

The Formation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

Introduction

The story of the formation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada is, in many respects, a sad tale—one intimately bound up with that of the Ukrainian immigrants who founded it: their spiritual needs, their collective experience of religion as poor peasant-settlers on the Canadian prairies, their growing sense of a collective national and ethnic Ukrainian identity, and their relationship with their troubled homeland, the Ukraine. It is a tale I will tell in two parts, the first part setting the stage with a thematic and analytical portrait of the conditions and experiences leading up to the formation of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, the second more simply and succinctly relating what happened as the church itself was formed, with the main thrust of the narrative aiming to account for *what went wrong*—that is, how a church embracing a large proportion of the Ukrainian immigration to the Canadian prairies (38,000 people by the end of 1928—Yuzyk 231), formed out of a sincere desire to be Orthodox, ended up isolated from the rest of the Orthodox world.

Factors Behind and Before Formation

The Ukrainian immigration to Canada in the period 1891 to World War I came from the provinces of Galicia (Halychyna) and Bukovyna in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and constituted approximately 150,000 on the eve of World War I. The Ukrainians from Galicia were overwhelmingly Greek Catholic, Catholics of Byzantine rite united with Rome. ... The Ukrainians in Bukovyna were predominantly member[s] of the Orthodox Church in Bukovyna, headed by the metropolitan of Chernivtsi. (Yereniuk 109)

Besides providing us with a succinct description of early Ukrainian immigration to Canada, Yereniuk's summary nicely illustrates two aspects of that early immigration that are particularly important to our subject, namely, that these first Ukrainian immigrants to Canada were united neither in nationality—for the Austro-Hungarian Empire embraced many nationalities, and as yet the Ukraine did not exist as a nation—nor in religion. And yet, as the reality of the Ukrainian immigration to Canada unfolded, it became clear that there was a powerful sense of unity amongst these early settlers—so much so that they were willing to face almost any hardship as long as they were settled next to one another¹—a sense of unity that ultimately expressed itself in nationalistic and, to a lesser extent, in religious terms. The formation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada was very much an expression of this developing sense of a *Ukrainian* identity. The three most powerful focal points for this emergent sense of Ukrainian ethnic/national identity seem to have been culture, language, and liturgy. While the power of this third focal point was certainly somewhat undermined by the Orthodox/Catholic divisions noted above, its

¹ John C. Lehr relates some patterns and incidents which nicely illustrate the strength of this impulse towards unity, noting that “immigrants from Galicia settled alongside but separately from those from Bukovyna” (48), that “successive newcomers [to the township of Stuartburn] traded off a progressive decline in land quality against the advantages of a familiar social, religious, and linguistic milieu” (48), and that the first Ukrainian immigrants whom the Canadian government dispatched to Fish Creek in an attempt to trick them into settling good wheat-growing land far away from any other Ukrainian settlements, refused “even [to] go [to] inspect [the] country, ... threatened to kill [the] interpreter,” [*insertions made to clarify original telegraph*] and simply “began walking back to Regina” *en masse* (46)!

importance as a force for unity—especially in the earlier stages of settlement—should not be underestimated.

Most of the early Ukrainian settlers on the Canadian prairies were peasants—those “stalwart peasant[s] in ... sheepskin coat[s], born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations” whom Canadian immigration minister Clifford Sifton had courted with offers of free land and preferred even over more culturally acceptable British immigrants as “good quality”. This is not to say that, as peasants, the Ukrainian settlers were not concerned with “larger”, more abstract issues such as canonicity and the Catholic/Orthodox question—indeed, subsequent developments would show that they definitely were—but as isolated settlers and peasant-farmers, their initial concerns were with more practical matters like establishing farms and building churches. The first services were generally held in homes large enough to accommodate larger meetings. As one early settler recalled, they “decided to meet every Sunday and sing at least those parts of the liturgy that were meant to be sung by the cantor.” (Yereniuk 110) But church buildings were high on the settlers list of initial priorities: “within a decade of the arrival of the first settlers, there were already twenty church buildings,” though “initially these edifices stood empty because the village priests remained in the homeland.” (110) This shortage of priests was a perennial problem—one aggravated in the case of the Greek-Catholic Ukrainians by Rome’s prohibition of married clergy in North America. The need for priests was deeply felt, and the settlers soon began to send out petitions for and invitations to clergy—but for many years, the settlers need was met either on an occasional basis, or, at best, by itinerant priests assigned to large regions.

