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## THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN KAZAKHSTAN: THE CASE OF ALMATY CITY

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**Abstract.** This article explores the history of Christianity's formation and development in Kazakhstan, with a particular focus on the establishment, growth, and current status of Catholic churches in Almaty. The main objective of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the origins of Catholic churches in Kazakhstan, their development patterns, and their present condition. The research employs a theoretical-methodological approach combined with a descriptive analysis of religious history. These methods enable an in-depth examination of the collected data and a thorough investigation of the formation process of Catholic churches in Kazakhstan.

Historical sources suggest that Christianity first spread in Kazakhstan through Nestorian missionaries, who engaged in religious outreach among the local population. The introduction and expansion of Christianity in Kazakhstan occurred in three key stages. This article discusses the arrival of the first Christians – Nestorians – and their missionary activities. It also examines the Russian Empire's political efforts to convert the Kazakhs to Christianity, highlighting the limited success of these initiatives.

Following Kazakhstan's independence, newly adopted laws facilitated the expansion of missionary activities and the rise of Protestant movements. The study illustrates how the transition of Kazakh society from atheistic ideology and a lack of religious education created opportunities for missionaries to establish various churches and religious communities. According to legal provisions, religious freedom was ensured, allowing different religious organizations to operate. Almaty, as Kazakhstan's largest metropolis, became the main center for Protestant churches. This study provides valuable insights into Kazakhstan's religious landscape, the history of Catholic churches, and their role in society.

**Keywords:** Christianity Catholic Church; Roman Catholic Church; missionaries; church; religion; Russian Empire; religious associations; faith.

### Introduction

Christianity has existed in Kazakhstan for many years. The first Christians to arrive in Kazakhstan were known as the Nasrani Christians. They spread their beliefs among the local population through missionary activities. Historical sources indicate that some Kazakh tribes accepted Christianity. However, after the arrival of Islam in Kazakh lands, Christianity began to decline. The spread of Christianity in the Kazakh steppe can be divided into three main periods.

The first arrival of Catholic missionaries in Kazakhstan dates back to the early 13th century. During this period, Frankish monks attempted to establish close relations with the Mongol Empire.

The second period of the spread of Christianity in Kazakh lands began with the colonization of the Kazakhs by the Russians. The Russians sent the best missionaries of the

Orthodox Church to convert the Kazakhs to Christianity. These missionaries first studied the local lifestyle and opened schools. In these schools, they not only taught basic literacy skills but also made great efforts to convert the young people to Orthodox Christianity. In the mid-19th century, Orthodox missionaries were actively working in Kazakh territories. Despite the Russian Empire investing heavily in this project, they were ultimately unable to Christianize the Kazakhs.

The third period of Christianity in Kazakhstan began after independence. Following Kazakhstan's declaration of independence, the country positioned itself as a democratic and secular state. In 1992, the Law on Religion and Religious Associations was enacted. According to this law, Kazakhstan is a secular state. The same law granted citizens the right to follow any religion and engage in missionary activities. After the adoption of this law, the number of missionaries in Kazakhstan increased. Their goal was to convert Kazakhs to their beliefs. Since Kazakh society was emerging from an atheistic ideology, its religious knowledge was limited, and missionaries took advantage of this gap. Among the various Christian denominations, Protestant movements were particularly effective in their missionary efforts. Within a short time, they managed to establish churches in every region of Kazakhstan.

### **Methodology and materials**

Several scientific methods were employed to study the establishment and development history of the Catholic Church in Kazakhstan. The theoretical-methodological analysis method was applied. Using this approach, a review of scientific works, books, and articles related to the topic was conducted. These materials contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the historical development and current state of Catholic churches. The theoretical-methodological foundations of religious studies and sociology were utilized to determine the main direction of the research.

In working with sources, official documents, laws, and government data regulating the activities of religious organizations in Kazakhstan were analyzed. In particular, the 1992 Law on Religion and Religious Associations was used as a key research object. Additionally, internal documents, reports, and other written materials from the churches were collected.

Observation and photo documentation methods were also employed during the study. The services of Catholic churches were examined through direct observation. The architectural features of worship buildings were studied. The results of these observations were documented using photo documentation and included as supplementary material in the research.

To maintain an objective perspective, the descriptive method of religious history was applied. This method allows for an impartial understanding of the role of religion in society by analyzing historical processes.

