016).

## EASTERN BAPTISTS

*Novoivanovka village (Gadabay district) is located in a high mountain area of the Lesser Caucasus, more than 3,000 meters above sea level, surrounded by thick forests. This village was built by Molokans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Only a few know that the spread of the Baptist faith in Azerbaijan started from this small village. In the early 1870s, an inhabitant of Novoivanovka named Vasili Vasilyevich Ivanov, established a Baptist congregation in his village, and then the Baptist faith spread from there to the other regions of our country.*

*V.V. Ivanov had a tremendous effect on the development of the Baptist movement not only in Azerbaijan, but generally in Russia. Before discussing how this man spread the Baptist faith, we should look at Shamakhi and Lankaran, because those are the places where the Russian Baptist movement started.*

### **Shamakhi and Lankaran As The Starting Point of Russian Baptists...**

In the 1840s and the 1850s, a new Molokan sect emerged in the Lankaran and Shamakhi counties of the province of Baku. Unlike the other Molokans who did not perform any Christian rituals, the members of these sects were baptized. Therefore, they were called “Vodniye Molokane” (“Water Molokans”)<sup>82</sup>.

The teaching of “Vodniye Molokane” spread in the 1860s from the province of Baku to Astrakhan, and later to the central provinces of Russia. It should also be noted that according to the teaching of this sect, only adults could be baptized<sup>83</sup>.

One of those who were interested in the teaching of this sect was a Molokan merchant from Tbilisi, Nikita Isayevich Voronin. He, however, wasn't content with the teaching of the “Vodniye Molokane” sect. After a long period of praying and seeking for the way of salvation, he felt sorry for his sins, repented, and desired to be baptized. He was looking for someone to baptize him. Soon he met a Presbyterian missionary Yakov Delyakov.

82 - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. - Москва: Издание всесоюзного совета евангельских христиан-баптистов, 1989. - p.42.

83 - Ibid.

Delyakov's views regarding baptism, however, didn't convince Voronin, because the Presbyterian missionary approved of infant baptism, which Voronin could not accept. One day, Delyakov introduced Voronin to Martin Karlovich Kalweit, the leader of the 15-people German Baptist congregation in Tbilisi<sup>84</sup>. The meeting changed Voronin's life. On August 20, 1867, in Tbilisi, Kalweit baptized him in the Kura River. Voronin's baptism marked the beginning of the Baptism movement in Russia and Ukraine. After his baptism, the merchant began preaching to Molokans, and a year later, he had a congregation of six people in Tbilisi. This small congregation led by Voronin was the first one in the history of the Russian Baptist church<sup>85</sup>.

At first, the members of the Russian congregation in Tbilisi called themselves "Christians baptized by faith." Later, when they realized their doctrinal closeness to the German Baptists, they called themselves Baptist. We should also mention that German Baptists did not engage in missionary activities and worshipped separately from the Russian Baptists. Nevertheless, after the German Baptist congregation in Tbilisi broke down, Kalweit and his family joined the Russian Baptist congregation<sup>86</sup>.

As time went on, this nucleus of the Baptist movement in the Caucasus – the Russian Baptist congregation in Tbilisi – grew up, and its members spread the Baptist faith in different regions of the Caucasus.

### The First Missionaries



*V.V. Ivanov (1846-1919)*

One of the members of the congregation in Tbilisi was V.V. Ivanov from the abovementioned Novoivanovka village of the Province of Yelizavetpol (1846-1919). On October 31, 1871, in Tbilisi, when he was twenty-five years old, he was baptized in the Kura River. This event can be considered the starting point of the Baptist movement in Azerbaijan, because after his baptism

84 - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. – p. 74-75.

85 - Ibid. - p 75, 522.

86 - Баптизм в Баку [Electronic resource]//сайт Наш Баку: История Баку и бакинцев. – URL: [https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Баптизм\\_в\\_Баку](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Баптизм_в_Баку) (retrieval date: 19.08.2016).

Ivanov returned to his village of Novoivanovka, started a congregation there, and then moved on to spread the Baptist faith in other regions of our country<sup>87</sup>. In 1873, he set out on a missionary journey to Chukhuryurd and Chabany villages of Shamakhi county, Lankaran city, Andreyevka and Prishib villages of Lankaran county. His activity resulted in some Molokans' accepting the Baptist faith<sup>88</sup>. Alexander Yunitski wrote about Ivanov's missionary activity: *"This Ivanov was the first person who spread the Baptist faith among the population of the Province of Baku: Molokans, Armenians (he means the Armenians resettled by Russian Empire from Iran and Turkey to the Northern Azerbaijan – A.A.) and others. For instance, some of those whom Ivanov converted to the Baptist faith were Mamonovs and Galiavykhs in Ivanovka village of the Province of Baku; Serebriakovs in Andreyevka village; Vorobyovs (1879), Yurins, and other Molokan families in Baku city. Ivanov travelled to different places calling himself a book distributor of "The Bible Society." Yet he was never a part of that society"*<sup>89</sup>.



V.G. Pavlov (1854-1924)

After the emergence of the Baptist congregation in Novoivanovka village, in the late 1870s, new congregations called "stations" emerged in Chukhuryurd village of Shamakhi county, Andreyevka village of Lankaran county, Novosaratovka and Novomikhaylovka villages of Yelizavetpol county, and Mikhaylovka village of Qazakh county of the Province of Yelizavetpol<sup>90</sup>.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, another Baptist missionary was active in Azerbaijan. His name was Vasili Guryevich Pavlov. He was born in Vorontsovka village of the Province of Baku. Pavlov learned about the Baptist faith when he worked as Voronin's clerk, and on April 9, 1871, he was baptized in Tbilisi. The Baptist Russian congregation in Tbilisi recognized his natural talent, clever mind, and speaking abilities. In fact,

<sup>87</sup> - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. – р. 70, 527.

<sup>88</sup> - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. - р.70.

<sup>89</sup> - Юницкий А. Гнезда сектанства на Кавказе. Санкт-Петербург: Санкт-Петербургская православная духовная академия, 2009 г. - р.157.

<sup>90</sup> - Клибанов А.И. История религиозного сектанства в России (60-е годы XIX в.-1917 г.). - Москва: Наука, 1965. - с. 190.

this zealous Russian missionary knew more than twenty languages, including Azerbaijani<sup>91</sup>.

In 1875, the Russian Baptist congregation in Tbilisi sent Pavlov to Hamburg to get religious education. There he studied with Pastor Johann Gerhard Oncken, the father of European Baptists<sup>92</sup>. Pavlov wrote about his education in Hamburg: *“I had the honor of personally knowing the founder of German Baptist congregations, the late J.G. Oncken. He got closely involved in my life and charged a preacher named P. Wilrat with teaching me German language and theology. In 1876, J.G. Oncken appointed me as a missionary, and I returned to Tbilisi”*<sup>93</sup>.

After his return to Tbilisi, Pavlov visited different places in the Caucasus as a missionary. He started his preaching activity from his own village, Vorontsovka. In his memories he wrote: *“...in the fall of 1876, I went on my first missionary journey in the Caucasus with a brother, because some friends asked me to visit them. The first place we visited was the village where I was born, the Molokan village of Vorontsovka. We stayed there for several days, took part in the Molokan meeting, but the elders were hostile to us, and we held several meetings in a private house”*<sup>94</sup>.

After visiting Vorontsovka, Pavlov went to some Molokan villages, including the ones where Ivanov had preached three years before<sup>95</sup>. Pavlov wrote: *“...we visited Novoivanovka village, and then we went to Dzegam station, got on post horses, and travelled to the Province of Baku. We came to Shamakhi city, to Chukhuryurd village, then to Prishib village, and we finally arrived to the city of Lankaran, which is located by the Caspian Sea, close to the Iranian border. We had several blessed meetings there, a few people came to faith, and a church was established”*<sup>96</sup>.

As we have seen, Ivanov and Pavlov were the first missionaries who spread the Baptist faith among Molokans. The Molokan faith, in fact,

91 - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. - p.70.

92 - Ibid.

93 - Баптист. - Одесса: July 27, 1911 - №31. - p. 244

94 - В.Г.Павлов. Воспоминания ссыльного//Материалы к истории и изучению русского сектантства и раскола. Баптисты, прыгуны, духоборцы, Л.Толстой о скопчестве, павловцы, поморцы, старообрядцы, скопцы, шгундисты/ Под редакцией Владимира Бонч-Бруевича. - Санкт-Петербург: 1908. Выпуск первый. - p. 2 (after that: Материалы к истории и изучению русского сектантства и раскола).

95 - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. - p.77.

96 - Материалы к истории и изучению русского сектантства и раскола. - p. 3.

provided fertile ground for the formation of the Baptist movement in the Caucasus. V.A. Valkevich wrote about it: “...*In the Caucasus, there is no Molokan village where the Baptist sect hasn't built its nest...*”<sup>97</sup>.

The fastest spread of the Baptist faith took place in the Province of Baku. For instance, “A Note on the Propagation of Protestant Sects in Russia, Particularly in the Caucasus” provides the following information: “... *Baptist propaganda had more success in the Province of Baku than it had in the different regions of the Caucasus because of the large number of Molokans there...*”<sup>98</sup>.

It should be noted that “Baptist” magazine published in 1907 contains information about the Baptist congregations in Azerbaijan and their leaders during the period of Tsarist Russia. Based on the information, Vasili Guryevich Pavlov appointed Ivanov as the presbyter, and Ivanov in his turn appointed the following men as local presbyters:

*Ivan Stepanovich Filatov* – Andreyevka village of Lankaran county;

*Platon Afanasyevich Filatov* – Novoivanovka village of Javad county;

*Leonti Afanasyevich Kryzunov* – Lankaran city;

*Kuzma Danilovich Zakurdayev* – Novomikhaylovka village of Yelizavetpol county.

V.V. Ivanov elected Dey Ivanovich Mazayev to be the presbyter, and on January 21, 1906, Mazayev appointed Mikhail Ivanovich Zhiruyev as the presbyter of Chukhuryurd village of the Province of Baku<sup>99</sup>.

## **The Years of Persecution**

In the period of Tsarist Russia, Baptists faced different kinds of pressure, because the tyrannical regime defended the Russian Orthodox Church, which held the dominant position in the empire, protecting the interests of the Orthodoxy. Despite the recognition of religious freedom for Baptists in the Russian Imperial Senate’s Decree of September 12, 1879,<sup>100</sup> the spreading of the Baptist faith among the Orthodox population was forbidden.

97 - The quotation is taken from A.I. Klibanov’s monography “The History of the Sectarism in Russia (1860s-1917)” (“Rusiyada dini sektantlığın tarixi (XIX əsrin 60-cı illəri-1917-ci il)”, p. 190).

98 - The quotation is taken from A.I. Klibanov’s monography “The History of the Sectarism in Russia (1860s-1917)” (“Rusiyada dini sektantlığın tarixi (XIX əsrin 60-cı illəri-1917-ci il)”, p. 190).

99 - Баптист. № 4. October 1907, - p.17-18; Баптист. № 5. November 1907, - p. 12.

100 - Материалы к истории и изучению русского сектанства. Преследование баптистов евангелической секты/ Под редакцией Владимира Бонч-Бруевича. Выпуск 6-ой. - Крайстчёрч (Англия, Хантс): Издание «Свободного Слова», 1902 г. № 69. - p.68 (after that: Преследование баптистов евангелической секты).

Violations led to severe punishment. Even the Baptists who converted Molokans and other non-Orthodox people faced pressure. Pavlov wrote about the pressure he faced during his missionary activity: “... *the ancient enemy began persecution. The chief of the county was informed about our spreading the Lutheran religion. We were called to the police. They took our passports and ordered us to return home. We were not sent off on a prisoner transport, but were given a pack of documents to submit to the chiefs of counties on our way home. Everything was going well until we reached a place called Aghdash in the Province of Yelizavetpol. From there we were sent to Yelizavetpol city escorted by the guards of the chief of the county. A funny incident happened in the way. The horse riders who were escorting us from one post station to another one stayed behind and we rode on the post horses by ourselves. We arrived to Yelizavetpol city and stopped at a hotel for the night. At midnight, they began banging on the doors, saying the prisoners had escaped and searching us. They set a guard on us until the morning, then early in the morning the county chief of Yelizavetpol city let us go, and we travelled to Tbilisi without escort again. When we arrived to Tbilisi, we had to go to the police and sign the affidavit stating that we would not spread the Lutheran religion. We signed it without feeling guilty, because we did not belong to the Lutheran church*”<sup>101</sup>.

In 1880, after Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev (1827-1907), a fanatic Orthodox, came to the position of the Chief Procurator of the Most Holy Synod, and especially after Pavel, who implemented his reactionary policy, was appointed as the Exarch of Georgia, the life of Baptists in the Caucasus became even heavier. Pobedonostsev initiated the adoption of different reactionary decisions against Protestants: laws were tightened up and efforts were made to silence the Protestant preachers. The Russian Baptists' leader, Pavlov, wrote about it: “*In 1887, Pobedonostsev took several steps against the sectarians, starting a period of cruel persecution. In the Caucasus, we were the first victims of this ruthless regime*”<sup>102</sup>. The Georgian exarch in his turn prohibited the activity of the Tbilisi Russian Baptist congregation. In April of 1887, Pavlov was arrested for his

<sup>101</sup> - Материалы к истории и изучению русского сектантства и раскола. - р.3.

<sup>102</sup> - Баптист. - Одесса: July 27, 1911 - №31. - р. 244.

missionary activity, and together with his family was sent to Orenburg for four years; then in 1895, Ivanov was arrested and exiled to Slutsk<sup>103</sup>.

Not only Baptist missionaries faced great trouble in the Russian Empire, but also those who converted from Orthodoxy to the Baptist faith. The first Russian Baptists' memoirs reveal that they had to pay a high price for turning away from their ancestors' religion. They were cursed, insulted, and put in prisons. Their family members were tortured and abused. The Orthodox clergy played an active role in this, setting people against Baptists. Russian historian V.D. Bonch-Bruyevich wrote about it: *"... ordinary villagers were mad at the sectarians, and the "questioning of their beliefs" was often followed by the looting of the Shtundists and Baptists: the sectarians and their families were beaten, their property was plundered. Of course, such actions were usually covered up by the administration, the weak press was silent, and – with rare exceptions – people and society knew nothing about them. Only now, many years later, as we read various sectarians' memoirs and diaries, do we learn about all the horrible things that happened to them in Russian villages and khutors on the threshold of the 20<sup>th</sup> century under the protection of the local government authorities, missionaries, priests, and other holders of power"*<sup>104</sup>.

On June 4, 1894, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Russian Empire accepted the resolution regarding the prohibition of the Shtundist sect, which was identified as "especially harmful for the church and the state"<sup>105</sup>. Then they began persecuting Baptists as "Shtundists." Orthodox priests were especially zealous in their persecution of Baptist and other sectarians; they labeled everyone who didn't recognize Orthodoxy "Shtundists" and handed them over to the government authorities. A Russian religious expert L.N. Mitrokhin noted: *"The official church started a real crusade against Shtundists, artificially identifying all the different sects that might be dangerous for the Orthodox as Shtundist. The church leaders incited government representatives to treat the sectarians violently, providing the government with evidence about their "Communist" and anti-government position. At the same time, they often counted the early Baptists as*

<sup>103</sup> - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. - р. 107, 527.

<sup>104</sup> - Преследование баптистов евангелической секты. - р. XXII-XXIII.

<sup>105</sup> - Ibid. – р. 69-70.

*Shtundists*"<sup>106</sup>. Bonch-Bruyevich described the different aspects of Baptist and Shtundist movements: "... *the spiritual authorities were trying hard to attribute everyone who disagreed with the Orthodoxy in any way to the "Shtundist" category*"<sup>107</sup>.

It is perhaps appropriate here to give some information about Shtundism. The term comes from the German expression "Bibel Stunde" which means "the hour of the Bible." This sect emerged in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century among Russian and Ukrainian peasants under the influence of German Protestants. Just as German colonists, the members of this sect dedicated an hour per day to Bible study. Shtundists rejected the Russian Church with its clerical class and Orthodox rituals. Later, Shtundism merged with the Baptist movement<sup>108</sup>.

### **The Hardship of Exile**

According to Articles No 189 and 196 of the "Penal Code" of the Russian Empire, sectarians who engaged in religious propaganda among the Orthodox and "dared publicly dishonor" the Russian Orthodox Church, were to be deprived of their privileges, citizen and political rights, and at the same time they were to be imprisoned or exiled for a period from 8 months up to 4 years. According to the code, those who lived in the European part of Russia were to be exiled to the Caucasus, those who lived in the Province of Stavropol and in the Caucasus were to be exiled to Siberia, and those who lived in Siberia were to be exiled to farther areas<sup>109</sup>.

The sectarians sent to the Caucasus were divided into two groups: 1) those resettled by force, with no respect to their citizen's rights, no court, no interrogation – the people in this group were sent to Gorus town of Zangazur county; 2) the sectarians who had lost all their rights and were driven out of their places based on a court decision – these ones were resettled to the city of Yelizavetpol (Ganja)<sup>110</sup>. The exiled sectarians faced harsh conditions. A Baptist named Yegor Nikanorovich Ivanov, an eyewitness to these events, described the conditions of the Baptists in Yelizavetpol in the following way:

106 - Митрохин Л.Н. Баптизм. - Москва: Издательство политической литературы, 1974 г. - р. 56.

107 - Преследование баптистов евангелической секты. - р. XXIII.

108 - Штундизм (от Нем. Stunde - Час) [Electronic resource]// Философский словарь. – URL: <http://slovariki.org/filosofskij-slovar/14516> (retrieval date: 16.08.2016).

109 - Материалы к истории и изучению русского сектанства и раскола. - р. 24-26.

110 - Преследование баптистов евангелической секты. - р.34

*“During this six-year period, sectarians from different provinces of Russia were sent to exile in large numbers. Most of them lived in dire situation; they and their children suffered from fever and typhoid. Many died, some were in a horrible situation!”*<sup>111</sup>.

Ivanov’s memories reveal that the hungry, miserable sectarians wandering the streets of Yelizavetpol were helped by the Baptists who lived abroad; a foreign Baptist man named Bedek helped operate a secret shelter for them in Yelizavetpol city; their sick were provided with medical assistance, and a sewing workshop was opened for the exiles to earn their living<sup>112</sup>.

The well-off Baptists who lived in Yelizavetpol city provided their destitute “brethren” with all kinds of help. For instance, Vasili Pavlovich Levashov’s home became a shelter for many exiled sectarians. Besides that, Baptists conducted secret religious services in his apartment. Levashov faced pressure from the government for being a Baptist believer, and eventually he became bankrupt<sup>113</sup>.

It should be noted that in the 1890s the number of forcefully resettled sectarians reached its highest point. The Baptists exiled to our country lived not only in Yelizavetpol city, but also in Helenendorf (present-day Shamkir), Nakhchivan county, Goychay, Tartar, Jabrayil, Shusha, Guba, and other places of Azerbaijan<sup>114</sup>.

## **Western missionaries**

Russian Baptists functioned under the protection of their Western “brethren” and enjoyed all kinds of support from Baptist organizations abroad. The Western missionaries were personally engaged in religious propaganda among the local people. Yunistki wrote about the Baptist propagating activity in Baku in the 1870s and 1880s: *“In this sad period, some foreign professors came secretly to Baku with the goal of spreading the Baptist faith. For this goal, foreign agents constantly appeared in Baku; they hired Armenians to do book distribution. They built storehouses*

111 - Материалы к истории и изучению русского сектантства и раскола. - р. 35.

112 - Ibid.

113 - Материалы к истории и изучению русского сектантства и раскола. - р.36.

114 - Материалы к истории и изучению русского сектантства и раскола. - р. 31-51;

Преследование баптистов евангелической секты. - р. 17-46.

*in their homes for storing sectarian books published abroad. They sent their singers to sing religious songs. They taught the newly formed Baptist congregations to sing religious hymns to the sound of pump organ. Money filled the pockets of the new Baptists' converts"*<sup>115</sup>.

The Western missionaries tried to spread the Baptist faith among Azerbaijanis, too, but their efforts had no success: *"In 1873, an Englishman whom Baptists called "Mister Easten" came to spread the Baptist faith in Shamakhi town of the Province of Baku. He spoke in the local Tatar dialect (meaning Azerbaijani language – A.A.) and had a Molokan translator named Chernikov (who later became a Baptist). In 1879, the same Englishman came to Shamakhi for the second time with a Tatar molla named Kapia Musha who had accepted the Baptist faith for money. The latter tried to talk with Tatars (meaning Azerbaijanis – A.A.) in Shamakhi, but wasn't able to persuade them"*<sup>116</sup>.

Among the Western missionaries who engaged in religious propaganda in the Province of Baku in the 1870s and 1880s, one can mention Golberg and Geyer from Sweden and Becker from England<sup>117</sup>.

### **1905 – End of Persecutions...**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the number of Baptists didn't grow, because they were facing persecution. This lasted until 1905. That year on April 17, Russian Emperor Nicholas II signed the decree "On the Strengthening of the Foundations of Religious Tolerance," announcing freedom of conscience, and the Tsarist regime released exiled Baptists<sup>118</sup>.

The decree granted Baptists the right to live according to their belief and to spread their faith freely. On October 17, 1906, the decree on "the Procedures of the Formation and Functioning of Staroobryadets and Other Groups..." was issued. This decree recognized the rights of state registration for different sects that used to function non-officially, including Baptist religious communities<sup>119</sup>.

115 - Юницкий А. История церквей и приходов Бакинской губернии (1815-1905 гг). – Баку: Изд. Бакинского братства законоучителей, 1906. - р. 54.

116 - Юницкий А. Там же. - р.158.

117 - Ibid.

118 - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. - р.133-134.



began spreading fast, because Baptists got an opportunity to preach their faith not only to non-Orthodox people, but the Orthodox as well. Ivanov wrote about this new stage of development of the Baptist movement after 1905: *“In Russia, however, this large Baptist movement started from 1905, when God granted us religious freedom. Before that time, we, Baptists, were oppressed. Since 1905, a new period began in the history of the Baptist movement, the period which may be called an epoch of the attack. The Baptist attack brought about significant changes in many places”*<sup>120</sup>.

After 1905, the Baptists moved to legal action, and many Baptist congregations were registered by the state. They opened religious schools, published a lot of literature and distributed it among the population. As a result, the number of Baptists in Tsarist Russia grew sharply<sup>121</sup>. We can say that from 1905-1911, the number of Baptists in Russia more than doubled and reached fifty thousand people<sup>122</sup>.

Baptists also gained the opportunity to carry out their activities without fear and restrictions. For instance, the central organization of Russian Baptists formed in 1884, “The Baptist Union of Southern Russia and the Caucasus,” wasn’t able to conduct their meetings for eight years. But after 1905, they held their congresses again<sup>123</sup>.

In spite of that, from 1911, a new wave of attacks against Baptists took place in Tsarist Russia, newspapers began spreading propaganda about Baptists, accusing the followers of this Protestant sect of treason and cooperation with Germany<sup>124</sup>.

## **From the History of the Baptist Community in Baku**

The history of the Baptist religious organization in Baku begins from 1891. That year V.V. Ivanov came from Novoivanovka village to Baku and

119 - Ibid. - p.134.

120 - Баптист. - Одесса: 23 февраля 1911 г. - №9. - p. 69.

121 - Популярно о баптизме (100 иллюстраций) [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://rusbaptist.stunda.org/popularno-o-baptizme.pdf> (17.08.2016).

122 - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. - p.140.

123 - Ibid. – p. 127-131.

