

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

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RUSSIA: Pastor Moskvitin's Evangelical Church headed for liquidation

Photo :Pastor Moskvitin taken to court. From Telegram

RUSSIA: Russia, Pastor Moskvitin's Church headed for liquidation

By Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (12.04.2023) – Bitter Winter reported in

March that the Kirovsky District Court of Omsk, Russia, sentenced Pastor Stanislav Moskvitin on March 12 to one and a half years to be spent in a penal colony. Moskvitin had been arrested on July 18, 2021. He is the pastor of the Apostolic Center Church "New Creation," which is part of the Russian Council of Christian Evangelical Churches.

As Bitter Winter had reported when the trial started in September 22, New Creation was founded in 2014 and registered in 2016. It is part of a network of Russian-speaking conservative Evangelical churches established in Russia, the Baltic States, and the United States. They supported in the past Putin and Patriarch Kirill's criticism of Western LGBT activism. However, they were denounced as "cults" by the Russian Orthodox Church because they proselytize and convert Orthodox believers to their Protestant faith.

The verdict was based on Article 239, no.1, which punishes "harming the health" of Russian citizens. It was an interesting decision because it regarded "brainwashing" or "hypnotizing" followers as a health-damaging practice Moskvitin was guilty of. Brainwashing is regarded by a vast majority of scholars of religious movements as a non-existing practice based on a pseudo-scientific theory, used as a tool to discriminate about unpopular minorities.

Russian media have now reported that the Ministry of Justice has conducted an inspection of Moskvitin's church and has come to the conclusion that it should be liquidated.

The inspection was carried out from March 15 to 17 with the help of anti-cult "experts," who concluded that the pastor systematically used "brainwashing" to "hypnotize" his followers.

Liquidation of the Apostolic Center Church "New Creation" has been proposed, and is expected to follow shortly, creating yet another casualty of the Russian anti-cult movement, Russia's

blatant disregard for religious liberty, and “brainwashing,” a theory that is not more scientific or respectable than flat earth hypotheses or other debunked fallacies.



Photo: Moskvitin hugging a parishioner during his trial. From Telegram.

Massimo Introvigne (born June 14, 1955 in Rome) is an Italian sociologist of religions. He is the founder and managing director of the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR), an international network of scholars who study new religious movements. Introvigne is the author of some 70 books and more than 100 articles in the field of sociology of religion. He was the main author of the *Enciclopedia delle religioni in Italia* (Encyclopedia of Religions in Italy). He is a member of the editorial board for the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* and of the executive board of University of California Press' *Nova Religio*. From January 5 to December 31, 2011, he has served as the “Representative on combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, with a special focus on discrimination against Christians and members of other religions” of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). From 2012 to 2015 he served as chairperson

of the Observatory of Religious Liberty, instituted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to monitor problems of religious liberty on a worldwide scale.

Further reading about FORB in Russia on HRWF website

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