The data collected through these methods were analyzed, providing an in-depth examination of the formation process of Catholic churches in Kazakhstan. The literature and sources used in this study offer a detailed and comprehensive exploration of the history of Christianity and the development of missionary activities in Kazakhstan. In particular, A. Anuarbekov's work, *Kazakistan'da Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, written in Turkish, examines the early stages of Christian missionary activities in Kazakhstan and the methods used to influence Kazakh society. The author focuses on the techniques missionaries employed to spread their religious teachings and their cultural impact. Anuarbekov emphasizes that the spread of Christianity in Kazakhstan was closely linked to the colonial policies of the Russian Empire, noting that the influence of Catholic and Orthodox missionaries varied across different historical periods.

G. Prikhodko, in his research *The History of Christianity in Kazakhstan and Central Asia in the Middle Ages*, examines the state of Christianity in Kazakhstan and Central Asia during the medieval period. The author analyzes the early spread of Christianity and key historical events within this context, including the influence of the Mongol Empire and its support for Christian missionaries. Prikhodko's study demonstrates that Christianity in the Middle Ages held not only religious but also political significance.

The book *Fundamentals of Religious Studies* by G. Esim, A. Artemiev, S. Qanaev, and G. Bilalova provides a comprehensive overview of the history of religions and the foundations of religious studies in Kazakhstan. It outlines general concepts of religious history and explores the interconnections between religions and cultures. The authors highlight the social, cultural, and political factors that influenced the spread of Christianity and analyze various religious movements in Kazakhstan and their impact on society.

In Y. Trofimov's research *Christianity in Kazakhstan*, a detailed analysis of the history and current state of Christianity in the country is presented. Trofimov's study offers insights into the structure of modern Christianity and the number of its followers. The author also discusses the expansion of missionary activities after Kazakhstan's independence and specifically examines the spread of new religious movements in the country.

The study by Yu. F. Trofimov, A. V. Nikiforov, and O. V. Sinyakov, titled *Religious Organizations of the North Kazakhstan Region: History and Modernity*, explores both the historical and contemporary situation of religious communities in North Kazakhstan. This research focuses particularly on the social role of religious organizations, their activities, and their influence on the local population. The study provides valuable information on the impact of Orthodox churches and Protestant movements, as well as their role in shaping the beliefs and social life of the people.

The findings from these studies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the history of Christianity and missionary activities in Kazakhstan. They highlight the unique characteristics of each period and offer a broad perspective on the influence of Christianity on Kazakh society and its development across different historical stages.

### ***The Catholic Church in Kazakhstan***

The Catholic Church in Kazakhstan is part of the worldwide Catholic Church. Today, Catholics make up approximately 1% of the population (Grigori, 2000). Catholic missionaries first became known in the territory of Kazakhstan in the early 13th century. Between 1245 and 1247, Franciscan monks—Pope Innocent IV's envoy, Giovanni del Plano Carpini, and his companion, Benedict—traveled to the Mongol Empire. Between 1253 and 1255, the primary purpose of the Franciscan Guillaume de Rubrouck's visit to Möngke Khan was to establish diplomatic relations between King Louis IX of France and the Mongol Khans. This effort contributed to the expansion of European knowledge about Central Asia and marked the beginning of missionary activities in the region.

The Franciscans played a significant role in advancing missionary efforts. In 1278, Pope Nicholas III entrusted the Franciscan Order with missionary tasks in the present-day territory of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The Franciscans lived in the lands of the Golden Horde, covering most of modern Kazakhstan except for the Zhetysay region (Grigori, 2000: 33). In 1289, the Franciscan Giovanni da Montecorvino, sent to Asia by Pope Nicholas IV, became one of the most influential Catholic missionaries. He contributed to the translation of the New Testament and the Psalms into Mongolian and worked toward establishing a Catholic Archbishopric in Khanbaliq (modern-day Beijing). Between the late 13th and 16th centuries, the Franciscans compiled the *Codex Cumanicus*, a Latin-Persian-Turkic dictionary (Grigori, 2000: 34).

