I have translated the Russian ‘prosveshcheniy’ as ‘enlightened’ so as to keep the notions of ‘light’ (‘svet’), and the bringing of light, that inhere in the original. The concept of the Church ‘bringing light’ to the villagers reoccurred frequently in conversations. However, ‘enlightened’ should be read as ‘educated’ or ‘instructed’ and not in connection with the seventeenth century Age of Enlightenment. As one of my informants pointed out, the epoch of the Lumières was a time when people moved ‘away from Christ’.

Introduction

Summarising a body of work about religion in contemporary Russia, Benovska-Sabkova et al. ask: ‘what makes Russian Orthodoxy a relevant and modern source of identity?’ [2010. P. 16]. Their suggested answer stems from the observation that ‘the relation between Russianness and Orthodoxy endures irrespective of historical time’, which means that ‘political and subjective ruptures are embedded in an encompassing notion of continuity’ [Ibid. P. 17]. Now, whilst for many Russians this reading may well ring true, such an interpretation arguably overlooks the complex experiences of those who imagine themselves as being most sincerely implicated in twenty-first century Orthodox life. For parishioners who find deep meaning in the concept of ‘enchurchment’ Russian Orthodoxy is certainly a potent identity, but one that has felt, and still feels, the effects of rupture.

My informants, regular churchgoers in a rural parish community in Leningradskai oblast’ in northwestern Russia, periodically recalled the saying that ‘Rus’ was christened but not enlightened’. What they implied by this was that whilst people in their village (and in Russia more generally) considered themselves ‘Orthodox’, they were poorly read in the basics of Christianity and rarely attended church. As one middle-aged woman put it bluntly: ‘There just aren’t enchurched people, there isn’t that enchurchment (votserkovlennost’). Because it was


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beaten out after seventy years of atheism – the knowledge (znanie)² of the laws of God and an understanding of church norms was beaten out of people.

This concept of ‘enchurchment’ is increasingly articulated by the postsocialist ¹ Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and has to do with ‘the process and goal of becoming a true Orthodox person’ [Zigon, 2010. P. 146; italics in original]. ‘It is a process because one must incrementally transform oneself into what the Church calls a spiritually moral person’, but is simultaneously a goal because ‘enchurched’ ‘describes the being of a person who has become spiritually moral’ [Ibid.]. More concretely, the term also suggests belonging to and participating in the Church as an institution [Agadjanian, 2011. P. 22]. Importantly, for the people with whom I conducted research, it is significantly more than stating that one is ‘Orthodox’ (pravoslavnyi), ‘which is sometimes a synonym for cultural or even national self-identity’ [Ibid. P. 21–22].

To explore the dynamics of enchurchment in a local setting my paper draws attention to the question of religious knowledge – and, just as importantly – the apparent consequences of the perceived limits of this knowledge. I understand ‘knowledge’ broadly, following Barth’s formulation of it being ‘what a person employs to interpret and act on the world … feelings (attitudes) as well as information, embodied skills as well as verbal taxonomies and concepts: all the ways of understanding that we use to make up our experienced, grasped reality’ [2002. P. 1]. Of course, I am talking specifically about the ‘ways of understanding’ that different people use to make up their Orthodox reality. My basic contention is that, after socialism, accounts of postsocialist religious ‘revival’ must be aware of how certain actors prioritise specific ways of being religious, with ensuing tensions over expertise, ignorance, and the best means of learning. If Orthodoxy ‘forms the backdrop against which life is lived’ [Stewart, 2008. P. 110], then we must examine how in

front of this backdrop people deepen, delimit, and dispute religious knowledges. Those who would be ‘enchurched’ in Russia today (both clergy and laity alike) are themselves faced with the task of learning, but also with the task of trying to teach others. Following a period when an atheistic state sought to supplant religious knowledge and wholly reconfigure how citizens saw themselves in the cosmos, what is and what is not known about Orthodoxy takes on a heightened symbolism today. I am not suggesting that the nineteenth century Russian peasantry were all devout believers in the way that the Church desired (see [Chulos, 1995; Engelstein, 2001]), and we should certainly not attempt a comparison between their doctrinal knowledge and that of the modern laity. However, I do think that for some people the experience of being Orthodox today has been thrown into sharp relief against the troubled Soviet past. Being enchurched involves a self-conscious recognition of one’s religious identity, not a passive acceptance.