124 - Популярно о баптизме (100 иллюстраций)//Там же.

sowed the seeds of the Baptist faith among the Molokans there. He began his activity in the place of the present-day Azerbaijan State Pantomime Theatre (Azadliq Avenue 49; close to “28 May” metro station). Ivanov remembers that place and his first missionary visit to Baku: *“After visiting some towns and villages of the Province of Baku, I came to Baku city. The site of the present-day beautiful building of the Baptist church was empty. There were no large constructions there, only wheat fields and some small houses. There I began my preaching with the Lord’s grace. First, I went to the religious meetings of “common” Molokans, which were held in the house of a rich Molokan named N.F. Minnikov. He was the Molokans’ presbyter and prophet. Here I was welcomed warmly, preached God’s Word, and shared the message about Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners”*<sup>125</sup>.

After Ivanov’s second visit to Baku in 1892, Molokan M.G. Serebrennikov and his wife accepted the Baptist faith. Later G.O. Vorobyev, V.A. Mironov, M.P. Yurin, and other Molokans became Baptists, and the Baptist Community in Baku was formed. At first, Baptists held their meetings in Serebrennikov’s home on Stanislavski Street (present-day Azadliq Avenue). After a while, they began conducting religious services in Vorobyov’s house, because Serebrennikov’s place was too small. Vorobyov’s house was located in an area called “Ganlitapa”<sup>126</sup>.

A separate worship hall was built in Serebrennikov’s yard. Soon the hall could not fit the Baptists. From 1907, they began to hold meetings in the house of Minnikov, the leader of the Molokan sect of “the common ones.” After Minnikov’s death, his son became a Baptist and gave the Molokan house of worship to Baptists<sup>127</sup>.

From 1895-1899, the presbyter of Baku Baptist church Ivanov was in exile. During the years of his absence, the presbyter’s functions were carried out by M.P. Yurin, P.Z. Chernyayev, and others. After his return, Ivanov became the presbyter of the church again. As the number of community members grew, Minnikov’s house became too small for them. Therefore, from 1908, the Baptists began meeting in a large and nice hall on Balakhani Street (present-day Fuzuli Street). They paid 1,300 rubles annual rent for it<sup>128</sup>.

125 - Молитвенный дом Русских Баптистов в Баку//Баптист: Духовно-нравственный журнал/Орган русских баптистов. - Ростов-на-Дону: Тип.Т-ва Павлова и Славгородского. Март, 1912. №6. - р. 8. 126 - Баптист: Духовно-нравственный журнал/Орган русских баптистов. Март, 1912. №6. - р. 8. 127 - Ibid.



The Baptists wanted to build a church in the area close to M.G. Serebrennikov's house, because that was the place where the Baptist movement in Baku was founded. Finally, the Baptists got what they wanted. In 1910, a 216 square sazhen piece of land on Stanislavski Street No 416 was allocated for the construction of a Baptist church. On January 1, 1911, the foundation of the Baku city Baptist church was laid. On December 25 of the same year, the church was open for believers. It could fit about 500-600 worshippers<sup>129</sup>.

In 1914, the Tsarist government officially recognized the Baptist Community in Baku. It is interesting that the official publication of the Baptists in Russia, "Baptist" magazine, was published in 1914 in Baku. The editorial office of the magazine was located at the address 1<sup>st</sup> Ganlitapa Street (present-day Salatin Asgarova Street) 213. The magazine's editor at that time was the founder of the Baptist church in Azerbaijan **V.V. Ivanov**<sup>130</sup>.

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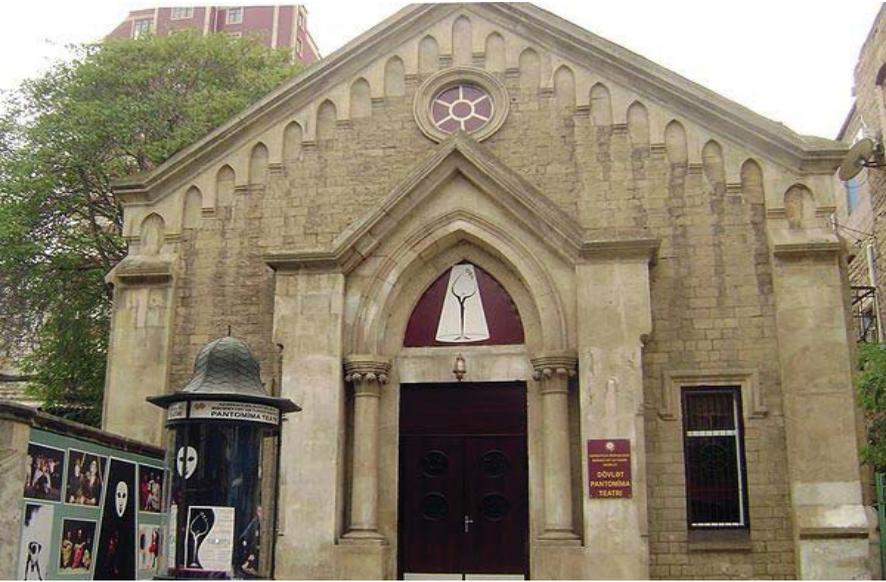
The past presbyter of the Baku Baptist Religious Community T.N. Zenchenko. The history of the Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist Church (personal Archive).

128 - Баптист: Духовно-нравственный журнал/Орган русских баптистов. Март, 1912. №6. - p.9;

The past presbyter of

the Baku Baptist Religious Community T.N. Zenchenko. The history of the Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist Church (personal Archive). 130 - Баптизм в Баку [Electronic resource]/сайт Наш Баку:

История Баку и бакинцев. – URL: [https:// www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Баптизм\\_в\\_Баку](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Баптизм_в_Баку).



The former Baptist church in Baku (presently the Azerbaijan State Pantomime Theatre building).



"Baptist" magazine published in 1914 in Baku.

## After the February Revolution...

In 1917, the February bourgeois democratic revolution happened in Russia, and the Tsar's tyrannical regime that persecuted Baptists was overthrown. Baptists in Russia rejoiced and welcomed the revolution. They hoped they would have freedom after the fall of the Tsarist government. In the same year, the October Revolution took place and Bolsheviks came to power in Russia. On April 28, 1920, Azerbaijan was occupied by Bolsheviks and Soviet rule was establishment in our country by force.

In the years of the abovementioned historical events, some changes took place in the Baptist community in our country. V.V. Ivanov who made a significant contribution to the spread of the Baptist faith in Azerbaijan, left the Baku Baptist church in 1917 and moved to Yevpatoriya (the Crimea) where his son lived. In Baku, his position was taken by L.D. Primorenko who soon left the city as well. After him, M.P. Yurin became the presbyter, and in 1918, D.K. Gavrilov took the position. At that time, Baptists in Baku met 4 times a day<sup>131</sup>.

After Soviet power was established by force in our country in 1920, an Armenian man named P.Y. Ter-Avanesov came to Baku from Astrakhan and joined Gavrilov in leading the Baptist Community in Baku. Ter-Avanesov was an active missionary; he organized a youth group in the church and was elected the secretary of "The Transcaucasian Baptist Union." The union held congresses in Baku and Tbilisi. In 1926, Ter-Avanesov was appointed the leader of the Baptists in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia<sup>132</sup>.

As we can see, in the early years of Soviet rule, Baptists could engage in their activities and hold their congresses freely. The question may be raised as to the reason for this. The reason is that Bolsheviks considered Baptists and other sectarians who had been persecuted by the Russian Empire to be the Tsarist government's victims, so they granted them religious freedom. At first, the Soviet government fought mainly against the Russian Orthodox Church. Because the Communist regime viewed the Russian Church as Tsarism's remnant, and its strong support. Baptists, however, had their golden era from 1918-1928.

131 - The past presbyter of the Baku Baptist Religious Community T.N. Zenchenko. The history of the Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist Church (personal Archive).

132 - The same personal archive.

They could freely spread their religion in the Soviet state. As a result, their numbers increased sharply. Therefore, this period is called the “golden decade” in the history of the Russian Baptist Church. In order to be sure of it, let us look at the facts. By 1928, the number of Baptists in the USSR reached 600,000 people, and the number of Baptist congregations reached eight thousand. For a comparison, in 1917, Baptists had 4,521 churches. Thus, during the “golden decade,” the number of Baptist congregations almost doubled<sup>133</sup>.

Nevertheless, after 1928, the Soviet government tightened its religious policy and closed down Baptists’ Bible courses, churches, publications, and religious communities in the USSR. By 1941, the number of Baptist churches remaining in the Soviet Union was less than ten<sup>134</sup>.

The Baptists living in Azerbaijan also had their share of suffering in this hard period. Their church building was taken away from them and used as the railway station booking offices. After that, the Baptists in the city had to meet in different places. It is interesting that from 1930-1933, the Baptists in Baku conducted their regular Sunday morning and evening meetings in a Molokan house of worship on Kubinskaya Street (present-day Zivarbay Ahmadbayov Str.)<sup>135</sup>.

From 1933-1936, the Baptists met for worship in another house on the same Kubinskaya Street. And from 1936-1937, they met in a house on Krayne-Krivaya Street (present-day Academician Garayev Str.)<sup>136</sup>.

Due to daily pressures from the Soviet government, the Baptists stopped meeting at a specific address. In 1940, they were allowed to conduct religious meetings in Lukoshkin’s house on the 12<sup>th</sup> Nagornaya Street (present-day Yusif Vazir Chamanzaminli). From 1930-1937, the following people took the position of the presbyter of Baku Baptist Church: L.D. Primochenko, Matyunenko, and Ter-AvanesoV<sup>137</sup>.

133 - Церковь должна оставаться Церковью. Необратимые десятилетия (1917-1937 годы в истории евангельского и баптистского движений)// Документальный материал об истории церкви ЕХБ в России. Составлен Историко-аналитическим отделом МСЦ ЕХБ. 2008 г. - п. 13.

134 - Ibid.

135 - The past presbyter of the Baku Baptist Religious Community T.N. Zenchenko. The history of the Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist Church (personal Archive).

136 - The same personal archive.

137 - The same personal archive.

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## Schism: Loyal Ones vs. “Initiative Group”

With the beginning of the World War II, Stalin’s regime relatively mitigated its religious policy. Baptists were allowed to have legal activity. In 1944, Baptists and Evangelicals in the USSR formed a joint organization named “The All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists” (hereinafter the All-Union Council). After the war, many Baptist religious communities entered this organization, formalizing their activities.

The Baptists in Azerbaijan from 1943 began meeting at the back of Lukoshkin’s house where they set a canopy. In 1944, the All-Union Council appointed Ter-Avanesov, the presbyter of Baku Baptist Church, to the position of the chief presbyter of Transcaucasia. In 1947, the All-Union Council members M.A. Orlov, I.Y. Zhidkov, A.V. Karev, and M.I. Golyayev visited Baku<sup>138</sup>.

In 1954, Baku Baptist Church changed its address again, opening a house of worship on 12<sup>th</sup> Nagornaya Street, House No 7 (Baku city, Narimanov district, 1<sup>st</sup> Jidir Street, House No 13). This house of worship is still functioning today<sup>139</sup>. In the 1950s and 1960s, a new wave of attack against religion took place in the Soviet Union. In those years, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev tried to uproot religion. Different measures were taken to this end. For instance, in 1959, at the government’s instruction and initiative, the leadership of the All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists accepted the documents titled “The Decree on the Union of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR” and “The Letters of Instruction to the Chief Presbyters of the All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists.” These documents seriously restricted and even paralyzed the Baptists’ activities: they were not allowed to spread their religion, their children were not allowed to participate in their religious services, baptizing people aged 18-30 was prohibited. The Soviet government’s flagrant interference in the Baptists’ internal affairs and the fact that the All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists was headed by people who had worked for the atheistic state for many years, brought about the split of the Baptists in the USSR into two groups. So in August of 1961, those who

138 - The same personal archive.

139 - The same personal archive.

were discontent about the government's interference in the All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists' affairs and about the All-Union Council's leadership formed an "initiative group." This group considered itself the true church and demanded to hold a new congress in order to implement reforms in the organization and to cancel the documents titled "The Decree on the Union of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR" and "The Letters of Instruction to the Chief Presbyters of the All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists." In February 1962, this group turned to the Organizational Committee, but since the demands of the "initiative group" were not fulfilled, a part of Baptists separated from the All-Union Council and began to engage in a secret activity. These Baptists known as the "initiative group" (also called "unregistered," "Baptist dissenters," and "separated") formed their secret organization named "The Council of Churches of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists". The chief leader of the "Initiative Group" was G.K. Kryuchkov. The "separated" Baptists who deliberately refused to be registered by the state established their secret printing-house and printed "The Messenger of Salvation" ("The Herald of Truth") magazine, "The Brotherhood Leaflet," and other religious materials. The "separated" Baptists became a real religious and political force in the Soviet Union. Unlike the registered Baptists, the "Initiative Group" did not recognize the ungodly state's laws, and so it suffered persecution and torture, some sacrificed their lives for the cause. The "separated" Baptists viewed their coreligionists who cooperated with the state as "traitors"<sup>140</sup>.

The split of the Baptists living in the USSR affected also the Baptists living in Azerbaijan. A schism happened among the Baptist communities in different regions of Azerbaijan. For instance, in 1965, a group of Baptists in Baku under the leadership of S.I. Savelyev, P.F. Bulaka, and P.I. Samotayev left the community to join the "separated" Baptists' organization<sup>141</sup>.

This dissension between the Baptists living in the post-Soviet countries – including Azerbaijan – continues to this day. Presently the center of the "separated" Baptists is "The International Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptist Churches," which is located in Moscow.

<sup>140</sup> - For more detailed information see: Митрохин Л.Н. Баптизм: история и современность (философско- социологические очерки). - Санкт-Петербург: Издательство Русского Христианского гуманитарного института, 1997. - p. 412-430.

<sup>141</sup> - The past presbyter of the Baku Baptist Religious Community T.N. Zenchenko. The history of the Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist Church (personal Archive).

In spite of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the “separated” Baptists still do not want to cooperate with the government and refuse to be registered by the state as a matter of principle.

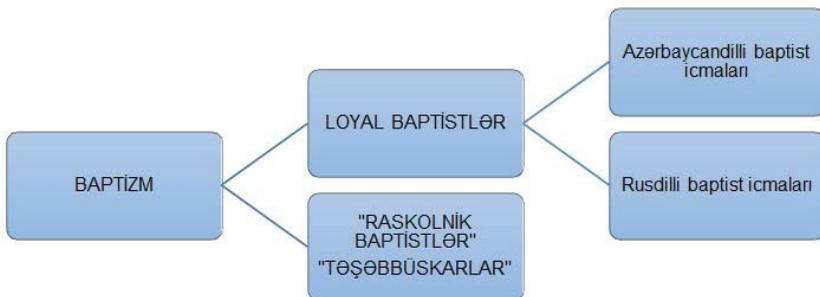
As for the Baptist communities in Azerbaijan who cooperated with the government in the Soviet Union, we should mention that in 1961, The Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist religious organization was registered by the state. From 1958-1966, A.K. Kushnarenko was the presbyter of the legal Baptists in Baku. In 1967, he was replaced by T.N. Zenchenko<sup>142</sup>. In the 1980s, a Bible course graduate N.P. Grubich performed the functions of the presbyter in the community<sup>143</sup>.

As to the numbers of Baptists in the years of Soviet rule, we should mention that in 1983 the Baku Baptist community had 384 people, and in 1986 it had 388 people<sup>144</sup>.

### Modern Period: Congregations, Number, Ethnic and Age Composition

After Azerbaijan regained independence in 1991, it announced freedom of conscience. Believers of different denominations got the opportunity to freely practice and spread their beliefs. The environment of freedom had a positive effect on the development of the Baptist movement. For instance, a national Azerbaijani Baptist church was formed in the years of independence. This was a new event in the history of the Baptist Church.

*Diagram 1. Baptist Religious Communities in Baku.*



142 - The same personal archive.

143 - История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР. – p. 498.

144 - The archive of the Council on Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR. The list of members of the Baku religious community of Evangelical Christian Baptists for 1983; the 1986 information on the registered Evangelical Christians-Baptist church and its activities.

As seen in Diagram 1, Baptists in our republic may be divided into two groups: the loyal ones and the “separated” ones.

### *Loyal Baptists*

The loyal Baptists try to be registered by the state, act according to the legislation, and cooperate with the government. The loyal Baptist communities in our republic may be subdivided into the following groups:

1. *Azerbaijani-speaking Baptist churches.* In the 1990s, a group of Azerbaijanis separated from the Russian Baptist community in Baku and formed the “Agape” Baptist congregation. In Greek “Agape” means “love.” An interesting feature of this Azerbaijani church is that its members sing Christian songs to the sound of Azerbaijani folk music. This community of about 350-400 members was registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan on November 13, 2015 as Baku Evangelical Christians-Baptists’ religious organization “Agape” (legal address: Baku city, Narimanov district, 1<sup>st</sup> Jidir Street, House No 13). It should be noted that this Azerbaijani-speaking Baptist congregation consists mainly of young people. “Agape” religious organization has cell groups in Sumgayit, Ganja, and Shirvan.



*The Baptist Church in Baku.*

2. *Russian-speaking Baptist churches.* There are also other loyal Baptist religious communities in Azerbaijan. The largest of them is the Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist church chaired by Ilya Zenchenko. This Russian Baptist congregation is the legal heir of the Baptist community which started in Baku back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the Soviet period, it was first registered by the state on January 1, 1946. In 2002, it was registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Presently the community has about 200-250 members. The majority of them is elderly people. The Baku Russian Baptist church and the “Agape” church worship in the same building.

The Chairman of the Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist religious community I. Zenchenko is the leader of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Azerbaijan. The union is a part of the Eurasian Federation of Unions of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, the Baptist World Alliance, and the European Baptist Federation.

The Baku Christian Baptist religious community has branches in Ivanovka village of Ismayilli district (20 people), Aliabad village of Zaqatala district (30 people), Neftchala, Shamakhi, and other places.

It should be noted that the loyal Baptists closely cooperate with the Association for “Spiritual Renewal” which is a part of “Mission Eurasia,” and actively participates in the project “School Without Walls” implemented by this organization<sup>145</sup>.



*The Baptist Church in Sumgayit city*



*The Baptist Church in Ivanovka village*

<sup>145</sup> - See the official website of this religious organization: <http://asr-rm.org/> (19.08.2016).

### *“Unregistered” Baptists*

The Baptists who were known in the Soviet period as “separated,” “unregistered,” “dissenter,” or the “Initiative Group” refuse to be registered by the state as a matter of principle and in general are against entering into any relations with the state. They are very conservative in their worldview and dress style. For example, they view the Western world as the embodiment of immorality. Therefore, these Baptists loathe the Western values. It is interesting that the “separated” Baptists in our republic say that they prefer to live and bring up their children in the Azerbaijani society, which is faithful to its national and moral values.

The “unregistered” Baptist religious groups belong to the “International Council of Churches of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists,” which joins the “Initiative Group” Baptists who live in the post-Soviet countries.

The “Initiative Group” does not cooperate with other Christians. Their community in general is characterized by a closed nature. “The International Council of Churches of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists” cooperates with only one Western Christian organization – a German mission called “Friedensstimme,” because that Christian organization also completely separates itself from the state.

In our republic, the International Council of Churches of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists includes a church in Baku (100-120 people), a church in Sumgayit (80-100 people), and a church in İvanovka village of İsmayılı district (about 50 people). Ethnically these groups mainly consist of Russians.

### **Eastern Baptists: their peculiar characteristics**

Finally, we would like to touch on the peculiar characteristics of the Russian Baptist movement, because Russian Baptists are in some ways different from their Western coreligionists. The Russian Baptist movement, which formed in the Caucasian Molokan setting, had a different path of development, and therefore these Christians are called “Eastern Baptists.”

The formation of the Eastern Baptist movement was affected by the Molokan sect and the Orthodox Church. The Russian Baptists believe that Jesus Christ was crucified for every person to be saved and that God has given every human a free will. Indeed, the “general” Baptists have this belief

as well. But Russian Baptists received this belief not from their Western coreligionists, but from the Orthodox church<sup>146</sup>.

It should be noted that the first Russian Baptist congregation, influenced by Western missionaries, accepted Calvinism (the doctrine teaching that God didn't give humans a free will, and Jesus Christ was sent for the salvation of the elect ones only). The first Russian Baptist missionary Pavlov got his education in Europe. His teacher Oncken was a Calvinist or "particular" Baptist. The teacher's worldview affected Pavlov as well. After he was appointed the presbyter of the Tbilisi Baptist church, he translated from German into Russian the basic beliefs of the "particular" Baptists – the "Baptist Hamburg Statement of Faith" consisting of 15 articles. The Russian Baptists in Tbilisi knew this creed as well. Thus, the first Russian Baptist church was Calvinist. The Russian Baptists, however, could not agree with the Calvinist beliefs reflected in the "Hamburg Statement of Faith," because of their Molokan and Orthodox background. Therefore, later the "Hamburg Statement of Faith" was corrected, and the Baptist faith was adjusted to the Russian people's religious views<sup>147</sup>.

The influence of the Orthodox Church on the Eastern Baptist movement is obvious. For example, like the Orthodox, the Russian Baptists fast a lot, spend nights in worship, inflict sufferings on themselves, constantly read the Bible, give offerings, etc. In other words, Russian Baptists are characterized by ascetism and martyrdom. The Western Baptists, however, are more pragmatic. The Western and Russian Baptists are also different in their performance of rituals. For instance, the Western Baptists pray for meal, sitting at the table, but the Russian Baptists consider praying in the sitting position to be wrong. Like the Orthodox, they pray either standing up or kneeling down<sup>148</sup>.

Despite the differences, the Western Baptists played a great role in the organization of the early Russian Baptists. For example, "Baptist" magazine (1907, No 4) informs us that the first Russian missionaries were

146 - Прохоров К. Кальвинизм, арминиаство и восточное богословие [Электронный ресурс]// Апологетический сайт: Ереси – Нет! – URL: <http://www.eresi.net/kalvinizm/kalvinizm-arminianstvo-i-vostochnoe-bogoslovie> (retrieval date: 19.08.2016).

147 - Баптизм в Баку [Electronic resource]//Там же (retrieval date: 19.08.2016).

148 - Прохоров К. Кальвинизм, арминиаство и восточное богословие//Там же.

appointed to the presbyter position by Western Baptist leaders. Let's look at the chain: an American Baptist professor of theology, Barnabas Sears, sent Johann Oncken, who was spreading the Baptist faith in different countries, as a missionary to Germany. J. Oncken in his turn appointed V.G. Pavlov as the presbyter of the first Russian Baptist church in Tbilisi. Then Pavlov held V.V. Ivanov, who was spreading the Baptist faith in Azerbaijan, worthy of being the presbyter there. Ivanov in his turn appointed others as presbyters in different areas of our country.

## SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

### Brief Historical Overview

The emergence of Adventism is related to the name of William Miller, a poor peasant who was acting as a preacher in the Baptist church.



*William Miller (1782-1849)*

His prophecies about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ laid the foundation of a new Protestant movement<sup>149</sup>.

Miller was born in 1782 in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. When W. Miller turned 30 years old, he returned to faith, and after two years of Bible study, in 1818, he concluded from the Book of Daniel that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ should happen around 1843<sup>150</sup>.

After this “discovery,” W. Miller told the people that the end was near, but nobody took his words seriously. Nevertheless, he kept saying that the end of the world would happen around 1843. In 1833, W. Miller became the presbyter of the Baptist church and got the opportunity to preach his ideas regarding the end of the world from the church pulpit. As time went on, his prophecies about the appearance of Jesus Christ began to draw people’s attention. The number of people who believed him was growing every day. W. Miller held many meetings and weekly conferences in order to propagate his religious views on the end of the human race. Many people came to listen to him, and many wept bitterly when they heard about the coming end<sup>151</sup>.

Thus a new religious movement emerged under the leadership of W. Miller. Who were the followers of this movement? Why did the Millerites (the followers of the teachings of William Miller) waited for the coming end so eagerly? In order to answer this question we should review the socio-economic processes that were happening in the USA at that time.

