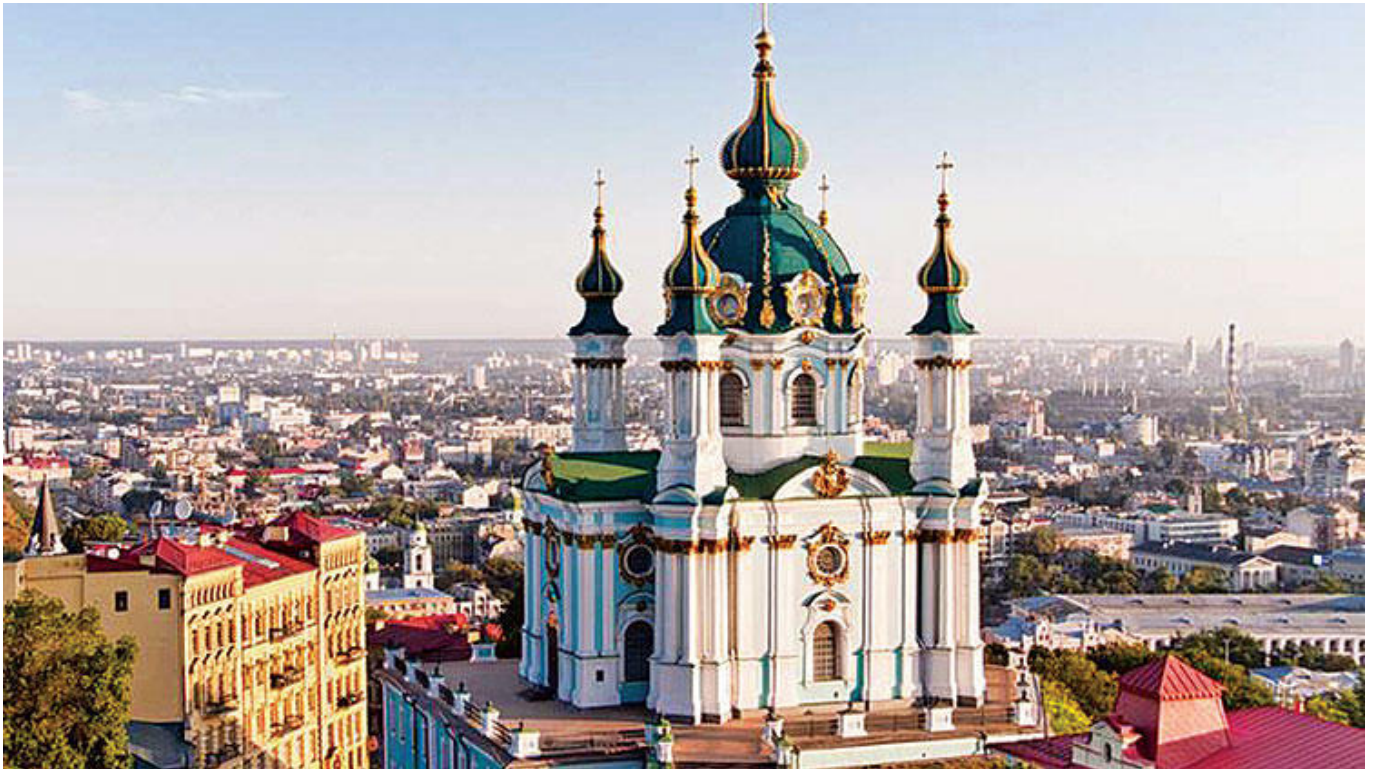


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Russian Archpriest Smirnov: Russian nation dying out, Islam on the rise



High-ranking Russian Orthodox Church cleric Dmitri Smirnov this week raised eyebrows in Moscow by warning that "... the Ukraine, Belarus and Russia are dying out.

As a Russian nation we have 30 years left; Muslims will reside in the European portion, and the Asia portion will become Chinese ... Just as the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople was converted into mosque, so too will the Orthodox Cathedral in Moscow be converted with a giant minaret in place of the Cross..."

Smirnov is the head of the Moscow Church's Commission on Family Matters.