

# Religious Culture as the Part of Spiritual and Moral Development of Younger Generation

Kulikova S.V.

Northern Trans-Ural State Agricultural University  
Department of Mathematics and Computer Science  
Tyumen, Russia  
s.culickova2010@yandex.ru

Malchukova N.N.

Northern Trans-Ural State Agricultural University  
Department of Mathematics and Computer Science  
Tyumen, Russia  
Npescova06@yandex.ru

**Abstract** – The article considers the role of religious culture in the formation spiritual and moral values in the educational process Agricultural University students. The article contains the analysis of the significance level of spiritual and moral values for students focused on the agricultural sector of economics. The study found out the significance of such values as faith, religious tolerance, labor, love of Homeland and patriotism, family values and traditions based on religion and culture.

**Keywords** – religious culture, spiritual and moral values, religious consciousness, educational work, agricultural university, labor, religious tolerance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Modern spiritual and moral crisis shows an increase in religious conflict and an increase in nationalistic sentiments among youth, that damage the national security of individual states and the world as a whole. There are urgent problems such as spiritual and moral education of the future generation, the development of respect for other cultures and religions, religious tolerance and the formation of readiness for international cooperation.

One of the aspects of interethnic communication is the mastery of knowledge of the national color of different nationalities and religious traditions. Religion, morality and law are the most important regulators of public relations. The significance of the unifying role of religious culture is reflected in the example of the history of the development of our country – the Russian Federation. In particular, the role of the Orthodox religion in the history of Russia was remarkably revealed by Vladyka Juvenal (1929–2013), who once headed the Kursk-Belgorod diocese: “Orthodoxy is the great Russian culture, science and literature, isography and music. Orthodoxy is Yaroslav the Wise and Nestor the Chronicler, Kirik Novgorod and Theophan the Greek, Epiphanius Slavynetsky and M.V. Lomonosov, Vl. Soloviev and Pavel Florensky, Ivan Ilyin and Alexey Losev. Orthodoxy is the unknown author of “The Tale of Igor's Campaign” and Epiphanius the Wise, Andrei Rublev, Pushkin and Gogol, Dostoevsky, Glinka and Mussorgsky, Leonid Leonov and George Sviridov” [1].

The global trend characteristic of modern Russian society is the presence of two opposite trends: on the one hand, this is the spread of universal lifestyle standards; on the other hand, the desire for national-state sovereignty and ethnocultural identity [2].

Christian, Muslim and other religions preserve the fundamental principles of the existence and confidence in the future of people professing these religions. For example, G.V. Sviridov – the famous Soviet composer and pianist considered Christian faith a source of human and artistic self-education. In his book “Music as Fate,” the composer wrote: “A person brought up with the traditions of the Holy Scriptures is accustomed to the greatness of the world. He knows and understands the solemnness of the world and a fear of God is a key for a person to be exalted. A man who knows that the Lord is the true master of Peace, Life and Death is suspicious of self-proclaimed encroachments on greatness. A faithful person cannot be manipulated, he has a fortress of faith in his soul” [3].

The problems of morality and spirituality were raised by many educators (V.P. Vakhterov, K.D. Ushinsky, V.A. Slastenin, B.T. Likhachev, V.V. Zenkovsky, K.N. Wentzel, N.I. Pirogov, A. V. Mudrik) and psychologists (L.S. Vygotsky, M.M. Rubinstein, V.P. Zinchenko, V.I. Slobodchikov, P.P. Blonsky, P.F. Kapterev).

Modern researchers consider the ideas about the spiritual and moral values of the future generation should be formed in the process of education both in the family and in educational institutions. There is a transformation of modern youth values, they ignore basic experience and focus more on information. Modern children are focused on their desires more than we would like. Moreover, among the younger generation, 100 years ago, what was the basis for a future life is perceived today as qualities desirable, but not obligatory (obedience, respect for elders) as a lifestyle trend (healthy lifestyle) or even outdated and no longer relevant (chastity) [4].

The formation of spiritual and moral values among the youth is one of the prior ideas of modern education. Problems arising in the process of developing this idea are associated with a lack of understanding of spiritual values and their essence. Federal laws emphasize spiritual and moral education, the formation of true spiritual values and the highly moral character of a citizen. In particular, the FSES of basic general education states: “It is necessary for students to fill the whole way of life with examples of moral behavior, using domestic and world history, spiritual and moral Russian culture, and the experience of cultures of traditional religions of Russia.”