In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the quickly developing

149 - Руфь А. Такер. Адвентизм седьмого дня: Эсхатологическая путаница (С-004) //Россия, 194044 Санкт-Петербург, а/я 954, Центр апологетических исследований. – р. 2.

150 - Ibid.

151 - Ibid.

Capitalist mode of production brought about the bankruptcy of small manufacturers, the growing exploitation, and the repeated crisis of production. Millions were suffering from the industrial revolution. Especially small merchants, small farmers and artisans were experiencing loss and bankruptcy because of the new economic relations. Therefore they welcomed W. Miller's message about the end times. The impoverished, oppressed people hoped that Jesus Christ would come soon to build His Divine Kingdom, saving all the oppressed from the misery of the world<sup>152</sup>.

In 1839, the pastor of the Chardon Street Chapel in Boston, Joshua Himes, joined W. Miller's movement. This man, with his ability to address large crowds and win people's hearts, and with a natural talent of writing, became W. Miller's close associate. He organized the Millerites and in his newspapers "The Sign of the Times," published in Boston, and "The Midnight Cry," published in New York, he answered the critical and satiric articles directed at Miller. Under Himes's leadership, lots of books and brochures were published and sent around the world<sup>153</sup>.

W. Miller's movement was gradually growing. In 1843, the movement had about 150,000 followers. At that time, Miller's followers were called "the Second Adventists" (The term "Adventist" comes from the Latin "adventus" which means "appearance, coming"). Their religious meetings were called "the Second Advent" (i.e. "the Second Coming"), because the leader of the movement, W. Miller, preached the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Millerites waited eagerly for Christ's appearance. However, the term "Second Adventists" sounded hard and weird, and there were no "first Adventists" among Christians, therefore this group was referred to as "Adventists"<sup>154</sup>.

As we said, Miller's movement was growing rapidly. W. Miller was asked by his followers to state the exact date of the appearance of Jesus Christ, because he was saying Jesus Christ would return around 1843, and

152 - Белов А.В. Секты, сектантство, сектанты. – М.: Наука, 1978. - п. 35.

153 - Руфь А. Такер. The quoted work. – п. 2-3.

154 - Григоренко А. Эсхатология, миллениаризм, адвентизм: история и современность [Electronic resource]. – URL:[http://www.e-reading.club/chapter.php/95123/17/Grigorenko\\_Eshatologiya%2C\\_millennarizm%2C\\_adventizm\\_\\_istoriya\\_i\\_sovremennost%27.html](http://www.e-reading.club/chapter.php/95123/17/Grigorenko_Eshatologiya%2C_millennarizm%2C_adventizm__istoriya_i_sovremennost%27.html) (retrieval date: 04.08.2016).

the Millerites were not content with that. Therefore W. Miller in 1835 his “Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, about the Year 1843: Exhibited in a Course of Lectures” announced the coming of Jesus Christ between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844<sup>155</sup>.



Influenced by W. Miller’s messages on the last times, on March 21, 1843, tens of thousands of people in the USA clothed in white garments went up to the mountains to meet Christ. But the expected appearance did not happen. Then the Adventists started waiting for March 21, 1844. On that day, the prediction did not come true either. After that, in the end of May 1844, in the Adventists’ annual conference in Boston, W. Miller publicly admitted he had made a mistake in his calculations, and said he would not try to predict the date of the coming of Christ anymore. Then one of Miller’s followers, Samuel Snow, corrected his teacher’s “mistake,” claiming that Jesus Christ would return on October 22, 1844. At first, Miller didn’t agree with the date, but when he saw his followers accepting the new prediction with great joy, he joined the crowd. The Millerites really expected this date with great enthusiasm. They left their farms and jobs, sold their houses and properties, prayed and repented from morning until evening. In short, they were getting themselves ready for the coming of Jesus Christ. But this time again, the expected event didn’t happen, and the Adventists experienced a great disappointment. That day became known as the “Great Disappointment” in the history of Adventism<sup>156</sup>.

After the “Great Disappointment,” W. Miller’s movement experienced a great shock. The followers of the movement were mocked at and ridiculed. Many Millerites in their disappointment turned away from their teachers. Most of them became bankrupt, because they had left everything behind, pursuing the vain illusions. They had a huge psychological shock. It should be noted that the Millerites were from different Protestant churches. Those who remained faithful to the movement even after the “Great Disappointment” were rejected by their churches, and in many cities and towns their places of worship were destroyed<sup>157</sup>.

The “Great Disappointment” caused a dissension among Adventists. They argued about religious matters and divided into different groups. W. Miller tried to prevent the dissension. On April 29, 1845, a conference was held in Albany, New York. Representatives of different Adventist organizations attended it. At the conference, W. Miller tried to unite his followers in one church, but the Millerites didn’t approve of his plan, because he had lost his influence after the “Great Disappointment”<sup>158</sup>.

In short, Adventists divided into different groups. For example, one group claimed that W. Miller had not made a mistake in his calculations, but the essence of the predicted date had been misunderstood; Jesus wasn’t supposed to come to earth on that date, because that day he entered the “Heavenly Temple” in order to make preparations for God’s judgment. After the completion of the preparations, Christ would come back to earth to build His Divine Kingdom. These Adventists were saying that in order to speed up His coming they had to obey the Old Testament law of keeping the Sabbath day. That group of Adventists began meeting for religious services on Saturdays, not on Sundays like other Christians<sup>159</sup>.

Those who obeyed the Sabbath law separated from the other Adventists in 1844. In 1860, at a congress in Battle Creek, Michigan, they

156 - Белов А.В. Указ. соч. – р. 34; Эсхатология, миллениаризм, адвентизм: история и современность// Там же.

157 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Религиозные организации современного мира: Учебное пособие. — М.: Издательство Московского университета, 2010. — р. 127; Эсхатология, миллениаризм, адвентизм: история и современность//Там же.

158 - Эсхатология, миллениаризм, адвентизм: история и современность//Там же.

159 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Там же. – р. 127-128.



called themselves “Seventh-day Adventists.” On May 20, 1863, again in Battle Creek, Seventh-day Adventists held their first General Conference where they developed the organizational structure and the statute of the “Seventh-Day Adventist Church” (SDA)<sup>160</sup>.

Ellen Gould White (1827-1915), her maiden name being Harmon, played an important role in the formation and development of SDA. She was also greatly supported in this by her husband James White (1821-1881). It is



*Ellen White (1827-1915)*

interesting that E. White never held any official position in SDA. She claimed to have received revelations from God, and Seventh-day Adventists considered her a prophet. E. White shaped the basic beliefs of SDA and laid the foundation of broad missionary activities. At her initiative, Adventists became open to the world, and SDA founded large educational and medical institutions and publications<sup>161</sup>.

### **Adventism in Azerbaijan**

The first Adventist missionary who came to Azerbaijan was Jacob Klein. In November of 1894, he came to Baku at the invitation of Germans who observed the Sabbath day. J. Klein stayed in the city for several days, baptized seven Germans and had the Lord’s Supper together with them. But the father of one of the Germans who had passed to the Adventist church complained to the Lutheran pastor, who in his turn informed the police of the events, and the police arrested J. Klein. They checked his passport and released him, but later the Adventists had to leave Baku because of persecution. As a result, there were no Adventists in the city for a long period of time<sup>162</sup>.

The first Adventist church in Azerbaijan emerged in Shusha.

<sup>160</sup> — Белов А.В. Указ. соч. – p.38.

<sup>161</sup> - Белов А.В. Указ. соч. – p.36, 38; Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Указ. соч. – p. 128.

<sup>162</sup> - Юнак Д.О.История Церкви Адвентистов Седьмого Дня в Азербайджане [Text]. Word format. - p. 50-51, 69.

This Russian-speaking church founded in 1902 was a part of SDA's Central Russian Mission. In 1906, in Novovasilyevka village which is situated near the Caspian Sea, 34 people accepted Adventism and as a result the Russian-speaking Adventist church emerged. A man named Ivanenko was elected



*Albert Ozol (1878-1916)*

presbyter of the church<sup>163</sup>.

A major role in the spread of Adventism in our country was played by a missionary named Albert Ozol. In 1909, he held several religious services, then nine people were baptized and accepted Adventism and an Adventist church was formed in the city. On July 17, 1910, after holding his last religious service in Baku, Ozol set out on a missionary journey, from Yevlakh to Aghdam and baptized three people in Garabulag

(present-day Fuzuli district)<sup>164</sup>.

During the period of Tsarist Russia, Adventism in Azerbaijan spread mainly among Molokans. As a result of the religious propaganda in the villages of A. Ozol, T.I. Lebsak, B. Gnedin, and P.I. Pilkhin, a group of local Molokans converted to Adventism, but the tyrannical Tsarist regime began persecuting the Adventists. Some of the Adventist leaders were imprisoned or exiled, others were deported from the country<sup>165</sup>. In spite of that, in the period of the Russian Empire, small Adventist groups existed in different parts of Azerbaijan. For instance, according to SDA information of 1911, our country had the following Adventist churches: Shusha city – founded in 1902; Garabulag – 6 members, founded in 1909; Novovasilyevka village – 9 members, founded in 1906; in 1908 it had 38 members, but later the number decreased; Baku – 9 members, the church was founded in 1910; Tulku mountains – 6 members, founded in 1910<sup>166</sup>.

As for the Adventists' activities during the years of Soviet Rule, first of all it should be noted that in the 1920s and 1930s one of the main missionaries of SDA in our country was Vasili Lukich Zhukov.

131 - Ibid. - p. 51.

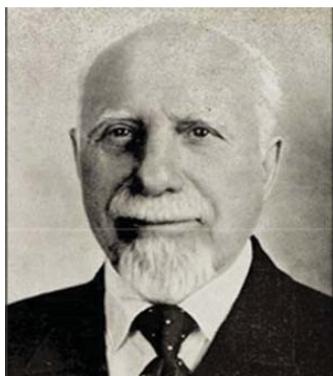
132 - Юнак Д.О. Указ. соч. - p. 52, 70.

133 - Завричко И. История образования Церкви Адвентистов Седьмого Дня//Азербайджан и азербайджанцы в мире: Культурологический журнал. № 1, июнь 2007 года. - p. 68.

134 - Юнак Д.О. Там же. - p. 56.

He ministered in Baku, Ganja, Garyagin (present-day Fuzuli), and other places. Besides that, in the early years of the Soviet rule, from October 12-16, 1927, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Transcaucasian Congress of SDA, the Adventist group in Rus Borisi village of Azerbaijan was included in the list of churches. Among those who spread Adventism in Azerbaijan at that time, the leader of SDA Transcaucasian missionary organization, A.G. Gallajev, is mentioned. In late 1929, also, one of the Adventist missionaries acting in our country was a former soldier from the Austrian Army named Pavel Ivanovich Pilkh<sup>167</sup>.

During the Communist regime, Adventists gathered for worship in secret places. In 1957, a man called Pyotr Stepanovich Kulakov came to Baku and took over leadership of the Adventist movement in Azerbaijan. In the 1960s, the religious situation became less severe. At that time, former religious organizations were restored and new Adventist groups emerged in Khachmaz and Tartar. After Kulakov's arrival, separate Adventist groups were united into one organization. A house of worship for Baku on Nagorny Street was established for 60-70 people there. In the 1960s, however, the house of worship was closed down again, and the Adventists had to gather secretly<sup>168</sup>. They were allowed to hold religious services only in 1965, then in 1966, local Adventists opened a house of worship. From 1968, they began meeting at Baku city, Narimanov district,



Yashar Aliyev Street 27 ( present-day 3<sup>rd</sup> Hippodrome Street 27). In 1969, the religious organization "Seventh-Day Adventist Church" was registered by the state. Then, Movsum Rahimov converted to Adventism and became the first Azerbaijani Adventist. This man had been imprisoned for his religious activity back in the years of Stalin's bloody repression. In 1976, Pavel Ilyich Zhitnikov became the leader of the Baku Adventist Church. Zhitnikov held this position until 1993<sup>169</sup>.

*Pyotr Stepanovich Kulakov*

135 - Юнак Д.О. Указ. соч. - р.56-57.

136 - Завричко И. Указ. соч. - р. 68.

137 - Завричко И. Там же; Юнак Д.О. Указ. соч. - р.71.

In the 1970s, foreign Adventists visited Baku (the President of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Hungary József Szakács and his wife Mária, the church secretary Zorka Denish, a Latvian named I.V. Oltinsh, the Vice-President of SDA's General Conference, etc.)<sup>170</sup>.

In the 1980s, the number of Adventists in Baku exceeded 100 people. As regards the rate of growth of the Adventist congregation, its members' social level and ethnic composition, first of all it should be noted that in 1982, the Adventist church in Baku had 103 members. During that year, five people became members of the church. The ethnic composition of church members was as follows: 76 Russians, 12 Armenians, 8 Ukrainians, 4 Azerbaijanis, and 2 Jews. The Adventists' education level was low. Only 4 out of 103 members had higher education. The rest were: 32 people with secondary education; 35 people with lower secondary education; 26 people with primary education; and 6 uneducated people. In 1982, the Baku Adventist Church members' social position was as follows: workers – 58 people; pensioners – 35 people, employees – 4 people. 6 people were dependent on others. That year's report shows interesting facts related to the age composition of the church members.

18-25 years old: 13 people (7 men, 6 women);

26-30 years old: 3 people (1 man, 2 women);

31-35 years old: 8 people (2 men, 6 women);

36-40 years old: 1 woman;

40-45 years old: 5 people (1 man, 4 women);

46-50 years old: 10 people (2 men, 8 women);

50 and older: 63 people (6 men, 57 women)<sup>171</sup>.

As we have seen, in the 1980s, the Baku Adventist Church consisted mainly of middle-aged Russian women.

It should be noted that one of the largest Adventist congregations in the years of Soviet rule was the one in Ganja. Even from 1906-1908, the Adventist missionary P.I. Plikh was actively involved in that church. In the 1920s, an Adventist church emerged in Ganja city (at that time the city was called Kirovabad). After World War II, the church had only 15 members.

<sup>170</sup> - Юнак Д.О. Там же. - p. 72.

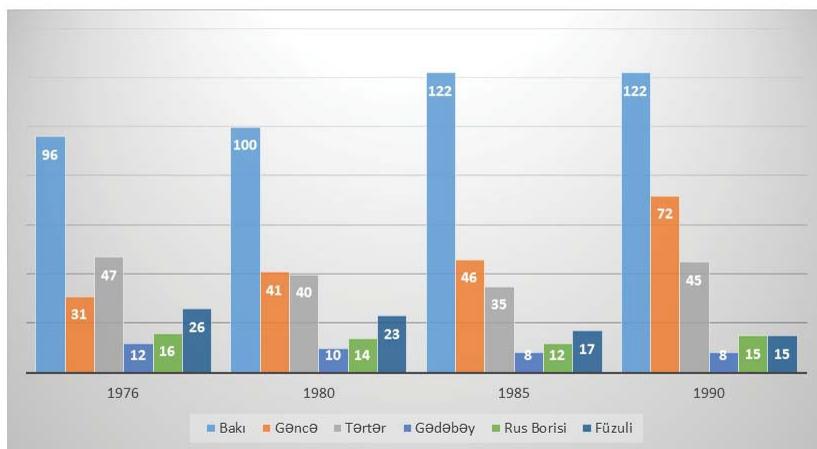
<sup>171</sup> - The archive of the Council on Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers: Folder No 31. Started from 1983. Baku SDA (Registered on September 23, 1969)/ The archive documents are stored at the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Up to 1957, it was led by P.M. Tkachuk. In 1957, the Adventist pastor Anatoli Sergeevich Noga came from the Ukraine to Ganja and soon the number of members grew to 40 people. After Noga's death, the Adventist Church in Ganja was led by his son-in-law Anatoli Stepanovich Zhelovaga. After Zhelovaga moved away from Ganja in 1988, for a few months the religious services were conducted by Pavel Yakovlevich Dmitriyenko<sup>172</sup>.

As for the Adventists in Baku, in the last years of the Soviet rule, Pavel Aleksandrovich Katsel came to the city and was soon elected the presbyter of the Baku Adventist Church. From 1988, Ivan Ivanovich Uklein began to lead the Adventist congregations in Azerbaijan. Also, Igor Veniaminovich Gospodarets and Pavel Mikhaylovich Nikulshin held the presbyter positions in the Baku Adventist Church<sup>173</sup>.

When speaking of the history of Adventism in Azerbaijan during the Soviet period, we should touch on the number of Adventist congregations existing at that time, in different parts of our country. "The History of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Azerbaijan" by D.O. Yunak presents the following picture of the approximate number of the member of Adventist churches in our country in different years during Soviet rule (See Diagram 1).

*Diagram 1. The Number of Adventists in the Soviet Period.*



131 - Юнак Д.О. Указ. соч. - p.73-74.

132 - Ibid. - p. 71-72.

It should be noted that the number of Adventists in the Tartar district is the total of the members of the two congregations there: The Adventist Church of Tartar City and The Adventist Church of Koyarkh village of Tartar District. It should also be noted that Koyarkh village was occupied by Armenian armed forces during the Karabakh war in 1993.

After Azerbaijani people restored their statehood in 1991, the Adventists living in our country gained the opportunity to practice and spread their faith without fear or obstacles. Thus, during the period of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union, Adventists were persecuted. Then Adventist churches were limited in their activities. In the years of independence, however, the Adventists were able to function freely and increase their numbers. If by the end of the 1980s, the number of Adventists in our country was 125 people, today their number is 528 people.

During the years of independence, many significant events happened in the Adventists' life. From 1990, they began publishing their literature. That year, they held an event called "Three Angels Over Baku" in the Shahriyar House of Culture; in 1991, they began Bible courses in the House of Officers; and in 1992, they organized an evangelism program by Arthur Schmidt, again in the Shahriyar House of Culture. In 1993, this Adventist preacher delivered speeches on healthy lifestyle and Bible study over a 3-month program. As a result, a new Adventist church was formed in Baku, and I.V. Gospodarets became its leader. I.I. Uklein remained the leader of the first church. The total membership of both churches was 222 people. In 1995, in Bakikhanov village of Baku city, a new church was established under D.B. Babayev's leadership. From 1996, Sunday school lessons and books by E. White began to be published in the Azerbaijani language. In 2001, the Azerbaijan Mission was established under I.P. Zavrishko's leadership (the present leader is Elshan Samadov). By 2003, the total number of members in Adventist churches in Baku was 360 people<sup>174</sup>.

On December 13, 2014, the Adventists living in our country celebrated the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Adventism in Azerbaijan. Then on

133 - Путь, длиною в 120 лет! Юбилей Церкви адвентистов седьмого дня в Азербайджане [Electronic resource]. – URL: [http://adventisty.ru/adventist\\_news/detail.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=248543](http://adventisty.ru/adventist_news/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=248543) (retrieval date: 04.08.2016).

September 09, 2016, the “Seventh-Day Adventist” religious organization in Baku city, Narimanov district, was re-registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan.



*A photo from the event in commemoration of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Adventism in Azerbaijan in the Seventh-day Adventist house of worship. December 13, 2014.*



*The house of worship of Seventh-day Adventists in Ganja city.*

## Basic Beliefs

The Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) church belongs to the Protestant branch of Christianity, but the beliefs of this church are characterized by the following differences:

1. The SDAs' main day of worship is Saturday, while other Christians worship on Sundays. In obedience to the Old Testament commandment, Adventists do not do any worldly work on Saturday, but commit that day to God<sup>175</sup>.

2. One of the distinctive features of SDA is that members of this church consider Ellen White a prophet, and believe her books were written under divine inspiration. Therefore, Seventh-day Adventists consider E. White's writings almost equal to the Bible<sup>176</sup>.

3. The "Three Angels' Messages" doctrine is another of the distinctive features of SDA. The doctrine states that three angels would be sent to prepare the human race for the last day. The angels will announce the end of the world, call people to repentance, proclaim the fall of Babylon – i.e. the sinful religious and political system of the USA and the Vatican, the Protestant movements that have gone astray, and the heathen – and will terrify those who submit to the "Satanic" system with divine punishment<sup>177</sup>.

4. The doctrine of "sanitary reform" is one of the unique features of SDA. This doctrine was created by Ellen White, the woman whom Seventh-day Adventists consider a prophet. She prohibited eating the meat of animals that were considered "unclean" in the Old Testament (such as pigs, fish with scales, etc.) She, however, went further and called her followers to eat healthy food, abstain from meat, tea, coffee, and spices; she was also against smoking and drinking alcohol. These ideas of Ellen White are reflected in her book "The Ministry of Healing." For instance, in that book the "prophet" of Adventists says the following about tea and coffee: *"In relation to tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcoholic drinks, the only safe course is to touch not, taste not, handle not. The tendency of tea, coffee, and similar drinks is in the same direction as that of alcoholic liquor and tobacco..."*<sup>178</sup>.

163 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Указ. соч. – р.129.

164 - Официальные заявления, рекомендации и другие документы Церкви Адвентистов Седьмого Дня. - Заокский: «Источник жизни», 2010. - р. 309.

165 - Трёхангельская весть [Electronic resource]// сайт «Откровения для последнего времени». – URL: <http://www.otkrovenie.de/sda/f19.htm> (retrieval date: 05.08.2016).

166 - Елена Уайт. Служение исцеления. – Заокский: «Источник жизни», 2013. - р. 274.

5. SDA members believe that in 1844 Jesus Christ entered the most holy place of the “Heavenly Temple” in order to cleanse God’s people from their sins as Chief Priest, and presently He is performing this function.

6. The members of SDA deny the doctrines of immortality of the soul and eternal conscious torment<sup>179</sup>.

## Number and Ethnic Composition

There are many Adventist denominations in the world – “the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” “the Adventist Reform Church,” “the Advent Christian Church,” “the Church of God,” “the Life and Advent Union,” “the First-day Adventist Christian Church,” etc. The largest of them is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. According to the information of December 31, 2015, SDA has 19,126,447 members in the world<sup>180</sup>. The total number of Adventists in Azerbaijan is 527 people. There are 339 Adventists in Baku and 170 in Ganja. There are also 7 Adventists in Tovuz, 5 in Nakhchivan, 3 in Ivanovka village of Ismayilli district, 2 in Saratovka village of Gadabay district, and 1 in Rus Borisi village of Goranboy district. The ethnic composition of the Adventists living in our republic is as follows: Azerbaijani – 334 people; Russian – 153 people; Ukrainian – 7 people; Tatar – 7 people; Lezgian – 8 people; Jew – 5 people; Tabasaran – 2 people; Korean – 2 people; Moldovan – 1 person; Kazakh – 1 person; Kumyk – 1 person; Gagauz – 1 person; Georgian – 1 person; Sri Lankan – 1 person; Lithuanian – 1 person; Abkhaz – 1 person; Dargin – 1 person.

## Structure of the Church

Each local Adventist church is governed by the general session. In our republic, Adventist churches are united under the Azerbaijan Mission. The Azerbaijan Mission submits to the Trans-Caucasus Union Missions (with its headquarters in Tbilisi), which in turn submits to the Euro-Asia Division with its central office in Moscow. There are 13 divisions (regional organizations). All the divisions submit to the General Conference of SDA

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167 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Указ. соч. – р.128.

168 - <http://adventist.ru/2016/04/07/kolichestvo-adventistov-v-mire-prevyisilo-19-millionov-chelovek/>  
(retrieval date: 06.08.2016).

(with headquarters in Maryland, USA; the Conference is also called the World Mission). The conference meets once every five years and is governed by the president who is elected there.

### **Humanitarian Organization**

Since 1994, ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) has operated in the Republic of Azerbaijan. ADRA is an international non-governmental organization that was established by SDA in November 1956, but formally is not a part of the church structure. It has representative offices in 125 countries. ADRA has General Consultative Status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Its main areas of activity are Baku and Ganja cities.