### ***The Catholic Diocese in the City of Almalik<sup>1</sup>***

At the beginning of the 14th century, a Catholic diocese was established within the framework of the Archbishopric of Khanbaliq in the city of Almalik, the capital of the Chagatai Ulus. The first bishop of this diocese was Carlino de Grassis. In the first half of the 14th century, a Franciscan monastery was built in Almalik. Pope John XXII (b. 1249 – d. December 4, 1334) sent a letter titled *Laetanter de vobis* to Karasmon and Johan, aides to the Grand Prince Hansiyin who had converted to Christianity. In this letter, the Pope entrusted them with ensuring the safety of Franciscan Richard Burgundy and declared that "a beautiful church was built for God," appointing him as the Bishop of Almalik. The diocese flourished during the reign of Prince

Hansiyn. However, later, Christians in Almalik<sup>1</sup> began to face persecution. In 1340, Bishop Richard Burgundy and six Franciscan monks, including three preachers, were executed (Kazakhstan, 1996: 4). In the following years, there were no further traces of Catholic Christianity in the region.

### ***The Catholic Church During the Russian Empire***

In 1662, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Mission Directorate) was established in the Vatican. With the idea that local Christian clergy should be trained in each country to carry out missionary work more effectively, Foreign Mission Seminaries were founded across Europe. Clergymen, whose expenses were directly covered by the Papal Propaganda Department, organized a missionary initiative for the Far East (Misyonerler ve Fener, 2002: 124).

In the mid-19th and early 20th centuries, Catholic missionary activities in Kazakhstan were revived with the migration of Polish, Russian, and German Catholics from Western Russia (Esim, Artemyev, 2003: 127). During this period, the Catholic Church in Kazakhstan continued to develop under the Russian Empire. Military officers, exiles, immigrants, prisoners of war, and refugees brought to Kazakhstan were adherents of the Christian faith. These groups included Poles, Lithuanians, Czechs, Germans, French, Latvians, Hungarians, Austrians, and others.

At that time, the congregations of Catholic churches in Kazakhstan were under the jurisdiction of the Mogilev Archdiocese. The clergy, primarily in Northern Kazakhstan, initially relied on the services of priests from the Omsk parish. For a long time, they did not have their own churches or dedicated places of worship. In the 19th and 20th centuries, as more Germans migrated to Kazakhstan, Catholic settlements began to emerge. The Catholic churches of Northwestern Kazakhstan were included in the Diocese of Tiraspol, established in 1848, with its center in Saratov.

At the beginning of the XXth century, Catholic places of worship began to be built in Kazakhstan. One surviving example is the Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Petropavl. Tsar Nicholas II's decree on Religious Tolerance, issued on April 17, 1905, marked a significant turning point in Catholic community activities. As a result, the Catholic Church was granted equal status with the Orthodox Church in certain matters and no longer needed approval from the Orthodox Church hierarchy for its organizational activities.

During World War I, Catholic military prisoners and Russian peasants were sent to Kazakhstan. As a result, the number of Catholic parishes in the country increased. By 1917, the number of Catholic clergies of German, Polish, and Lithuanian origin in Petropavl's parishes was approximately 5,000. In the Kostanay parish, there were about 6,000 Catholics across eight places of worship. In the German colony of Mariyenburg (Peremenovka) in Eastern Kazakhstan, there were around 4,000 Catholics. These and other church communities were included in the Omsk Mogilev Archbishopric. Similarly, small Catholic churches in Southern Kazakhstan were included in the Tashkent Archbishopric. These included the St. Michael the Archangel Wooden Church in Verny (present-day Almaty), St. Mary's Cathedral in Zharkent (Zhetysu region), and the Raphael the Archangel Church in Kapal (Zhetysu region).

### ***The Catholic Church During the Soviet Era***

After the Bolshevik Revolution, all Catholic parishes in Kazakhstan were closed, and believers faced repression. The return of Poles to Poland and Ukraine led to the closure of many parishes. In the USSR, efforts to completely eliminate Catholic administrative structures began. Additionally, both the Latin and Byzantine Catholic hierarchies were systematically dismantled. The remaining priests were sent to camps or exiled.

Due to forced deportations during the Soviet period, the number of Catholics in

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<sup>1</sup> Almalik is one of the ancient medieval cities. Today, the remnants of the settlement are located approximately 300 kilometers from the city of Almaty

Kazakhstan increased again. Most of the deportees were Germans. Among the approximately one hundred thousand deported individuals – including Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and others – there were also clergy members. During that time, like all other religious groups, Catholics were forced to conduct religious services and rituals in secrecy, often at night. Most priests were taken by the National Committee for interrogation and never returned.