Value is the significance, importance, usefulness of an object or phenomenon [5]. A more accurate explanation of the concept of "spirituality" depends on the socio-cultural experience of the people. The basis of spirituality in Russia is the religious consciousness and culture of traditional religions which are connected with the lifestyle of our multinational country within the centuries. So, for Orthodoxy, spirituality is inseparable from faith, it is the experience of life in Christ, the involvement of a person of Divine grace, thus, we can talk about the unity of man with God. In Islam, spirituality is interpreted as a constant appeal to the Almighty. In Buddhism, spirituality is seen as the path to enlightenment through the purification of consciousness from thoughts. One can single out the general signs of the definition of the concept of "spirituality" from the standpoint of traditional religions in Russia: prayer (direct appeal to God and higher powers) and enlightenment (coming to peace of mind, purification and education of humanity to humanity).

Morality is a secular concept. As such, it combines the concepts of "morality" and "ethics." Morality represents those rules of behavior and relationships that are accepted in society and brought up with a person from childhood, this is an external manifestation of the positive qualities of a person and a worthy attitude to people and the world. Spirituality and morality are so interconnected with each other that often these concepts are mentioned together, and most often speak of spiritual and moral values, education, consciousness, etc.

An effective civil position of a person is closely connected with patriotism, which manifests itself as a love of a small homeland and feeling of pride for its past and present [6]. A hundred years ago the biggest tragedy for Russians was to leave their homeland. Leaving the place of birth, family and friends brought deep emotional pain to people that could not drown out anything, often a person felt lost in new living conditions. This was especially seen when Russia had the first mass wave of emigration after the 1917 revolution. Love for the Motherland and patriotism, embedded in the Russian people, are based on the mental religious consciousness that is passed down from generation to generation, and, in our opinion, this forms the true values that form the basis of the people's life.

Therefore, the modern educational system of both school and university, pay attention to the formation of the values that form the spiritual and moral consciousness. To a certain extent, this trend is reflected in the document "Strategy for the Development of Education in the Russian Federation for the period until 2025," which states the need for "ensuring the establishment of a Russian civic identity, strengthening the moral foundations of public life, successful socialization of children, their self-determination in the world of values and traditions of multinational the people of the Russian Federation, intercultural understanding and respect." The preamble of the Federal Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations of the Russian Federation" emphasizes respect for all religions, which are an integral part of the historical heritage of Russian citizens, but "recognizing the special role of Orthodoxy in the history of Russia, in the formation and development of its spirituality and culture" [7].

Timeliness of the analysis of the values of Orthodoxy, the building of partnerships between state structures and religious organizations is a real way to increase the effectiveness of educational activities, the formation of a tolerance culture, a positive attitude to the different traditions and religions [8].

There are two aspects distinguished in the system of spiritual and moral education: objective-technological, determined by the integrity and unity of goals, content, methods, means and forms of organizing the upbringing of moral qualities, their rigid structural and substantive connections, reflecting a certain order of the process of moral education, where the definition of subsequent components is impossible without awareness of the preceding, and subjective-personal, reflecting the role of each of the subjects of education in organization and function. Hovhan characterizing relationships and interdependencies that exist between them. All components of the process of spiritual and moral education are ordered in relation to goals, which, being complex integrative psychological formations, are concretized in the content of education, expressing its particular goals, presented as a combination of simpler moral qualities and habits that characterize moral personality at a particular stage of age development [9].

The federal state educational standard of basic general education explains a clear idea of the modern national educational system – "this is a highly moral, creative, competent citizen of Russia, accepting the fate of the homeland as his own, aware of responsibility for the present and future of the country, rooted in the spiritual and cultural traditions of the multinational people of Russian Federation" [10].

The main task of the Higher School, formulated in the "Concept for the modernization of Russian education for the period until 2025", is to prepare not only a highly qualified, responsible specialist able to stand out in a competitive job market, but also a highly moral, spiritually developed person with a sense of responsibility for the country and its socio-economic prosperity [11]. The key to the success of the task is social and pedagogical approaches unity in the education of the younger generation and is considered as the foundation for the formation of spiritual and moral values of modern youth.