An analysis of the perceived contours of religious knowledge reveals that rather than celebrating an unbroken and over-simplified continuity with the pre-revolutionary past (as per [Benovska-Sabkova et al., 2010]), my Orthodox informants were overtly analysing and attempting to rectify the ruptured transmission of religious knowledge. This concern for learning and educating indicates that, if anything, much of their attention was future-orientated, since the future was a place where the spiritual wrongs of the past could be rectified. Indeed, whilst there are excellent studies on how postsocialist religious communities cultivate links with the past (for example [Benovska-Sabkova, 2008]), the question of knowledge encourages us to consider how such religious practitioners might see their communities as spiralling into the future.

After providing a more solid ethnographic context for this paper, I am then going to offer some background to the debate around religious knowledge in contemporary Russia and demonstrate how my informants stressed the limits of their individual knowledges and their efforts to learn more. The next section expands the idea of how the enchurch vision of Orthodoxy differed considerably from what my informants saw as more simplistic, limited understandings of the faith. I then discuss the efforts of the Church to educate the locals about Orthodox Christianity. Having established the

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² I have translated ‘znanie’ as ‘knowledge’. Another fitting translation might be ‘awareness’.

¹ I speak about the ‘postsocialist’ context (as opposed to the ‘postsoviet’) so as to encourage comparison with other formerly socialist countries outside the Soviet zone (Serbia, for instance). Verderoy prefers ‘postsocialist’ as opposed to ‘postcommunist’ since socialist societies never saw themselves as having achieved ‘Communism’ [1999. P. 130, n. 14].
The postsocialist orthodox revival

I set the debate in a deeper temporal trajectory. I show how the churchgoers’ nuanced view of history allows them to deal with the ruptured transmission of knowledge in their tradition and actively deal with it in the present. This ultimately allows me to draw together the contemporary concerns about religious knowledge with the broader debate about Orthodox continuity.

Rural Orthodoxy

My arguments are based on a six-week period of fieldwork in a settlement with around one thousand permanent residents that sits on the highway about seventy kilometres to the south-east of St Petersburg. There are (fairly exceptionally by rural Russian standards) two churches in the village. My main research was based around the community of the Church of the Kazan’ Icon of the Mother of God (церковь Иконы Казанской Божьей Матери; henceforth the Kazan’ church). The original wooden church opened in 1903, standing in close proximity to the railway station. Then, as the Soviet persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church raged, it was closed in 1937 and transformed into a social club. This social club (vividly remembered by the village’s older residents) burnt to the ground in 1984. For many years all that remained on this site was a grey oblong stone, inscribed with a cross, that had lain beneath the original altar. In 2005 reconstruction began, significantly funded by a local businessman. Finally, on 21st July 2010 – the church’s patronal festival – the first liturgy was held. The priest is currently the thirty-year old Father Arsenii (Арсений). The other church, dedicated to St Nicholas the Wonderworker (церковь Николы Чудотворца; henceforth the St Nicholas church), is located about one kilometre down the highway from the centre of the village, making it less accessible. Whilst most of my material comes from the Kazan’ church community, I spoke at length with Father Mikhail, the priest of St Nicholas, and attended several services there.

Being hosted by a couple who were also involved in sponsoring the construction of the Kazan’ church, I actively participated in the life of the parish community, attended liturgies, and interviewed members of the clergy, church volunteers, and regular churchgoers. These interviews took place in diverse settings. With some people I drank copious amounts of brandy with others I chatted quietly after liturgies. Some parishioners accorded me hours of their time for discussions, elsewhere it was a case of snatched conversations over the shop counter whenever possible. Being male, it proved easier to communicate with the priests (they let me record interviews), whilst the elderly babushki were more wary of my intentions (and preferred me to take notes). There was half-humorous talk that I might have been a spy, or even a Jehovah’s Witness.