One of the first and most dramatic Orthodox-Catholic conflicts to flare up illustrates the effects of a number of these early forces on the religious experience of the first Ukrainian settlers on the Canadian prairies. In the community of Star, Alberta, some of the settlers were visited on an occasional basis by various Greek Catholic priests, while others were served by an itinerant Russian Orthodox priest. There was some overlap between the two groups—as when some of the Greek Catholics came to the Russian Orthodox services because the Russian Orthodox priest was a good speaker. The settlers were encouraged by both Russian Orthodox and Greek Catholic priests to apply for a land-grant and to build a church-building, which they did. Controversy erupted when the French Canadian Catholic bishop who had visited the community attempted to “get the land vested in the Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese ‘in trust’” for the church “a month after the [church] trustees had received their patent for the same land.” (Yuzyk 77-78) While the initial controversy was resolved when the bishop “assigned the land to the trustees, ... the trust was left to stand as previously declared.” (78) When the church was completed in 1899, “the first service was conducted in it by a Greek Catholic priest from the United States, ... who was on a tour of the Ukrainian settlements.” (79) After the Greek Catholic priest’s departure, however, “some of the members of the congregation, who had grievances against him, visited the Russian Orthodox priest, who held a service in the church on the second Sunday of Lent in ... 1900, and announced that he would conduct the Easter service in the same church.” (79) He was physically prevented from doing so, however, by the Greek Catholic members of the congregation, and when the police were called in, the church was closed and a lengthy court battle ensued. After being appealed to the Supreme Courts of the North-West Territories (of which Alberta was then a part) and of Canada, the case was finally resolved in 1907 by the Privy Council in London, England, which ruled that the church and the property belonged to the local trustees, who supported Orthodoxy. In this example, we see the initial unitive forces of the

settlers' common culture, language, and liturgy in their communal construction of the church, as well as the disruption and confusion resulting from occasional and itinerant clerical ministry. The court case and its resolution also had a significant impact on subsequent communal church-building projects, in that it inspired in the Ukrainian settlers a definite preference for the trusteeship model of church ownership.

The Star, Alberta, case also illustrates—indeed, itself became an additional reason for—the difficulties faced by the Canadian Roman Catholic hierarchy in communicating with their Ukrainian parishioners. When Bishop Emile Legal (“who, because there was no Greek Catholic hierarchy in Canada, had nominally assumed jurisdiction over Greek Catholics there”) had visited the community, it was the first service of the Eastern Rite which he had seen, and all communication with the parishioners had to be interpreted by the priest who was visiting with him (Yuzyk 77). The linguistic-cultural-liturgical gap was immense, and even earnest attempts to bridge it, such as translating French and Belgian missionaries to the Eastern rite, were often met with hostility and suspicion simply because the priests in question were not Ukrainian (Yerenuik 113). The Catholic hierarchy's insistence that only celibate priests could serve in North America did not help matters, as has already been noted, as it aggravated the already-extreme shortage of Ukrainian priests (since “96 per cent of the Greek Catholic clergy [in Galicia] were married”) and put the celibate French and Belgian missionary priests continually on the defensive (Krawchuk 208-209). There was strong feeling among the Ukrainian immigrants that “the French bishops impose their priests upon us” and many were so suspicious “that the francophone priests were out to Latinize them that when the latter offered financial assistance to the impoverished immigrants, such funds were flatly refused as a matter of principle.” (211)

