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MORMONS CHURCH STRUCTURE AND SERVICE

This article examines the structure and missionary activity of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is officially registered in our country. In 1992, the country adopted the law «On Freedom of Religion», many people had the choice to follow any religion. As a result, in addition to the two main traditional religions, other religious movements began to appear. To such religious associations is the «Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints». «The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints» or they are also called Mormons, began to come to the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan since 1997. That is, they exist in our country for 20 years. During this period, the organization spreads its faith in our country, increasing the number of its parishioners. Until now, this organization has not been considered by religion scholars as a separate topic. Thus, the religious association «The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints» was chosen as an object of research. In addition, this article will also consider the emergence of the first representatives, official registration and development in the regions and cities of the Mormon Church on the territory of our state.

Key words: religion, new religious movements, mormons, «The Church of JesusChrist of Latter-day Saints», missionary.

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Мормондар шіркеуінің құрылымы мен қызметі

Бұл мақалада елімізде ресми тіркелген «Соңғы күн әулиелерінің Иса Мәсіх шіркеуінің» құрылымы мен миссионерлік қызметі қарастырылады. 1992 жылы елімізде «Діни сенім бостандығы және діни бірлестіктер туралы» заңы қабылданып, халыққа қалаған дінін ұстануға рұқсат берілді, көптеген діни бірлестіктер құрыла бастады. Нәтижесінде Қазақстанда негізгі дәстүрлі екі діннен бөлек, өзге де діни ағымдар қанат жая бастады. Осындай ағымдардың бірі «Соңғы күн әулиелерінің Иса Мәсіх шіркеуі» болып табылады. «Соңғы күн әулиелерінің Иса Мәсіх шіркеуі» немесе мормондар Қазақстан жеріне 1997 жылдан бастап келе бастаған. Яғни, биыл 20 жыл болды. Осы уақыт аралығында бұл ұйым елімізде өз сенімдерін таратып, сенушілерінің қатары артып жатыр. Осы жерде қазақ халқының менталитетіне жат ағым қалайша осыншама уақыт бойы сенімін таратып, ізбасарларын тауып жатыр деген орынды сұрақ туындайды. Осы уақытқа дейін еліміздегі бұл ұйымның қызметі арнайы тереңдетіп зерттелмеген. Сондықтан, аталмыш ұйымның қызметі зерттеу тақырыбының басты нысаны етіп алынды. Сонымен қатар бұл мақалада «Соңғы күн әулиелерінің Иса Мәсіх шіркеуі» өкілдерінің мемлекетіміздің аумағына алғаш келуі, аталмыш шіркеудің елімізде ресми тіркелуі және аймақтарға таралуы да қарастырылады.

Түйін сөздер: дін, жаңа діни қозғалыстар, мормондар, «Соңғы күн әулиелерінің Иса Мәсіх шіркеуі», миссионерлік.

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Структура и деятельность мормонской церкви

В данной статье рассматривается структура и миссионерская деятельность «Церкви Иисуса Христа Святых последних дней», которая официально зарегистрирована и в нашей стране. В 1992 году в стране был принят закон «О свободе вероисповедания и религиозных организациях», и многие люди имели выбор следовать какой-либо религии. В результате, в дополнение к

двум основным традиционным религиям, стали появляться другие религиозные движения. К таким религиозным объединениям относится и «Церковь Иисуса Христа Святых последних дней». Последователи «Церкви Иисуса Христа Святых последних дней», или их еще и называют мормонами, начали прибывать на территорию Республики Казахстан с 1997 года. То есть они существуют в нашей стране 20 лет. В течение этого периода организация распространяет свою веру в нашей стране, увеличивая числа своих прихожан. До сих пор эта организация не рассматривалась религиоведами как отдельная тема. Религиозное объединение «Церковь Иисуса Христа Святых последних дней» было выбрано в качестве объекта исследовательской темы. Кроме того, в данной статье будет рассматриваться и возникновение первых представителей, официальная регистрация и развитие в областях и городах мормонской церкви на территории нашего государства.

Ключевые слова: религия, новые религиозные движения, мормоны, «Церковь Иисуса Христа Святых последних дней», миссионерство.

Introduction

The Kazakh people has its own ancient history, its language, traditions and religion. The history of our country has closely linked to Islam for many centuries. Islam has become one of the main sources of the original spirituality and culture of the Kazakh people. Islam has been playing an integral part in the life of the Kazakh people. Many changes were not brought as this religion is similar to Kazakh customs and traditions.