If, as Ewing suggests, ethnographers are ‘drawn, often involuntarily, into the nets of significance cast by the people among whom they conduct research and are thrust into their discourse and debates’ [1994. P. 578], then, being immersed in the politics and liturgical life of the parish, I was rapidly and ambiguously entangled in such ‘nets’. Whilst I did not espouse my informants’ Orthodoxy (being of an Anglican background), villagers with less involvement in the church began to overtly associate me with the Orthodox community, which possibly says something about the marked nature of regular churchgoing in rural Russia. My puzzling identity and the obvious limits of my own understanding provided a suitable portal into discussions about how people knew their faith. My point here is that if this article focuses on ‘ways of knowing’ it is because I too was inextricably caught up in (and an instigator of) debates about religious knowledge.

Knowledge and its loss

Davis describes the ‘widespread’ ignorance of the laity on matters of religion in the late Soviet era [1995. P. 200], and, given the ‘lack of systematic religious education’ during the period, the existence of ‘deep religious amnesia’ [Agadjanian, 2011. P. 19] is to be anticipated. Köllner also suggests that, regardless of many claiming an Orthodox identity, ‘knowledge of Orthodox axiological teachings remains low’ [2013. P. 40]. Addressing the statistical discord between people’s religious self-identification and what they actually understand and believe of their proclaimed faith, 4

4 During her fieldwork in the Romania of the 1970s and 1980s, Verdery really was suspected of being a spy [1996. P. 7]. I do not think that people truly felt me to be working for UK intelligence (razvedka) – repeating this idea was more a handy way of reminding me of my otherness, of the fact that I could not be readily bracketed.
Filatov and Lunkin argue that ‘the Orthodox religiosity of Russians today is so amorphous, so organisationally, dogmatically and ideologically unstructured, that any criteria for measuring it and any figures obtained about it are essentially imprecise’ [2006. P. 43]. Given these bleak conclusions, perhaps unsurprisingly, religious education is currently a ‘burning issue’ in Russia [Tocheva & Ładykowska, 2013. P. 56], accumulating significance at a national level with the debate over the introduction of the Foundations of Orthodox Culture course in state schools [Lisovskaya & Karpov, 2010].

Such reflections about the loss of religious awareness after socialism are not groundbreaking revelations and to rehash the same ideas here would not be insightful. What is interesting is to examine how religious people in a localised setting make sense of the perceived paucity of this knowledge. The question is not about ‘measuring’ Orthodox religiosity (how would you do that?), but about analysing how various ways of knowing religion emerge after a time of atheism, how these systems posit what should be known, and how different people react to this.

* * *

One day towards the end of my fieldwork I sat talking with Tamara. She was a woman in her mid-forties, a regular churchgoer who was paid a small salary to run the church shop. During our discussion a man stumbled into the chapel where we were sitting. He was clearly the worse for drink and close to tears. Somehow (and the details remained vague) his beloved pet dog had been accidentally, tragically, killed. Would it be possible, he enquired of Tamara, to light a candle in her memory? Tamara calmly replied that animals do not have souls and so could not be commemorated, encouraging him to light a candle for the well-being of his family instead. Once he had staggered out, Tamara turned to me:

You see, an example. No knowledge. He came here and wanted to commemorate his dog. He’s sorry about his dog. He was even crying … I understand [she recalled the death of her own cat]. But I know about this. I know that [my cat] didn’t have a soul, that I can’t commemorate her. But he doesn’t have any awareness. He came to church to remember his dog. So that’s the issue. But you see, his soul is already expecting something, is already striving for God. His soul’s started looking for something.

This event, which was surely more noteworthy for me than it was for Tamara, clearly illustrates the frustrations that the regular parishioners frequently reported about what they saw as the inadequate religious knowledge of their fellow villagers and Russians. Knowledge, Dilley notes, ‘is given form and process by the potentiality of ignorance, of not-knowing’ [2010. P. 177] meaning that (as in this case with Tamara) ignorance is thus ‘always linked to moral judgement and evaluation’ [Ibid. P. 188]. It is fair to say that for the clergy and regular churchgoers what the general public did not know about Orthodoxy was arguably just as significant as what they did. The perceived lacunae in people’s knowledge spurred people like Tamara to define their own positions more clearly, but also to set out ways to rectify the issue.