In 1912, the Canadian Catholic Church moved to address some of Ukrainian immigrants' concerns and desires by appointing a Ukrainian, Nykyta Budka, “as the first bishop (1912-27) of the Greek Catholic Church in Canada, with full jurisdiction over the Byzantine-rite Ukrainians but responsible to the pope.” (Yerenuik 114) This move met with limited success, however, in part because Budka's authoritative leadership style played into the aforementioned fears of Latinization and strict hierarchical control², and in part because Budka's insistence on the use of the title “Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in Canada” for his church went directly against the developing sense of *Ukrainian* ethnic identity. The following years' developments dealt further blows to the cause of the Canadian Catholic Church among the Ukrainian immigrants. The Congregation for the Propagation of Faith's 1913 decree *Ea Semper*, “with its explicit emphasis on celibate clergy,” (Yerenuik 114) further alienated Ukrainian immigrants who wanted married priests like they had had back in Galicia, and Bishop Budka's rash pastoral letter at the outbreak of the war in 1914, in which he urged his flock “to support Austrian emperor Franz Josef in his impending struggle with Russia”, only helped to label the Ukrainian immigrants as traitors when Britain (and, shortly thereafter, Canada, as a loyal part of the British Empire) declared war on Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire within the week.

If the Canadian Catholic Church was too Latin for many of the Ukrainian immigrants, the Russian Orthodox Church suffered similarly from a tendency to be too Russian. While the Russian Orthodox Mission in North America stood to gain much from the trend set by Fr. Alexis Toth whereby many Uniate churches in North America returned to Orthodoxy, it tended to

² Especially over their church buildings! Krawchuk notes that “to the Ukrainian mind, registration under a Latin-rite bishop was akin to a renunciation of church property in favour of a foreign church.” (217)

interpret this movement not simply as a return to Orthodoxy, but as a return to Russia. From Bishop Nicholas' reply to the settlers at Star, Alberta, in 1897 in which he "expressed thanks to God that the correspondents 'remember that they are Russians'" (Yuzyk 76), to Archbishop Alexander's 1919 Russian-language telegraph to the fledgling Ukrainian Orthodox Church accepting them under his omophorium, this continual emphasis on the Ukrainian immigrants' identity as *Russians* was bound to end up rubbing them the wrong way as their sense of ethnic identity as Ukrainians developed. While this stance did prove reasonably fruitful among the Russophile Ukrainians from Bukovynia, it was exactly this insistence on identifying the Ukrainians as Russians that proved the primary—and ultimately insurmountable—obstacle that prevented the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada's initial impulse to put itself under Archbishop Alexander's omophorium from coming to fruition.

By far the most colourful chapter in the history of the Ukrainian settlers' early religious experience on the Canadian prairies was the development of the so-called "All-Russian Patriarchal Orthodox" and the Independent Greek churches. As these closely-interrelated episodes aptly illustrate the vulnerability and the resulting negative experiences of the largely priestless peasant-immigrant Ukrainian communities—negative experiences that contributed to the strength of the immigrants' desire for a truly Orthodox church they could call their own—they are worth taking the time to relate at some length here.

The All-Russian Patriarchal Orthodox Church began with the arrival in 1903—and largely ended with the departure in 1908—of the self-styled "Seraphim, Bishop and Metropolitan of the Orthodox Russian Church for the whole of America" (Yuzyk 92), actually "Stefan Ustvolsky ... a former Russian Orthodox priest who had been excommunicated by the Holy Synod in St. Petersburg" (Olender 194) and who now based his claims to authority on "a forged document of an act of consecration by three Eastern Orthodox archbishops." (Yuzyk 92) "Coming to Winnipeg in 1903, after having been rejected by a group of disaffected Greek Catholic priests in the United States," (Yuzyk 92-93) "Seraphim set up a chapel in the immigration building and began to celebrate Divine Liturgy ... and to ordain Ukrainian Catholic cantors as priests for a fee of \$25.00." (Olender 194) Given the extreme shortage of Ukrainian priests, it was a popular offer, and Metropolitan Seraphim "quickly ordained fifty priests and a number of deacons, many of them semi-illiterate." (93) Ironically, this imposter and charlatan soon found himself used by three Protestant Ukrainians with a hidden agenda.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada had long been concerned with the massive influx of Ukrainian immigrants, who were not only not British, but not even Protestant. But in their attempts to evangelize the Ukrainian immigrants, they were faced with a problem: despite the obvious superiority of British civilization and Protestant religion, the Ukrainian immigrants were strangely resistant to conversion. "Ritual and the 'display of gorgeous colours' were used to induce the lay person to turn off his powers of reason and intelligence," according to one Presbyterian medical missionary to the Ukrainians. (Olender 193) One potential inroad into the Ukrainian community that the Presbyterians explored was to train young Ukrainian converts as teachers and missionaries for free in their seminary in Winnipeg. But of course these trained converts then faced the enormous difficulty of finding acceptance as spiritual leaders within their community without the benefit of a Catholic or Orthodox ordination.