Looking back on history the Kazakh people had experienced many difficulties but they didn't accept other religion. Even the Soviet government tried to prevent the spread of Islam poisoning the minds of the people with "There is no God". This in turn was a severe blow to religious rituals passed down from generation to generation but they firmly had kept its religious values.

Having experienced hard time the Kazakh people gained independence in 1991. The country adopted the law about religion "Freedom of religious belief and Religious Association" where many people could follow any religion. Many religious associations were created and people began to live in peace. As a result, in addition to two main traditional religion, other religious movements have been started. One of that movement is "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints".

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" or Mormons appeared in the country 20 years ago. During this period, the organization spread its faith in the country, increasing the number of churchgoers. But how the Kazakh people accepted such movement that is strange to Kazakh mentality is the subject of our research work.

Research methods. In this article the historical-comparative, structural-systematic, phenomenological, anthropological, sociological methods are widely used in order to define characteristic features of Mormons.

Literature review. Because of the lack of scientific research works about Mormons in Kazakhstan we had to refer to the works written by foreign scholars. They are Mormon scientists and representatives of various Protestant denominations. Among them the works of Cowan, Marvin "Mormon Clams Answered", Walter Martin "The kingdom of the cults", McDowell and Don Stewart "Handbook of Today's Religions", Kaiser Edgar P. "How to Respond to the Mormons", John Beadle "Life in Utah or the mysteries and crimes of Mormonism". Though it was written in 1872 it considered to be the best work in the Russian language. There are also the Russian orthodox scholars' works: A.L.Dvorkin "Prophets and Mormon Gods", O.Kazakov "Lament for Mormons", U.A.Kondratyev "History and belief of the Mormon sect". But there aren't any works in Kazakh language yet. "Religions in Kazakhstan", "New religious sects in Kazakhstan", "Non-traditional religious movements and cults" were written by Kazakh scholars N.Zh.Baitenova, K.A.Zatov, Sh.Rysbekova, K.M.Borbasova, B.B.Beisenov, A.D.Kurmanaliyeva, B.B.Meirbayev. Those works give a brief information about the service and history of this organization. You can also find a brief information about the history and teachings of this organization in encyclopedias, reference brochures namely Religious Affairs Committee, Religious organizations in Kazakhstan on reference book, Religions in Kazakhstan in two volumes. We used internet resources www.mormonnews.kz, www.lds.org, www.mormon.org, www.apologia.narod.ru, www.exmormon.org, www.antimormon.narod.ru, analyzed Kazakh and Russian articles from internet and made references to them.

As was stated above those works give only a brief information. Unfortunately, the works of foreign scholars hasn't been translated in Kazakh language yet.

Main part

At the beginning of the XIX century with the strengthening of Protestantism in the United States other developed religious ideas began to appear. One of these religious organizations - "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints". It is also known as the Mormon Church. This name was taken from The Book of Mormon (Joseph Smith 2013; 104). It is the sacred book of Mormons. This organization is the largest in the Western religious organizations and is one of the richest organizations. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS Church or, informally, the Mormon Church) is a Christian restorationist church that is considered by its members to be the restoration of the original church. (Turner, 2012: 35). The emergence of Mormons religious organization is closely related to the history of the formation of the US. Leaders of the LDS Church assert that the LDS Church is the only true church and that other churches do not have the authority to act in Jesus' name. Nowadays the Kazakhstani religious scholars classify this organization as new protestant movements. (Baitenova, 2008: 205). Mormonism like other New Age religions is the type of gnostic ideas. Mormons believe that they are true Christians not Catholic, Orthodox or Protestants. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has many branches all over the world.

A brief history of the organization. The church is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. Mormon Church was established in 1830. The founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith who received personal revelation from God and His son, Jesus Christ, to restore the fullness of the gospel, which had been lost shortly after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in 1820. Three years later in 1823, while Joseph was sleeping a light appeared in his room. An angel appeared, claiming to be a heavenly messenger sent from the presence of God. His name was Moroni. He claimed to be the lost survivor of a lost race. He spoke of work that God had for Joseph, and spoke of a book written upon golden plates. He proved himself to Moroni, by keeping the knowledge of the plates a secret. In 1827 Moroni directed to the hills, where the golden plates were buried. He then instructed Joseph to translate the writings and then copy the onto paper. The golden plates were a written testimony to the spiritual history of early America.

