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From Outsider to Parishioner: Religious Identity Among the Older Generation in the Ivanovo Archdiocese

Translation by Charles Arndt III

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This article deals with religious identity among the older generation in the recently formed Ivanovo Archdiocese through the analysis of two criteria: self-identification (Do you consider yourself a believer?) and regularity of church attendance (Do you attend church, and if yes, then how often?). Data gathered through a phone survey is analyzed through a mixed research methodology, in which the insights gleaned through statistical data are supplemented with those gained through detailed conversation analysis applied to the exchanges between questioners and respondents. This analysis is used to develop a typology of religious identity along with indices of religious indifference and religious mobility. One striking conclusion is that religious identity among the older generation in the Ivanovo Archdiocese seems to be largely independent of external social factors.

Keywords: interview analysis, attachment to the Church, Ivanovo Archdiocese, index of religious mobility, index of religious indifference, elderly people, religious identity, sociology of religion, phone surveys.

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I remember how, the first morning after reading the Gospel, I went out and looked around in amazement at all the people walking down the street, running for the train, rushing to work, and I thought: What a miracle! They may not know that they are all loved by God indiscriminately, but I know, and they can no longer be my enemies...

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, *Conversations about Faith and the Church*

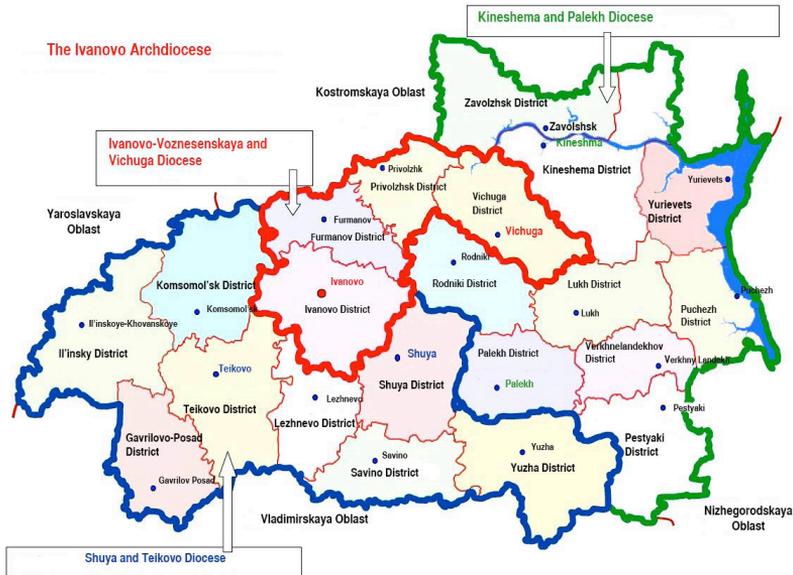
ON June 7, 2012, by decision of the Holy Synod, the Ivanovo Archdiocese was formed. It consists of three dioceses: in the western part of the Ivanovo Oblast there is the Shuya and Teikovo Diocese; in the center of the oblast there is the Ivanovo-Voznesenskaya and Vichuga Diocese; and finally, in the East, the Kineshema and Palekh Diocese (Figure 1).

The main reasons for the allocation of three new dioceses from within the Ivanovo-Voznesenskaya Diocese (which, according to territorial boundaries, corresponds with the Ivanovo Oblast) are the large size of the territory, the remoteness of several population centers, and the expansion of parish life. All of these create difficulties if there is only one center. The proportions of population density and territorial integrity were taken into account in the formation of these three dioceses. Along with this, it is interesting to pose the question of just how homogeneous the contingent of believers actually is. Do their socio-demographic characteristics vary drastically? Can one discern any distinguishing features in the parishes of the three newly formed dioceses?