Partial knowledges, unaligned visions

Haraway [1991] urges us to valorise partial knowledges, knowledges that people possess which are characterised, not by their omniscient nature, but by their incompleteness. What was significant in this case was that churchgoers readily flagged the limits of their own understanding. Indeed, what seemed to distinguish people in the village was not (as in some classic models) an educated elite versus an ignorant peasantry. Rather, the enchurched set themselves apart by actively recognising the work on the self that Orthodoxy demands (fasting, confession, weekly attendance at the liturgy), self-reflexively asserting their limited knowledge, and conscientiously seeking to amend this. It is also worth noting that both Fathers Arsenii and Mikhail were completing their theological education, following a decree from Patriarch Kirill that all priests should have seminary level training 7. During our interviews...

5 All my informants have been given pseudonyms.
6 The verb used here is ‘pominat’, literally meaning ‘to remember’, but, in church circles, meaning ‘to commemorate’ or ‘to pray for’.
7 In the 1990s, due to the shortage of candidates, many men became priests without this training. Davis describes the tense state of theological education at the end of the Soviet Union [1995. P. 159–177].
and discussions both priests referred to their studies and to subjects they had covered recently, thus nuancing any simplistic notion of fixed ecclesiastical authority and lending weight to my argument that postsocialist Orthodox knowledges must be seen as situated and dynamic.

Pavel was a local man heavily invested in church life. He became ‘enchurched’ eight years ago and eventually started helping at the altar. However, despite his involvement in parish life, he readily positioned himself as a student. On matters of Orthodox Christian doctrine he said that ‘I’m still learning, learning, learning, and learning some more’. In another conversation about church iconography, he stated that ‘We’re only just beginning to understand [these artistic technicalities]’. Valentina Antonova, a churchgoer in her mid-seventies, recalled the process of getting to know more about church life: ‘We [the elderly parishioners] already know a lot. When to sing the Creed and prayers to the icon, when to sing ‘Our Father’ (Отче наш). We’re learning the prayers … We’ve got a grasp of it all. At the beginning it was hard to understand.’ Vadim, a forty-year-old man who travelled to services from St Petersburg, made a low sweeping gesture with his hand, saying that sometimes he felt he knew very little, and that he sought to learn more about Orthodox rituals and traditions by speaking to experienced churchgoers. Other people would quickly defer my questions to Father Arsenii (‘You should ask bat’ushka’) (Надо у батюшки спросить), signalling the limits of their own knowledge and handing over to whom they saw as more qualified source. By way of contrast, Lena, an amiable middle-aged woman who worked in the village shop, observed that whilst there were people ‘who read’ about Orthodoxy, she confidently counted herself out of this group, satisfied with the notions of the faith that she already possessed. In such views, religious knowledge seems to become objectified, externalised, a body of information that could be known should the individual feel inclined.

Regular churchgoers deal with the Soviet Union’s impact on religious knowledge, not by denying it, nor by taking an Orthodox identity for granted. In my field-notes I documented the countless dismissive remarks they made about people who confidently identified as Orthodox but who only came to church periodically to ‘light a candle’ (поставить свечку). Indeed, the people with whom I spoke do not claim a confident, all-encompassing knowledge. What they claim is a desire to learn. This position (recognising the depths of Orthodoxy even if you have not plumbed them yourself) pits itself against those who were seen as being interested in a superficial, aesthetic Orthodoxy. In one conversation, Olga Borisovna, a former St Petersburg resident and now living solely ‘for the Church’ in the village, rather pointedly included me in this latter category.

Father Andrei, a deacon in his forties who served in the Kazan’ church, was overtly sceptical about newcomers to the faith: ‘They’re Christians, but at a consumer level: [mimicking the amazed voice of a newcomer opening hands and mock awe] “icons!”, “bat’ushka!” Such involvement, he suggested, is also a sort of step toward churchliness and Orthodoxy, but it’s only the start. You can’t stop there. You can come to church for the first time, a second, third or fourth time and get close with these feelings, but after that you’ve got to dig deeper.