It was thus that three graduates of this Presbyterian training program approached “Metropolitan Seraphim” to avail themselves of his offer of ordination. More than that, they began working with the other newly ordained priests to further Metropolitan Seraphim’s cause, and, with little competition from other ordained priests on the prairies, preaching a message that “upheld trustee ownership of church property[,] ... the new church movement spread like a prairie fire into almost every Ukrainian community” (Yuzyk 93). Given his character, however, Metropolitan Seraphim soon became a liability to the burgeoning new movement, and he was encouraged by his “wiser” priests to travel to Russia “to seek sanction and support for his church from the Holy Synod in St. Petersburg.” (94) This he did in the fall of 1903 and, not surprisingly, he returned empty-handed the following year. Meanwhile, during Metropolitan Seraphim’s absence, the Presbyterian-trained priests had staged a coup. “A church assembly (*Sobor*) was convened in Winnipeg in January 1904 with all the priests in attendance as well as delegates from each congregation.” (Olender 195) The main speaker, Bodrug, was one of the Presbyterian-trained priests, and the name and constitution of the “Independent Greek Church” that the assembly created and incorporated had been devised “with the assistance of the Principal and professors of Manitoba College” (194), the Presbyterian seminary that Bodrug and the others had attended.

Metropolitan Seraphim was naturally astounded when he returned and discovered these developments, but his immediate excommunication of the leaders of the coup was pretty much a moot point: the Independent Greek Church had already rejected apostolic succession and had determined that future ordinations were to be performed by the church consistory rather than by a bishop (196). His excommunications were simply rejected, and since most, if not all of his parishes were now under the Independent Greek Church which Bodrug and his friends controlled, Metropolitan Seraphim became *de facto* “a bishop without a church.” (196) Not long afterwards, “the Russian Holy Synod announced the excommunication of Seraphim and all the priests ordained by him,” and in 1908 Seraphim left Canada for Russia (Yuzyk 94).³ The Independent Greek Church apparently continued its initial successes for some time—although in fact we have little to go on other than the figures Bodrug reported to his Presbyterian supporters—but as the Presbyterian Church began to exert more and more control, requiring Presbyterian approval for all IGC consistory actions in 1907, reforming the liturgy in 1910 (ridicule of Orthodox traditions was one tactic adopted to accomplish this), and, in 1912, cutting off financial support for the priests unless they became Presbyterian ministers, the Independent Greek Church began to lose parishioners, ministers (including Bodrug!), and, ultimately, most of its parishes. “By 1925, ... there were only five ministers left serving rural Ukrainian churches on the prairies.” (Olender 200)

The at-times-comical tragic drama of the rise and fall of the Seraphimite and Independent Greek churches is eloquent testimony to the strength of the Ukrainian immigrants’ desire for their own priests and a church responsive to their traditions where they could worship God with the same liturgy they had used for centuries. It also illustrates the secondary importance—and the dangers of that secondary importance—of questions of canonicity and jurisdiction in the minds of the settlers. And as lessons learned in “the school of hard-knocks”, the Ukrainian immigrants’ experiences with the Seraphimite and Independent Greek churches tended to make the settlers somewhat more wary of outsiders seeking to take advantage of them, and reinforced the