The idea that God and Jesus appeared to a 14-year-old boy caused many to be angry with Smith and his followers. The Mormons were hounded from state after state. J. Smith was killed. Finally,

Mormons left the community far away from the country and founded the Salt Lake City. (O'Dea, 1964: 48). When the law against polygamy had been destroyed, Utah became one of the state of the USA. This state considers to be the leading state in giving up smoking, only 12 percent of the population smokes and they often take part in charity events. (Davies, 2003: 127).

If we talk about the structure of the church, Mormons are controlled by strict hierarchical structure of the Church. The president heads a hierarchical structure with various levels reaching down to local congregations. Bishops, drawn from the laity, lead local congregations. Male members, after reaching age 12, may be ordained to the priesthood, provided they are living the standards of the church. Women do not hold positions within the priesthood, but do occupy leadership roles in some church auxiliary organizations. The LDS Church is organized in a hierarchical priesthood structure administered by men. Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus leads the church through revelation and has chosen a single man, called "the Prophet" or President of the Church, as his spokesman on the earth. While there have been exceptions in the past, he and two counselors are normally ordained apostles and form the First Presidency, the presiding body of the church; twelve other apostles form the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. When a president dies, his successor is invariably the most senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve (the one who has been an apostle the longest), who reconstitutes a new First Presidency. These men, and the other male members of the church-wide leadership (including the first two Quorums of Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric) are called general authorities. In the case of the death of the Prophet first counselor is appointed as a new prophet, and the second counselor becomes the first one. Thus, the highest representatives of the power moves one step forward.

Since the death of Joseph Smith there were 15 prophets in the history of church. The current president is Thomas S. Monson. The living prophet is the most important person for the Mormons.

According to the latter-day saints the mission of the church is to help people to come to God. The church structure is responsible for developing this mission. There are many branches of the church. The number of visitors usually doesn't exceed 250 to 500 people. If the number of visitors are increased the management can be divided in two.

Missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church)—widely known as Mormon missionaries—are volunteer represen-

tatives of the LDS Church who engage variously in proselytizing, church service, humanitarian aid, and community service. Mormon missionaries may serve on a full- or part-time basis, depending on the assignment, and are organized geographically into missions.

After application to the church and the requisite approval, prospective missionaries receive a “call to serve”—an official notification of their location assignment—through the mail from the President of the Church. The mission call also informs the prospective missionary what language he or she will be expected to use during his or her mission. Members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are responsible for assigning missionaries to a particular mission. A prospective missionary receiving the call to serve is generally considered to be a major event in LDS culture; family members, friends, and members of the prospective missionary’s congregation often gather together when a call arrives, which the prospective missionary opens and reads aloud to the group.

General authorities and mission presidents work full-time and typically receive stipends from church funds or investments.

At the local level, the church leadership are drawn from the laity and work on a part-time volunteer basis without stipend. Like all members, they are asked to donate a tithe of 10 percent of their income to the church. An exception to that rule is for LDS missionaries, who work at the local level and are paid basic living expenses from a fund that receives contributions from their families or home congregations. But, prospective missionaries are encouraged to contribute the cost of their missions to this fund themselves when possible. Members volunteer general custodial work for local church facilities.

According to the church official site statistics in 1850 the number of believers is reached to 60,000 people; in 1900 - 230,000 people; in 1950 - 1 000000 people; in 1961- 1 800000; in 1964. - 2 000000 people; in 1970 - 2 500,000 people; in 1985 - 6 000000 people; in 2000 - 11 000000; The current president of the church declared that the number of Mormons has reached to 15 million since 2016.

Under the leadership of the priesthood hierarchy are five auxiliary organizations that fill various roles in the church: Relief Society (a women’s organization), the Young Men and Young Women organizations (for adolescents ages 12 to 18), Primary (an organization for children up to age 12), and Sunday School (which provides a variety of Sunday classes for adolescents and adults). Women serve as presi-

dents and counselors in the presidencies of the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary, while men serve as presidents and counselors of the Young Men and Sunday School. The church also operates several programs and organizations in the fields of proselytizing, education, and church welfare such as LDS Humanitarian Services. Many of these auxiliaries and programs are coordinated by the Priesthood Correlation Program, which is designed to provide a systematic approach to maintain worldwide consistency, orthodoxy, and control of the church’s ordinances, doctrines, organizations, meetings, materials, and other programs and activities.

The church operates a Church Educational System which includes Brigham Young University (BYU), BYU–Idaho, BYU–Hawaii, and LDS Business College. The church also operates Institutes of Religion near the campuses of many colleges and universities. For high-school aged youth, the church operates a four-year Seminary program, which provides religious classes for students to supplement their secular education. The church also sponsors a low-interest educational loan program known as the Perpetual Education Fund, which provides educational opportunities to students from developing nations.

