

How did the adoption
of orthodox
christianity in the 10th
century a.d. influence

...



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

How did the adoption of Orthodox Christianity in the 10th Century A. D. influence the Russian State? Since the adoption of Christianity by Vladimir I in 988 A. D. the church has had a profound influence on the Russian state. The magnitude of this influence has varied throughout history, from its peak during the 15th Century, to lows during the reign of Peter the Great and in Soviet Russia. Since the fall of communism the Church has revived its position in Russian Society and is asserting its influence in a number of ways, including resurgence in attendance, the building and restoration of churches, and arguably in the re-appearance of the Church and State acting in symphony. Prior to 988 A. D. Prior to the adoption of Christianity, paganism prospered in 10th century eastern Slavic areas, including modern day Ukraine and Western Russia. This pagan worship was specific to each tribe and community resulting in a lack of unity between tribes and communities. In 980 AD, Vladimir I the Prince of Kiev, recognised the need to bring these pagan tribes together under a common 'single state' religion. He initially attempted this through the unification of common pagan gods, however this didn't succeed.[1] Fortuitously at this time, the conditions for the adoption of the Christian religion were appropriate, including the spread of Eastern (Byzantine) Christianity along the Black Sea and other nearby areas. It was this religion that Vladimir I chose to unite Rus and which, subsequently created the nation of Rus out of the chaos of barbarian tribes.[2] Arguably, Vladimir I chose this religion, for a number of reasons. Most notably were the aesthetic qualities of the religion, including the beauty of the service and the churches themselves that finally determine the adoption of this religion.[3] These qualities subsequently had influence throughout Russian history in architecture, the arts, culture and notably in all Russian's lives. Of a major <https://assignbuster.com/how-did-the-adoption-of-orthodox-christianity-in-the-10th-century-ad-influence-the-russian-state/>

importance to the survival of ' Rus' the church also ensured survival through the Mogol years and persecutions such as during the reign of Peter the Great. 988 A. D. The Adoption of Orthodox Christianity In the year 988 AD Vladimir I was baptised and declared Christianity as the official state religion of ' Rus' (then Kievan Rus).[4] In the immediate aftermath of the adoption of Christianity, the deities of the old religion were destroyed, mass baptisms took place, churches were built and priests were appointed in all towns. The immediate impact of this conversion to Christianity also saw children of the Kievan upper class educated and taught to read. The Church and its influence upon the Russian State The Mongol invasion In the middle of the 13th century, during the period of Mogol conquests, the Russian Orthodox church saved the population from destruction by the Mongol invaders, the Tartars. The Tatar's were pagans who fortunately believed in the existence of more than one god. Accordingly, they recognised the church's saints and the church, just-in-case they were the one true god, thereby granting them forbearance and support instead of destruction.[5] During this period, the church also gave spiritual strength to the nation of Russia to survive and fight off the enemies[6] and was one defining factor in Russia finally overcoming the Tatars, under the leadership of Ivan the Terrible. The middle history Throughout its middle history the Russian church became more submissive to the will of the state. Submission was evidenced as early as the 14th century, and complete in the 18th and 19th century with the decree of Peter the Great. However, this submissive relationship went from one end of the spectrum to the other, with the church also evidencing an assertive relationship over the state, such as in 1662 when Patriarch Nikon claimed that the church is superior to the secular power.[7] In the 1441, the church

<https://assignbuster.com/how-did-the-adoption-of-orthodox-christianity-in-the-10th-century-ad-influence-the-russian-state/>