³ In a tragically appropriate conclusion to this tragic episode, Seraphim’s erstwhile assistant and successor “proclaimed himself ‘Arch-Patriarch, Arch-Pope, Arch-Tsar, Arch-Hetman and Arch-Prince’, excommunicating the Pope and the Russian Holy Syod.” (Yuzyk 94)

importance they already attached to trustee ownership of church properties, as well as their desire for a church strongly committed to Ukrainian liturgical and religious traditions. Their experience with the Independent Greek Church, in particular, also gave the Ukrainian immigrants a taste of both an independent church largely under their control (in the heady early years of the movement) and a taste of a church largely controlled by others (in the later years, as the Presbyterian Church began to exert its control). The settlers' definite preference for the former over the latter "made them realize," according to Olender, as she concluded her analysis of these experiences, that "it was necessary to create a religious body totally independent of Rome or any other church, and completely controlled by Ukrainians." (201) While Olender may be overstating the case somewhat, one can clearly see many of these concerns playing a part in the formation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

Formation and Isolation⁴

As the Ukrainian settlements on the Canadian prairies matured, put down roots, and began to absorb the Canadian democratic milieu, a small but influential intelligentsia "began to emerge from among the immigrants who had some gymnasium (college) or high school education completed in Western Ukraine[, as they] ... began to enter Canadian colleges and universities." (Yuzyk 102) Initially, this intelligentsia consisted almost exclusively of public-school teachers: the training period for teaching was shorter than for other professions, and the positions the teachers held in the communities were particularly influential (103-104). The teachers also communicated amongst themselves regularly at provincial and regional conventions (105), at one of which "they formed a publishing company which was to launch a newspaper that would be 'a non-party, educational and economic organ of Ukrainian teachers.'" (106) This newspaper, the *Ukrainian Voice*, began publication in 1910 and took an editorial stance that was critical of Catholicism, called for "the establishment of a Greek Catholic National Church in Canada independent of Rome, the bishop to be elected by the people" (107), and presented Orthodoxy in an ever-more favourable light (116). The *Ukrainian Voice's* call for a Ukrainian National Church was eventually taken up in a more systematic fashion by the former-school-teacher editor of another Ukrainian-language newspaper, the *Canadian Farmer*. This paper, from December 1917 to July 1918, published a series of articles signed "National Priest", which outlined how a "Ukrainian National Church" might be formed and even presented a draft constitution for the proposed church (137-139). Among its 59 articles, the constitution specified:

7. All contracts of church property must be in the hands of the local trustees. ...
 12. The bishop and his successors must be only sincere Ukrainians. ...
 17. The bishop may not accept any other priests except Ukrainians. ...
 23. Priests must be married, or single of older age. ...
 45. The Ukrainian National Church must adhere to the eastern rite and this may never change.
- (140-141)

The success of the "National Priest" newspaper campaign and the extreme hostility of Bishop Budka towards it apparently prompted "Wasył Swystun, principal of the P. Mohyla Ukrainian Institute, to convene a confidential meeting of leading Ukrainians ... for the purpose of

⁴ This portion of the paper follows Paul Yuzyk's thesis "Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada (1918-1951)" very closely as it is largely dependent upon it: Yuzyk's thesis is one of the few works available that deals with the formation of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada in any detail.

‘discussing church and national affairs.’” (143) The invitation “stated that a solution had to be found for the following shortcomings of the [Greek Catholic] church: the abolition of celibacy, liberating the church from ruinous influence of French and Belgian priests, safeguarding church property and the Ukrainian character of bishops and priests.” (143) The meeting was held in Saskatoon on July 18 and 19, 1918, with 154 of the 320 invitees in attendance (Bishop Budka, who was one of those invited, did not attend), a Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Brotherhood was formed, which all joined, and the establishment of “the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada” was approved. The draft constitution from the *Canadian Farmer* was adopted for the new church organization, which was to be guided by the following five general principles:

1. This church is in communion with other Eastern Orthodox churches and accepts the same dogmas and the same rite.
2. Priests must be married.
3. The property of the congregations must be in the ownership of the congregations and the church congregations must manage it.
4. All bishops must be elected by a general synod of clergy and delegates of church congregations and brotherhoods.
5. Church congregations have the right to accept and discharge priests. (146)

The published report of the meeting’s proceedings concluded with “An Appeal the Ukrainian People in Canada” to renounce union with Rome, become members of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Brotherhood, and work for the establishment of the new Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church. (146-148)