Traditionally, the older generational cohort is more active in church parish life (Argyle 1958: 48–49; Davie 1998: 101–02), especially in rural, economically deprived regions. Regardless of religious confession, religiosity appears most often among people experiencing some kind of social deprivation. In addition to the elderly, Lynda Powell, Leila Shahabi and Carl Thoresen single out minorities, women, the less-educated population, the handicapped and people with poor health as those who are more inclined to religious service (Powell et al. 2003: 38). John Vincent considers that the main problem of old age is in its social construction as a period of sickness and want, which in the modern world leads to the stigmatization and the deprivation of the elderly, (Vincent 2003: 131, 138, 167) and also leads, according to studies done on non-Russian populations, to their involvement

in religious activity. Because of this age cohort's association with a religious worldview, it is precisely with the elderly age group that we can most readily test the extent of the religious homogeneity and the overall social consistency across the newly formed dioceses.

Figure 1: The Boundaries of the Ivanovo Archdiocese



Sample

At the end of May 2012 the Ladoga Foundation, together with the non-profit organization Social Validation, The Center for Methodology for Research on Federalism at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, and the public opinion research institute Qualitas conducted a telephone survey among residents of the Ivanovo Oblast who were above 50 years of age. All told, 1,200 people were questioned according to a random sample that included mobile and stationary telephones, which allowed for the inclusion of rural settlements far away from regional centers and, in general, to significantly expand the territorial coverage.

The sample was based on ABC and DEF range telephone numbers active in the Ivanovo Oblast, published on the Federal Communication Agency's website. The ABC ranges include geographically bound telephone numbers (stationary phones, including apartment phones) while the telephone numbers from the DEF ranges are not associated

with any specific geographic location (mobile phones). The quantity of selected numbers in a range was directly proportional to the share of that range in the general quantity of numbers assigned to the corresponding oblast (the volume of the range). The selection of numbers in a given range occurred randomly with the help of systematic selection with the interval equal to the relationship of the volume of the range to the quantity of selected numbers in the range. With this selection method, each telephone number from all of the DEF or ABC ranges has an equal probability of being included in the sample.

Selection within a given household was not carried out, that is, the survey was taken from the first member of the family over fifty years old to come to the phone who was willing to take part in a conversation about education. If a respondent who answered the phone was under fifty years old, he or she was asked if there was anyone living in the house over fifty and was requested to pass the phone to that person. If there was a person in a given family who fulfilled all the criteria for the sample, but it was not possible to speak with him or her at that moment, the interviewer found out a convenient time for the conversation to take place and, if necessary, called the elderly person at a different phone number.

Data Processing Methods

The data analysis was built on mixed research methods. On the one hand, we relied on the results of a quantitative survey. The strictness of the formulas and the unambiguous wording of the closed questions allow us to construct aggregate indicators, scale the data and perform a quantitative analysis. On the other hand, any standardized interview merely represents a particular conversation format (Baker 2002: 779). People are not robots, and an interview is not a formal transfer of information. Respondents make judgments, wait for reinforcement of their answer from the interviewer, justify their judgments, and make arguments for as well as against statements they had just uttered. In other words, behind all the classifications of answers and aggregate indicators lies a first-hand, living moment of communication in which the wealth of meanings and experiences is at times no less than that found in the most heartfelt discussion. Therefore, to ignore the situation of the conversation entirely, to act as if it is not a significant factor for the interpretation of the data, would represent, it seems, if not complete methodological folly, then at least the crudest of methodological errors.

Analyzing telephone dialogues, we relied on a particular phonetically oriented method of transcribing audio recordings. For example, laughter is codified as a row of x's in parentheses, and their quantity refers to the length of the laugh: "(xxxxx)" or "(xx)"; with upper-case or lower-case indicating volume: "(xxx)" or "(XXX)" for soft or loud, respectively; arrows pointing up (↑) or down (↓) refer to rising or falling intonation, respectively. Pauses are codified as are overlapping speech, interrupting one's conversation partner, stress and elevation of the intonation (for more details see appendix). Developed in the tradition of conversation analysis, these codes allow us to capture not only semantic constructions but also non-verbal methods of communication: laughter, sighs, pauses, overlapping statements, interruption of speech, etc. In countless publications, the interlocutors' remarks, commonly sterilized under the pressure of the rules of punctuation and orthography, lose not only the uniqueness of conversational speech, but also the accentuation of meanings. When the conversation turns to a subject close to the respondent's heart, invariably there is a loss of meaningful elements of his or her speech if the researcher ignores the non-verbal side of communication. Because the interview is built upon a standardized questionnaire, the interviewer relies on receiving quick, laconic answers. For this reason, the respondents' justifications and comments to closed questions are all the more important to us. Detailed replies not only allow us to test the meaningfulness and importance of the questions posed, but also to assign valid boundaries to subsequent interpretations.