### **Source of Funding**

The local Adventist churches function with the voluntary offerings of believers. Money is collected at every service and once every three months. The church members give ten percent of their income to the church. Out of this church tax, which is called “tithe,” 10 percent is used for the needs of the local church, 45 percent is given to the Union and the Division, and the rest is given to the General Conference. The local Adventist churches also get financial aid from their foreign centers<sup>181</sup>.

### **Public Position and Religious Education**

Seventh-day Adventists respect national laws. SDA displays a tolerant attitude towards other denominations, but is critical against the ecumenical movement, which is trying to unite all Christians. Therefore, SDA does not become a member of the international Christian organization of the “World Council of Churches”<sup>182</sup>. Adventists mainly cooperate with Baptists – the two churches try to help solve their common problems together<sup>183</sup>. It is interesting that in Baku the buildings of the Adventist church and the Baptist church are located in one neighborhood. Every Adventist church has a functioning Saturday school. At the same time, the Adventists in Azerbaijan get religious education in Zaoksky Adventist University, which is located in the Tula Region of the Russian Federation.

169 – Стёпина С., Войтоловский Ф., Лункин Р. Церковь адвентистов седьмого дня//Современная религиозная жизнь России: опыт систематического описания. т.2 - р. 399

170 - For more detailed information see: Официальные заявления, рекомендации и другие документы Церкви Адвентистов Седьмого Дня. - Заокский: «Источник жизни», 2010. - р.270-284.

171 - Стёпина С., Войтоловский Ф., Лункин Р. Указ. соч. – 396.

## PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

*This Protestant denomination is characterized by ecstasy, high emotionality, and irrationality. It is the most numerous and the most rapidly spreading Protestant movement in the world and in Azerbaijan.*

*Though it is relatively new, Pentecostalism spread rapidly in different parts of the world. In some historically Catholic areas Pentecostalism is competing with Catholicism, drawing the members of this large and ancient branch of Christianity to its side. Researchers attribute the Pentecostals' success to their ability to adjust to the globalizing world. In our rapidly changing world, Pentecostalism seems to be the most promising Christian denomination. Thus we should review the history and the origins of this interesting Protestant denomination, its basic beliefs, and its past and present in Azerbaijan.*



## Brief Historical Overview



The origin of Pentecostalism is related to the name of Charles Fox Parham, a Methodist church minister who believed that before the end of the world Christianity would spread rapidly on earth and the missionaries who would fulfill this task would have supernatural power because of the descent of the Holy Spirit. Parham believed that speaking in unknown tongues was the evidence of the Holy Spirit's descending upon the believer, or in Christian terms, of the baptism of the Holy Spirit<sup>184</sup>.

*Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929)*

In 1900, Parham started the “Bethel” Bible school near Topeka, Kansas. About forty people enrolled in the school. Parham acted as both a teacher and a student in the school. He gave students the task of researching the Bible regarding baptism of the Holy Spirit. After their research the students came to the conclusion that random speaking in unknown tongues was the greatest evidence for the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Because the book of Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2, narrates the event that happened 50 days after the resurrection of Christ, on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles and they suddenly spoke in languages they didn't know<sup>185</sup>.

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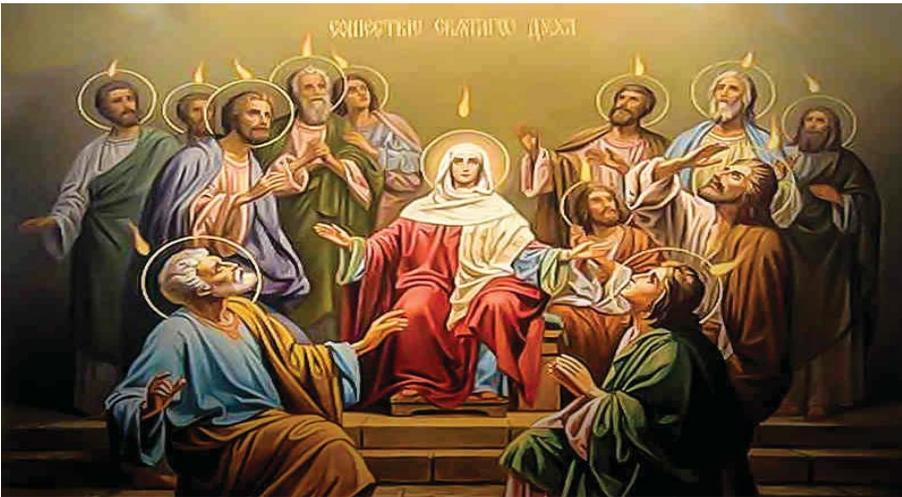
On New Year's eve in 1900, Parham and his disciples began praying at night to receive that gift from the Holy Spirit. During the worship, one of his disciples, a woman named Agnes Ozman, asked her teacher to lay hands on her and pray for her according to the pattern set out in the early apostolic church. After Parham began praying for her, Agnes suddenly “spoke” in Chinese, though she did not know that language. In the following days, the other students of the Bible school, including Parham

<sup>172</sup> - See: Франчук В.И. Пробуждение: от центра Одессы до окраин России. – Одесса: «СИМЭКС-ПРИНТ», 2011. – р. 141.

<sup>173</sup> - Франчук В.И. Указ. соч. – р. 141-142; Чарльз Пархам. Проповедник, который поспешил [Electronic resource] <http://7gromov.com.ua/?q=node/1789> (retrieval date: 07.12.2016).

himself, claimed they were baptized by the Holy Spirit and spoke in unknown languages<sup>186</sup>.

This was the beginning of Pentecostalism. January 1, 1901 is considered the starting date of the Pentecostal movement, because Agnes Ozman “spoke” in Chinese on New Year’s eve<sup>187</sup>. The adherents of the new Protestant denomination were called “Pentecostal,” because the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, on the Day of Pentecost, and they began speaking in languages they didn’t know.



*The icon describing the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

After this experience in the Bible school, Parham called other Christians to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. He claimed to have been given a special power of healing through the descending of the Holy Spirit on him. The people who attended Parham’s religious services believed that they were baptized with the Holy Spirit and healed. In 1905, Parham started a new Bible school in Houston, Texas, in order to spread his religious ideas<sup>188</sup>.

One of Parham’s disciples was a black man named William Joseph Seymour. He studied in Parham’s school for only six weeks. According to

174 - Франчук В.И. Там же. – р. 142; Чарльз Пархам. Проповедник, который поспешил//Там же.

187 - See: Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Религиозные организации современного мира: Учебное пособие. – М.: Издательство Московского университета, 2010. – р. 142.

188 - Франчук В.И. Там же. – р. 142.



*William Joseph  
Seymour (1870-1922)*

the law of segregation which was in force in the USA at that time, black people and white people had to study separately. Therefore W. Seymour sat in the corridor of Parham's school and listened to lessons from there. Later he left the Bible school and went to Los Angeles where he preached, calling people to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. After a while, a religious group was formed under his leadership<sup>189</sup>.

On April 9, 1906, during worship, the members of the group, affected by the Holy Spirit, suddenly began speaking in unknown tongues and singing. After this event, the group grew rapidly, so that W. Seymour's followers began looking for a bigger place to worship and hold religious services, and soon they met in a building at the address Azusa Street 312. After a while, Seymour's church was officially named the "Apostolic Faith Mission," but people usually called it the "Azusa Street Mission"<sup>190</sup>.



*Azusa Street Mission.*

189 - See: Сесил М.Робек. Азуза-стрит: миссия и пробуждение. – Александрия: ЕЗДРА, 2011. - p. 16-17.

190 - Ibid. - p. 18.

191 - Ibid. - p. 20.

In the Pentecostal church at Azusa Street 312, people of different nations – white and black, poor and rich – worshipped together, entering ecstasy and making strange movements during worship. Cecil M. Robeck wrote about it: *“In the Azusa Street Mission, people were speaking in tongues, prophesying about the future, talking of divine healing, having visions, and experiencing other unusual forms of actions by the Holy Spirit, such as jumping, lying down on the floor, laughing, screaming, barking, and falling down”*<sup>192</sup>.

The massive ecstasy on that street is known as the “Azusa Street Revival.” The revival in the “Azusa Street Mission” spread to other places in the USA and to different European countries; thus Pentecostalism spread throughout the world<sup>193</sup>.

Researchers divide the history of Pentecostalism into three stages of development, which they call three waves. The first wave of Pentecostalism began in Ch.F. Parham’s Bible school on January 1, 1901, when A. Ozman allegedly spoke in an unknown tongue under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The first wave spread to other Protestant churches, and as a result members of different Protestant churches became Pentecostal. After receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they left their former churches to establish separate independent ones. But the first wave eventually weakened. The second wave of Pentecostalism began in 1960. That year, believers in the church of an Anglican pastor from California, Dennis Bennett claimed to have received the gift of speaking in tongues from the Holy Spirit. This time the ecstatic phenomena similar to the ones observed in Pentecostal churches were experienced in the Anglican Church. Then D. Bennet’s church was shown on TV channels, and the Californian pastor soon became famous. From his church, the Pentecostal movement spread to other Protestant churches. In the 1960s, some members of the Roman Catholic Church were also influenced by Pentecostalism. In the early 1970s, the Pentecostal influence was felt even in the conservative Greek Orthodox Church<sup>194</sup>.

The question may be raised as to what makes the second wave different from the first one. As we have already mentioned, the first wave

188 - Ibid. - p. 27.

189 - Франчук В.И. Указ. соч. – p.145.

190 - Янг Дж. Христианство. – М.: Агентство «ФАИР», 1998. – p. 249.

started from the revival in Azusa Street, and involved only different Protestant churches. The Protestants influenced by Pentecostalism would leave their churches and established their own Pentecostal churches. The second wave, however, influenced not only Protestants, but also many Catholics and even a small number of Orthodox believers. This time, the believers who were “baptized” with the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues, and experienced other ecstatic phenomena, and would not leave their churches. Those who were influenced by the second wave were called Charismatics, and their movement was called the Charismatic movement (or sometimes the Renewal Movement)<sup>195</sup>.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the third wave of Pentecostalism spread widely and the Charismatic movement in the Christian world entered a new phase. This time, the believers who were influenced by Charismatism left their churches and founded their own independent congregations. The adherents of these new churches were called “Neo-Charismatics.” The Neo-Charismatics do not name their churches “Pentecostal” or “Charismatic”<sup>196</sup>.

Neo-Charismatism has the following peculiar characteristics<sup>197</sup>:

- The attempt to influence traditional Christian denominations even if it takes removing the leaders of other churches or causing dissension;
- Propagating religion with “miracles” and “signs;” This method is called “power Evangelism;”
- Massive “deliverance” and “healing” sessions;
- Strange movements during worship: massive hysteria, falling on the ground, etc.;
- Waging “spiritual warfare” against “territorial spirits.”

The “Toronto blessing” in 1994 marked the beginning of a new stage in the Charismatic movement. This religious phenomenon happened in one of the churches in Toronto, Canada<sup>198</sup>.

191 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Указ. соч. - р. 146; Янг Дж. Указ. соч. - р. 249.

192 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Указ. соч. - р. 147.

193 - See: The Sunday School materials of the Evangelical Christian Baptist Church “Preobrazheniye” (“Transfiguration”). - p.97 [Electronic resource] / Prepared by: Ryaguzov Viktor Semyonovich, Yermoskin Ilya Ilyich, Puzankov Oleg Gersonovich and others. - URL: file:///C:/Users/User/Desktop/transfiguration-sunday-school-material-year-2.pdf (retrieval date: 13.12.2016).

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## Religious Teachings

The doctrine of Pentecostalism is founded on the belief in the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit can descend on every believer. In their opinion, after the Holy Spirit descends on believers, He gives them different gifts, so they speak in unknown tongues, have the power to heal the sick, drive out demons, and do other miracles. The phenomenon of speaking in unknown tongues under the influence of the Holy Spirit is called “glossolalia” (from the Greek “speaking in a tongue”).

Besides that, Charismatics have a religious belief called “prosperity theology,” which is also called the “prosperity gospel,” “health and wealth gospel,” or the “gospel of success.” The traditional Pentecostals do not have “prosperity theology” in their beliefs. According to this theology, the Lord wants believers to be physically healthy, prosper and have success in all areas of life. Therefore Charismatic leaders promise their followers that they will be rich, have a successful career, and be healed from the worst diseases<sup>200</sup>.

At the same time, many Charismatic churches are characterized by a positive attitude towards the Jews and Zionism. They believe that Jews are elected by God. The Charismatics do their best to help Jews return to their land, Israel, and they consider it their sacred duty. For example, most Charismatic churches collect money for Jews to return to Israel<sup>201</sup>.

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<sup>194</sup> - Янг Дж. Указ.соч. – р. 250.

<sup>195</sup> - Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> - See: Лункин Р. Пятидесятничество и харизматическое движение: Общие сведения. История и филиация// Современная религиозная жизнь России: опыт систематического описания. Том II. – Москва: «Логос», 2003. – р. 262.

## Forms of Worship

Pentecostalism is a Protestant denomination, therefore the Pentecostals' religious services look like the meetings of other Protestant denominations. Yet there are differences, too. Glossolalia or speaking in tongues is the Pentecostals' distinctive form of worship.

The services of traditional Pentecostal churches are quieter, while the meetings of Charismatic churches are noisy and emotional. For instance, during worship they fall into ecstasy and loudly “speak” in tongues. In some Charismatic churches, people do more extreme and weird things (such as massive hysteria, falling on the ground, laughing wildly, making sounds of animals). At the same time, Charismatics use modern music styles such as pop-music in their religious services. The Charismatic movement is characterized by massive religious events (such as “healing” thousands of people, “driving out demons” from people’s bodies). All these manifestations, are detested by conservative traditional Pentecostals, who prefer to worship quietly and peacefully<sup>202</sup>.

## Current Situation

Pentecostalism is not a unified or homogenous movement. This Protestant denomination is divided into different movements and represented with numerous churches today. In general, Pentecostals tend to split and divide into different sects and movements. Nowadays, Pentecostalism is divided into the following movements: the twice blessed Pentecostals, the thrice blessed Pentecostals, the radical Pentecostals, the Unitarians, etc.<sup>203</sup>.

188 - Там же.

189 - For more detailed information see: Лункин Р. Пятидесятники и харизматы: единство в многообразии [Electronic resource]. – URL: [http://www.keston.org.uk/\\_russianreview/edition11/02Charismatics.html](http://www.keston.org.uk/_russianreview/edition11/02Charismatics.html) (retrieval date: 12.12.2016); Лункин Р. Пятидесятничество и харизматическое движение: Общие сведения. История и филиация. – р. 259-266.

190 - See: Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Указ. соч. - р. 144.

Pentecostals in the post-Soviet countries are also divided into different groups: the followers of Voronayev, the followers of Schmidt, Pentecostal-Zionist Evangelical Christians, Holy Zionist Evangelical Christians, etc.

Pentecostalism with its numerous sects is the largest and the most rapidly growing Protestant movement in today's world. According to 2011 information of the "Pew Research Center," the number of Pentecostals in the world has exceeded 584 million people (about 304 million Charismatics and about 279 million traditional Pentecostals)<sup>204</sup>.

Pentecostal churches exist in most countries of the world. Most Pentecostals live in Brazil and the USA<sup>205</sup>. The world's largest Pentecostal organization is the "Assemblies of God." It has over 67 million members<sup>206</sup>. It should be noted that some Pentecostal churches in our country (e.g. "Nehemiah" church) are a part of that organization.

Presently, Pentecostals are involved in social activity. They organize events to solve issues related to marriage and family, alcohol and drug addiction; they propagate healthy families, healthy lifestyle, and high moral values. At the same time, Pentecostals are involved in a broad range of charitable work<sup>207</sup>. Certainly, the Pentecostals' numbers grow rapidly due to their active social involvement in the world.

## **Pentecostalism in Azerbaijan**

### *Oneness Pentecostals*

Scientific sources provide very little information about the first Pentecostals in Azerbaijan. Some sources reveal that a group of Pentecostals existed in Baku even before the February Revolution (1917), back in Tsarist Russia. The group resulted from the activity of missionaries sent to the Caucasus from the Pentecostal church in Vyborg (a Russian town located on the border with Finland). The Vyborg church belonged to so-called Oneness Pentecostalism. It was founded in 1913 by its leader Aleksander Ivanovich Ivanov.

191 - <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-movements-and-denominations/> (retrieval date: 12.12.2016).

192 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Там же. – р. 148.

193 - The official website of the "Assemblies of God." – URL: <http://worldagfellowship.org/> (retrieval date: 12.12.2016).

194 - See: Лункин Р. Союз христиан веры евангельской пятидесятников (СХВЕП)// Современная религиозная жизнь России: опыт систематического описания. Том II. – Москва: «Логос», 2003. - р. 271.

Influenced by Andrew David Urshan, a missionary who had come to Tsarist Russia from the USA, in 1913 Ivanov passed to the Oneness movement of Pentecostalism. The movement is called “Oneness” because these Pentecostals are baptized only in Jesus’ name. It emerged in the USA and is also known as the “Jesus Only” movement<sup>208</sup>.

The Oneness Pentecostals call themselves “Apostolic Evangelical Christians.” Yet Evangelical Christians, Baptists, and others called them by a hateful name “Tryasuny” (in Russian “shakers”). Nevertheless, in the Russian Empire most Baptist and Evangelical Christians moved to Pentecostalism<sup>209</sup>.

Traditional Pentecostals consider the Oneness Pentecostalism a heretical sect, because the founders of Pentecostalism and most Pentecostal Christians believe in the Trinity.

Both in Tsarist Russia and in the Soviet period, the Oneness Pentecostal movement didn’t spread widely. The Oneness Pentecostal group in Azerbaijan didn’t have success either and was buried in the past. The Pentecostal church that had more followers was Ivan Yefimovich Voronayev’s church. His followers founded Pentecostalism in our country.

### *Christians of Evangelic Faith*

The founder of Pentecostalism in the Ukraine and Russia, Ivan Yefimovich Voronayev, was initially a Baptist Christian. He learned about Pentecostalism while he lived in the USA, and in 1919 he left the Baptist church in New York and founded the first Russian Pentecostal church. Later he settled in Odessa city. As a result of his activity there, a church was opened on November 12, 1921, and the “Association of Christians of Evangelic Faith in Odessa Region” was founded in 1924. As we see, Voronayev’s followers called themselves Christians of Evangelic Faith. But others called them “followers of Voronayev.” As time went on, Voronayev’s church grew, and his followers’ churches emerged in different areas of Ukraine and Russia, and even in the Central Asia. Odessa became the center of this church.

- See: Клибанов А.И. История религиозного сектантства в России (60-е годы XIX в. – 1917 г.). – М.: «Наука», 1965. – р. 250; Ефимов И. Современное харизматическое движение сектантства [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://www.klikovo.ru/books/45157/45163.html> (retrieval 192 date: 09.12.2016). 209 - Клибанов А.И. Там же. – р. 250.

By the end of 1929, Voronayev's "All-Union Association of Christians of Evangelic Faith" consisted of about a thousand churches with 25,000 members, including the Pentecostal churches in Azerbaijan<sup>210</sup>.

Voronayev's followers began their activities in Azerbaijan in the 1930s. In 1932, an elderly couple of Greek descent named Manidaki came from Odessa to Baku. They were members of Voronayev's church. They met with the preacher of the Baku Baptist church Nikolay Alekseyevich Kazansov and his wife Anna Ivanovna, and then they came to the Baptist church and talked to the local Baptists about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The following day the Manidaki couple returned to Odessa<sup>211</sup>. After a while, the former Baptist preacher N.A. Kazansov with his family moved to Salyan and accepted the Pentecostal faith there. Later a Baptist group came to Salyan and was influenced by the Kazansov family and allegedly received the baptism of the Holy Spirit; thus a small religious community of Christians of Evangelic Faith emerged in Salyan<sup>212</sup>. But the greatest role in the formation



of Pentecostalism in Azerbaijan belongs to Vasili Stepanovich Pavlov. He was born in 1890. In the period of Tsarist Russia, he was punished severely for preaching the Baptist faith. After his being exposed to Voronayev's church in Odessa in 1924, he accepted the Pentecostal faith. It is also known that in the early 1930s, Pavlov and his family lived for a while in Baku, Salyan, and in Zubovka village which is on the bank of the Kura River. Pavlov's preaching activity resulted in the emergence of Pentecostal churches in Azerbaijan<sup>213</sup>.

*One of the founders of  
Pentecostalism in Azerbaijan  
Nikolay Alekseyevich Kazansov*

<sup>210</sup> - Франчук В. Указ. соч. – p. 10, 36-38.

<sup>211</sup> - Ibid. – p. 423-424.

<sup>212</sup> - Ibid. – p. 424-426.

<sup>213</sup> - Франчук В. Указ. соч. – p. 270-275; 426-431.



*The first Pentecostals in Salyan.*

Historical sources have very little information about Pentecostal congregations existing in Azerbaijan at that time. It is known that the members of those congregations were former Baptists. It is also known that Mikhail Trofimovich Andreyev acted as the presbyter of the Pentecostal church in Baku<sup>214</sup>.

Thus, in the early 1930s, Voronayev's followers sowed the seeds of Pentecostalism in Baku and Salyan. At that time, they functioned secretly, because the Soviet government fought against religion. In 1930, the All-Union Council of Christians of Evangelic Faith was abolished, Voronayev and the Council's leadership were imprisoned, and in 1933, V.S. Pavlov was sent to GULAG labor camp.

When World War II started, the Soviet government's treatment of believers became milder relatively. Stalin's regime allowed believers from various unofficial religions and denominations to legalize their activities. The Communist authorities wanted to turn people's religious feelings into Soviet patriotism. Because of it, in 1944, Baptists and Evangelical Christians united to establish an association named the "All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists" (AUCECB). The Soviet government didn't let the other Protestant churches, including the Pentecostals, form their own official organization, and proposed all the

Protestants join AUCECB. Some Pentecostal churches in the USSR entered this organization and were registered by the state. In 1945, more than 400 Pentecostal churches with 25,000 members joined AUCECB<sup>215</sup>.

Later, however, most Pentecostals left this organization, because AUCECB demanded that they should abandon some of their religious practices. Afterwards, many Pentecostal churches refused to be registered by the state. Thus, most of the Pentecostals in the Soviet Union found themselves in an illegal position, and a group of so-called “unregistered” Pentecostals appeared, also known as the “Initiative Group.” The “unregistered” Pentecostals refused to cooperate with Communists and to let the atheistic government dictate their activity; they treated their coreligionists who had been registered by the state with hostility<sup>216</sup>.

In the period of Soviet rule, the Pentecostal churches in Azerbaijan also joined the “unregistered” ones. Most of their members were old and uneducated people. The Pentecostals in Baku were meeting secretly until they decided to be registered by the state shortly before the collapse of the Soviet Union. It should be mentioned that in the late 1980s they held their meetings in the house of a missionary from the USA named Nicholas Daliwe. He was the person who applied for the state registration of the church in Baku. Yet his initiative did not give any result, and the Pentecostal religious community was not registered by the state.



*The church building and Sunday service of the “Star of the East” church. Baku city.*

<sup>214</sup> See: Филатов С., Лункин Р. Российский союз евангельских христиан-баптистов (РСЕХБ)// Современная религиозная жизнь России: опыт систематического описания. Том II. – Москва: «Логос», 2003. – р. 159; Пятидесятничество и харизматическое движение: Общие сведения. История и филиация. – р. 252-253.

<sup>216</sup> - See: Российский союз евангельских христиан-баптистов (РСЕХБ). – р. 161; Пятидесятничество и харизматическое движение: Общие сведения. История и филиация. – р. 256.