evidenced a tendency to obey the will of the state, by following the will of the Moscow princes and not the head of the Church. They evidenced this in the case of the rejection of unification with the Catholic Church. However, the influence of the state over the church was also reinforced during this period by the Tartars, possibly recognising the power of religious leaders, but mainly because Moscow princes were more likely to be obedient to the will of the Tatar rulers; the Khan's.[8] However, as time continued, the influence of the church increased. Symphonia The church played a leading role in freeing the land from the Tatars, and centering power under the princes of Moscow. As Moscow gained political power in Eastern Europe, the significance of the church increased throughout the religious world. In the fifteenth century this led to the creation of a self-governing arm of the church in Moscow, led by the Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia, who was ranked among the highest of Byzantine churches. This increased the influence of the church on the state, and through the principle of 'Symphonia' which aimed for a balance between the government of one hand and the church on the other, the church ultimately became one of the controlling powers; the Czar being the other. Through this linkage, the church played an important role in how the country was run. It was generally accepted by the population that the royal decrees and edicts of the Czar's were primarily religious in character. This linkage continued until the decree rescinding the patriarchate in 1721 by Peter I (Peter the Great), who decreed that the whole of Russia was under one supreme ruler, the Czar.[9] Peter the Great When Czar Peter I abolished the patriarchate he entrusted the Government of the church to a Synod under his control, thereby making it a department of the State, and reducing its influence.[10] This act essentially abolished the long held belief of <https://assignbuster.com/how-did-the-adoption-of-orthodox-christianity-in-the-10th-century-ad-influence-the-russian-state/>

Symphonia, although the reforms took place slowly and many failed to filter through to peasant areas. Arguably, the principal of Symphonia has re-emerged in modern day Russia following the fall of the Soviet Union.[11] However, the influence of the church did not wholly dissipate with the rescinding the patriarchate. Throughout the next 200 years the church maintained its relevance through attention to religious education and missions throughout Russia, restoration and building of churches, and developing sciences such as history, linguistics and Oriental studies.[12] The Old Believers The Russian state and culture was particularly influenced by the Old Believers, a group of Christians who advocated that nothing be altered in Russian texts, service of ritual.[13] In the 17th century, their views led to personal persecution, imprisonment and exile and ultimately resulted in the distribution of the Old Belief through Siberia, the North and the Urals; thereby helping to further populate these areas. The religious beliefs of the Old Believers, which included high ethical standards, love of work and reliability, led to them attaining high positions in business and prospering the Russian economy. Ultimately, their beliefs and practices resulted in innovative industrial technology, famous art works, superior performing art practices, and benefits to charities.[14] From Peter the Great to the Soviet Years In the 19th century the church held a higher position than under Peter the Great, however the continuing functioning of the church as a department of the State excluding their ability to exercise any influence or relative power in the State. It wasn't until 1917, with the abdication of Czar Nicolas II that the church found independence for the first time in history. However this independence was to have disastrous consequences in the Soviet years. The Soviet years: 1917 to 1980's The Soviet years, beginning in 1917, was to be <https://assignbuster.com/how-did-the-adoption-of-orthodox-christianity-in-the-10th-century-ad-influence-the-russian-state/>

the start of turmoil for the Russian church, and signalled the decline of the influence it had shown for almost 1000 years. With the abdication of Nicholas II the church obtained independence through a scission of Church and State. However, the Church was able to establish the Patriarchate for the first time since Peter I. However this scission accompanied the Bolshevik's anti-religious stance, with elimination of religion as an ideological objective. Subsequently, churches were destroyed, clergy and believers persecuted or killed and publications banned. Apart from a short revival during the Second World War, the number of churches and church influence were minimal.[15]

Current influence in Russia The Millennium celebrations of the baptism in Kievan Rus in 1988, compelled the powers of Russia to open fresh dialogue with the church, based on the importance it played in the history of Russia and its contribution to the moral standards of the country.[16] Post-Soviet recovery has been mixed and the church continues to maintain a new found independence from the State.[17] However, some argue that the Church is still able to influence the State, eg. in the banning of some non-Russian Orthodox organisations, including Scientology and Jehovah's Witnesses.[18]

The historical stand made by the church is well recognised by the Government and its politicians. It has been argued that when politicians are asked why the church is given so much prominence, it is a case of 'repaying the States historical debt to the Church'.[19] Conclusion Throughout its history the Church has significantly influenced the Russian State. From the adoption of Christianity to the reign of Peter the Great, the idea of Symphonia has underscored the Church and State relationship. In addition, the Church was able to influence the creation of the Russian State, both initially, during and following the period of the Tartar rule. The influence of