It is interesting to note that a more comprehensive interpretation of the questions is generally more helpful when dealing with members of the older generation. They approach the formulation of their answers more responsibly, often attempting to demonstrate to the interviewer the possible range of personal understanding. This creates a certain tension in communication. The interviewer cannot always choose a simple, unambiguous answer that corresponds to the proposed scale. However, we get calculated indicators saturated with meaning by using our system of codes for conversation analysis.

Data Analysis

The respondents were asked three questions related to religious topics: Do you consider yourself a believer? Do you go to church? If yes, how often? (Table 1). In international public opinion surveys,¹ certain

1. See for example Gallup 1996.

variations of these questions about religious self-identification and the frequency of church attendance are the most widely used questions for evaluating religious identity and for measuring the range of religious practices.

**Table 1: The Distribution of Answers to Questions about Faith,*
% per column**

Questions	Dioceses of the Ivanovo Archdiocese				Average
	The city of Ivanovo	Ivanovo-Voznesenskaya and Vichuga (w/o the city of Ivanovo)	Shuya and Teikovo	Kineshema and Palekh	
DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A BELIEVER?					
Yes	70	78	81	82	76
No	30	22	19	18	24
DO YOU GO TO CHURCH?					
Regularly to services	6	4	7	7	6
Mainly on holidays	53	54	56	51	53
I do not go to church	42	42	37	42	41

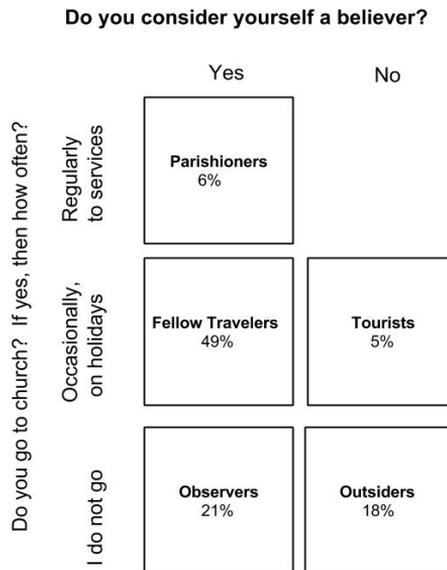
* The portion of the population that is not Orthodox within the region does not exceed 2–3%. Therefore, within the framework of this study, we are not examining the differences between Orthodoxy and other confessions.

The overwhelming majority (76%) of the residents of the Ivanovo Oblast over fifty years old consider themselves believers; however just under half (41%) claim that they do not go to church. From the distribution across the three dioceses, it is evident that one cannot trace any relationship between place of residence and church attendance. In addition, when the question of faith was posed to people in the capital of the Oblast, Ivanovo,

the number of people claiming a lack of personal faith was a little higher (30%) than the average (24%) for the Ivanovo Oblast.

From the general features of the findings from the three questions, one can build a typology of religious identity in which the question of whether one has faith forms the axis of religious identification, and church attendance indicates the mobility (Figure 2). The extreme negative position in this religious typology is occupied by people who answered negatively to both questions (18%): they do not consider themselves believers and do not attend church. Independent of their personal views and convictions, at the present moment they remain outsiders with respect to church life. However, their position is more likely determined by a lack of knowledge and by their apartness from the church rather than stemming from a deep-seated atheism. For the majority of Ivanovo Oblast residents declaring a lack of faith, this reflects searching and doubt, and not a materialistic view of life that rejects any spiritual element. For example, a former teacher of Russian language and literature who was interviewed avoided providing a straight answer to the question about faith for a long time, and then, at one point, proposed her own interpretation of faith: “I speak with God in civil language, when I need to” (Fragment 1, line 5).