In addition to these regularly scheduled meetings, additional meetings are frequently held at the meetinghouse. Auxiliary officers may conduct leadership meetings or host training sessions and classes. The ward or branch community may schedule social activities at the meetinghouse, including dances, dinners, holiday parties and musical presentations. The church’s Young Men and Young Women organizations meet at the meetinghouse once a week, where the youth participate in activities and work on Duty to God, Scouting, or Personal Progress. Other popular activities are basketball, family history conferences, youth and singles conferences, dances, and various personal improvement classes. Church members may also reserve meetinghouses at no cost for weddings, receptions, and funerals. There are some reasons to leave the mission, for example if their children cannot take care of themselves, if a man has a pregnant woman, if one hasn’t able to pay debts, couples suffering from infectious diseases.

Newly called missionaries attend a short training period at one of 15 church Missionary Training Centers worldwide. The largest Missionary Training Center is located in Provo, Utah, adjacent to Brigham Young University. Missionaries who will not be learning a language in order to serve their missions spend three weeks at Missionary Training Center where they practice using proselytizing

materials, learn expected conduct, and study the scriptures. Missionaries bound for foreign-language missions spend six to nine weeks at Missionary Training Center, depending on the language to be learned. During this period, they are encouraged not to speak in their native tongue but rather to immerse themselves in the new language.

All LDS young men are expected to serve a two-year, full-time proselytizing mission. Missionaries do not choose where they serve or the language in which they will proselytize, and are expected to fund their missions themselves or with the aid of their families. Missionaries are expected to pay their own expenses while on the mission, often with assistance from family. In the past, each missionary paid his or her actual living expenses, but this approach created a disproportionate burden on missionaries who were assigned to more expensive areas of the world. In 1990, a new program was introduced to equalize the financial responsibility for each missionary and his or her family. Now, all young missionaries pay a flat monthly rate which is then redistributed according to regional costs of living. Young people in the church are encouraged to save money throughout their childhood and teenage years to pay for as much of their mission as they can, although many receive assistance from parents, family, or friends. Missionaries who cannot save the required funds may obtain assistance from their home congregation or from a general missionary fund operated by the church and contributed to by Latter-day Saints around the world.

Mormons do not wear special clothing, but are expected to dress modestly: for men, conservative, dark trousers and suit coats, white dress shirts, and conservative ties. For women, modest and professional dresses or blouses and mid-calf length skirts are worn. In hot, humid climates, suit coats are not required, and dress shirts may be short-sleeved. Casual clothes may be worn only in limited circumstances, such as when missionaries provide manual labor or exercise. All full-time missionaries wear a name tag that gives their surname with the appropriate title.

Most missions are divided into several zones, a zone being a geographic area specified by the mission president. A zone encompasses several more organizational units called districts. Each zone and district is presided over by leaders drawn from male missionaries serving in that area. Zone and district leaders are responsible for gathering weekly statistics, assisting missionaries in their areas of responsibility, and general accountability to the mission president for the well-being and progress of the mis-

sionaries under their stewardship. A district typically encompasses four to eight missionaries, and may or may not comprise more than one proselytizing area. An area is typically a portion of the LDS ecclesiastical unit known as a ward (or congregation), one ward, or multiple wards.

In addition to the leaders mentioned above, the mission president has two or more assistants. Assistants to the President are typically missionaries who have previously served as district and/or zone leaders. They serve as the president's executive assistants, administering policies and helping missionaries throughout the mission.

Missionaries are encouraged to write a letter to their parents weekly. Since almost all of their time is otherwise occupied, other communication is limited. However, a missionary may use preparation day to correspond with any person that is resident outside of the boundaries of the mission. Missionaries do not go on vacation and are generally permitted to telephone their parents only on Christmas Day, and one other day of the year, usually Mother's Day. Missionaries are provided with a free, filtered church e-mail account to correspond with their parents on preparation day only by using a computer in a public location, such as at a public library or an internet café. In the event of an emergency, family members of a missionary may contact him or her via the mission president's office.