<https://assignbuster.com/how-did-the-adoption-of-orthodox-christianity-in-the-10th-century-ad-influence-the-russian-state/>

the Church commenced its decline during the reign of Peter the Great, where it was relegated to a department of the State. This influence abated during the Soviet years except for a small resurgence during World War II. Since the fall of communism the Church has evidenced a reviving influence over the Russian State, although not as strong as what it was during its zenith in the 15th and 16th Century. References: Blitt, Richard. (2010). Russia's 'orthodox' foreign policy: the growing influence of the Russian Orthodox church in shaping Russia's policies abroad, *Religion in the Public Square*, retrieved from < <https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/files/142-blittboyd33upajintl3632011pdf>> on April 1, 2013. Fedotov, George P. (1943). Religious Background of Russian Culture. *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 12, pp 355-1 doi: 10. 2307/3160216 Gaskova, M. (2004). The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Shaping the Political Culture of Russia, *Journal of Scientific & Industrial Research*, No. 7, p. 122-130. Papkova, Irina. (2010) *The Orthodox Church and Russian Politics*, Woodrow Wilson Center Press with Oxford University Press. Petro, Nicolai N. (2012). The role of the Orthodox Church in changing Russia, *Instituto Per Gli Studi Di Politica Internazionale*, No. 121, p. 1-6. Richards, George. (1918). The Church and religion of Russia, *The American Journal of Theology*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 541-561. Rzhnevsky, Nicholas. (1999) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge Companions Online <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521472180> Rzhnevsky, Nicholas. (2012) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. (2nd Edition) Cambridge University Press. Cambridge Companions Online <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9781107002524> ----- [1]

Rzhnevsky, Nicholas. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. <https://assignbuster.com/how-did-the-adoption-of-orthodox-christianity-in-the-10th-century-ad-influence-the-russian-state/>

Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 38. [2] Fedotov, G. (1943). Religious Background of Russian Culture. *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 12, pp 3551: 41. [3] Rzhnevsky, Nicholas. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 40. [4] Rzhnevsky, Nicholas. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 24. [5] Rzhnevsky, Nicholas. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 42. [6] Gaskova, M. (2004). The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Shaping the Political Culture of Russia, *Journal of Scientific & Industrial Research*, No. 7, p. 126. [7] Gaskova, M. (2004). The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Shaping the Political Culture of Russia, *Journal of Scientific & Industrial Research*, No. 7, p. 127. [8] Rzhnevsky, Nicholas. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 43. [9] History of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2007, Russian Crafts, retrieved from < <http://russian-crafts.com/customs/russian-church-history.html>> on 31 March 2013. [10] Richards, G. W. (1918). The Church and religion of Russia, *The American Journal of Theology*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 548. [11] Gaskova, M. (2004). The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Shaping the Political Culture of Russia, *Journal of Scientific & Industrial Research*, No. 7, p. 126. [12] History of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2007, Russian Crafts, retrieved from < <http://russian-crafts.com/customs/russian-church-history.html>> on 31 March 2013. [13] Rzhnevsky, Nicholas. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 44. [14] Richards, G. W. (1918). The Church and religion of Russia, *The American Journal of Theology*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 552. [15] Gaskova, M. (2004). The Role of the Russian Orthodox <https://assignbuster.com/how-did-the-adoption-of-orthodox-christianity-in-the-10th-century-ad-influence-the-russian-state/>

Church in Shaping the Political Culture of Russia, *Journal of Scientific & Industrial Research*, No. 7, p. 127. [16] *History of the Russian Orthodox Church*, 2007, Russian Crafts, retrieved from < <http://russian-crafts.com/customs/russian-church-history.html>> on 31 March 2013. [17] Charles Clover (December 5, 2008). "Russia's church mourns patriarch". *Financial Times*. Retrieved March 31, 2013. [18] Blitt, R. C. 2010. Russia's 'orthodox' foreign policy: the growing influence of the Russian Orthodox church in shaping Russia's policies abroad, *Religion in the Public Square*, retrieved from < <https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/files/142-blittboyd33upajintl3632011pdf>> on April 1, 2013. [19] Petro, Nicolai N. (2012). The role of the Orthodox Church in changing Russia, *Instituto Per Gli Studi Di Politica Internazionale*, No. 121, p. 2.