**Figure 2: Typology of Religious Identity,
% from the number of respondents**



Fragment 1²*Woman, 72 years old, city of Kineshma*

-
1. I: And ↓so ↑do you consider yourself a beliEving (.) person
 2. R: (3.0) how can I say (1.0) I'm a believer and ↑ not a believer (1.0)
 3. [like when I get sick: I ask
 4. I: [well which do you lean ↑ to
 5. R: I speak with God in civilian language when I need to
 6. ↓Although to be honest then >how can I say< he probably respects me
 7. He helps [if I ever get sick I just kind of lie down he
 8. I: [well you::
 9. R: okay cAlm down Actually I drank a lot of tea with raspberry jam
 10. and That's it I got better
 11. I: so you more ↑believe=
 12. R: =No=
 13. I: =or you are having trouble answering
 14. R: you know I don't like fanatics. Well I have a whole
 15. lot of:: fri- friends (.) gIrl friends friends=
 16. I: =uh huh
 17. R: from the school ((I worked as a Russian language teacher in a high school
 18. for 40 years)) >well there at the school < so (.) Some of them
-

2. Here and in future examples, the specific collection of coded symbols, which have been developed in order to convey particularities of emotional indicators and intonation in the speech of the respondents (see appendix), has been applied to the transcripts of interview excerpts. Failure to account for the non-verbal component in an interview can result in false interpretations of what is said, shifting the interpretation toward the interpreter's reading. In contrast, the system of codes we have developed allows us to capture the particularities of the interviewers' and interviewees' utterances and to bring the written text closer to the elusive ligature of oral communication.

-
19. well:: completely you know ah::: in that- in that area well::
20. over GOd [(.) ↓went crazy
21. I: [(xx) well
22. R: well [this is me: I don't app-approve
23. I: [so you:
24. R: well you believe and After all believe —
25. I: -well so >you believe< ↑Yes
26. R: if you want to believe, believe, if you don't want to believe,
don't believe=
27. I: =So what do you ↑think
28. Do you believe more or
29. >are you having trouble answering <
30. R: (2.0) I simply you know what: (.) think that If you Want
believe
31. ↓if you want don't believe —
32. I: well: then ↑you=
33. R: =I don't believe
-

Only after recalling her school colleagues, who, in her opinion, “went crazy over God,” and after several polite but persistent requests from the interviewer (lines 4, 8, 11, 13, 21, 23, 25, 27–29, 32) does she make a clear choice—“I don't believe” (line 33). The numerous pauses, introductory phrases, and use of supplementary examples indicate that the respondent does not have a clear negative bias against faith. She more likely belongs to the group of so-called “observers,” who in their hearts accept God, but the present conversational situation and, possibly, her recollection of episodes from her personal life, push her to respond in the negative. This “emergent,” on-the-spot formulation of a negative response about having faith is typical for the people of the older generation that we questioned.

The most positive attitude toward church is demonstrated by those who answered positively to both questions: 6% of those questioned consider themselves believers and regularly attend church (Fragment 2).

Fragment 2*Man, 59 years old, village of Malyshevo, Rodniki District*

1. I: Do you consider yourself a ↑believing person
2. R: yes YES I am a deeply believing person
3. I: Do you ↑go to church if yes then ↑how often=
4. R: =absolutely
5. I go regularly: rEgularly as much as nEcessary=
6. I: =uh huh
7. R: according to the ↓canons °that's how much I go°

This may approximate the typical view of churched parishioners, who can be categorized as the type of parishioners who make a conscious decision on the question of faith.

The most numerous group of respondents consists of “fellow travelers,” those who consider themselves believers but only rarely attend church, i.e., on holidays (49%). For them, in contrast to the “observers” and some of the “outsiders,” the question of faith does not raise any problems; however, visiting churches is associated more with curiosity (Fragment 3, lines 12–19) and with the desire to see something new than with day-to-day life or any sort of regular activity.