Single missionaries are prohibited from dating or courting while serving missions. The policy of companionships staying together at all times serves to discourage these activities. While missionaries may interact with members of the opposite sex, they may never be alone with them or engage in any kind of intimate physical or emotional activity (e.g., kissing, hugging, holding hands, flirting). They may not telephone, write, e-mail, or accept letters from members of the opposite sex that live in the area where they are assigned to proselyte. Missionary companionships are also asked not to visit with members of the opposite sex unless at least one person of the missionaries' same sex is present to chaperone. Alternatively, those contacts may be referred to a companionship of the same gender as the contact or to married couple missionaries, when available. Missionaries may use public transportation, walk, bicycle, or in some areas drive automobiles owned by the church, or occasionally ride within a private automobile with a church member who is accompanying them to a teaching appointment, proselyting, or fellowshiping activity.

A returned missionary (often abbreviated “RM”) is a term used by members of the LDS Church to refer to men and women who have previously served as Mormon missionaries. Once they return home, RMs are generally encouraged to begin dating seriously and to seek marriage.

The health code for Latter-day Saints is based on a teaching regarding foods that are healthy and substances that are not good for the human body. Accordingly, alcohol, tobacco, tea, coffee and illegal drugs are forbidden.

Religious holidays are celebrated in Salt Lake City church, in many other temples of the world. The new church has been recently built in Brigham. Like other Mormon temples it was built with the most expensive materials because every believer must feel themselves like they are in heaven.

Mormon temples are built resembling to Solomon’s place as described in the Gospel. Non-Mormons are not allowed to enter the church and take photos as it is the sacred one.

Evangelical Christians in the United States had criticized Mormons for a long time and they don’t accept the teachings of Mormons founded by Joseph Smith in the 19th century.

This organization pays much attention to the relationship between father and son and wife. Spending every Monday evening at home with their family is one of the traditions of Mormons. Sports events are held in the church on Saturdays.

There are 2 branches of Mormons organization in our country in Astana and Almaty. Almaty branch is located in the Al-Farabi Avenue. According to the journalist, and one of the members of the Mormon Marianna Gurina, the first Mormon missionaries Russell and Margaret Bekuster came to Kazakhstan in 1997. They were just talking about their faith in their own home, and after the increased followers they officially registered the religious community in 2000.

In the late 1990s, Pieper and his family moved to Kazakhstan, where he learned to speak Russian while working for a law firm in international trade law. Pieper became the branch president and the first-ever leader of the LDS Church in Kazakhstan. The first branch opened in Almaty on July 29, 2001

According to the church statistics, today the number of believers in Kazakhstan has reached 275 people. Two branches are working in Almaty and Astana. If you look at the statistics in Asia, the number of believers is 1 111 204 people. In addition, 42 missionaries have been working actively.

When I wanted to find a Mormon church in Almaty I couldn’t find it at once. Finally, I found the

church among tall buildings but it wasn’t a temple with a dome as we thought. Ideally, the church looks like a house of worship. In addition, it is not a separate building, there is a separate entrance, but the two-storey building. The building is surrounded with an iron fence with the sign in Kazakh and Russian language ‘The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ and ‘Mormon branch in Almaty, Kazakhstan’.

The religious organization consists of different nations such as Russians, Germans, Koreans, Ukrainians, Kazakhs and Uighurs. The Mormon church is administered by different nations. The President of the church is Sultan Murat Dautov, Uighur, his Second Counselor is Murat Imangazinov, Kazakh, the second counselor is Vitaliy Tsai, Korean. What I was interested was that 40 percent of 275 people of the community are Kazakhs.

As there are 165 countries in the world so there are so many Churches of Jesus Christ there. All donations are given to a large accounting department in Salt-Lake city. The expensive building in Almaty in one of the more expensive areas is funded from there.

At the same time the church is actively working with young people. The obvious example is that the church organizes the annual “Youth Conference” that is chosen by the main church in Salt Lake City. It should be noted here that the conference is attended by young people from all over the world including the youth of Kazakhstan.

Conclusion

According to these statistics the church of Mormons is actively working in our country. They often hold conferences and seminars among the ordinary people and the followers. The program of such activities is different and interesting. For example, visiting temples and houses of worship, sharing experiences, organizing sport races, games, etc. Young people have the opportunity to travel abroad and learn foreign languages.

New evidence reaches the conclusion that the followers of Mormonism are increasing in our country especially in Almaty. The organization is funded by the USA Mormon church. In this case, the American life of style has a major influence on the youth in Kazakhstan.

The Constitution of Kazakhstan provides for freedom of religion, and the various religious communities worship largely without government interference, never to discriminate on grounds of racial, ethnic or cultural origin that all people are equal. However, the current religious situation in the

country needs to take some measures. Otherwise, the current non-traditional religious movements are focused on young people and the followers are

young. In this regard in order to improve the legal and religious literacy of young people there are still many works to do.

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