

Businessman Sets Orthodox Rules for Workplace

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 12, 2010

The  Moscow Times

The head of a prominent Russian dairy said Thursday that he would fire employees who have abortions or refuse to be married in Russian Orthodox Church ceremonies.

Critics said the rules set out by the president of Russkoye Moloko, Vasily Boiko-Veliky, violated the Constitution and labor laws.

While the Russian Orthodox Church criticized the rules, they are likely to add to concerns among liberals and minority faiths about the growing influence of the dominant church.

"We have about 6,000 employees, most of whom are Orthodox, and I expect them to be faithful and to repent," Boiko-Veliky said.

He said the company was established to promote the Orthodox revival of Russia, and the rules were meant "to prevent future sins by employees."

Ekho Moskvyy radio quoted Boiko-Veliky as saying a woman who has had an abortion "can no longer be an employee of our company. ... We don't want to work with killers."

He said he would not try to introduce tests to determine whether employees have had abortions or require them to sign a pledge, but would rely on them to be honest. He said he was more concerned about future conduct than the past.

According to Ekho Moskvyy, Boiko-Veliky said the record heat wave Russia has endured this summer was punishment for sin and that church weddings could improve things.

Russian Orthodox Church spokesman Vladimir Vigilyansky said the rules could cast the church and religion in a bad light, according to Ekho Moskvyy.

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