After the Soviet regime came to power, almost all places of worship were closed, and both clergy and active believers were subjected to repression. Another reason given for the closure of churches was the return of Poles to Poland and Ukraine (Trofimov, 2006: 78). In a letter written by Father Senvaitis to the Archbishop on May 27, 1922, this issue was described as follows: "So far, three train cars full of people from my congregation have been sent from Petropavl to their homeland.

Only two or three people attend the Sunday Mass, and they too will leave on the next train. The few who remain here are barely practicing Catholics. A young priest is needed to take my place" (Kilise Tarihi Sayfaları, 2001: 21). The same situation occurred in the city of Verny (present-day Almaty), where places of worship were left empty and eventually sold. As a result of Stalin's repression (1937-1938), a large number of Catholics – mostly Germans, Ukrainians, and Poles – were exiled to Kazakhstan, and many lost their lives in the camps. Some preachers who served their sentences in the camps remained in Kazakhstan to minister to the local Catholic community (Anuarbekov, 2008: 28). During the Soviet era, the city of Karaganda became a spiritual center for Catholics in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Until 1977, Catholics were only able to worship in secret. However, in 1977, permission was granted for the establishment of a Catholic church in Karaganda. After obtaining official approval from the Soviet authorities, a church dedicated to Saint Joseph was built in 1978 under the leadership of Father Albinas Dumblyauskas and Catholic Bishop Alexander Hiroy. In Karaganda, Father Albinas Dumblyauskas established an underground novitiate (training program) for men. Even during the Soviet period, his students began studying at Catholic seminaries in Riga. Alongside Albinas Dumblyauskas, several nuns arrived in Karaganda. He also invited nuns from the "Eucharistic Brotherhood of Jesus Christ" to Karaganda and encouraged local vocations. In total, 26 nuns from the Eucharistic Brotherhood arrived in Karaganda (Trofimov, Sinyakov, 2016:

105). By the end of the Soviet era, native priests and nuns from Kazakhstan began taking over the responsibilities of serving the Catholic community in the country.

### ***The Catholic Church in the Republic of Kazakhstan***

After Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991, people of various nationalities who had lived on Kazakh soil began returning to their home countries. As a result, the Catholic Church faced difficulties due to the departure of Germans, who made up a significant portion of the Catholic community – approximately 70% overall and even 100% in some parishes. According to statistical data from 1982, 99.5% of the Catholic community in Almaty and 91% of Catholics across Kazakhstan were of German origin (Trofimov, 2006: 44). In recent years, the Vatican has focused its attention on Kazakhstan. The first indication of this was Pope John Paul II's invitation in 1989 to Father Albinas Dumblyauskas, the priest of St. Joseph's Church in Karaganda. Later, in 1991, the Vatican established the Apostolic Administration of Kazakhstan and Central Asia in Karaganda (Esim, Artemyev, Kanayev, Berikan, 2003: 137).

To ensure the proper functioning of the Catholic Church in Kazakhstan in the early 1990s, on April 13, 1991, Pope John Paul II officially designated Karaganda as the Central Apostolic Administration and appointed Jan Paul Lenga as its head. The spiritual influence of the Apostolic Administrator in Karaganda extended beyond Kazakhstan to the scattered Catholic communities in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. The Apostolic Administration, headquartered in Karaganda, was the first Catholic organization in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. It was later reorganized into a modern metropolitan structure, under which two dioceses and one Apostolic Administration were established. Since August 1995, the Catholic newspaper "Credo" has been published. On September 29, 1997, the Catholic communities of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, and on December 22, 1997, the Catholic community of Kyrgyzstan, received the

status of "Sui iuris" (independent jurisdiction).

On October 7, 1997, the Catholic seminary Redemptoris Mater was officially established in Karaganda. However, on July 16, 1998, it was completely reorganized and renamed Mary – Mother of the Church. On April 7, 1998, the Barefoot Carmelites Monastery, dedicated to the Holy Trinity and the Immaculate Conception of Mary, was opened in Karaganda.

The statute of the Apostolic Administration was officially registered in 1996. In 1997, all churches in Central Asia were separated from the Apostolic Administration of Kazakhstan and granted the status of Sui iuris (autonomous jurisdiction). In 1999, the Apostolic Administration of Kazakhstan was divided into the Diocese of Karaganda and three new Apostolic Administrations in Astana, Atyrau, and Almaty.