Fragment 3*Man, 61 years old, city of Ivanovo*

8. I: But do you ↑consider yourself a believing person
9. R: Yes I am ↓Orthodox I ↓pay respect and:: and I wear a
10. cross and —
11. I: -Ah:: —
12. R: -I believe=
13. I: =have you gone to church If yes then ↑how often
14. R: I've gOne to church but:: ↓not often I've been and::: in big churches and:::
15. There are a lOt of churches nowadays and I gO frequently —
16. I: - mostly on ↑holidays
17. R: well::: at lEast::: let's say about twIce a year=
18. I: =Ah I see —
19. R: -And: so I visited °well I'm
20. talking on average° But I visited
21. Very many And in Kiev ↓I was
22. And::: in sergievpOsad ↓I visited
23. I ↓Saw Everything: I'm curious

-
24. about these things Well in the Ivanovo
 25. Oblast I've been practically
 26. everywhere
 27. I: mostly on holidā —
 28. R: - YES YES whEn there is the opportunity ↓ of course
-

As a rule, “fellow travelers” critically evaluate the strength of their own faith (Fragment 4, lines 2–3), reporting that they do not make any special effort in this area. But they do possess a general positive attitude, attentiveness and respect for faith. This could be connected with personal experiences and/or examples from the lives of other people (fragment 4, lines 7–11).

Fragment 4

Woman, 71 years old, city of Ivanovo

-
1. I: Tell me please do you ↓ consider yourself a believing person
 2. (3.0) we: ll a true believer <I can't say< Well: generally I go
 3. [to church
 4. I: [well↑ probably ↓ yes=
 5. R: = ↓ yes probably::: well I would say —
 6. I: - yes the truth, here is the truth (xxx)
 7. R: well you know (.) well we had this teacher=
 8. I: = uh huh
 9. R: if I Well (.) he was never (.) and then suddenly he became a
 10. true believer. And then he went- He knew all the holidays:::
 11. and::=
 12. I: =uh huh
 13. R: we don't have that- no we don't have That and I won't talk
 about it—
 14. I: - well do you consider yourself a
 15. ↑believer
 16. R: well in general
-

Doubts in faith — this is a characteristic typical of representatives of the “fellow travelers” group. They are missing only a little of what would cause them to transfer into the “parishioners” group. Nevertheless, a generally positive attitude and, in some sense, an understanding of religious values, is present to the fullest degree. One of their most common explanations is lack of time, immersion in day-to-day cares and concerns, looking after loved ones. For example, a man who stated earlier that his main concern is his grandchildren called himself

a believer without any uncertainty (fragment 5, line 2). But he only associates attending church with time freeing up: “everything depends upon how busy things are, on work and plus chores around the house” (fragment 5, lines 7–9).

Fragment 5

Man, 50 years old, village of Savino, Savino District

-
1. I: Tell me please: Do you ↓consider yourself a believing person
 2. R: (3.0) °yes°
 3. I: and do you go to chur—
 4. R: - ↓of course Without faith one can't do anything ↑Going to church
 5. As ↓required As much as I can
 6. I: well then mostly ↑on holidays or do you regularly attend services
 7. R: (4.0) (...xx) everything depends o::n how busy things are=
 8. I: =uh huh
 9. R: on work and (2.0) plus chOres around the house
-

“Observers” refuse to attend church but identify themselves as believers. In research on the population of Western Europe, the steady rise of this group was noted several decades ago. Grace Davie convincingly shows how elderly people living in developed countries are less and less frequently connecting their faith with the Church these days (Davie 1994; Davie and Vincent 1998: 103). Analogous results concerning the departure of the elderly from traditional religion to private spiritual practices and the radical individualization of faith in Japanese society have been noted by Neal Krause, Jersey Liang, Joan Bennett and their colleagues (Krause, et al. 2010: 671–96). In our study, by contrast, the group refusing participation in collective worship is not so large — 21%. Moreover, in examining the speech forms of this refusal, it is not difficult to uncover its completely conditional nature. For example, one grandmother emphasized three times in a strong tone that she has faith (fragment 6, lines 2, 12), leaving the interviewer no doubt of this. However, she just as decisively asserted her lack of church attendance. However, this did not represent a categorical rejection of church attendance. She very rarely goes to church and does not consider it possible to say she does, because of the irregularity of her visits. She stops by a church “only for my soul, once in a while” (Fragment 6, lines 6–7).