The next step, especially in light of the Catholic response which denounced the new church as Protestant and Presbyterian, was to win “recognition from an existing Orthodox Church.” (150-151) Accordingly, “the Brotherhood dispatched a telegram to Archbishop Alexander Nemilovsky of the Russian Orthodox Church ... requesting that he take the new church temporarily under his patronage and allow Ukrainian priests in his church to minister to the congregations of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church. After some delay, there came a telegram replying in Russian, ‘I accept the new Orthodox infants under my omophorium.’” (151-152) No further response was forthcoming, however, and when the Brotherhood sent a delegation to meet the archbishop in Winnipeg, as was suggested to them, “Archbishop Alexander failed to arrive.” (152) To cover up this “wild goose chase”, the Brotherhood announced that “Archbishop Alexander would give an address at the first sobor (synod) of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church”, then furthered the deception by claiming that “the prelate was unable to come because of illness” and by persuading four Russian Orthodox priests who had come to see the archbishop “to swear allegiance to the new church.” (152) The move backfired, however, when the four priests discovered the deception, “broke with the new church and proceeded to denounce it.” (153)

The situation improved briefly in 1919 when “Metropolitan Platon, head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autonomous Church, because of unstable conditions in Ukraine and the opposition of the Ukrainians to his church, which acknowledged the jurisdiction of the newly-elected Russian Patriarch Tikhon, left the country and came to New York.” (153) Metropolitan Platon convinced Archbishop Alexander to meet and discuss matters with the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Brotherhood in Canada, who sent Swystun to meet and to negotiate with the archbishop and the metropolitan. An agreement was reached and signed on July 3 and 4, 1919, by which “the Canadian church became a section of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autonomous Church in Ukraine”

(154). Unfortunately, Swystun's premature publication of the agreement on his return (it was supposed to have been kept in confidence until the sobor that autumn) provoked such "an outburst of criticism in the Russian newspapers in the United States and Canada" (156) that Archbishop Alexander was forced to issue a special pastoral letter addressing concerns that this recognition of a distinct Ukrainian Orthodox Church "would lead to the disintegration of both the Russian nation and its Orthodox Church" (157) and censuring the Brotherhood for "commencing the organization of Ukrainian parishes, not among the Uniates⁵ but among our Orthodox." (158-159) While the letter did not explicitly abrogate the agreement and seems to have been tactfully worded on the whole, the Ukrainians were particularly insulted by the one of the archbishop's less-thoughtfully-worded assertions that "the Ukrainians are not a separate people nor a nation but only one of the Russian political parties." (158-159) Given that the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church had come into existence as an expression of the developing separate, specifically *Ukrainian* ethnic identity, the leaders of the new church "preferred to dissociate themselves from the Russian Orthodox Church" and found it "expedient to abandon the original plan. This was made easier because an alternative had already presented itself at this time." (160)

The "alternative" that had "presented itself" turned out to be Metropolitan Germanos Shehadi, who, after an initially friendly reception from the Russian Orthodox Mission upon his arrival in North America, had broken with the Russian Orthodox Church and attempted "to woo Arab parishes in the American diocese away into an 'Arab Church.'" (Stokoe 63) Although he had been excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church and thus possessed no legal jurisdiction in North America, the case was made at the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church's second sobor that Metropolitan Germanos was, in fact, "a legal bishop" (presumably on the grounds that, since Germanos was under the Patriarch of Antioch, the Russian Orthodox Church had no right to excommunicate him) and that his nominal supervision over "doctrinal matters, ecclesiastical discipline, and the Greek rite" would be preferable to Archbishop Alexander's disregard for "the basic rights of the Ukrainians" as evidenced in his "anti-Ukrainian pastoral letter" (Yuzyk 170-171). Given Archbishop Alexander's recent visit to Winnipeg (where the sobor was held) in which he had "denied any connection with the sobor, denounced the sponsors and emphasized his Russian loyalty" (164), and given Metropolitan Germanos' personal presence at the sobor and his popular statement there that "I want your church to be so democratic that an undemocratic person would not be able to have a place in it" (171), Swystun's "alternative" was, not surprisingly, successful. "Relations with the Russian Orthodox mission were severed and approval was given to the temporary spiritual jurisdiction of Metropolitan Germanos Shehadi 'until the time of the election of a Ukrainian bishop ordained according to the canonical rights of the Orthodox church.'" (171) The switch was presented as spiritually appropriate because Metropolitan Germanos—in contrast to Archbishop Alexander who was "a pupil of the Muscovite-tsarist school" and thus "does not understand what the oppression of one nation by another means and what suffering and slavery is"—was the "son of a nation which suffered many centuries and that is why he understands what is oppression and slavery, truth and injustice. It is only thus his sympathy to democracy can be explained." (174)