On October 3, 1994, a diplomatic agreement was signed between the Vatican and Kazakhstan, and Vatican Ambassador Archbishop Marian Oles visited Almaty. In 1998, an agreement was signed regarding the relationship between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Holy See, which came into force on July 30, 1999. After that, relations between the two countries further strengthened (Anuarbekov, 2008: 41).

In 1997, the Kazakhstan branch of the International Caritas Catholic Charity Foundation was established. In addition to providing financial assistance to those in need, the branch also offers free computer courses. In 2000, an Alcoholics Anonymous organization was opened in Karaganda to help people overcome alcohol addiction. A center for treating drug addicts was also established in the Almaty region. Since September 1, 1996, there has been a Christian primary school named St. Lawrence in the village of Korneyevka, Northern Kazakhstan. Later, this primary school was transformed into a Christian high school. In Karaganda, the newspaper "Kredo" is published monthly with a circulation of 5,000 copies.

Ukrainian Catholics, who often attend Roman Catholic churches, include figures such as Oleksiy Zaritskyi (1912-1963) and Nykyta Budka (1877-1949), both canonized by Pope John Paul II (Anuarbekov, 2008: 38). Before the first Catholic church was opened in Karaganda in 1997, these believers attended Roman Catholic churches. By 2001, with the opening of a similar church in Pavlodar, there were three officially registered churches in Astana, Pavlodar, and Karaganda. Additionally, several small groups were formed in villages associated with these cities, along with another monastery in Karaganda (Trofimov, 2006: 89-90).

On July 7, 1999, the papal bull *Ad aptius consulendum* reorganized the Apostolic Administration of Kazakhstan, transforming the churches in Karaganda and East Kazakhstan into the Diocese of Karaganda. At the same time, three new Apostolic Administrations were established in Astana, Almaty, and Atyrau.

In 2000, the "Faith and Reason" (Вера и Разум) center was opened in Shchuchinsk under the Astana Ordinariate. This center serves as a place for prayer ceremonies, spiritual rituals, conferences, and other events. It includes guest rooms, a chapel, and a dining hall, with similar centers planned for other Apostolic Administrations and the Diocese of Karaganda. In 1997, the Mary – Mother of the Church (Мария-Мать Церкви) Higher Spiritual Seminary was established in Karaganda, and by June 2002, it had 20 students enrolled (Anuarbekov, 2008: 38).

One of the most significant events for Catholics in Kazakhstan was the visit of Pope John Paul II from September 22-25, 2001. His visit also served as a gathering for clergy from Kazakhstan and Central Asia. In total, three cardinals, eighteen bishops from Rome, Lviv, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Siberia, and Central Asia's Sui iuris mission, four apostolic administrators, 172 priests, six deacons, 27 seminarians, 12 monks, and 99 nuns participated in the Council held in Astana. The Pope's visit was celebrated as a major event for Catholics in Kazakhstan.

A Catholic Apostolic Nunciature operates in Karaganda. On October 8, 2002, Holy See Preacher Vasily Govera was appointed as the Apostolic Nuncio for Catholics in Kazakhstan and Central Asia and as the Pope's representative to the Catholic parishes. There are currently five Catholic parishes in Kazakhstan: Karaganda, Astana, Pavlodar, Shiderty, and Satpayev. Today, the main center of the Catholic Church in Kazakhstan is located in Astana. It consists of the

Archdiocese of the Blessed Virgin Mary and two auxiliary dioceses in Karaganda and Almaty, along with the diocesan administration in Atyrau. The Archdiocese is headed by Archbishop Tomasz Peta. Additionally, under the leadership of Archbishop Vasily Govera, the Apostolic Nunciature continues to serve Catholics throughout Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

In 2003, there were 90 Catholic communities and 160 separate groups in Kazakhstan. Three bishops from Poland, Italy, Germany, the United States, Korea, and Switzerland, along with more than 60 priests, were serving in the country (Anuarbekov, 2008: 39).

| DIOCESAN REGIONS                       | CENTER    | NUMBER OF CATHOLICS | NUMBER OF PRIESTS | NUMBER OF PARISHES |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Archdiocese of the Blessed Virgin Mary | Astana    | 90 000              | 34                | 21                 |
| Diocese of Karaganda                   | Karaganda | 40 000              | 14                | 17                 |
| Holy Trinity Pope                      | Almaty    | 50 000              | 17                | 7                  |
| Apostolic Administration of Atyrau     | Atyrau    | 2 600               | 7                 | 5                  |

Figure 1. Diocesan Regions in Kazakhstan<sup>2 2</sup>

Most of the clergy in Kazakhstan do not hold citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Their primary reason for coming to the country is the shortage of priests in both old and newly established churches. Currently, one in four Catholic churches in Kazakhstan does not have a local priest. In May 2003, Catholics established their administrative centers.