Father Andrei’s accusation, then, is that many people remain fixated on the material, on the visual, whereas he would rather they eventually grasped a broader, spiritual picture. However, what he perceives as being but initial steps towards a deeper understanding (he imagines that the boundaries of Orthodox experience can be pushed back much further) are, for many Russians, the very cornerstones of their Orthodoxy.

Icons, relics, and personable priests are meaningful signs of faith. For instance, the locals who attended church less regularly often evoked their own relationship to a particular priest. Lena pulled a displeased face when I mentioned Father Mikhail, saying she preferred Father Arsenii who was, in her view, ‘wonderful’ (замечательный). A waitress in a roadside café preferred the ‘atmosphere’ St Nicholas church because the building was older than the Kazan’ church. If, to follow Engelke and Tomlinson, Father Andrei is insisting on the meaning of certain Orthodox practices, then he perceives the ‘specter of its absence’ in what he believes to be the local, limited readings of the Church [2006. P. 25]. However, the locals
emphasised their own meanings, in alternative personal visions unaligned with Father Andrei’s. Everyone I spoke to had conceptions of Orthodoxy; nobody professed atheism.

**Learning on offer**

Since the regular parishioners were concerned about how much people knew (and the potentially non-canonical ways in which they knew what they did), they responded accordingly. Father Arsenii organised a Sunday school that ran after the morning liturgy throughout the academic year. He characterised it as a place where people could ask questions, where he showed relevant films, where he could put people’s ‘thoughts in order’. However, the lessons were a source of great frustration for him: attendance was poor. If there were thirty people at the service, he might expect to get five or six staying behind. He explained that the majority of the congregation ‘think the knowledge that they have already is enough for them’, a position that irritated him. The enchurched are not content with comfortable working knowledges, but encourage a humble awareness that there is much more to be learnt.

Similarly, free literature on religious matters was abundantly available in the church shop (lavka) and chapel. Tamara frequently gave me books and leaflets to read. They were free and plentiful, but, she said, nobody ever took them. Titles ranged from *How to behave in the cemetery* to *About the Holy Liturgy*. Such booklets, Weichert argues, are ‘an essential part of post-Soviet cultural re-education and reorientation’ where clerical authors ‘provide the rules while people negotiate the (new) Orthodox environment and their place within it’ [2007. P. 465]. Moreover, ‘the question-and-answer format’ that is often used ‘reinforces the sense of an all-knowing Church’ [Ibid. P. 460]. Weichert captures the *theory* of how the Church would like these booklets to work. In truth, however, the Church’s all-knowingness is dormant unless actualised, read. Rules may be provided, but this does not mean that they are followed or even deemed to be relevant by their intended audience.

For Dilley, ignorance ‘is an absence that has effects in terms of what is construed as knowledge, and of what social relations of learning are established in order to address the consequences of that absence’ [2010 S. P. 188]. As I have shown, the enchurched parishioners readily construed knowledge, and ways to implement it. Indeed, in doing so – and dejectedly talking about the local lack of interest – they clearly mapped out their own Orthodox identity. Whilst more enchurched people perceived a glaring ‘absence’, many other people did not. Or, even if they did perceive such an ‘absence’, they did not necessarily see it as one that should be filled. After socialism, where religious knowledge is not naturally woven into the social fabric, but objectified and marked, we see how one group’s insistence on learning may be rejected by others who prefer to delimit their involvement.

Kormina argues that in Russia ‘[c]ontemporary pilgrims, just like the present-day Orthodox more generally, are distinguished from each other by their degree of assimilation into religious culture and their degree of participation in Church life’ [2013. P. 206]. Indeed, in order to understand the undulating and irregular forms of postsocialist religiosity it is unhelpful to work with a simplistic framework of all-knowing institutions and ignorant neophytes. As I have been showing, one fruitful approach is to examine how the religious identify what constitutes religious knowledge, and then how they judge the efforts of themselves and others to imbue this knowing. How, though, does this analysis further our analysis of the broader idea of Benovska *et al.* about Orthodoxy’s almost cathartic properties in the face of social change? The next logical analytical step is to cast these very real debates about ways of knowing and experiencing Orthodoxy into a deeper temporal trajectory.