## *Religious Communities of Pentecostals and Charismatics Today*

After Azerbaijan regained independence in 1991, our country declared freedom of religious beliefs, and the Pentecostals also used the opportunities of the freedom of conscience to actively propagate their religion; soon Pentecostalism became the largest Protestant denomination in our republic. Let us remember that the same process was taking place not only in Azerbaijan, but all over the world. The number of Pentecostal converts was much greater than the other Protestants in different parts of the world.

Today, there are several Pentecostal religious organizations in Azerbaijan. The main Pentecostal communities in our republic are shown on Diagram 1.

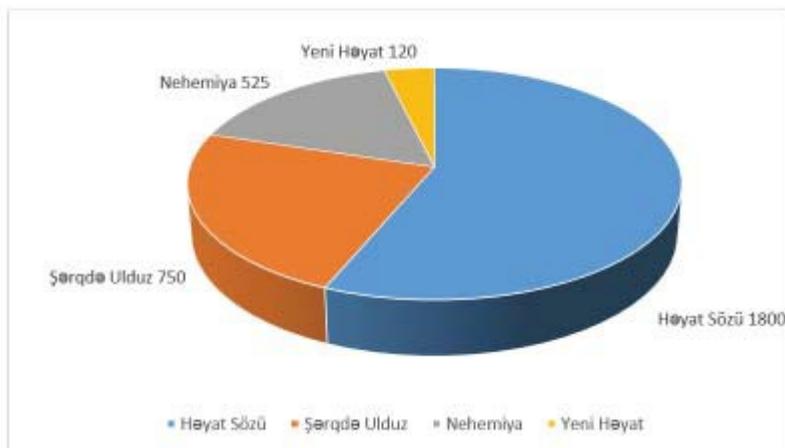
**Diagram 1. Pentecostal religious organizations in Azerbaijan**



As we can see from Diagram 1, the Pentecostal communities divide into two main streams: Christians of Evangelic Faith (traditional Pentecostals) and Charismatics (new Pentecostals). The traditional Pentecostals have formed religious organizations named “Star of the East” and “Nehemiah,” while the Charismatics have formed the ones named “Word of Life” and “New Life.” There are also other Pentecostal religious communities. Some of them are “The Living Stones” (Charismatic), “The Lord’s Temple” (Pentecostal), “Baku Vineyard Church” (Charismatic), etc. But these congregations have less members, between 20-50 people each.

So, the historical roots of the traditional Pentecostalism in our country go back to the churches established by Ukrainian missionaries (followers of Voronayev) in the 1930s. The first Charismatic church was established in 1994. Although the traditional Pentecostals appeared in Azerbaijan long before the Charismatics, today the number of the Charismatics is higher than the number of the traditional Pentecostals. This is illustrated on Diagram 2.

*Diagram 2. The number of Pentecostal church members in Azerbaijan*



*The information is based on the reports of the religious organizations.*

As we can see from Diagram 2, the total number of Pentecostal Christians in our republic is over 3,100 people. It is remarkable that the Charismatic “Word of Life” church has more members than the traditionally Pentecostal “Star of the East” and “Nehemiah” churches together. It should be noted that “Word of Life” is the largest and the most rapidly growing Protestant church in our country. According to 2016 information, this church has about 1,800 members.

After reviewing the statistics, it would be appropriate to present detailed information about the main Pentecostal churches.

*The “Star of the East” church in Baku.* After Azerbaijan regained independence, the Pentecostals who used to meet for worship secretly in the years of Soviet rule got an opportunity to formalize their activities.

On November 10, 1993, a Pentecostal church named the “Star of the East” was registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice. In 2002 it was registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations. Since the day it was established, Roman Zhmurov has been the Chairman of this church.

In the early period of its activity, the church had about 100 people. But in the 1990s, the number of their members increased due to active propagation and their humanitarian aid to people in need. In spite of that, in the recent years, the number of the “Star of the East” church members decreased. According to 2016 information, this church has 750 members (including children).

This religious organization’s main area of activity is Baku city, but it also has small groups in Sumgayit, Shabran, Yevlakh, Barda, Ganja, Gusar, and Ivanovka village of İsmayilli district. The “Star of the East” church has Azerbaijani and Russian groups. It is a part of the religious organization named “Russian Missions Association of Christians of Evangelic Faith,” yet the organization is not the center of the “Star of the East” church – the church acts independently, maintaining a close relationship with this organization and with other coreligionists abroad, particularly in Russia, Germany, and the USA. Their funding comes from voluntary offerings.

The “Star of the East” church is loyal to the state and tries to act within the law. We should also mention that a number of churches have originated from the “Star of the East.” For example, “Nehemiah,” “The Living Stones,” “The Lord’s Temple,” etc. The largest of these churches is “Nehemiah.”

*“Nehemiah” Church of Gospel-Believing Christians.* In the Old Testament, Nehemiah was a man who restored the wall of Jerusalem which was ruined after the Babylonian captivity. The church named after this man originated from the “Star of the East.” “Nehemiah” church was registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice in 1999. In 2002, it was registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations.



*“Nehemiah” church.*

In 1999, “Nehemiah” church had about 130 members. Since then, the church has grown due to their active propagating activity and their humanitarian aid. Today, the church has about 525 members. Most of them are Azerbaijani. The main area of activity of “Nehemiah” church is Baku city. Besides that, they also have cell groups in Sumgayit, Siyazan, İsmayilli, Gusar, Goychay, Yevlakh, Khachmaz, Shamkir, and Qakh<sup>217</sup>.

“Nehemiah” church is a part of the “Russian Church of Christians of Evangelic Faith.” It also closely cooperates with “Nehemiah” International Mission. This Christian international humanitarian organization was founded in 1990 and is based in Nidda, Germany. It functions in about 70 countries

( source: [http://www.nehemia.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=72&Itemid=92](http://www.nehemia.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72&Itemid=92) ).

“Nehemiah” church respects the state and the laws. Based on the Bible, the church leadership affirms that any secular government is set by God. Thus the church calls its members to submit to the authorities. This is stated on the official website of the church (<http://nehemiahazebaku.wixsite.com/azerbaijan/prayforazerbaijan>).

217 - The official website of “Nehemiya” church. – URL: <http://nehemiahazebaku.wixsite.com/azerbaijan/untitled-c14ec> (retrieval date: 11.09.2016).

*“Word of Life” church.* This church belongs to the Charismatic stream of Pentecostalism and is a part of “Word of Life International Union” (In Swedish, “Livets Ord”). The union was founded on May 24, 1983, by Ulf Ekman, and is located in Uppsala, Sweden. It is interesting that on March 9, 2014, the founder of that Christian international organization, Ulf Ekman, officially announced his conversion to Catholicism. Of course, the news of their religious leader’s conversion to another branch of Christianity disappointed and confused the “Word of Life” church members. Presently, Christian Akerhielm is the President of “Word of Life” International Union.

“Word of Life” began functioning in Azerbaijan from 1994. That year their organization held an event, “God Loves Azerbaijan.” At the same time, in the 1990s, the organization’s center, “Word of Life International,” was involved in a wide array of humanitarian activity in our country<sup>218</sup>. In 1999, the “Cathedral of Praise” (“Word of Life”) religious organization was registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice. In 2000, the church came under the Eurasian Association of Christians of Evangelic Faith, the “Church of Faith”<sup>219</sup>.

The leader of “Word of Life” in our country is Rasim Khalilov. He became the pastor in 2000. R. Khalilov graduated from Azerbaijan Technical University in 2000, then studied in “Word of Life” Bible College from 2001-2002, and completed the pastor courses in “Word of Life” University in Kiev, Ukraine in 2003. We should mention that in the 1990s, Mats-Jan Söderberg played an important role in the formation of “Word of Life” church in our republic<sup>220</sup>.

The church is characterized by its social activity and involvement in different charitable programs. For example, the church provided

218 - История церкви «Слово Жизни» в Баку [Electronic resource]//The official website of “Word of Life” church. – URL: <http://wol.az/наша-история/> (retrieval date: 12.12.2016).

219 - История церкви «Слово Жизни» в Баку//Там же.

220 - История церкви «Слово Жизни» в Баку//Там же.

humanitarian aid for people in need jointly with the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society; from 2005-2006, jointly with “American Councils,” it participated in the “Combating AIDS” event in Baku organized by the UN.<sup>221</sup>

The leader of “Word of Life” church R. Khalilov takes an active role in different international events and reports on the historical traditions of multiculturalism and tolerance in Azerbaijan. This church is loyal to the state and encourages its members to serve in the Azerbaijan Armed Forces<sup>222</sup>.

The leader of “Word of Life” in Azerbaijan R. Khalilov was attacked by Armenian bloggers, because of the fiery sermon that he delivered on June 10, 2012, where he defended Azerbaijan’s just position, and called all the church to pray for the liberation of Karabakh from the Armenian occupants and for the displaced Azerbaijanis to return to their land. In the sermon, R. Khalilov said: *“If I ask you, ‘Do you believe that Karabakh will be ours?’ I am sure 50 percent of you will say ‘Amen.’” But how many times per day do we pray for Karabakh?.. The next question is, ‘How many times per week do we pray for Karabakh?’ ‘How many times per month do we pray for Karabakh?’ Maybe it is time for the church to arise and proclaim, ‘Karabakh, return!’ Because it is your land and my land, which was cut off from the body of Azerbaijan. It has been cut off and it needs to be put back where it belongs, to be restored to life... I believe we should be standing in God’s presence, saying, ‘Our Heavenly Father! For the sake of Jesus Christ, may Karabakh return! May Karabakh be ours again! It is ours, but we are not there.’ So when will it happen? When our prayers have been heard.*

*There is a painful wound in the body of Azerbaijan. We seem to never talk about it. But this painful wound has cast our country into a strain. It is a heavy burden for the government... I started to realize that each Sunday we should pray for Karabakh. But it would be great if you spend at least five, ten, or fifteen minutes at home on your knees, asking God, ‘O Lord, return Karabakh! ‘O Lord, return Karabakh! O Lord, may Karabakh be ours again! It seems to be in Azerbaijan, but it is not in Azerbaijan. I wish Karabakh were ours again... The Lord is making our church real. The Lord is making our church patriotic. The Lord is making our church a church that loves her land.”*

221 - История церкви «Слово Жизни» в Баку//Там же.

222 - История церкви «Слово Жизни» в Баку//Там же.

R.Khalilov's sermon caused anger among Armenian bloggers. They accused the Baku "Word of Life" church of being sympathetic of Islam and serving the government of Azerbaijan; they made a video clip against the religious organization "Word of Life," calling the authorities to close down this organization's mission in Armenia<sup>223</sup>.

The "Word of Life" church in Azerbaijan has about 1,800 members. Most of them are Azerbaijani. There are also Russian, Lezgian, Tatar, Indian, Pakistani, Nigerian, and Swedish members.



*A Sunday service of the "Word of Life" church.*

The church organizes "Alpha" courses to promote Christianity.

The following "Word of Life" churches have been registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations.

1. The Baku "Word of Life" Christian Church. (date of registration: May 23, 2012; legal address: Baku city, Khatai district, S. Vazirov Str. 6);
2. "Word of Life – 2" Sumgayit Christian Church. (date of registration: November 13, 2015; legal address: Sumgayit city, Inshaatchilar village, House No 14/9, Apt. 3).

There are also "Word of Life" cell groups in Aghdash, Guba, and other places.

<sup>223</sup> - You can watch the video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGZ1O9F1jLM> (retrieval date: 11.09.2016).

*“New Life” Christian Gospel religious organization.* This religious organization belongs to the Charismatic stream of Pentecostalism. It was founded in 1999 by Lyudmila Ibrahimova who was born on June 15, 1947 in Baku to an educated family and graduated from the Azerbaijan State University, Faculty of Philology. At first, L. Ibrahimova became a member of “Word of Life” church, but later she established her own church, which is affiliated with the “New Life” church in Minsk, Belarus. The bishop and leader of the church in Minsk is Vyacheslav Goncharenko<sup>224</sup>.

In 2006, “New Life” church was registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations for the first time, and in 2009, it was re-registered by the state.

It has about 120 members. Ethnically the church consists of Azerbaijanis, Russians, and the children of mixed families. Most of the members are middle-aged women and Russian-speakers<sup>225</sup>.

The church respects national laws and treats adherents of other religions and Christian denominations with respect. Their main religious services take place every Sunday at 1.00 p.m. at the Organ and Chamber Musical Hall of the Muslum Magomayev Azerbaijan State Philharmonic Hall. The church organizes different courses: a Bible College, a school of praise, a school of ministry<sup>226</sup>.



*A Sunday service of the “New Life” church.*

224 - The official website of the “New Life” church: <http://www.newlifebaku.az/ru#home> (retrieval date: 12.12.2016).

225 - <http://www.newlifebaku.az/ru#home>.

226 - <http://www.newlifebaku.az/ru#home>.

## PRESBYTERIANISM

### Origins

This Protestant denomination emerged in Scotland. Its founder was a Scottish priest named John Knox (1514-1572). In 1545, he converted from Catholicism to Protestantism and became one of the close associates of George Wishart, a leader of Protestants in Scotland. He was persecuted and imprisoned for his Protestant faith. After being released, he lived in England for a while, because at that time the English government was Protestant. In England, Knox served as a preacher and a chaplain and took an active part in the compilation of “The Book of Common Prayer.” After the accession of Mary Tudor, an extreme Catholic, to the throne in 1553, J. Knox was forced to flee to other European states. For a short time, he lived in Germany and Switzerland. In Switzerland he met a famous Protestant theologian John Calvin and was influenced by his religious ideas<sup>227</sup>.

After Protestants temporarily came to power in Scotland in 1559, he wrote “Scots Confession” along with five priests. This document, based mainly on the ideas of the Swiss theologian, J. Calvin, was adopted in 1560<sup>228</sup> by the Scottish Parliament. Thus, Presbyterianism was founded in Scotland and attained the status of state religion in that country.

### Basic Beliefs and Form of Church Governance

Theologically Presbyterian churches are close to the Evangelical Reformed Church established by John Calvin. Yet there are some minor differences. Reformed theology teaches that God did not give humans free will, while Presbyterians teach the opposite<sup>229</sup>.

The chief positions in the church are taken by people titled “presbyter.” These people divide into two groups: the presbyters who preach and perform religious rites and those who assist them in the church governance and services<sup>230</sup>.

The Presbyterian Church is governed by a council of elders (“the Session”). Elders are elected by church members and approved by “the

<sup>227</sup> See: Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Религиозные организации современного мира: Учебное пособие. – М.: Издательство Московского университета, 2010. – p. 114.

<sup>228</sup> - Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> - Ibid. – p. 114-115.

<sup>230</sup> - Ibid. - p. 115.

Presbytery (governing body). The Presbytery is a governing body ruling over a number of churches; it consists of ministers and elders from those churches (one from each church). The terms “Presbyterianism” and “Presbyterian” comes from this governing body<sup>231</sup>.

### Presbyterianism in Azerbaijan

The first Presbyterian missionaries came to Azerbaijan in the period of Tsarist Russia, in 1802, when the Tsarist government allowed preachers from the “Edinburgh Missionary Society” (after 1818, it was named the “Scottish Missionary Society”) to set a colony near Karras Sultanayu settlement in order to spread Christianity among Muslims in the Northern Caucasus. The society was established by Presbyterians in 1796<sup>232</sup>.

In order to draw Muslims to the Christian religion, the Scottish missionaries printed the New Testament and other sacred scriptures in Arabic, Persian, and in the languages of the peoples of the Caucasus. In 1821, two Presbyterian preachers of the “Scottish Missionary Society” came to Northern Azerbaijan, to Guba and Shamakhi, and spread Christian literature among the local Muslims inviting them to believe in Christ<sup>233</sup>. In spite of that, the Scottish missionaries did not have success. Just a couple of Muslims converted to Christianity as a result of their preaching. One of the converts was a prominent Azerbaijani orientalist Mirza Kazim-bey (1802-1870).

His original name was Muhammad Ali Kazim-bey. His father Muhammad Kasim Kazim-bey was a well-known spiritual leader in Darband. In his youth, Kazim-bey met Scottish missionaries Glen and McPherson and taught them Turkish and Persian languages. The missionaries taught him English in return. After some time, Kazim-bey was influenced by the missionaries, and in 1823, he was baptized with the Presbyterian ritual<sup>234</sup>. This prominent figure who would later make a great

231 - Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Указ. соч. – р. 115.

232 - Scottish Missionary Society [Electronic resource]//Mundus: Gateway to missionary collections in the United Kingdom. – URL: <http://www.mundus.ac.uk/cats/14/293.htm> (retrieval date: 06.12.2016); Агасиев И. Геополитический фактор и переселенческая политика царской России на Кавказе в первой половине XIX века (на примере истории немецкой колонизации)// журнал «Кавказ и Глобализация». – SWEDEN: Central Asia & Central Caucasus Press AB, 2012. - Том.6, выпуск 3. – р. 180. 233 - Кузнецов О. Кальвинисты на Кавказе: история религиозной экспансии европейских протестантских миссионеров в отношении народов северного и южного Кавказа. *Azərbaycan MEА-nın Xəbərləri. İctimai elmlər seriyası*, 2016, №1. - р. 95.

contribution to world orientalism with his foundational works and research becoming the first Azerbaijani Presbyterian believer.

One of the missionaries working in Northern Azerbaijan in the period of Tsarist Russia was Yakov Delyakov. His original name was Kasha Yagub. Y. Delyakov was an ethnic Assyrian (some say he was a Syrian), born in Iran. He had become a Presbyterian in his country, graduated from the Presbyterian Bible school, and in 1862 came to Tsarist Russia to spread his faith. It is quite possible that at that time Y. Delyakov preached Christianity among his Transcaucasian compatriots who lived in the areas near the border with Iran. In the 1860s, he acted as a Presbyterian missionary in the Caucasus, and at the same time he distributed Bibles in Baku, Yelizavetpol (Ganja), Tbilisi, and Vladikavkaz, as a Bible Society representative<sup>235</sup>.

There is an interesting fact related to Y. Delyakov. In Tbilisi, he introduced a Molokan merchant, Nikita Voronin, to a German Baptist named Kalweit. On August 20, 1867, Kalweit baptized Voronin in the Kura River. That date was the starting point of the Russian Baptist movement. Thus, Y. Delyakov played an important role in the history of the Russian Baptist movement by introducing Voronin to Kalweit<sup>236</sup>.

The historical sources clearly show that Presbyterianism didn't take root in our country, despite the efforts of some Scottish missionaries and Yakov Delyakov.

The Presbyterian Church was established in our country in the period of Azerbaijan's independence. After Azerbaijani people regained independence in 1991, business people and humanitarian workers from South Korea spread Presbyterianism here. Their activities resulted in the establishing of a Presbyterian church in our republic. Despite South Koreans' propagating activity, Presbyterianism hasn't been widely accepted

234 - Кузнецов О. Указ. соч. – р. 80-81.

235 - Деляков Яков Делякович – миссионер [Electronic resource]//Наш Баку: История Баку и бакинцев.

-[https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Деляков\\_Яков\\_Делякович](https://www.ourbaku.com/index.php/Деляков_Яков_Делякович) (retrieval date: 06.09.2016); Деляков Яков Делякович (Каша Ягуб) – миссионер-баптист, создатель групп христиан-баптистов// сайт «Парапет» - сообщество истории Баку и бакинцев. – URL: [http://www.baku.ru/enc-show.php?cmm\\_id=276&id=169750&c=1752](http://www.baku.ru/enc-show.php?cmm_id=276&id=169750&c=1752) (retrieval date: 06.09.2016).

236 - [http://www.baku.ru/enc-show.php?cmm\\_id=276&id=169750&c=1752](http://www.baku.ru/enc-show.php?cmm_id=276&id=169750&c=1752) (retrieval date: 06.09.2016).



*Mirza Kazim-bey (1802-1870)*

in Azerbaijan. The Presbyterian religious organization in our republic, the Baku Presbyterian Church, has very few members (about 15 people). The church services are attended by 20-30 people.

Baku Presbyterian church was established in 2001 by a citizen of South Korea named Gideon Song, who withdrew from the church and passed the leadership to the Azerbaijani members, because according to Article 1 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Religious Freedom,” foreign citizens are prohibited from engaging in a religious propaganda. Most of the members of this local Presbyterian church are Azerbaijanis. Almost all of them are young.



*Yakov Delyakov (1829-1898)*

The Baku Presbyterian Church is a part of the “International Presbyterian Church,” which was founded in Switzerland in 1954 by Francis August Schaeffer. The organization includes other Presbyterian churches functioning in the United Kingdom and in other European countries, as well as the South Koreans’ Presbyterian churches in Europe<sup>237</sup>.

237 - For more detailed information see: The official website of the “International Presbyterian Church.” – URL: [http:// ipc.church/](http://ipc.church/) (retrieval date: 06.09.2016).

## NONDENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIANITY

When speaking of Christian churches functioning in the Republic of Azerbaijan, we must touch on so-called nondenominational Christianity. These churches do not identify themselves with any Christian branch or denomination.

Nondenominational Christianity is a new religious phenomenon for our country. It formed in the 1990s, but nondenominational Christians accomplished a lot in a short time due to their active missionary activity. By our calculations, there are approximately 650-900 people who consider themselves nondenominational Christians in our republic. It means that nondenominational Christians are the third largest Protestant group after Pentecostals and Baptists.

It should be noted that nondenominational Christians have spread mainly in Baku city where they are represented by two Christian churches and small house groups (house churches). Let us quickly review the two nondenominational Christian churches.

### *“Greater Grace” Religious Organization*

“Greater Grace” Church is a part of the international religious organization “Greater Grace World Outreach” based in Baltimore, Maryland.

The organization was founded by Carl H. Stevens (1929-2008). In the early 1960s, he was the leader of a small Baptist church in Woolwich, Maine. In time, Carl H. Stevens’s church grew, and he started a radio program in Portland, Maine. In 1971, his church of a thousand members moved to South Berwick, Maine. In 1972, he founded the Northeast School of the Bible in Maine. Carl H. Stevens’s church in Maine was named “The Bible Speaks.” In 1976, “The Bible Speaks” church moved to Lenox, Massachusetts, and “Stevens School of the Bible” was established. From 1976, “The Bible Speaks” church began to engage in widespread missionary activity, sending preachers to Europe, Kenya, and Nicaragua<sup>238</sup>.

In 1987, “The Bible Speaks” moved to Baltimore city, and Stevens’s church was named “Greater Grace World Outreach.” Maryland Bible College & Seminary opened there to prepare pastors, missionaries, and church ministers<sup>239</sup>.

“Greater Grace World Outreach” is governed by a Board of Elders. Since 2005, Pastor Thomas Schaller has been the Chairman of the Board. The organization has churches in over 70 countries. One of them is the church in Azerbaijan, which was established in Baku in 1991. In Azerbaijani it is called “Həyatverici Lütüf.” At the initiative of expat missionaries working in different foreign companies, on April 21, 1993, the church was registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice as the International Bible organization “Həyatverici Lütüf” (“Greater Grace”). A major role in the formation of the “Greater Grace” church in Baku, was played by Matti Sirvio, an artist from Finland who worked in a foreign tourism company in our country.

“Greater Grace” members were very active in the 1990s, never hid their goal of converting Azerbaijanis to Christianity, and used various financial and missionary means to reach their goal (e.g., giving humanitarian aid to IDPs, orphanages, hospitals, lonely elderly people, disabled people, etc.) As a result, they moved beyond Baku and managed to form small cell groups in Sumgayit, Barda, and Ismayilli.

In October of 1996, “Greater Grace” international conference was held in Baku. It was attended by over 600 participants from more than 15 countries.