Fragment 6

Woman, 70 old years, the old city of Navoloki, Kineshema District

1. I: Do you ↓consider yourself a believing person
2. R: (2.0) I:: ↓believe but (.) I dOn't ↓go to church
3. I: you don't go ↓to church ↑yes
4. R: yes
5. I: -and how would you evalu—
6. R: - well from time to time from time to time:: well it's like
7. for the soul ↓for my—
8. I: -look there is an [option here
9. R: [and so in order to
10. I: [go regularly to services or on
11. holidays or you don't go at all
12. R: I don't go At All but I BELIEVE but:: I BELIEVE

“Tourists” (5%), by contrast, speak of their own lack of faith, but stop by church from time to time. We are not speaking here about curiosity or the desire to find out something new — qualities often associated with tourism — but rather about a kind of traditionalism encoded in their behavior: “I go because it's expected, you should.” To build on the metaphor of tourism, this is not individual itinerary selection but rather a group visit to places designated in advance. It is the acceptance of a number of previously assigned rules without thinking through and understanding their necessity or importance. Here we witness tourism by habit: an association with the other as a means of satisfying what is expected, often connected with an incurable disease or death, a sorrow that cannot be confined with a secular picture of the world.

Fragment 7

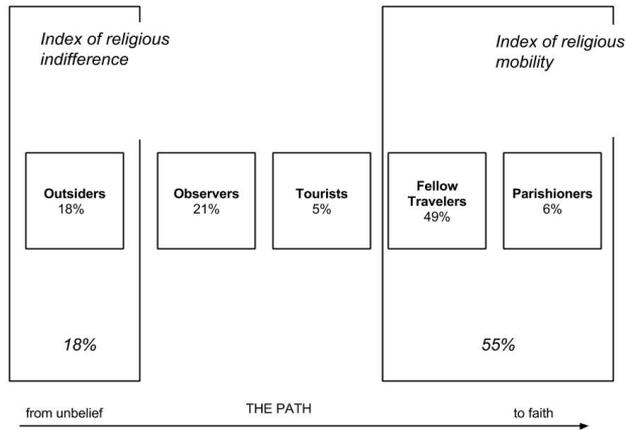
Woman, 53 years old, village of Staraya Vichuga, Vichuga District

1. I: Do you consider yourself: a believing person ↓yes or no
2. R: (2.0) no
3. I: no And church do you ↑go or not
4. R: I go when it's necessary
5. I: mostly ↓on holidays ↓when you need to ↑ yes
6. R: well: to honor the dead you know in in obedience to the rituals (.)
7. for memorial services

The research tradition of explaining someone's coming to faith as a result of deprivation, pain and suffering has long been established.

A large proportion of faith among the elder generation is based on the nearness of death, poor health, and losses in life (Lane 1978: 225; Argyle 1958: 49). While not disputing the causes listed above, we note that these reasons arose much more often in conversation with people in the “tourist” and “observer” categories than the other categories. Among the “parishioners” and “fellow travelers” life-affirming motifs dominated, and meaning, for them, is found through an even-tempered, if not to say joyful, attitude to events. Neal Krause came to similar conclusions having found in empirical data a direct and persistent relationship between imbuing one’s path in life with meaning, the strengthening of a religious understanding of one’s personal calling, and regularity in attending church services (Krause 2003: 160–70). Because religion is perhaps the weightiest area of human existence, endowing the latter with meaning (Clark 1958: 419), the search for meaning, and not an escape from reality, becomes the dominating factor in turning to God. In other words, above all faith provides people with a chance at life; it corresponds with an understanding of and sense of meaning behind what is occurring and does not merely serve as a surrogate for worldly losses. It is practically impossible to come to such an understanding of faith in isolation. Krause shows how the church community provides the parishioner with both spiritual and emotional support. The first is based on religious doctrine, the second on universal human values — empathy, care, love and trust (Krause 2008: 397–98). It is precisely the combination of the spiritual and the emotional that explains the vivid contrast between the attitudes of believers and those who are merely curious about faith.