**Time and knowledge**

At the outset of my fieldwork my interview questions started from the premise that the Soviet Union had dealt a heavy blow to the Church that severely impacted all domains of religious life. My informants did not necessarily deny this view, but their churchly readings of history generally sought deeper, more complex trajectories. The problems and waning influence of the Church were cast back well before the Soviet Union, starting with the secularising
reforms of Peter the Great in the 1700s (see [Lesourd, 2013]). Several of my informants consequently argued that if the Revolution had occurred this was precisely because the late imperial Church had poorly educated her flock and failed to propose a superior alternative to the Bolsheviks. Despite these critical reflections on the institutional Church, the people I spoke to frequently imagined the faith of those who had remained believers during the Soviet Union as purer and truer than that of believers today. Sustained persecution had engendered a sort of spiritual purity amongst the faithful, a point also made by Ware [1997. P. 148]. That said, the enchurched had little time for ‘the ‘widespread belief’ that religion ‘was preserved in the Soviet period by village grandmothers’, essentially agreeing with Kormina and Shtyrkov that the knowledge they transmitted was minimal at best [2011. P. 171; see also Benovska-Sabkova et al., 2010. P. 18]. During the USSR, it was easier to express one’s Orthodoxy in the countryside [Davis, 1995. P. 128], but Tamara was very sceptical about the quality of this religiosity, suggesting that it was ‘crooked’.

What, then, are the implications of presenting such a nuanced view of history? I would argue that the enchurched were distinguishing themselves from people who might think that the Orthodox faith is a cultural ‘given’ in contemporary Russia. They posited Orthodoxy as an inherited, yet imperfect project to be worked on. Celebrating the commitment of Soviet believers is arguably a veiled stab at those who are considered to be ‘insincere’ Orthodox today; recognising the troubles of Soviet and even prerevolutionary Church history they position themselves as active participants in revitalising Orthodoxy in the present. Verdery argues that given ‘the shallowness of Bolshevism’s own historical roots’ reinserting ‘deeper temporalities’ (such as Christianity) after socialism is a real possibility, allowing politicians to connect with the ‘precommunist past’ [1999. P. 117]. However, in this community the new Christian temporality did not completely overlook the socialist one. The dents that socialism made in Orthodoxy need to be rectified, and this is a process to be accomplished, not by rewriting history, but by enchurching into the future, by working towards becoming better Orthodox people. The Sunday school and plentiful free literature (however ineffective they were later claimed to be) were all part of this project.

We can thus refine Kormina’s conclusions further. The enchurched do not see these ‘degrees of assimilation’ into religious culture as being static. All people have the potential to come spiritually closer to the Church. (Recall Tamara saying that the bereaved dog owner’s soul was looking for something, hinting at his potential for greater religious involvement.) Moreover, my informants insisted that awareness of Orthodoxy can evolve through improving religious schooling. Acknowledging the limited nature of his religious education due to his Soviet upbringing, Father Pavel told me that religious education needed to be initiated ‘with the mother’s milk’. Valentina Antonova was keen to emphasise that young people attended the Sunday school, not people of her age. This is a vision that places much hope on future generations to see it through.

Verdery argues that ‘the sense of self rests partly on a sense of being-in-time, the shape people attribute to history infuses both individuals’ and groups’ self-understanding’ [1999. P. 117; italics in original]. In underlining the religious knowledge lost during socialism and the decline of the ROC even before that, the enchurched parishioners develop their self-understanding in a discourse that emphasises learning. Moreover, in criticising what they see as deviant ways, they concomitantly stress what they see as the correct way of being Orthodox. Thus, contra Benovska-Sabkova et al. [2010] who suggest that Russian Orthodoxy helps to ‘embed’ rupture, it is clear that, for these enchurched parishioners, the fractures of socialism actually revitalise a sense of mission. The emphasis on the need to inculcate the right sort of knowledge, more than on idealising the past, throws our attention onto how religious identities are imagined as evolving into the future.