It is difficult for the young generation to navigate in the modern world and the information space, which offer young people a different set of values - from deeply religious to extremely radical and anti-human. Which of them is true, which one need to be relied upon and taken as the basis of your life? The article gives answers to the questions set above.

## II. OBJECTS AND METHODS

The study was conducted on the basis of the Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education Northern Trans-Urals, Tyumen (GAU of Northern Trans-Urals) during the 2018–2019 academic year with the help of first and second-year full-time students of Agricultural Engineering faculty. The study involved 132 respondents. Used research methods are: analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature on the topic of research, questionnaire

and tests for students; comparative analysis of the results; qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

### III. RESEARCH ANALYSIS

The purpose of the study is to determine the level of spiritual and moral values significance for students of the Northern Trans-Urals, and their attitude to religiosity as the basis of these values.

The national composition and religion of students of the State Agrarian University of the Northern Trans-Urals is determined by the historical residence in the south of the Tyumen region of many nationalities, mostly Russians and Tatars, as well as the cross-border location of the region with the Republic of Kazakhstan. Nowadays there are representatives of different nationalities studying at the university: Russians, Tatars, Kazakhs, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Chechens, Chuvashs, and others. An important fact to mention is that approximately 60 % of students at the university are residents of rural areas and 40 % are urban residents.

The university trains specialists for agricultural sector of the Russian economy. This industry cannot offer young people a comfortable life, high salaries, a wide range of entertainment, and superdeveloped infrastructure. On the contrary, the agrarian sector requires hard work, love for peasant labor, love for a small homeland, concerning family traditions, manifestation of patriotism, asceticism and sacrifice, which a modern average young man is not capable of. Therefore, it is necessary to find out the level of formation of spiritual and moral values among future agricultural engineers.

The study also focuses on the attitude of students to religion, labor, a homeland, family and their future profession. A questionnaire was conducted within the study to determine the students' precedencies.

One of the first questions of the questionnaire is related to the concept of faith: "Do you consider yourself a believer and, if yes, which religion do you profess?". 73 % of the respondents consider themselves believers, 7 % are convinced atheists, the rest respondents consider themselves undecided because of mixed family traditions. The majority of believers are Orthodox – 62 people (65 %), the rest are Muslims (34 people – 35 %). There are no representatives of other faiths.

In continuation of the religious theme, students answered the question regarding religious tolerance, "How do you feel about people of another faith?". The answers turned out to be monosyllabic – either "calmly" or "good" (91 %), or "indifferently" (9 %). The result of the answers is positive and coincides with the results of a study in early 2018. I am glad that future agricultural engineers are not subject to extremism and xenophobia.

The next question: "Do you consider love of homeland and patriotism relevant values nowadays?" The question was difficult. A significant proportion of respondents could not answer (47 %), because there is no clear understanding of what the idea is about. The results between the positive and negative answers were distributed as follows: 34 and 19 %,

relatively. The fact is alarming, because the respondents are the professionals dealing with the development of the country. The future of homeland depends on their patriotism. Therefore, answers to the question "Would you like to move to another country?" were offering hope. Only 3 people (2 %) gave an affirmative answer, because they do not see for themselves the possibility of self-realization in our country. 9 % may leave their homeland if they cannot "find themselves" in the future, 33 % never think about it, 5 % do not do this because of the difficulty of learning a foreign language, the rest (51 %) will not leave the country whatever the circumstances are, and this category is made up of students who consider themselves believers. A large percentage of those who do not want or do not think to leave the country is explained by the fact that the respondents are mainly rural residents who would rather want to move to the city than to leave the country.

Next question was: "Do you consider work a spiritual and moral value of modern society?" The majority of respondents answered positively (78 %), considering "hardworking people are valued in society", "all that we have is the result of labor," "no pain, no gain" "there is no society without work", "work ennobles man", "our life is based on labor", "progress is achieved through labor", "people get money and become physically hardy with the help of labor"; 10 people (7.5 %) answered "I don't know", the rest indicated a negative answer, arguing with explanations "people became lazy" and "not all kind of labor is paid". The reasoned answers show that the respondents relied on an abstract understanding of labor as a value that is present in human life, but no one expressed a personal attitude to work. Those who do not consider labor a value perceive it as a necessary tool for obtaining benefits. This approach to the assessment of labor coincides with the results of a similar survey conducted in 2016–2018. Units of those questioned (apparently true believers) consider work necessary for spiritual growth, as a basis for independence and confidence in the future. When specifying what kind of work – intellectual or physical (peasant) – respondents imply, the results are obtained: 25 % answered "intellectual" (this indicator includes those who think to go abroad, atheists, some of those who do not consider work to be value), 28 % – physical, the majority (47 %) – both intellectual and physical.