In the past, “Greater Grace” church opened “Baku Bible Institute,” which offered education in Christian theology, principles of Christian mission, and English and Finnish languages. The graduates were given

238 - Fundamentalists and Evangelical Churches [Electronic resource]// Melton’s Encyclopedia of American Religions. -

COPYRIGHT 2009 Gale. – URL: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/fundamentalists-and-evangelical-churches#Z> (retrieval date: 03.09.2016); История GGWO [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://ggrace-spb.blogspot.com/2008/06/ggwo.html> (retrieval date: 03.09.2016); Томас Шаллер. Миндальный жезл цветет [Electronic resource]. – URL: [http://russiaggwo.blogspot.com/2008\\_06\\_01\\_archive.html](http://russiaggwo.blogspot.com/2008_06_01_archive.html) (retrieval date: 03.09.2016).

239 - <http://ggrace-spb.blogspot.com/2008/06/ggwo.html> (retrieval date: 03.09.2016).

special diplomas. Presently, only the name of the “Baku Bible Institute” remains.

It should be noted that “Greater Grace” religious organization has been ignoring the state laws. In 2001, after the establishment of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SCWRO), the church was supposed to be registered there, but it refused to submit the necessary documents to SCWRO. In 2009, according to the additions and amendments to the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Religious Freedom,” religious organizations that had been registered before were to submit their documents to the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations again by January 1, 2010. Yet this time, “Greater Grace” religious organization did not want to submit the necessary documents. Based on this, SCWRO appealed to the court for the annulment of the past state registration, and the Administrative and Economic Court of Baku No 1 granted SCWRO’s petition. Baku Appeal Court confirmed the resolution. The church was disappointed with the decision and appealed against it, but the appeal was rejected.

“Greater Grace” church conducts services in Azerbaijani and Russian languages. For many years, this church held its main religious services on Sundays at the Organ and Chamber Musical Hall of the Muslum Magomayev Azerbaijan State Philharmonic Hall. After the annulment of its state registration, the church was not allowed to use that building.

At present, the members of the church meet in the organization’s office at the address Baku city, Nasimi district, Bashir Safar oglu Street 191, House 62-64. Sunday services are attended by about 120-150 people. Most of them are Russian-speakers, young and middle-aged women. “Greater Grace” is governed by the Board of Elders. Today the pastor of the church is Fuad Tariverdi.

In recent years, there has been a visible weakening of the “Greater Grace” church’s activities. The church members have not been propagating their faith as actively as they did before, and the number of adherents of this Christian group in our republic has been decreasing.

### ***“Baku International Fellowship” (BIF)***

It was founded in 1998 by foreigners. Initially, it was a Sunday school for children. Later it became “Baku International Fellowship.” One of the main purposes of “Baku International Fellowship” is meeting the needs of foreigners who work in different foreign companies in Baku<sup>240</sup>.

This English-speaking religious organization is governed by a Board of Elders. Its main religious meetings are held on Sundays from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30. p.m. at the address Baku city, Badamdar, A. Abbaszada Str. 1128. The services are conducted in English and are attended by about 250-300 people. The majority of people who attend the services are citizens of foreign countries (Americans, Europeans, Africans, Filipinos, Indians), but there are some Azerbaijanis, too. The church has separate groups for women, men, children, and youth.<sup>241</sup>

<sup>240</sup> - <http://www.churchstaffing.com/job/146065/> (02.09.2016).

<sup>241</sup> - <http://www.churchstaffing.com/job/146065/> (02.09.2016); The official website of “Baku International Fellowship.” – URL: <http://bakuchurch.org/wrdprs/> (retrieval date: 02.09.2016).

# **CHAPTER VI**

## **ANTITRINITARIAN CHRISTIANITY**

## “JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES”

*“Absolute obedience to the leadership, incessant propagation, constant study of the religious tenets (explained in over two hundred works), breaking up with all the society which is “under the devil’s rule,” free involvement in the organization’s activities – this is what a Jehovahist’s life looks like.”*

**Roman Lunkin,**  
*religious expert from Russia*

*Christians who follow the Antitrinitarian movement deny the Trinity, that is the idea of God’s three divine persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and believe in one God. Antitrinitarianism is represented in the world by different churches and sects. Today, Azerbaijan also has Christians who do not accept the Trinity. They belong to the “Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious organization. This organization is new in our country, but because of their members’ persistent, well-planned, even, so to speak, aggressive propaganda, the number of their members has exceeded the number of many Christian churches which have existed in our country since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

### Brief Historical Overview

The emergence of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious movement goes back to the year 1872, when an American merchant named Charles Russell (1852-1916) formed a group named “International Bible Students” in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The group’s purpose was to find out what the Bible says regarding the future of humankind. Charles Russell criticized the Adventists who expected the fleshly return of Jesus Christ and claimed that Jesus Christ had returned in an invisible way in 1874. In his work “The Object and Manner of Our Lord’s Return” (1874) he developed this idea, claiming that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ should happen in 1914. After Russell’s prediction failed, his followers said it did happen, but in 1914 Jesus Christ returned invisibly<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> - Белов А.В. Секты, сектантство, сектанты. – М.: Наука, 1978. – р. 59; Казьмина О.Е., Пучков П.И. Религиозные организации современного мира: Учебное пособие. – М.: Издательство Московского университета, 2010. – р. 165; Иеговизм / Е.С. Прокошина [и др.]; под общ. ред. М.Я. Ленсу. – Минск.: Наука и техника, 1981. – р. 9.



*Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916)*

Charles Russell was the author of particular teaching about Armageddon (the battle between Jesus Christ and the devil). According to his doctrine, in the battle of the last days, 144,000 elect ones will be saved.

To preach his religious view of the end of the world, in 1879, Ch. Russell published his first magazine called

“Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence” (later “The Watchtower”). In 1881, “Zion’s Watch Tower Tract Society” was founded. In 1884, this organization was registered in Pennsylvania as “The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society” (hereinafter the Society). From 1909, the Society began functioning in Brooklyn, New York<sup>3</sup>.

At first, Ch. Russell’s followers called themselves Bible Students or Russellites<sup>4</sup>. After Russell’s death, Russellites were divided, because in 1917, Ch. Russell’s close associate and the author of over one hundred books Joseph Franklin Rutherford (1869-1942) became the President of the Society. Rutherford brought some new ideas into Russell’s teaching. For instance, he announced that great multitudes of good people will be saved, not just 144,000 elect ones. Besides that, J.F. Rutherford changed the democratic structure of the Society into an authoritarian one. The Bible Students were not happy with his initiatives, and several groups separated from the Society. Later these groups of Bible Students became independent religious organizations (such as “The Dawn Bible Students Association” – A.A.). To distinguish his followers from the other Bible Students, Rutherford in 1931 called his organization “Jehovah’s Witnesses”<sup>5</sup>.

2 - Религиозные организации современного мира. Там же.

3 - Лункин Р. Общество «Свидетелей Иеговы»//Современная религиозная жизнь России. Опыт систематического описания. Том 2. – Москва: Логос, 2003. – р. 441.

4 - Иеговизм. Там же.

5 - Лункин Р. Указ. соч. – р. 441; Религиозные организации современного мира. – с. 165.



*Joseph Franklin Rutherford*  
(1869-1942)

J.F. Rutherford had great power in his hands. He established the highest governing body of the organization and claimed that God revealed His will through this body<sup>6</sup>.

After Rutherford, from 1942-1977, Nathan Knorr (1906-1977) was the president of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” organization. He governed this international religious organization from 1942-1977; he set up the educational network of Jehovahists in New York state and established their main missionary institution, the Bible School of Gilead<sup>7</sup>.

After Knorr’s death, the “Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society,” that is “Jehovah’s Witnesses” had the following presidents:

1. Frederick William Franz. He was the president from 1977-1992 to the end of his life.
2. Milton George Henschel. He became the president of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” in 1992<sup>8</sup>. Henschel held the position until the year 1999, when he resigned at his own will. Such a resignation was unprecedented in this religious organization; before Henschel, all the leaders remained in the position of the president of the Society until their death.
3. From 1999, Don Adams.

### **“Jehovah’s Witnesses” in Azerbaijan**

As a result of the activity of Jehovahist missionaries from Stavropol Krai of Russia, in 1983, a small group of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” – about ten people – emerged in Baku. Because it was banned in the Soviet Union, the Jehovahist sect was pressed by law enforcement agencies and forced to engage in secret activity. After the USSR collapsed and the Azerbaijani people regained independence, freedom of religious beliefs was declared

6 - Лункин Р. Там же.

7 - Ibid.

8 - Ibid.

in the country and everyone, regardless of their nationality, religion, and belief, including “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” got the opportunity to freely practice and spread their beliefs. In 1997, Jehovahists applied to the Administration for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan to be registered by the state. In December 1999, Baku city “Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious organization (legal address: Baku city, T. Abbasov Str. 9, Apt. 91) was registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice. Leonid Moroz was elected the Chairman of the organization, which at that time had about 500 active members; Jehovahists’ religious meetings at that time were attended by over 1,000 people.

After the establishment of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in 2002, “Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious organization was registered by the state (legal address: Baku city, Sabunchu District, Seyid Huseyn Str. 23, Apt. 10). L. Moroz was elected the Chairman of the organization again. For a while, Jehovahists in Baku opened their “Kingdom Hall” in the former “Chinar” house of ceremonies, near “Baku” cinema, in Ahmadli village of Khatai district. Here they held their religious meetings every week Tuesday through Friday from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., on Saturdays from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m..

It should be noted that the activities of the Jehovahist groups in our country are guided by American and European missionaries who live in Tbilisi. The local Jehovahists’ coordinators live in Tbilisi.

### **Organizational Structure**

“Jehovah’s Witnesses” international religious organization has a strict order and discipline. The organization is characterized by a hierarchical structure. Jehovahists call it “theocratic governance.” They consider their organization to be God’s elect. Seeing themselves as God’s vicars on earth and the representatives of God’s Kingdom, they don’t recognize any secular government.

The highest governing body of the organization is called the

9 - Справка о деятельности зарегистрированной религиозной общины «Свидетелей Иеговы». Папка: “Христианские религиозные организации” (Ведущий специалист А. Козлов)//The archive of the Administration for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, stored at the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Governing Body. According to the information given on the official website of “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” since January 2015, the members of the Governing Body are Samuel Herd, Geoffrey Jackson, Steven Lett, Gerrit Lösch, Anthony Morris III, Mark Sanderson, David Splane. From the year 1909, the Governing Body functioned in the headquarters of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious organization in Brooklyn, New York, at Columbia Heights Street No 124. But in 2016, it moved to the new headquarters which are located on a 20 hectare plot in Warwick, New York<sup>10</sup>.

Jehovists believe that their only god Jehovah, communicates his commands through this Governing Body. Thus, the Governing Body has absolute power over the organization. Jehovists accept its decisions to be perfect and inerrant and to be obeyed fully. Since the Governing Body was “elected” by Jehovah Himself, appointments to the key positions in the organization is done by the Governing Body. Women are not allowed to take leadership positions in the organization<sup>11</sup>.

Members of the Governing Body are chosen by the Governing Body itself. Membership in the Governing Body usually lasts for a lifetime. It should also be noted that since 1976, the powers of the President of the “Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society” were significantly limited in favor of the Governing Body.



*The former headquarters of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious organization in Brooklyn*

10 - <https://www.jw.org/az/yehovanın-şahidləri/sual-cavab/rəhbərlik-şurası/> (retrieval date: 24.10.2016).

11 - Лункин Р. Указ. соч. – р. 442, 447.

The Governing Body's branch offices exist in 85 countries. The branch offices translate and publish Bible materials in over 700 languages. The materials are distributed to more than 110,000 meetings in the world. The branch offices are governed by branch committees, which consist of three or more experienced elders. The Governing Body regularly sends its representatives to the branch offices in order to oversee their work<sup>12</sup>. Thus, the Governing Body manages the world Jehovahs through the branch offices.

***Jehovists in Azerbaijan submit to the Georgian branch office which is located at the address: Tbilisi, Aerodromis dasaxleba, 13<sup>th</sup> Street No 10. In that branch office, Jehovahist literature is translated into Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Kurdish languages; besides that, audio and video recordings are produced in these languages***<sup>13</sup>.

The "Jehovah's Witnesses" Governing Body includes six committees. Each member of the Governing Body serves in one or more committees. Through these committees the Governing Body guides the activity of the regional organizations: Coordinators' Committee, Personnel Committee, Publishing Committee, Service Committee, Teaching Committee, and Writing Committee<sup>14</sup>.

"Jehovah's Witnesses" religious organization has the following management structure from below to above: they are organized in congregations of about 100 people each. Every congregation's activity is governed by a body of elders (according to Jehovahs, elders are mature people, experienced in religious propaganda and possessing solid religious knowledge. They are not paid for their work). About 20 congregations make up one district, and about 10 districts make up one province. The congregations are periodically visited by elders, who are in a traveling ministry, known as district and provincial overseers<sup>15</sup>. It should be noted that according to 2015 information provided by "Jehovah's Witnesses," the congregation in Baku functioned under a governing body of 18 people

12 - Кто сегодня исполняет волю Иеговы. – Германия: «Druck und Verlaq: Wachturm Bibel- und Traktat- Gesellschaft, Selters/ Ts., 2016. - p. 22; <https://www.jw.org/az/yehovanın-şahidləri/filiallar/birləşmiş-şatlar/> (retrieval date: 24.10.2016); <https://www.jw.org/az/nəşrlər/kitablar/ilahi-müjdə/yehovanın-şahidləri-təşkilatı/> (retrieval date: 24.10.2016).

13 - <https://www.jw.org/az/yehovanın-şahidləri/filiallar/gürcüstan/> (retrieval date: 24.10.2016).

14 - <https://www.jw.org/az/yehovanın-şahidləri/sual-cavab/rəhbərlik-şurası/> (retrieval date: 24.10.2016).

15 - <https://www.jw.org/az/yehovanın-şahidləri/sual-cavab/yığıncaqların-təşkili/> (retrieval date: 24.10.2016); <https://www.jw.org/az/yehovanın-şahidləri/sual-cavab/pul-almayan-xidmətçilər/>



(congregation overseers and elders). Each Jehovahist congregation has a service committee. The committee consists of people aged 25-35 years old. Each one of them is a leader of a small cell group, which is at the lowest rung of the hierarchical ladder of this international religious organization. The cell groups are called studies. Study members meet in private houses<sup>16</sup>.

### **Missionary Method and Religious Education**

“Jehovah’s Witnesses” engage in persistent missionary activity. Technically this kind of religious propaganda is called proselytism. Even the researchers with the most objective standpoint characterize Jehovahists’ missionary activity as aggressive propaganda. For example, Roman Lunkin, a famous Russian religious expert who fought for the rights of the new religious movements, called Jehovahists’ propaganda aggressive. Due to this persistent, well-planned, missionary activity, the number of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” in the world keeps growing and has even quickly exceeded the number of older Christian movements. This is what we see in Azerbaijan; although the sect of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” began its activity here in the 1990s, it grew larger in number than not only Lutherans, Baptists, and Adventists who have been here since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also the neo-Protestant sects established by foreign missionary organizations, which bring humanitarian aid and spend lots of money for the spreading of Christianity. If we consider that “Jehovah’s Witnesses” do not bring any humanitarian aid to attract people, but on the contrary, treat each of their new members as an instrument of propaganda and exploit their followers materially and morally, we will realize how successful Jehovahists’ propaganda is.

In light of this, the question may be raised as to why Jehovahists have such success and how they form their methods of propaganda? In order to answer this question we should take a closer look at “Jehovah’s Witnesses” studies, which is the smaller group in the structure of the organization. Because the main load of their missionary activity is carried by the studies.

Study members go from door to door, preaching Jehovahism unceasingly, relentlessly. The work in the studies is organized in the following way: the group leaders divide the houses in the districts and quarters between their Jehovahists and command them to go from door to door and attract people to their religion. Later everyone gives a written report about their work to their leader who in turn has to submit regular written

reports to the leader of the “Kingdom Hall” (Jehovists’ main place of worship; its exterior and interior are both very simple, and it has no special feature – A.A.). Kingdom Halls in the districts have to send information to the center in the USA. The reports should contain the following information: the number of the visited apartments, the number of those who got interested in Jehovahism, and the number of new members<sup>17</sup>.



A detailed file is started for every person who becomes the member of the “Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious organization. Besides the meetings held two times a week (on Thursdays and Sundays) and conducted by elders, the members have to attend the Theocratic School where they not only learn their religious tenets, but are also instructed in methods of working with people. In the Theocratic Ministry School, Jehovahists learn how to meet people, communicate with them and lead discussions. Every member has to commit two to five hours per day to propagation. The rest of the time they have to spend in the study of Jehovahist literature. The elders of the congregation check their members’ level of knowledge very seriously. As Jehovahists grow in their experience, they are called by special titles:

<sup>17</sup> - Лункин Р. Указ. соч. – р. 446, 447.

*students, unbaptized publishers, baptized publishers (Jehovah's witnesses), auxiliary pioneers, and special pioneers*<sup>18</sup>.

The most active and successful pioneers – after special tests and trials – get an opportunity to enter the Kingdom Hall family, and then to go to the main missionary school in New York – “Watchtower Bible School of Gilead,” where they can rise in their career<sup>19</sup>.

### **Basic Beliefs**

The beliefs of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” are based on Ch. Russell’s religious teaching. Russell had a unique interpretation of the Bible and wrote six books. These six books were published in a collection titled “Studies in the Scriptures” or “Millennial Dawn.” The interpretation of the Bible presented in those books played the key role in the formation of the religious tenets of “Jehovah’s Witnesses”<sup>20</sup>.

Although Jehovahists call themselves Christians or followers of Jesus Christ, they do not consider their organization a part of the Christian world. They believe in one god, the almighty creator, but they deny the Trinitarian belief of one God in three persons. “Jehovah’s Witnesses” claim that the Holy Spirit is God’s invisible power. They call Jesus Christ the Savior and the Son of God, but they don’t believe that Jesus Christ is the Almighty God. In their view, Jesus is God’s chosen servant and messenger. The Most High Creator appointed Jesus Christ as the ruler over the whole humanity, and people will be saved by Jesus Christ. Unlike most Christians, Jehovahists don’t believe that Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, but they claim He was executed on a single upright post. They view praying to Jesus Christ as making companions to God, and they consider veneration of the cross, icons, and other images as idolatry. This makes Jehovahists different from most Christian denominations. At the same time, they accept the 66 books of the Bible<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> - Ibid. - p. 447.

<sup>19</sup> - Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> - Лункин Р. Указ. соч. – p. 442.

Jehovists do not believe in hell, or in eternal torment, or in the immortality of the soul. They think that only a part of humanity will achieve immortality by the will of the God Jehovah. Some of those who achieve immortality will exist in heaven as spirit, while others will live on earth in physical bodies. The rest of the people will die forever and will have neither bodies nor spirits. According to Jehovists' religious view, immortality is a reward for faithfulness<sup>22</sup>.

"Jehovah's Witnesses" believe in the spiritual, not physical resurrection of Jesus Christ. They claim that the Gentile times ended in 1914, because in that year Jesus Christ invisibly returned to the earth as Logos, and put an end to Satan's rule; Armageddon shall occur after the death of the last "witness" of Jesus Christ's appearance, who was born in 1914<sup>23</sup>.

According to Jehovists' teaching, in Armageddon Jesus Christ will lead His army in a battle against man-made governments and will defeat them, putting an end to man's rule on earth; then good will overcome evil, and God's rule will overcome the world's rule. After that, Jesus Christ's millennial reign will start. This is an integral part of Jehovah's divine plan<sup>24</sup>. The "precise" statistics of victims of the future battle in the Jehovist literature is horrifying, as if they do not talk of real people's lives. According to Jehovists, two billion people will die in Armageddon. This "holy" battle will affect all the people living on earth, regardless of their race and nationality, including women and children, except for "Jehovah's Witnesses." Jehovist authors describe the massive destruction of human lives emotionlessly, as if it were a natural manifestation of war<sup>25</sup>.

According to Jehovists, God will reward and raise for eternal life those who were loyal to Jehovah from 1933 until Armageddon. The number

21 - Иеговизм. – п. 16,17; <https://www.jw.org/az/müqəddəs-yazıların-təlimləri/suallar/isa-xaç-üzərindəmi-edam-edilib/> (retrieval date: 25.10.2016); [https://www.jw.org/az/yehovanın-şahidlərini-xristian-dünyasına-aid-etmək-olarmı/](https://www.jw.org/az/yehovanın-şahidləri/sual-cavab/yehovanın-şahidlərini-xristian-dünyasına-aid-etmək-olarmı/) (retrieval date: 25.10.2016); <https://www.jw.org/az/yehovanın-şahidləri/sual-cavab/yehovanın-şahidləri-nəyə-inanırlar/> (retrieval date: 25.10.2016).

22 - See: - Лункин Р. Указ. соч. – п. 443.

23 - Ibid.

24 - Ibid.

25 - See: Иеговизм. – п. 28, 29.

of the elect ones will be 144,000 people. Those are Jehovah's elect people. Because Jehovah broke his covenant with Jews, and made an alliance with these elect people<sup>26</sup>.

In 1935, some new additions were made to the Jehovahist teaching. Starting from 1935, not only 144,000 people were promised to achieve immortality, but whoever recognizes Jehovah. Only 144,000 people will live in heaven as spirits, not in flesh, and the rest of those who achieve immortality will live physically on earth in the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Their number is unlimited<sup>27</sup>. But Jehovahists teach that the divine testing will not end with this. By the end of the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus Christ will bring humanity to perfection, complete His mission, and hand the authority to Jehovah. Then Jehovah will make the final test for the perfected ones. Satan and demons will be thrown down to a very deep abyss. Those who were deceived by them and opposed Jehovah will be destroyed together with Satan and demons. The fully tested 144,000 spirits and a certain number of immortal people on earth will enter Jehovah's universal family. *The only principle the Governing Body teaches to its members to be able to make it through such a complicated way, and to be saved is absolute obedience and full acceptance of the Jehovahist beliefs, and by rejecting any critical or independent thinking*<sup>28</sup>.

Proclaiming signs of the approaching end of the world and predicting its exact date (1914, 1925, 1927, 1928, etc.) is characteristic of the "Jehovah's Witnesses" religious organization. Their last prediction of the date of the end of the world was October 25, 1975. After the prediction failed they tried to explain why the end didn't come as they expected<sup>29</sup>.

### **Attitude Towards Secular Government**

"Jehovah's Witnesses" attitude towards the state is controversial. On one hand, they try to be registered by the state and pay taxes on time; but on the other hand, they hate the secular state and do not recognize it. Because their main goal is to build a theocratic kingdom under Jehovah's rule. Therefore

26 - See: Лункин Р. Там же. – р. 443, 444.

27 - Лункин Р. Указ. соч. – р. 444.

28 - Ibid. - р. 444, 445.

29 - See: Лункин Р. Там же. – р. 443, 444; Иеговизм. – р. 27.

Jehovists reckon secular states to be evil governments that have seized divine power. They consider themselves God's vicars on earth and in their extreme religious worldview they do not respect state symbols, loathe people's customs, and do not accept the concepts of homeland and nation<sup>30</sup>. In short, they believe that states and their structures are under Satan's control.

Jehovists withdraw from social life and forbid their followers to receive higher education, participate in military service, vote in elections, celebrate state holidays, national festivals and birthdays, and take part in entertainment<sup>31</sup>.

"Jehovah's Witnesses" have negative attitudes towards not only states, but also international organizations such as the UN. They think that such organizations have no right to fulfill their international mission, because the universal absolute ruler is Jehovah and the Governing Body, which represents his will<sup>32</sup>.

### **Religious Prohibitions**

Jehovists' life is regulated by very hard and strict prohibitions. First of all, they are discouraged from any communication with society, and particularly from any dialogue with representatives of different Christian churches. They are only allowed to go from door to door, spreading their religious teaching. Since "Jehovah's Witnesses" call other religions and beliefs false and consider themselves the only heralds of divine truth, and they believe themselves to be the only group that interprets the Bible correctly. Even their leaders prefer to stay in the shade and come out in public only when necessary, e.g. in court sessions. The leaders of Jehovist congregations or regional divisions never speak publicly. In short, this organization does not encourage social activity<sup>33</sup>.