Conclusion

I once attempted to explain my research about the ‘postsocialist religious revival’ to Vadim, a parishioner mentioned above. He smiled slyly and asked, repeating my wording: ‘Oh, is this considered a “revival” (vzrozhdenie)?’ His implication was, of course, that the real religious revival was yet to come, that the Russian interest in Orthodoxy since the 1990s was but a superficial phenomenon. In twenty-first century Russia religion may well be a legi-
timate source of identity, but we must not overlook how devoted parishioners critique the perceived quality of this religiosity. Through focusing on the ways the enchurched construe and imagine the contours of religious knowledge, a complex picture emerges whereby practitioners do not deny the rupture of the socialism, but rather position themselves in response to it, simultaneously decrying the lack of religious ‘enlightenment’ in Russia, and seeking to rectify it. Far more than a situation where people gaze back in time to an idealised version of Russian Orthodoxy, the priorities in this community seem to be more focussed on recognising spiritual shortcomings and rectifying them. This is a project that is necessarily future-orientated.

Barth notes that ‘[p]eople construct their worlds by their knowledge and live by it, and therefore an anthropology of knowledge should ask how these varieties are variously produced, represented, transmitted, and applied’ [2002. P. 10]. After an epoch when it was hoped that religious knowledge would evaporate, the ways in which this knowledge is today being represented and applied provide crucial insights into the postsocialist Orthodox experience. One of my informants (Tamara) said that during socialism faith ‘became crooked at the edges’. It is what are seen to be the ‘crooked edges’ of knowledge and understanding that have proved noteworthy in this analysis. What do the enchurched perceive as being worth knowing, how do they pit these knowledges against the ways of the populace, and to what extent are ideas about religion seen as understood? Asking what people are said to know/ say they know, or are said not to know / say they do not know, proves insightful as we start to see the complete mismatch of perceptions between the Church’s view and that of people who hope to acquire soulful calm in their own way.

Of course, to make this exploration of postsocialist religious knowledge truly penetrating we need to go beyond Russian Orthodoxy, beyond Christianity also. For instance, concerning postsocialist Tajikistan, Stephan [2006] discusses the frustrations of students who bring home with them ‘universalist’ interpretations of Islam from their studies abroad, interpretations that collide with what they see as the misguided, Soviet influenced ‘local’ Islam. For this elite it becomes a question of attempting to re-educate people out of what is perceived as a ‘dilution of Islam’ [Ibid. P. 158]. Amongst the Macedonian Sufis with whom Oustinova-Stjepanovic worked, by contrast, the frustration was predominantly within the group, not directed outwards. Whilst the practitioners eagerly read theological literature to aspire to the right way of performing dervishluk, they were blocked by ‘the gap between the prophetic precedent and human re-enactments of that excellent ontology in the past and contemporary contexts’ [2011. P. 119]. In both cases, though, (and this chimes with the case I have explored here) we see deeply invested practitioners seeking purportedly truer, purer forms of the belief system that is widely practised around them. The key question, then, is about how religious practitioners deal with rupture in their traditions, and how concerns about lost knowledge impact portrayals of religious identities in the present and the ways that these identities are imagined in the future.

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ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ПРАВОСЛАВИЯ В ПОСТСОВЕТСКОЙ РОССИИ
И ВОПРОС О РЕЛИГИОЗНОМ ЗНАНИИ

Статья основывается на материалах этнографической экспедиции в небольшую русскую сельскую православную общину Ленинградской области и фокусируется на религиозном дискурсе постоянных прихожан, которые активно вовлечены в церковную жизнь. Особое
внимание уделяется их обыденным представлениям о «воцерковленности» и истинном религиозном знании. Анализ их «полевых» высказываний о неудовлетворительном состоянии религиозного просвещения и его текущих задачах, предпринятый в статье, показывает, что после падения «социализма» прихожане вовсе не идеализируют дореволюционное православное прошлое и не пытаются восстановить связь с ним в прежних формах, как это часто утверждается в литературе. Они, конечно, принимают непростую судьбу Русской православной церкви, но, стремясь к повышению своей религиозной грамотности, скорее, ориентированы на будущее.

Ключевые слова: православие, воцерковленность, дискурс воцерковления, религиозное знание vs. религиозные представления, (‘частные’ религиозные знания), просвещение и просвещенность, религиозная идентичность, религиозная самоидентификация, обыденное религиозное сознание, заявленная вера, повторное явление (возрождение) религии, Россия / Русь.