Church services are conducted in Russian, Ukrainian, German, English, and Polish, with people of various nationalities attending. In the past, most churchgoers were Germans and Poles. However, today, in addition to them, Ukrainians, Russians, and Kazakhs also visit the churches. The only ecclesiastical court for all Catholics in Kazakhstan has been established in Almaty. Operating separately from the Episcopal Administration, this court handles church-related cases, including matters of marriage and divorce.

The Catholic clergy actively continues its missionary activities with missionaries from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, the United States, Italy, and South Korea. In churches, Catholic religious principles are taught through special groups for children, youth, and adults, with preparations made for anointing, baptism, and marriage. Special attention is given to the education of children and youth. Many congregations emphasize the importance of children's homes and kindergartens. Additionally, trips and vacation programs are organized during the summer holidays, while various festivals and pilgrimage programs are held for young people.

In 2000, the first Catholic gathering in Kazakhstan was held in Karaganda to mark the two-thousand-year anniversary of the Catholic Church. During this three-day event, a congregation of 3,500 people prayed together and participated in various cultural programs. Clergy from both Kazakhstan and abroad, including priests and religious leaders, also took part in the gathering (Anuarbekov, 2008: 40).

In August 2000, one hundred young Catholic priests from Kazakhstan traveled to Rome to meet with the Pope on the occasion of International Youth Day. At the closing ceremony of this major event, over two million people gathered at Tor Vergata University Field on Sunday, August

<sup>2</sup> <http://catholic-hierarchy.org/country/sckz1.html>

20, to see the Pope. On that day, Pope John Paul II addressed the visitors.

According to 2003 statistics, there were no Catholic churches in three provincial centers – Kyzylorda, Oral, and Aktau – though new church constructions were underway. During the official visit of Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Sodano in May 2003, the first stone of the Karaganda Cathedral was laid (Trofimov, Nikiforov, 2010: 38).

The Roman Catholic Church in Kazakhstan is actively involved in charitable and aid activities. In addition to delivering sermons and teachings, it provides charitable support to those in need, including the sick, orphans, the disabled, and the elderly. Some churches operate soup kitchens and free pharmacies for the poor. In Almaty, a hospital provides treatment using methods practiced by South Korean specialist doctors. This hospital is officially registered as the only one in the country that operates with church support. In Talgar, a disabled people's association is supported by the church, while in Kapchagay, orphanages have been established.

### Conclusion

The study has established that the spread and development of Christianity in Kazakhstan have undergone several historical stages. In the first stage, Christianity was introduced by the Nasrani Christians. The second stage was marked by the active efforts of Orthodox missionaries, carried out within the framework of the Russian Empire's colonial policy. The third stage began after Kazakhstan gained independence, characterized by the expansion of Protestant communities under the principles of religious freedom and democracy.

This study thoroughly examined the formation, current state, and development trends of Protestant churches in Almaty. Within Kazakhstan's religious policy framework, Christian adherents were granted the freedom to conduct their activities. As a result, the number of churches increased, and the structure of religious communities strengthened. The research methods included a review of scientific literature and historical analysis. Consequently, the study identified the activities of Catholic churches, their interaction with society, and the external factors supporting them. In Kazakhstan, Christian representatives primarily carry out their religious activities through social and cultural events, which help strengthen their connection with the local population and foster a positive perception.

In conclusion, the development of Catholic churches in Kazakhstan has been successfully implemented to a certain extent. However, further progress in this process will depend on the growth of religious awareness in society, the strengthening of interfaith dialogue, and improvements in the legislative framework. Future research should explore these aspects in greater depth and comprehensively analyze the role of religious communities in Kazakhstan.