Given the nationalistic sentiments which prompted the rejection of Archbishop Alexander in favour of Metropolitan Germanos, and given the "spiritual superiority" line of reasoning which

⁵ It seems that a part of the agreement had been "that the Brotherhood would organize the church from converted Greek Catholics" (156)—something that would certainly have been consistent with the focus of the initial meeting in which the Brotherhood was formed.

was adopted to overrule questions of jurisdictional canonicity in the switch, it is hardly surprising that when the time finally for the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada to elect a Ukrainian bishop, they chose to elect one from the extremely nationalistic Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the United States was the first to elect as their bishop, in June 1924, Archbishop Ioann Theodorovich, sent to them, at their request, by Metropolitan Wasyl Lypkivsky in Kiev, the primate of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. (195-196) After some correspondence with Archbishop Ioann, the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada invited him to come to Yorkton, Saskatchewan, to participate in a sobor convened to decide whether or not to elect him as their bishop. Archbishop Ioann's description of "the struggle of the Ukrainians for independence" and of the formation of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church moved his audience to tears, and, after a presentation reassuring the assembly that "the joint meeting of the Consistory, Brotherhood and clergy ... had ... unanimously concluded 'that the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church has nothing uncanonical about it'", the delegates "unanimously voted that the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada come under the jurisdiction of Archbishop Ioann Theodorovich 'on terms similar to those made with Metropolitan Germanos, with both parties maintaining their independence.'" (206) So it was that on July 16, 1924, nationalism, a sense of spiritual superiority, and emotion combined forces with a relatively weak understanding of the canonical issues involved, and the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada unwittingly—and perhaps even somewhat unconcernedly—cut themselves off from communion with the rest of the Orthodox Christian Church.

Conclusion

It is sobering to see how the forces of nationalism and emerging ethnic identity that united the Ukrainian immigrants and that led them to rediscover their Orthodox heritage, also ended up isolating them, as these same forces that formed the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada also led its members to effectively cut themselves off from communion with the rest of the Orthodox world. Before we leap in to judge the Ukrainian immigrants, however, it is worth pointing out that it was these same nationalistic impulses that forced Archbishop Alexander to distance himself from the fledgling Ukrainian church just as it was reaching out for the Russian Orthodox mission's guidance and protection. It is also worthy of note that it was this same desire for a cohesive national and religious identity that motivated the subversive Presbyterian mission in the Independent Greek Church, and a similar desire for uniformity that lay behind the Roman Catholics' insistence on celibacy, as well as any genuine "Latinizing" tendencies.

But the story of the Ukrainian immigrants and their church is more than a cautionary tale against the dangers of nationalism and ethnic isolationism, and more than a tragicomedy of jurisdictional errors. It is the story of real spiritual needs unmet and the struggle to meet them; the story of a people desirous to worship God in their own language, in accordance with their own customs, a people taken advantage of and making their own mistakes as they struggled towards this goal, but a people willing to persevere, to do what it would take to go the distance, and, in that perseverance, rediscovering one the most important aspects of their heritage: Orthodoxy. Given the chaotic conditions of early settlement on the Canadian prairies, the extent to which they accomplished this rediscovery is worthy of admiration. And again, given these chaotic early conditions, the elements of true Orthodoxy that were missed in the rediscovery process become more understandable. It is only within this admiration and understanding that a true appreciation

of the story of the Ukrainian immigrants to Canada and the history of their church can be achieved.

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