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How much does it cost to reach the ends of the earth? – economic dimension of the Russian missionary activities

Missionary work has become a central issue for the Christian churches of modern Russia from the late 1980-1990's. It is on the agenda of many Christian churches and organizations in Russia. For example, in 2007 the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church adopted the "Concept of the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church ", and in 2011, a draft "On the organization of missionary work in the Russian Orthodox Church". Russian Protestant communities belonging to different movements are the most active in this respect. Among them the Pentecostals stand out for the missionary activities. The Minor Council of the Russian United Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith, held in October 2013, was entitled "The mission of the Church. XXI century. Russia and to the ends of the earth". Russian Protestants organized many missionary expeditions over the past 20 years and brought the Gospel to the most remote areas of the country.

Participation in the missionary expeditions and contribution to the formation of new churches are a duty of every Christian. Almost all Protestant pastors preach about it during the church-service. However, this lofty goal involves the calculations of a more mundane nature – an economic one. Missionary expedition is a costly undertaking that requires organizational efforts of the community, and financial contribution of individual believers. And it is not only about tithe and other donations. Missionary trips can last for a long time, therefore its participants sometimes have to resign or go on a long vacation.

Normally all financial expenses during the mission are on account of its participants. Not surprisingly, the missionary expeditions attract mainly well off believers. According to the inquiry conducted in 2012 in a number of Pentecostal communities of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District (West Siberia, Russia) (N = 564 ), 26.7 % of believers with high incomes are involved in missionary expeditions, when among those with above-average incomes it is 22.4 %,

and above those with average incomes it is 24.5 %. In comparison only 14.8 % of the believers with below-average incomes and 11.8 % of believers with low incomes participate in missionary activities.

What are the economic costs of organization of missionary expeditions? What are the organizational challenges that churches face? What is the economic contribution of individual believers in the missionary work of the community, and what are the possibilities of their participation in missionary activities? – our report will be dedicated to these particular issues.