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## **ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ КАТОЛИК ШІРКЕУІНІҢ ҚАЛЫПТАСУ ЖӘНЕ ДАМУ ТАРИХЫ: АЛМАТЫ ҚАЛАСЫ МЫСАЛЫНДА**

**Андатпа.** Мақалада Қазақстандағы христиан дінінің қалыптасу және даму тарихы, Алматы қаласындағы католиктік шіркеулердің құрылуы, дамуы және қазіргі жағдайы қарастырылған. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты – Қазақстандағы католик шіркеулерінің құрылу тарихын, даму ерекшеліктерін және олардың қазіргі жағдайын жан-жақты талдау. Зерттеуде теориялық-әдіснамалық талдау және діндер тарихының сипаттамалық әдісі басшылыққа алынды. Осы аталған әдістерді қолдану арқылы алынған мәліметтер жинақталып, зерттелді және Қазақстандағы католик шіркеулерінің қалыптасу үрдісін жан-жақты талдауға мүмкіндік берді.

Қазақстан аумағына христиандықтың алғашқы таралуы несториандық христиандар арқылы басталғаны және олардың миссионерлік қызметі арқылы жергілікті халық арасында таралғаны тарихи деректерде көрсетілген. Христиандықтың Қазақстан жеріне келуі мен таралуы үш негізгі кезең арқылы жүзеге асырылды. Мақалада Қазақстанға келген алғашқы христиандардың несториандық болғаны, олардың жергілікті халық арасында миссионерлік жұмыстар жүргізгені баяндалады. Ресей империясының қазақтарды христиан дініне енгізу үшін жасаған негізгі саясаты мен оның нәтижесіз аяқталғандығы туралы да ақпарат ұсынылған. Қазақстан тәуелсіздік алғаннан кейін қабылданған заңдар миссионерлік қызметтің өрістеуі мен протестанттық бағыттың ықпалының артуына себеп болды. Қазақ қоғамының атеистік идеологиядан шығып, діни білімінің әлсіздігі, миссионерлердің осы жағдайды пайдаланып, түрлі шіркеулер мен діни қауымдарды құруына мүмкіндік бергені көрсетіледі. Заңға сәйкес, елде діни сенім бостандығы қамтамасыз етіліп, әртүрлі діни ұйымдардың қызметіне мүмкіндік берілді. Алматы қаласы Қазақстандағы ең ірі мегаполис болғандықтан, протестанттық бағыттағы шіркеулердің негізгі орталығына айналды. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы діни ахуалды тереңірек ұғынуға, католик шіркеуінің тарихын түсінуге және олардың қоғамдағы орнына баға беруге көмектеседі.

**Түйін сөздер:** Христиандық; католик шіркеуі; Рим-католик шіркеуі; миссионерлер; шіркеу; дін; патшалық Ресей; діни бірлестіктер; наным-сенім.

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## **ИСТОРИЯ СТАНОВЛЕНИЯ И РАЗВИТИЯ КАТОЛИЧЕСКОЙ ЦЕРКВИ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ: НА ПРИМЕРЕ ГОРОДА АЛМАТЫ**

**Аннотация.** В этой статье рассматривается история формирования и развития христианства в Казахстане, создание, развитие и современное состояние католических церквей в Алматы. Основная цель исследования – предоставить всесторонний анализ истории создания католических церквей в Казахстане, их особенностей развития и текущего состояния. В исследовании используются теоретико-методологический анализ и описательный метод религиозной истории. Применение этих методов позволило проанализировать собранные данные и провести глубокое исследование процесса

формирования католических церквей в Казахстане.

Исторические источники показывают, что первоначальное распространение христианства в Казахстане началось с несторианских христиан и их миссионерской деятельности среди местного населения. Введение и распространение христианства в Казахстане произошло в три основных этапа. В статье рассматривается прибытие первых христиан, которые были несторианцы, и их миссионерская работа среди местных жителей. Также приводится информация о ключевых политических мероприятиях Российской империи, направленных на обращение казахов в христианство, а также о неудачных результатах этих усилий. После обретения независимости Казахстаном, законы, принятые в стране, способствовали расширению миссионерской деятельности и росту влияния протестантских движений. В статье показано, как переход казахского общества от атеистической идеологии и отсутствие религиозного образования позволили миссионерам создавать различные церкви и религиозные общины. Согласно закону, была обеспечена свобода вероисповедания, и деятельность различных религиозных организаций была разрешена. Алматы, как крупнейший мегаполис Казахстана, стал основным центром протестантских церквей. Это исследование помогает лучше понять религиозный ландшафт Казахстана, историю католических церквей и их роль в обществе.

**Ключевые слова:** Христианство; Католическая церковь; Римско-католическая церковь; миссионеры; церковь; религия; Российская империя; религиозные объединения; вера.

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