The typology constructed here allows us to assign the elderly generation to a specific territory with regard to factors that are significant to confessional identification. If one were to speak of the realization of a key goal set by the 2011 Bishops’ Council, the revitalization of parish life, then approaching different categories of the population for social and marketing purposes becomes sensible. It allow for the identification of target groups and for a more efficient delegation of efforts in spreading Christian teachings. The typology of religious identity presented here (Figure 2) can be easily broken down into a linear scale showing the religious journey from complete unbelief, lexically referred to as “outsiders,” to becoming churchd, which leads to the behavior of “parishioners” (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Indices of Religious Indifference and Religious Mobility

The portion of “outsiders” in a given territory can be interpreted as the “index of religious indifference”, or lack of faith. This is the part of the population which is, as yet, impermeable to the direct influence of religious instruction. The index defines the detachment of the community being investigated from religious practice. At the same time, the total share of “parishioners” and “fellow travelers” (the most consistent and active part of the church parish) we interpret as the “index of religious mobility,” indicating genuine movement toward faith. In the Ivanovo Oblast, the index of religious indifference for people over fifty years old is 18%, and the index of religious mobility is 55% (figure 3). Grace Davie, relying on the work of Georg Simmel, emphasizes the individualization and segmentation of modern life, the departure from collective forms of worship, and the search for personal ways of connecting with the sacred (Davie 2007: 31). In our classification, these are the groups described as “tourists” and “observers.” We will note here that these groups are quite small and thus do not compel us to speak of the disintegration of collective forms of worship. On the contrary, it is obvious that there is a significant shift in the direction of religiosity among the oblast’s older generation, which points to the strong position and productive activity of the Church. If one examines the values of the indices in the Archdiocese in cross-section, their homogeneous distribution ($\chi^2 = 23.508$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.024$) becomes noticeable. In other words, the Ivanovo Archdiocese, in the religious identity of the older generation, represents a largely homogeneous socio-territorial community (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of Answers on the Index of One's Religious Journey in the Dioceses of the Ivanovo Archdiocese, % by line

Dioceses of the Ivanovo Archdiocese	Typology of the roads to faith					Indices	
	Parishioners	Fellow Travelers	Observers	Tourists	Outsiders	Religious Mobility	Religious Indifference
City of Ivanovo	6	47	17	6	24	53	24
Ivano-Vosnesenskaya and Vichuga w/o the city of Ivanovo	4	52	22	4	18	56	18
Shuya and Teikovo	8	50	22	6	14	58	14
Kineshema and Palekh	8	47	27	5	13	55	13
Average	6	49	21	5	18	55	18

Marginal differences (statistically insignificant) are noticeable only among the numbers of “observers” and “outsiders” in the city Ivanovo and in the Kineshema and Palekh Diocese, respectively. In Ivanovo a greater number of “outsiders” stands out – 24% versus 18% in the average of the sample. In the Kineshema and Palekh Diocese observers represent 27% of the population versus the overall average of 21% (Table 2). The index of religious mobility in these territories is practically indistinguishable.

Based on the hints of variation indicated above, one could surmise that the urban population differs significantly from the rural population in matters of faith. However, in our sample we did not discover any direct relationship between the type of inhabited locality and religious identity ($\chi^2 = 8.212$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.413$). Moreover, no correlation has been established with such a variable on any question concerning socio-demographic or behavioral characteristics.

Only in relation to gender and use of the internet are there some insignificant correlations: men take the position of observers more often than women, to the detriment of the position of fellow travelers

($\chi^2 = 12.255$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.016$); among those who use the internet daily, the number of outsiders is greater than among those who never use the internet ($\chi^2 = 35.142$, $df = 16$, $p < 0.004$). In conducting a quantitative content analysis on discussion topics among the elderly in online communities, Galit Nimrod discovered that questions of faith and religious practice occupy only one thirteenth of the most discussed topics, which include: enjoyment of life, rest and recreation, family, health, work and education, and financial issues (Nimrod 2010: 382–92). It is possible that the intensification of secular interaction, which is uncharacteristic for those advanced in years, leads to a disinclination toward purely religious ponderings.