The most famous prohibition of "Jehovah's Witnesses" is related to blood transfusions. According to their teaching, blood transfusion is forbidden because a person's soul is in his blood. Therefore everyone who

<sup>30</sup> – See: Лукин Р. Указ. соч. – p. 445.

<sup>31</sup> - Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> - Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> - Ibid. – p.447; Иеговизм. – p. 16.

enters their organization has to sign a blood refusal card – a special document affirming that its owner refuses blood transfusion in case of an accident. Of course, this strict prohibition leads to many tragic results. “Jehovah’s Witnesses” compare accepting a transplanted organ to cannibalism and forbid food products containing animal blood (e.g., sausage)<sup>34</sup>.

### **Humanitarian activity and Bethel**

“Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious organization has no humanitarian institutions and is not engaged in any charitable activity except for missionary work; it does not even provide their own members with any material assistance.

On the contrary, there are many cases of the exploitation of labor in the organization. For instance, a structure called Bethel (“House of God”) exists in the organization’s branch offices. It is somewhat similar to monastic orders, because the most faithful Jehovahs – those who are the closest to the leadership – live there and day and night work sacrificially for the organization without any payment. In Bethel, everyone has a job to do in an office, a kitchen, or a dining room. Others work in a printing-house or a bindery; do laundry, cleaning, maintenance, or other things – all without pay. The question may be raised as to the reason why these people agree to work for free. The reason is that they feel privileged to be a part of “the family of the House of God.” Not every Jehovahist receives such favor. Only those who have passed a strict test are allowed to enter the “family of God” (they are required to fill a detailed form answering questions regarding their professional, social background and health). Only fully healthy people 25 years old and older are accepted to the group of the elect ones<sup>35</sup>.

### **Numbers**

According to 2015 information, “Jehovah’s Witnesses” are active in about 240 countries. Their number is 8,220,105 people. But their only holiday, the Anniversary of Jesus Christ's death was attended by 19,862,783 people.

34 - Лункин Р. Указ. соч. – р. 445, 446.

35 - <https://www.jw.org/az/nəşrlər/kitablar/jehovahs-will/what-is-bethel/> (retrieval date: 25.10.2016).

According to this organization's 2015 report, 105 people were baptized in Azerbaijan that year, 13 meetings were held, the number of 'publishers' was 1351 people, the number of auxiliary pioneers was 136 people, and the number of pioneers was 327 people. Compared to 2014, Jehovah's witnesses in Azerbaijan grew 7 percent<sup>36</sup>. On April 3, 2015, the Anniversary of Jesus Christ's death was attended by 2,674 people<sup>37</sup> and this is the highest number registered in our country for the past years.

### **National and Age Composition**

Most Jehovahists in our republic are Azerbaijanis and Russians. There are few Lezgians. Most of the congregation members are young girls and middle-aged women.

### **Geographic Spread**

Besides the congregation in Baku, Jehovahists also have groups in Sumgayit, Ganja, Barda, Mingachevir, Qakh, Zaqatala, Lankaran, and Shamkir.

### **Educational Institutions**

Their main missionary school is the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead (USA). Each congregation has a Theocratic Ministry School.

### **Source of Funding**

"Jehovah's Witnesses" function with voluntary offerings. At the same time, there are many cases of the members' transferring their immovable properties to the religious organization by notarial act.

<sup>36</sup> - Всемирный отчёт Свидетелей Иеговы за 2015 служебный год//Ежегодник Свидетелей Иеговы 2016 - Германия: Druck und Verlaq: Wachturm Bibel- und Traktat- Gesellschaft, Selters/ Ts., 2016.

<sup>37</sup> - Müqəddəs İbadətimiz (avqust, 2015)/ Azərbaycan üçün. - Druck und Verlaq: Wachturm Bibel- und Traktat- Gesellschaft der Zeugen Jehovas, e. V., Selters/ Taunus. – s. 4.



*“The Watchtower” magazine  
(in Azerbaijani) No 6, 2016.*

## Publication

The religious organization’s main publications are “The Watchtower” (published in over 250 languages) and “Awake!” (published in over 100 languages). Besides these, Jehovahists publish a lot of pamphlets, brochures, and studies for their Theocratic Ministry Schools. For instance, the brochure “Listen to God and Live Forever” is available in over 640 languages<sup>38</sup>.

### *“The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures”*

“Jehovah’s Witnesses” do not recognize the Bible translations used by other Christian churches; since 1950, they have been using their own Bible translation called “The New World Translation.” They changed God’s name to Jehovah in about 7,000 places of the Bible; they added to the holy script the apocryphal gospels that are not accepted by the Orthodox and Catholics; they did not include in their Bible translation the phrases that are not found in the most ancient manuscripts; and they translated some passages differently<sup>39</sup>.

Therefore many scholars criticized “Jehovah’s Witnesses” and accused them of distorting the meaning of the original Biblical texts adjusting them to their own religious worldview. In general, Jehovahists are characterized by a “modern” interpretation of the Bible, a flexible adjustment of their basic beliefs to the demands of the present time, and even changing some points of their religious worldview<sup>40</sup>. This methodology and this approach was reflected in the “New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures.”

29 - The statistic information was taken from the official website of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” religious organization.

30 - <https://www.jw.org/az/nəşrlər/kitablar/jehovahs-will/new-world-translation/> (retrieval date: 26.10.2016).

The “New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures” was published in full or in part in over 100 languages and over 170 million copies were distributed. On September 19, 2014, the “New World Translation”’s Azerbaijani version was published<sup>41</sup>.

### **Religious Holidays**

“Jehovah’s Witnesses” have only one religious holiday – the Anniversary of Jesus Christ’s death. It is celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, according to the Jewish calendar. In the Gregorian calendar, the date takes place in March or April. For instance, in 2015, Jehovahists performed this religious ritual on April 3.

31 - Иеговизм. – р. 16.

32 - <https://www.jw.org/az/nəşrlər/jurnallar/wp20150701/azərbaycan-dilində-müqəddəs-kitabın-yeni-dünya-tərcüməsi-işiq-üzü-gördü/> (retrieval date: 26.10.2016).

## CONCLUSION

Dear reader, we have looked at the colorful and rich life of the Christians who live in our country; we have reviewed the basic beliefs, forms of worship and doctrinal principles of different Christian sects; we have learned about the difficult history of the ancient Eastern Church – the Albanian Apostolic Church, about the followers of Orthodox, Catholic, Molokan, Doukhor, Baptist, Adventist, Pentecostal, and other churches; we have tried to give information on all the Christian organizations existing in our country from A to Z. We have made an effort to provide detailed information about every Christian denomination and religious organization and to show the interesting past and rich heritage of Christianity in our ancient land.

We have also pursued another goal in writing this book. By talking of Christians living in our country we have tried to answer the biased and unjust statements regarding Azerbaijan in the reports of some international organizations. Because the authors of those reports are so far from objectivity that they equate our secular and tolerant country, which is distinguished by its multicultural historical traditions and does not give any religion or religious belief a higher status, with some Muslim states where Sharia law is in force, where Christian propaganda is forbidden and missionaries are killed, and where church bells are never heard; they equate Azerbaijan with countries where Christians are persecuted, and they report of particularly Protestants being persecuted here. Certainly, these absurd claims are entirely ungrounded.

Christians in Azerbaijan are not persecuted, on the contrary, the legislation on non-Muslim communities gives them more privileges. For instance, according to the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Religious Freedom,” Muslim religious organizations submit to only one center – the Caucasian Muslims Office, while non-Muslim religious organizations have the right to submit to any religious center and to change their center. Besides that, Islamic rites and rituals may be performed only by people who have obtained their religious education in Azerbaijan, while services of non-Muslim religious organizations may be performed by people who have been educated abroad.

The fact that Christian religious organizations are financially supported by the state and churches and Christian houses of worship are granted a limited annual amount of free natural gas clearly indicates that even though the overwhelming majority of its population is Muslim, the state of Azerbaijan does not implement a policy of discrimination, but provides equal rights for all and supports all religious organizations regardless of their beliefs.

The fact that Christians in Azerbaijan live freely and enjoy equal rights may be illustrated by many examples. Besides mosques, our capital city has Russian and Catholic churches, the ringing of church bells is heard, foreign and local Catholics worship together in the Catholic church which is located in the most attractive point of Baku, and Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants celebrate their religious holidays with great joy and excitement. On Sundays, Orthodox and Catholics, as well as Molokans, Adventists, Baptists, Jehovahists, Pentecostals, and Charismatics meet in their houses of worship and glorify the Lord. At the same time, the state reconstructs German Lutheran churches, financial support is allocated for Christian religious organizations, and all the necessary conditions are created for Christians in Azerbaijan to meet their needs. If the reports about the horrible conditions of Christians in our country, particularly Protestants, are true, then why do the leaders of different Christian denominations in Azerbaijan criticize those reports and publicly protest against them?

At this point, I'd like to quote the leader of "New Life" church Lyudmila Ibrahimova. In the discussion about these reports, the female pastor expressed a very important point that is especially notable because her congregation is young and the sect she belongs to is new to our society. L. Ibrahimova expressed her contentment with the conditions created for the followers of small new Christian movements in the country. Disagreeing with the report on Christian minorities' persecution in Azerbaijan, she said, *"How can anyone say that Christians are persecuted in Azerbaijan if in the very center of Baku several Christian congregations conduct their meetings in the Lutheran church?"* We cannot but agree with L. Ibrahimova's words.

Indeed, every Sunday followers of different Protestant denominations such as Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Charismatics worship in the former German Lutheran church (presently Organ and Chamber Musical Hall), right in the center of Baku.

To confirm L. Ibrahimova's words, we can mention the Bible Festival that took place in the Organ and Chamber Musical Hall on February 21, 2016, with the "Azerbaijan Bible Society's" support. This significant event was organized in the Organ and Chamber Musical Hall; the Bible Festival was supported by the Albanian-Udi religious community, the Apostolic Prefecture of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Azerbaijan, "Word of Life," "New Life," Baku New Apostolic Church, "Seventh-day Adventists," and other Christian religious organizations. The celebration was very interesting, Biblical passages were read aloud in the languages of different peoples living in our country; an exhibition of Bible publications was presented. Certainly, the organization of such an interesting Christian event was possible only due to the free and tolerant environment in our country.





*The Bible Festival. February 21, 2016.*

The tolerant attitude towards Christians in Azerbaijan is greatly illustrated by the Armenian church right in the center of Baku – the Church of “Saint Gregory the Illuminator” (constructed in 1863 or 1869; some sources indicate it was built in 1887 by the architect named Karl Gustav Hippius). One may ask why this church? Because it shows that even though the Azerbaijani people have suffered from the Armenian chauvinistic policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide, despite all the sufferings caused by the Armenian’s aggression, the Azerbaijani people treated their enemy’s religious belief with respect and did not do any harm to the Armenian church in the most beautiful place of Baku. They had every reason to act in a different way. For example, Armenian vandals destroyed our religious and cultural monuments on the lands that they occupied, and the Armenian church played a negative role in the history of our people. It is no secret that Armenian priests acted opposed to the humane values of Christianity and supported Armenian separatists in every way, turning houses built for worship to the Most High Creator into weapons depots. Sad to say also, that it was the Armenian Gregorian Church that inspired the Armenian Dashnaks. And it is not an accident that in Azerbaijani people’s minds, the Armenian Church is associated only with Armenian separatism and

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showing respect to them, our people display a high tolerance and did not do any harm to the Armenian church in Baku. On the contrary, the Armenian church was preserved and restored by the state. Today about 5,000 books and manuscripts are stored in that building. It should also be noted that in 2010, the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Kirill and the head of the Armenian Church Karekin II visited the former Armenian church and prayed there.

*The building of the former Armenian church in Baku*

But the “Saint Gregory the Illuminator” church is not the only building that remains from Armenians in Baku. One of the former Armenian churches preserved until nowadays is the building where the Germany-Azerbaijan Cultural Society “Kapellhaus” is located. The Armenians who built it did not belong to the Armenian Gregorian Church, but were Lutherans. In the period of Tsarist Russia, in 1881, the German-Swedish Lutheran church had some Armenian members, too. Eventually the Armenian Lutherans did not get along with Germans in 1881 they established their own church. Osip Torosyants became the pastor of the Armenian Lutheran church. In 1908 (by some sources, from 1912-1915), The Armenian Lutherans built a house of worship in the land that belonged to the German-Swedish Lutheran church, next to their church building. The house of worship had also a functioning religious school. After the establishment of Soviet power, the Armenian Lutheran house of worship was closed down and the building was used as a kindergarten. Today this building is known as “Kapellhaus” (in German, “a house near a chapel”) and it is used for different German cultural events organized by the Germany-Azerbaijan Cultural Society.

Before we finish this book, there is one more point that should be mentioned. You might have noticed that the book does not have a special chapter related to the Armenian Church, neither do figures and charts include any information about the members of the above-mentioned church. Despite that, according to 2009 information of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, over 120,000 Armenians live on the country's territory. Most of them are settled in the lands of Azerbaijan that were occupied by the Armenian armed forces. Based on these statistics, some researchers may consider it a serious shortcoming of the book that a religious organization with so many members hasn't been discussed here. Expecting such criticism, we should make it clear that our purpose in writing this book was to give information on the Christian religious organizations operating on the territories that are presently controlled by the state of Azerbaijan. It is impossible to obtain full and objective information about the Armenian Church because its activity is limited to within the occupied territories. We believe that our ancient lands will soon be liberated from occupation, and then we will have the opportunity to describe the religious situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh.

Enough said about the method and purpose of the book. We hope this book will give the readers a broader perspective on the origin of Christian churches and organizations in Azerbaijan. Certainly, it is impossible to give all the information about the worshippers of Jesus Christ and followers of His humane teaching, because Christianity in our republic is very colorful, new Christian churches and societies begin, and in modern Azerbaijan Christianity is developing in new ways. In particular the house church, Charismatic sects, nondenominational Christian groups, Pentecostals, and Jehovahs activities draw our attention. As far as we can see, in the future these new religious movements of Christianity will have more success. Of course, all these studies require constant updating of our information and new research. I hope this book will be like a lighthouse for more detailed studies in future.

Finally, I wish to express gratitude to the Chairman of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations, Mubariz Qurbanli, and to everyone who helped us in the process of writing this book. This book would not be as full a treatment of the subject as it is without the help of the leaders of different Christian denominations and religious organizations and ministers of churches in our country. I also thank the Executive Authority of Gadabay district for their assistance in our research in Slavyanka village, I thank the municipality of that village, and I thank my colleagues from the State Historical Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan for their help.

## CHRONOLOGY

*1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. - first Christian missionaries come to Caucasian Albania from Jerusalem and Syria; St. Eliseus establishes a church in the village of Gisa (Kish)*

*4<sup>th</sup> century - Gregory the Illuminator's activity*

*313 - Urnayr announces Christianity as the state religion in Caucasian Albania*

*340 - The Albanian Church becomes autocephalous (Independent)*

*487-488 - The Council of Aghuen*

*4<sup>th</sup> century - St. Grigoris, a catholicos of Albania, establishes the Amaras monastery*

*5<sup>th</sup> century - Leaders of the Albanian Apostolic Church are given the title of "Catholicos-Archbishop, Patriarch"*

*551 - The leaders of the Albanian Apostolic Church begin using the title of "Catholicos of Albaniya, Lpiniya, and Chola" ("Great Catholicos of Albania and Balasakana")*

*705 - The Council of Partav (Barda)*

*1216-1238 - Albanian prince Hasan Jalal Dawla builds Gandzasar's temple*

*1289-1290 - Dominicans and Franciscans come to the city of Tabriz*

*13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries - The Tabriz custody of Eastern Tartary is formed*

*April 1, 1318, Roman Pope John XXII issues the bull, Redemptor Noster and establishes an archbishopric at Sultaniyya (a city in Southern Azerbaijan)*

*1320 - The French Catholic missionary, Jordan of Severac, visits Baku and other cities of the Northern Azerbaijan*

*14<sup>th</sup> century - Catholic missions, monasteries, and schools are established in Baku, Shamakhi, Ganja, and Nakhchivan*

*1350 (or 1356) – The Nakhchivan Catholic episcopate is established*

*1349 – The Catholic episcopate in the city of Dakhikera in Northern Azerbaijan ceases to function*

*1374 or 1384 – The end of the Catholic episcopate in Maragha city*

*1425 - The archbishopric of Sultaniyya declines*

*1476 - The Tabriz Diocese ends*

*15<sup>th</sup> century – The Catholic archbishopric of Sultaniyya is moved to Nakhchivan*

*1511-1836 - Gandzasar Monastery becomes the residence of the Albanian Catholicoses*

*1573-1747 – The active period of Augustinians in the Safavid state*

*1604-1775 - The active period of Carmelites in the Safavid empire*

*1628-1765 – The active period of Capuchins in the Safavid state*

*1653-1760 – The active period of Jesuits under Safavid rule*

*1677-1764 – The active period of Dominicans in the Safavid empire*

*1680 – A Polish Jesuit mission is established in Ganja*

*1746 – The end of the Catholic archbishopric of Nakhchivan*

*1815 – The first Russian Orthodox church is built in Azerbaijan (Baku) – “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” church*

*1818 – The Germans of Württemberg come to Northern Azerbaijan*

*1819 – German settlements of Helenendorf (present-day Goygol) and Annenfeld (present-day Shamkir) are built*

*1821 - The first two Presbyterian preachers from the “Scottish Missionary Society” come to Guba and Shamakhi and preach the Gospel among Azerbaijanis*

*The 1820s – A Lutheran house of worship is opened in Helenendorf*

*1821-1822 – The first Basel missionaries (August Dietrich and Count Felician Zarembo) come to Azerbaijan and open a missionary school and a printing-house in Shusha*

*1823 - The prominent Azerbaijani orientalist, Mirza Kazim-bey, is baptized by Scottish missionaries according to Presbyterian ritual*

*March 11, 1836 – The Russian Emperor Nicholas I abolishes the Albanian Catholicate*

*1841 – The first publication of a Biblical text was made in the Azerbaijani language. In London, the “Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel” published the Gospel of Matthew in Azerbaijani*

*October 28, 1857 – The first Russian Orthodox church is built in Baku (The Cathedral of “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker”).*

*19<sup>th</sup> century – Tsarist Russia sends Catholic Polish prisoners and soldiers to Northern Azerbaijan*

*The 1840s - The Russian Orthodox Church of “Michael the Archangel” is built in Baku*

*The 1840s and 1850s - The sect of “Vodniye Molokane” emerges in Lankaran and Shamakhi counties of the province of Baku*

*1832 - Molokans settle in the Varanda district of Karabakh county*

*1834 - The first Molokan settlement is formed in Altiagac, in the Province of Baku*

*The 1840s and 1850s – The Molokan sect of Nazarei (Nazarene) emerges in Khilmilli village (located in Gobustan district)*

*1842 - A parochial school building is built in Helenendorf*

*1844 – Slavyanka village – the settlement of Doukhobors in Northern Azerbaijan is built*

*1857 – “St. John” church is opened in Shamkir*

*July 9, 1860 - “The Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus”*

*1867 - Udis write an objection letter to the Russian Tsar, refusing to even gather in their ancient temples that had been subjected to Armenian Gregorian priests*

*October 31, 1871 – V.V. Ivanov who began the Baptist movement in Azerbaijan, is baptized in Tbilisi, in the Kura River*

*The early 1870s – The emergence of the first Baptist community in Azerbaijan (in Novoivanovka village of Gadabay district)*

*The 1870s – The formation of the German-Swedish Evangelical parish in Baku*

*1873 – The famous Russian Baptist, V.V. Ivanov’s first missionary journey in the regions of Azerbaijan*

*1876 – The famous Russian Baptist, V.G. Pavlov’s first preaching in different places of Azerbaijan*

*1880 - The formation of the Baku Evangelical Lutheran parish*

*The 1870s and 1880s – Western Baptist missionaries’ activities in Azerbaijan*

*The 1880s and 1890s – Tsarist Russia exiles Baptists to Ganja and other places in Azerbaijan*

*1892 – A Russian Baptist congregation is established in Baku*

1895-1899 – *The Tsarist government exiles the founder of the Baptist church in Azerbaijan, V.V. Ivanov*

1885 - *A Lutheran church is built in Ganja city*

1887 - *The “Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral is built in Ganja city*

1888 - *Georgsfeld colony (present-day Shamkir district, Chinarli vil.)*

1888 - *“St. George” Georgian Orthodox Church is constructed in Qakhingiloy village of Qakh district*

1888 - *“St. Nino” Georgian Orthodox Church is built in Alibeyli village of Qakh district*

1888-1898 – *“St. Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral is erected in Baku*

1892-1894 - *“Holy Sameba” Georgian Orthodox Church is built in Kotuklu village of Qakh district*

1892-1894 - *“St. Michael” Georgian Orthodox Church is built in Meshabash village of Qakh district*

1892 – *“St. Bartholomew” Russian Orthodox Church is constructed near the Maiden Tower*

1894 - *The first Adventist missionary (Jacob Klein) comes to Azerbaijan*

1896-1899 – *The Lutheran Evangelical church, “Church of the Savior” is built in the center of Baku from the plans of the architect named A. Eichler*

1902 - *The first Adventist congregation emerges in Azerbaijan (in Shusha city)*

May 23, 1902 - *“Baku Cyril and Methodius Fraternity of the Lovers of Church Songs” is opened*

1903 - *“Roman Catholic Charitable Society” is founded in Baku*

1903 – *“Open House - Polish Catholics Society” is established in Baku*

1904 - *The Russian Orthodox Church in the Province of Baku is divided into two blagochinnis*

1904 - *A one-class four-year school of the Catholic parish is opened on Nikolay (Istiqlaliyyat) Street in Baku*

May 19, 1905 - *the Vicariate of Baku is formed under the Kartalin and Kakheti Diocese of the Georgian Exarchate*

1906 - *The German settlements of Grűnnenfeld (present-day Aghstafa district, Vurghun village) and Eigenfeld (present-day Shamkir district, Irmashli village) are established*

1909-1910 – *Albert Ozol’s missionary activity in Azerbaijan*

1909 - *A Lutheran church is erected in Annenfeld (Goygol) on the basis of the plans of an architect named F.A. Lemkul*

1909 – *Russian Orthodox “Holy Myrrhbearers” Cathedral (former Church of “Holy Archangel Michael”) is constructed in Baku*

1909 – *A Seventh-day Adventist congregation is formed in Fuzuli*

1910 – *A Seventh-day Adventist congregation is formed in Baku*

December 25, 1911, *A Baptist house of worship is opened in Baku*

1912 - *The German settlement of Traubenfeld (present-day Tovuz city) is established*

1912 - *The Catholic Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception” is built in Baku city*

1914 - *The Tsarist government officially recognizes the Russian Baptist Community in Baku*

1914 - *The official publication of Russian and Ukrainian Baptists, “Baptist” magazine, is published in Baku*

1914 - *The German settlement of Yelizavetinka (present-day Aghstafa town) is established*

*1917 - The Vicariate of Yelizavetpol is established*

*1917 – A “Oneness” Pentecostal congregation associated with the Vyborg church emerges in Baku*

*The 1920s - An Adventist congregation emerges in Ganja*

*1923 - The Baku Diocese is opened under the Transcaucasia Metropolitanate of Renovationist Churches*

*1926 - The Russian Orthodox Church of “the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary” is constructed*

*The 1930s - Lutheran churches in our country are closed down by the Soviet government*

*1931 - Vensel, the pastor in Helenendorf, and Roisch, the pastor in Annenfeld, are arrested.*