We were also interested in the respondents' attitude towards the family and family traditions. The traditional attitude to the family has always been passed down from generation to generation and is still considered one of the main values of our society [12]

For several years, students mostly consider family the prior value. The latest research has shown the same results. 58 % of respondents make family a priority, as they think good family relations, love for parents and preservation of family traditions are important. Among the peculiarities of upbringing in rural areas, students note a closer relationship with people, the lack of urbanization processes in the countryside (according to students, this is an advantage when raising children), strict upbringing, respect for elders, and accustoming to work [13].

Family dynasties are still one of the most important part of their life. 16 % of the surveyed students studying agricultural

engineering continue the family dynasty. Same survey in 2017 showed another percentage – 14 %. The percentage is small, but it shows a continuing trend of agrarian dynasties. Despite the negative trends of the post-Soviet period, in particular, the reorientation of rural schoolchildren to urban professions and the education of a consumer attitude to life, they still managed to maintain professional continuity in the rural environment [14].

The last thing we asked about future professional activities: “Are you going to live and work in the countryside after graduation?” 17 % (22 people) gave affirmative answers, 58 % (77 people) would not go to the suburbs and 25 % (33 people) – “rather no than yes”. The question is not idle. Since the GAU of the Northern Trans-Urals trains specialists for the agricultural sector of the economy, it is important that students stay to work in this area and live in the countryside. This is one of those questions that we always ask our students. The number of positive answers reflects a steady trend in the study of this issue for 11 years: 2008 – 11 %, 2010 – 15 %, 2012 – 15 %, 2014 – 14 %, 2016 -16 %, beginning of 2018 – 15 %, although one cannot but notice the weak dynamics in the direction of an increase in those wishing to work in the agricultural sector. Those who are studying in the target direction or want to continue the peasant dynasty, or can’t stand the bustle of the city, are ready to deal with peasant work.

As for those who doubt, this category increases from year to year. In 2008 there were 0 % of uncertain answers (more often there was a strict rejection), but the number increased to 25 % – a positive result by 2019. This category of students should be encouraged so that after graduation they stay to work for the development of villages.

University, Department of agro-industrial complex (AIC) of the Tyumen region are doing a much work on this issue. The “Agro-civilization project” was created for rural schoolchildren of all ages. The main goal of the project is to promote a rural lifestyle. The university employs professional student labor groups, for example, Energetik, Agroengineer and others. They earned agricultural classes at rural schools. In 2019, an agreement was signed between the State Agrarian University of the Northern Trans-Urals, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education and Science of the Tyumen Region on career guidance, creating a positive way of rural life and popularizing agricultural professions in the system “kindergarten-school-college-university”.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study show that a graduate of an agricultural university should have spiritual and moral values based on religious culture, such as faith, the value of work, love for a homeland and family. Without this, a young man’s conscious choice of the agricultural profession is not possible. Only a solid spiritual and moral foundation will help a university graduate realize himself in the agricultural sphere, be happy, not regret his choice, consider his profession serving the homeland.

The results of the study allow us to draw the following conclusions.

1. It is important to form a positive attitude towards peasant labor and rural lifestyles for a graduate of an agricultural university and to orient him to live and work in rural areas; help realize that his work and professionalism are necessary for the development of agriculture and the country as a whole.

2. The educational process in an agricultural university should be based on the identity of the cultural heritage and religious consciousness of our multinational country. The task of teachers is to convey to each student in the process of spiritual and moral education the basic dogmas of each religion, to show their essence and humanity, to teach religious tolerance. Attending events dedicated to the Day of National Unity, the national holidays of each national culture, should be an integral part of the educational plan of the university.

3. It is necessary to pay more attention to the events forming the spiritual and moral values, traditional for Russia, based on mental religious consciousness in the young generation.

4. Promote among young people respect for family traditions, the importance of preserving labor dynasties, love for the small homeland and the Fatherland, and foster patriotism.

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