In relation to the other variables we do not see even a hint of any kind of statistical dependence: whether concerning age groups ($\chi^2 = 10.306$, $df = 16$, $p < 0.850$), assessment of one's financial situation ($\chi^2 = 20.683$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.055$), education ($\chi^2 = 10.571$, $df = 16$, $p < 0.835$), engagement in physical exercise ($\chi^2 = 3.765$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.439$), assessment of one's health ($\chi^2 = 8.806$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.719$), willingness to take a job involving physical labor ($\chi^2 = 4.497$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.810$), attitude toward local government ($\chi^2 = 4.004$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.857$), appraisal of the standard of living in the Oblast ($\chi^2 = 9.087$, $df = 20$, $p < 0.982$), etc. In studies undertaken outside Russia the lack of a connection between religious precepts or practices and certain socio-demographic or behavioral variables has been regularly recorded (June, et al. 2009; Moreira-Almeida, et al. 2010). However, we have yet to see a study exhibiting thoroughly sustained and consistent independence among such characteristics.

Conclusion

From here we can formulate a fairly radical contention, from the standpoint of secular consciousness: religious identity in the Ivanovo Archdiocese does not depend on the external characteristics and particularities of secular behavior. Within the framework of the questions touched upon in this study, the path from complete unbelief to becoming churchied in the thinking and practices of the elderly generation is conditioned exclusively by the spiritual efforts of the parishioner. It would seem that what is a banal truth to an Orthodox believer has been confirmed by statistical data, which in itself is surprising. Usually, it is not so difficult to discover manifold correlations, from the entirely plausible to the quite extravagant. In academic journals one finds literally hundreds of scholarly articles on how elderly people's health, social well-being,

physical condition, and sexual behavior depend on their involvement in religious practice (Idler, et al. 2003: 327–65; Krause 2003: 160–70; Levin, et al. 2006: 1168–69; Levin, et. al. 2011: 389–406; Levin and Chatters 2008: 153–72; Mystakidou, et al. 2008: 1779–85; Idler, et al. 2009: 528–37; Moxey, et al. 2011: 82–88; McFarland, et al. 2011: 297–308; Stang, et al. 2012: 101–08). However, the variable of religious identity we have constructed uncovers an enviable stability and immunity from all materially conditioned factors included in the questionnaire. How persistent is this “anti-sociological” conclusion concerning the path to faith’s independence from secular life? Where are the limits of such a generalization? Can one transfer it to the elderly generation of the whole of Russian society, or must one speak only of the Ivanovo Oblast? Have we discovered a characteristic unique to Orthodoxy or can we transfer such assertions, with some adjustments, to other religions? How much does the advanced age of those surveyed influence the practice of becoming churchd? How much do age-based cohorts of the population of Russia differ in the typology of religious identity, if at all? All of these questions are for subsequent research, comparisons, and scholarly articles.

Appendix

Key to transcription symbols for registering conversational speech*

Symbol	Description
(o.o)	Numbers in parentheses indicate pauses between statements (in seconds)
()	The speech fragment is unclear and cannot be transcribed
(.)	Symbol for a short interval between statements (tenths of a second)
(())	A comment of the author, not part of the statement
(words)	Doubt as to the correctness of the transcribed excerpt
[]	Overlapping of statements
(xx)	Laughter, smile in the voice

Symbol	Description
.xx	Inhalation
xx.	Exhalation
Wo (xx) rd	The word is pronounced with laughter or a smile in the voice
=	There is no pause in the statement at all
word—	Interrupted word
.,?! :	Symbols representing intonation: concluding, listing, interrogative and exclamatory
:	Stretching out of the letter; the number of symbols approximately indicates the length of the stretching
<u>word</u>	An underlined letter indicates intonation stress on that letter
WORD	The word is pronounced very loudly, a shout
<u>word</u>	The word is energetically emphasized and said a little louder than usual
°word°	The statement is pronounced noticeably quieter than usual
↑↓	Rising and lowering of intonation
→	Direction toward an element of the transcription described in the text
word'	A “swallowed” word or part of a word, colloquial variation
<...>	The part of text following between the statements is omitted
<> ><	Slowing of speech; acceleration of speech

* Composed in accordance with the basic fundamental rules of transcription for conversation analysis (Sacks, et al. 1974: 731, 734; Hutchby and Wooffitt 2001: vi-vii).

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