*1932 - The first Christians of Evangelic Faith, Voronayev’s followers come from Odessa to Baku*

*The 1930s – The first communities of Christians of Evangelic Faith (Pentecostals) emerge in Baku and Salyan*

*1934 - Bolsheviks blow up the Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception”*

*1936 – Bolsheviks destroy “St. Alexander Nevsky” Cathedral and “St. Bartholomew” Chapel by the Maiden Tower*

*1936 - The last pastor of Helenendorf church, Otto Vensel, is imprisoned*

*November 2, 1937 - The chief priest of the Russian Orthodox Church of “the Nativity of the Holy Mother Mary” Ioann Ilyich Ganchev is executed by firing squad*

*1937 - The last pastor of Annenfeld church, Emil Roisch, is arrested and executed by firing squad*

*1937 - The pastor of the Baku Lutheran church, Paul Hamberg is repressed*

1946 - *The Church of “St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker” is opened in Khachmaz city*

1954 - *The Baptist Church opens a house of worship at: Baku city, 12<sup>th</sup> Nagornaya Street, House No 7 (Narimanov district, 1<sup>st</sup> Jidir Street, House No 13)*

1955 - *A congress dedicated to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the granting of religious freedom to Molokans by the Russian Tsar Aleksandr I is held in Baku*

*The 1960s - Adventist congregations emerge in Khachmaz and Tartar*

1961 - *The Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist religious organization is registered by the state*

1965 – *Baptists in Azerbaijan are split into the loyal and the “initiative group”*

1968 - *Seventh-day Adventists open a house of worship at the address: Baku city, Narimanov district, Yashar Aliyev Street 27 (present-day 3<sup>rd</sup> Hippodrome Street, House No 27)*

1969 - *The religious organization “Seventh-Day Adventist Church” is registered by the state*

*The 1960s – The first Azerbaijani Adventist Movsum Rahimov converts to Adventism*

1991 - *“Greater Grace World Outreach” religious organization begins its activity*

1992 - *The “New Apostolic Church” religious organization is registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice*

1993 - *The Baku Evangelical Lutheran religious community is registered in the Ministry of Justice*

November 10, 1993 - *“Star of the East” religious organization is registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice*

*The early 1990s – The first Azerbaijani-speaking Baptist congregation (“Agape” church) is established*

1994 - *“Word of Life International” religious organization begins its activity in Azerbaijan*

1998 - *“Baku International Fellowship” is established*

December 28, 1998 - *The Baku and Caspian Diocese is restored by the Holy Synod’s decision*

April 2, 1999 - *The Baku Roman Catholic religious organization is registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice*

May 14, 1999 - *The Baku Evangelical Lutheran religious community celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Church in our country*

1999 - *The “Cathedral of Praise” (“Word of Life”) religious organization is registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice*

1999 - *The “New Life” Christian Gospel religious organization is formed*

1999 - *The Baku “New Apostolic Church” religious organization opens its house of worship*

1999 - *The “Nehemiah” Church of Gospel-Believing Christians is registered by the state in the Ministry of Justice*

2000 - *The Small Catholic Church of “The Intercessor Jesus Christ” is opened in Baku*

2000 - *The Jubilee Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church includes Holy Martyr Ioann of Baku in the list of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russian Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*

October 11, 2000 - *The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples assigned the leadership over the Catholic mission in Azerbaijan to the Order of “Salesians of Don Bosco” (SDB)*

2001 – *A Presbyterian congregation emerges in Baku*

2001 – *The Seventh-day Adventist Church establishes the Azerbaijan Mission*

*May 25-28, 2001 - The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Aleksy II's first visit to our country*

*May 28, 2001 – The National Leader Haydar Aliyev's meeting with Patriarch Aleksy II*

*January 31, 2002 - The Baku Roman Catholic religious organization is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*2002 - The Baku New Apostolic Church religious organization is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*2002 - The Baku Evangelical Christian Baptist religious organization is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*2002 - The Baku "Star of the East" church is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*2002 - The "Nehemiah" church of Gospel-Believing Christians is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*May 22, 2002 - Roman Pope John Paul II's visit to Azerbaijan at the invitation of the President Haydar Aliyev*

*2005 - Molokans celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their resettlement to Azerbaijan*

*September 14-15, 2005 - The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Aleksy II's second visit to our country*

*September 14, 2005 – Our Head of State, Ilham Aliyev, awards Patriarch Aleksy II with the highest state award the "Shohrat Order" (Order of Glory)*

*September 14, 2005 - The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Aleksy II awards the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev with one of the highest awards of the Russian Orthodox Church - "St. Sergius of Radonezh" First Class Order*

*April 2, 2006 - "Saint Seraphim of Sarov" House of Worship is opened in Sumgayit city*

- 2006 - *The Baku “New Apostolic Church” religious organization opens its second house of worship*
- 2006 - *“Saint Teresa of Calcutta” mercy home is opened in Baku’s Zigh village*
- February 2007 - *The Church of “Holy Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception” is erected in the center of Baku*
- 2008 - *Several members of the Albanian-Udi religious community receive a blessing from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and are baptized in the Jordan river*
- September 26, 2008 – *The Haydar Aliyev Foundation signs a memorandum of cooperation with the Catholic community in our country*
- 2009 - *The Baku “Molokan Spiritual Christians” religious community is re-registered by the state*
- 2009 - *The Sumgayit “Molokan Spiritual Christians” religious community is re-registered by the state*
- October 12, 2009 - *The Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*
- November 6, 2009 - *The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Kirill’s first visit to Baku; the Head of State Ilham Aliyev meets with the Leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Patriarch participates in the International Conference “Interreligious Dialogue: From Mutual Understanding To Cooperation”*
- December 25, 2009 - *The “New Life” Christian Gospel religious organization is re-registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*
- January 21, 2010 - *Gobustan district, Hilmilli village “Molokan Spiritual Christians” religious community is re-registered by the state*
- April 24-26, 2010 - *the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Kirill’s second visit to Baku*

*April 24, 2010 – The Head of State Ilham Aliyev awards Patriarch Kirill with the “Sharaf” state order; and the Head of Russian Orthodox Church awards the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the First Class Order “Glory and Honor”*

*24 April 25, 2010 - Patriarch Kirill participated in the meeting of the CIS Interreligious Council which took place in the conference hall of the Caucasian Muslims Office*

*April 26-27, 2010 - Patriarch Kirill takes part in the World Summit of Religious Leaders*

*May 14, 2010 - The Baku Lutheran Evangelical religious organization “Church of the Savior” is re-registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*March 22, 2011 - The Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese is established*

*2011 - The International Agreement “On the Juridical Status of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Azerbaijan” is signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Holy Throne and Crown*

*July 7, 2011 - The “Apostolic Prefecture of Roman Catholic Church” is registered by the state*

*August 4, 2011 - By the Papal Bull, Pope Benedict XVI appoints V. Fekete the Apostolic Prefect*

*2011 - Oghuz City Albanian-Udi Christian religious organization is registered by the state*

*July 14, 2013 - The baptism ceremony which had been forgotten in the Albanian-Udi community for over 80 years, is revived*

*August 3, 2013 - Festival ceremonies dedicated to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the revival of the Albanian-Udi church and the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of Christianity as the official religion in Caucasian Albania are held*

*November 15, 2013 - The Russian Orthodox Church opens the Orthodox Religious-Cultural Centre of the Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese*

*December 13, 2014 - The Adventists living in our country celebrate the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Adventism in Azerbaijan*

*2015 – Martin Luther’s “Small Catechism” is published in the Azerbaijani language*

*May 23, 2015 - The Baku “Word of Life” church is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*November 13, 2015 - The Baku Evangelical Christians-Baptists’ religious organization, “Agape” is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*November 13, 2015 - The Ismayilli district, Ivanovka village “Molokan Spiritual Christians” religious community is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*December 13, 2015 - The “Word of Life – 2” Sumgayit Christian church is registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations*

*August 30, 2016 - The Head of State Ilham Aliyev issues a decree to provide a proper celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the emergence of German settlements in the Southern Caucasus*

*September 09, 2016 - The Baku city, Narimanov district “Seventh-Day Adventist” religious organization was re-registered by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan*





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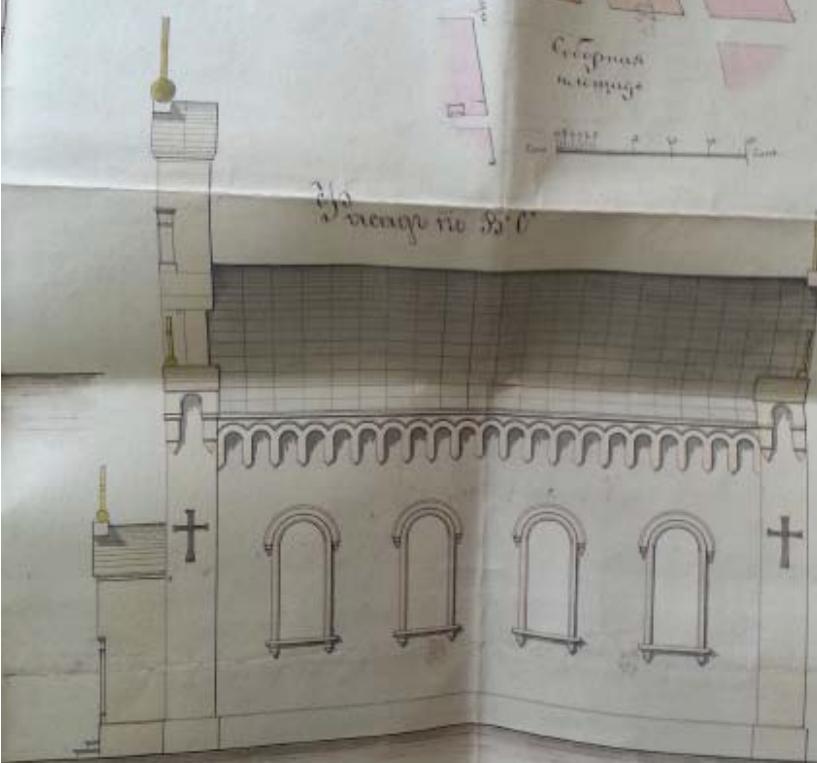
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**Appendix No 2****The project of the Roman Catholic Church in Baku city 1863.****The State Historical Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan.**



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Число 1/2

## Appendix No 3

### Roman Pope Benedict XVI's bull named «De iuvandis» regarding the establishing of the Apostolic Prefecture in Azerbaijan August 4, 2011.



## The Holy See

**BENEDICTUS EPISCOPUS**

**SERVUS SERVORUM DEI**

**AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM CONSTITUTIO APOSTOLICA **AZERBAIGIANIENSIS**\* IN AZERBAIGANIA  
PRAEFECTURA APOSTOLICA**

CONDITUR AZERBAIGIANIENSIS APPELLANDA De iuvandis omnibus Christifidelibus solliciti, cuncta disponere conamur ut Evangelii nuntius et Domini salutaria beneficia omnia loca contingant et quam efficacissime ad longinuos etiam populos perveniant. Nunc ob oculos Nostros gentes versantur quae in Azerbaijania commorantur, quibus ob eorum spirituales necessitates opportuna subsidia commodare properamus. Quapropter, favorabili quorum interest habito suffragio, Missionem « sui iuris » Bakuensem ad gradum Praefecturae Apostolicae Azerbaijanienensis appellandae elevamus, quam sollicitis curis Societatis S. Francisci Salesii committimus. Itemque primum Praefectum Apostolicum Azerbaijanienensem Reverendum Dominum nominamus Vladimirus Fekete, S.D.B., cum omnibus iuribus et facultatibus eidem Officio adnexis. Haec omnia ad expedienda ecclesiasticum virum, qui Apostolicae Sedis negotia in Azerbaijania curat, legamus. Re tandem ad finem perducta, documenta apparentur, quorum sincera exempla ad Congregationem pro Gentium Evangelizatione diligenter mittantur. Hanc denique Apostolicam Nostram Constitutionem nunc et in posterum ratam esse volumus, contrariis quibuslibet rebus non obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, die quarto mensis Augusti, anno Domini bismillesimo undecimo, Pontificatus Nostri septimo. Tharsicius card. Bertone Secretarius Status Marcellus Rossetti, Protonot. Apost.

Franciscus Di Felice, Protonot.

Apost.

\*A.A.S., vol. CIII (2011), n.9, pp.567-568. © Copyright 2011 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

**Appendix NO 4**

**THE CHART OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION**

Loqotip	Ad	Ünvan	İcma və ya qurumun təşəkkül tapma tarixi	Dini icma və ya qurumun respublikamızda ilk dəfə dövlət qeydiyyatına alınma tarixi	Telefon və
	Azərbaycan Respublikasının Alban-Udi Xristian d.i.	Qəbələ r-nu, Nic qəsəbəsi, Alban aftokefal "Çotari" kilsəsi	I-II əsrlər	2011-ci il	udi@udi.a
	Rus Pravoslav Kilsəsinin Bakı və Azərbaycan Yeparxiyası dini qurumu	AZ 1010, Bakı şəhəri, Ş.Əzizbəyov küç, 205	1815-ci il. Bakı vikariatlığının təsis olunması - 1905-ci il.	Bərpa olunub - 28 dekabr 1998-ci il  Ədliyyə Nazirliyində dövlət qeydiyyatına alınıb – 18.03.2000-ci il	(012) 440-  baku@eparhia

	"Azərbaycan Respublikasında Katolik kilsəsinin Apostol Prefekturası" dini qurumu	Bakı şəhəri, Nərimanov rayonu, Məmməd Araz küçəsi, 69/b1	XIX əsrin 60-cı illəri	2011-ci il	(012) 562-22-55 priest@catholic.az	<a href="http://www.catholic.az">www.catholic.az</a>
	Xilaskar Yevangelik Lütheranların Bakı d.i.	Bakı şəhəri, Səbail rayonu, Z. Tağıyev küçəsi, ev 7, mənzil 3	1870-ci il	2002-ci il	(012) 441-29-11	<a href="http://www.gemeindebakujimdo.com">www.gemeindebakujimdo.com</a>
	"Yeni Həyat" Xristian icmli d.i.	Bakı şəhəri, Bədəmdar, 1-ci y/mas., Ev 12 \	1999-cü il	2006-cı il	(050) 751-51-52 info@newlifebaku.az	<a href="http://www.newlifebaku.az">www.newlifebaku.az</a>
	"Həyat sözlü" Xristian dini icması	Bakı şəhəri, Xətai r-nu, S. Vəzirov küçəsi, 6	1994-cü il	1999-cü il	(012) 496-57-88 (012) 496-57-89 (012) 447-01-70 church@lob.az	<a href="http://www.wol.az">www.wol.az</a>

	Bakı şəhəri Nərimanov rayonu "Yeddinci Günün Adventistləri" dini icması	Bakı şəhəri, 3-cü İppodrom küçəsi, ev 27	1910-cu il	23 sentyabr 1969-cu il	Sdaaz777@ gmail.com	<a href="http://www.bible.az">www.bible.az</a>
	Bakı Yeni Apostol Kilsəsi dini icması	Bakı şəhəri, Nərimanov rayonu, Aşıq Əli küçəsi, 10	1992-ci il	1992-ci il	(012) 465-83-47	<a href="http://www.nak.org">www.nak.org</a>
	"Bakı Beynəlxalq Qardaşlığı" dini icması	-	1998-ci il	-	office@ bakuchurch.org	<a href="http://www.bakuchurch.org">www.bakuchurch.org</a>
	"Yehovanın Şahidləri"	Bakı şəhəri Xətai rayonu, Seyid Əziz Şirvani küçəsi, 20.	Təqribən 1983-cü il	1999-cu ilin dekabr ayı	LegalContact.Az@ jw.org (051) 433-02-99	<a href="http://www.jw.org/az">www.jw.org/az</a>

	<p>İncilə iman edən məshiçilərin "Nehemiya" dini icması</p>	<p>Bakı şəhəri, Xətai rayonu, Əhmədli qəsəbəsi, 9-cu Əhmədli küçəsi, 45 "A"</p>	<p>XX əsrin 90-cı illəri</p>	<p>1999-cu il</p>	<p>nehemiah.baku@gmail.com nehemiahazerbaku@gmail.com (012) 370-47-69 (055) 311-71-00</p>	<p><a href="http://www.nehemiahazerbaku.wikisite.com/azerbajian">www.nehemiahazerbaku.wikisite.com/azerbajian</a></p>
	<p>"Şərqdə Ulduz" Xristian incil dini icması</p>	<p>Bakı şəhəri, Nizami rayonu, 8-ci km qəsəbəsi, Şərifli küçəsi, ev. 9/31</p>	<p>Təqribən XX əsrin 30-cu illəri</p>	<p>10 noyabr 1993-cü il</p>	<p>pentokostol@mail.ru (012) 421-95-95 (050) 310-27-15</p>	<p>-</p>
	<p>"Həyatverici İttif" dini icması</p>	<p>Bakı şəhəri, Nəsimi rayonu, Başır Səfər oğlu küçəsi 191, ev 62-64</p>	<p>1991-ci il</p>	<p>21 aprel 1993-cü il</p>	<p>(012) 595-15-49</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ggwwo.org">www.ggwwo.org</a></p>

-	Bakı şəhəri Xristian-Baptist dini icması	Bakı şəhəri, Nərimanov rayonu, 1-ci Cıdır döngəsi, ev 13	1892-ci il	1 yanvar 1946-cı il	-
-	Bakı şəhəri Yevangelist Məsihi Baptistlərinin "Aqape" dini icması	Bakı şəhəri, Nərimanov rayonu, 1-ci Cıdır döngəsi, ev 13	XX əsrin 90- cı illəri	1999-cu il	-

## Appendix No 5

### The list of Christian religious organizations registered by the State Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan during the

Şəh. №	Adı	Ünvanı	
100109 A2-02	Rus Pravoslav Kilsəsinin Bakı və Azərbaycan Yeparxiyası qurumu	Bakı şəh., Ş.Əzizbəyov küç, 205	
100109 A2-34	“Yeni Həyat” Xristian incil d.i.	Bakı ş., 28 May küç., 17 (Kamera orqan musiqi zalı) Badamdar, 1-ci y/mas., Ev 12	
100109 A2-68	Sumqayıt şəh., “Molokan ruhani- xristian” d.i.	Sumqayıt şəh., 18-ci məhəllə, ev 10/23	
100109 A2-91	Bakı şəh., “Molokan ruhani- xristian” d.i.	Bakı şəh., A.Navai küç., ev 12/18	
100109 A3-	Azərbaycan Respublikasının Alban-Udi Xristian d. i.	Qəbələ r-nu, Nic qəs., Alban aftokefal “Çotari” kilsəsi	
100110 A1-172	Qobustan r-nu Hillilli kəndi “Molokan ruhani- xristian” d.i.	Qobustan r-nu, Hillilli kəndində yerləşən kilsə	
100110 A2-286	Qax rayonu Qaxingiloy kəndi “Müqəddəs Giorgi” kilsəsi gürcü pravoslav xristian d.i.	Qax rayonu, Qaxingiloy kəndi, “Müqəddəs Giorgi” kilsəsi.	
100110 A2-314	Qax rayonu Əlibəyli kəndi “Müqəddəs	Qax rayonu, Əlibəyli kəndi, “Müqəddəs Nino” kilsəsi.	

100110 A3-367	Nino" kilsəsi gürücü pravoslav xristian d.i. Xilaskar Yevangelik Lüteranların Bakı d.i.	Bakı şəhəri, Sabail rayonu, Z. Tağıyev küçəsi, ev 7, mənzil 3	14.05.10
100110 A3-367	Xilaskar Yevangelik Lüteranların Bakı d.i.	Bakı şəhəri, Sabail rayonu, Z. Tağıyev küçəsi, ev 7, mənzil 3	14.05.10
100111 A1-542-1	Oğuz şəhəri Alban-Udi Xristian dini icması	Oğuz şəhəri, "Kiski Qerqes" ziyarətگاهی	01.07.11
100111 A1-544	"Azərbaycan Respublikasında Katolik kilsəsinin Apostol Prefekturası" dini qurumu	Bakı şəhəri, Nərimanov rayonu, Məmməd Araz küçəsi, 69/b1	07.07.11
100112 A1-549	"Həyat sözü" Xristian dini icması	Bakı şəhəri, Xətai r-nu, S. Vəzirov küçəsi, 6	23.05.12
100115 A - 609	İsmayıl rayonu İvanovka kəndi "Molokan-ruhani-xristian" dini icması	İsmayıl rayonu, İvanovka kəndi, Noviy döngə 2a	13.11.2015
100115 C - 610	"Həyat Sözü - 2" Sumqayıt xristian dini icması	Sumqayıt şəhəri, İnşaatçılar qəsəbəsi, ev 14/9, mənzil 3	13.11.2015
100115 B - 611	Bakı şəhəri Yevangelist Məsihi Baptistlərinin "Aqape" dini icması	Bakı şəhəri, Nərimanov rayonu, 1-ci Cıdır döngəsi, ev 13	13.11.2015

**Appendix No 6****KURMUK TEMPLE – THE SYMBOL OF  
AZERBAIJAN’S TOLERANCE**

In the Qakh district of Azerbaijan, on a high hill in the area around Ambrachay village, there are the remains of an ancient Albanian church known as Kurmuk temple. Historians date the construction of this ancient Albanian temple to between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries A.D. After Tsarist Russia occupied the Ilisu Sultanate in 1894, a Russian Orthodox church was built on the remains of the Albanian temple. It was built by the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus” and named after St. George. Although the Tsarist government called it “St. George,” the local people kept calling the place “Kurmuk,” and today it is still known as Kurmuk. Presently, both the remains of the ancient Albanian temple and the former Russian church building are protected by the state. According to the list approved by the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 2, 2001, “Kurmuk” temple is registered as a historical and cultural monument. In 2003, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism made a total renovation of “Kurmuk” temple.

This is the history of Kurmuk temple. But we are interested in this Christian temple not because of its construction history or architectural design, but because of its symbolic meaning. Both Azerbaijanis and Georgians from the Qakh district view the site of Kurmuk temple as a holy site. During “Kurmukoba” festival (celebrated every year on May 6 and November 23) thousands of pilgrims walk up to Kurmuk temple where they pray to the Most High God, light candles for their requests to be accepted, and bring sacrifices, making requests over the remnants of the ancient Albanian temple. It is interesting that most people who come to Kurmuk temple are local Azerbaijanis. We should also mention that local Azerbaijanis celebrate that day as Kurmukoba festival, while the local Georgians and visitors from Georgia celebrate it as St. George’s Day.

Indeed, every year, an interesting event is celebrated on the site of Kurmuk temple in May and November. Azerbaijanis pray with their hands raised in a Muslim way, while Georgians, standing near them, cross themselves in a Christian way.



This religious phenomenon which takes place at Kurmuk temple, is unique and something rarely found in the world. So rare is it to see Muslims and Christians worshipping side by side. However, this is witnessed in the district of Qakh every year. This remarkable religious phenomenon clearly demonstrates that fanaticism is foreign to Azerbaijani society. Our people are tolerant towards other religions. In short, the Kurmuk temple is another symbol of the historical tradition of tolerance in Azerbaijan and its multicultural environment.



*Kurmukoba festival*



*Kurmukoba festival*

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# *Non-Muslim Religions and Sects Operating in Azerbaijan*

*Which Christian denominations and organizations exist in Azerbaijan? What is the difference between Orthodox and Catholics? Who are “Jehovah’s Witnesses”? When did the first Baptist and Adventist missionaries come to our country? What is the number of Pentecostals in our republic? What Orthodox churches existed in Baku?*

*This book was written in order to answer such questions, informing our readers of the interesting history of Christianity in Azerbaijan, the colorful life of Christians in our country, and the different movements and streams of Christianity.*