

Ukrainian Missions and Churches in the Niagara Peninsula

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WHEN THE WORLD WAS SETTLED, one of God's angels travelled across it, stopping daily to distribute talents to the peoples of the various lands. When he arrived at the Ukraine, legend has it, he stayed for a week. And so the Ukrainian people enjoy a rich cultural heritage, of music and literature, and art. That culture has become an essential part of their faith, a faith which extends back a millennium. Ukrainians will soon be celebrating the anniversary of Prince Vladimir's adoption of Christianity as the official religion of Kiev, in 988.

The Ukrainians who began coming to Canada in 1891 left much behind, so their faith and their culture were especially important to them. Most of the first wave of immigrants came from the western provinces of Galicia, Volhynia, Bukovina and Transcarpathia, which formed part of the Hapsburg Empire until 1918. They tended to be Greek Catholics (Uniates), who followed the eastern calendar and liturgy, and had married clergy, but accepted the primacy of the pope.

The majority, a landless people brought to a peopleless land, settled on the prairies and became farmers. Some remained in the urban centres of eastern Canada, and their numbers were augmented by those who found it difficult to make a living from farming, or from the poor farmland they were sometimes allotted. In the Niagara Peninsula, they were attracted by work in the industries of Welland, the paper mills of Thorold and for the construction of the new Welland Canal.

In western Canada, Ukrainians built churches which they made available to Orthodox or Greek Catholic priests who visited and held services for them—and sometimes tried to lay claim to the building for their church. The Ukrainians of the Peninsula built no churches before World War I, but they did attract the attention of itinerant clergy. One of the first of these was a Baptist.

It must have been in the 1870s that John Kolesnikoff¹ was converted. When his parents died, the bishop of his native Kherson took him into his home, and later placed him in a seminary. After his ordination, he was to have been sent to Persia as a missionary. But Kolesnikoff rebelled, left the church and secretly became a socialist. His action must have aroused some notoriety, for a Stundist² missionary visited him “to congratulate him on separating from the Greek church and becoming a Christian.” When Kolesnikoff explained that he had become an infidel, the Stundist gave him a copy of the

¹ On Kolesnikoff (d. 1917), see C.J. Cameron, *Foreigners or Canadians?* (1913), pp. 42-58 and C.H. Schutt, “Rev. John Kolesnikoff” *Canadian Baptist Home Missions Digest*, v. 2 (1955), pp. 83-6. Cameron identifies him as being originally Greek Catholic, Schutt as Greek Orthodox. Schutt is probably correct, as Kherson was unlikely to have had a Greek Catholic bishop.

² The Stundists (from the German *Stunde*, ‘devotional hour’) were an evangelical group which began in mid-nineteenth century Russia, and become increasingly identified with the Baptists.

New Testament and introduced him to an underground prayer meeting. Despite his three years as a seminarian, Kolesnikoff and his wife testified to reading the Bible as if they had never heard the story of Jesus before. They were converted, and with the enthusiasm of a new convert, he became an evangelist. This prompted first his imprisonment and then his banishment from Kherson, at the instigation of church authorities.

With his wife and family he travelled to Odessa (the birthplace of the Stundist movement), about 100 miles west of Kherson, on the Black Sea. Here he was baptized by a German Baptist missionary, and after a further period of imprisonment, became the founder of a number of churches in the area. He seemed to arouse opposition wherever he went; but, finding the missionary fervour he lacked as a priest, he moved first to Bessarabia, then to Roumania and finally to Bulgaria. There he met a Bulgarian, Peter Doycheff, who had been converted in Buffalo, New York and sent back to his native land as a missionary. Through their partnership, Kolesnikoff received a call to America (1903), and from there he came to Toronto in 1908.

Though the mission halls he opened in Toronto were his base, Kolesnikoff travelled widely throughout the country. He employed slides in his temperance talks to “show the evils of the besetting sin of the Slav and its remedy”. When preaching, he was able to use at least three languages. He edited a small periodical, *Witness of the Truth*³ whose 200 copies were widely distributed. A response from one of the magazine’s readers prompted him to visit Welland about 1910. He estimated the Slavic population then to be 500 (out of a total of 8000, about 2000 of whom were “foreigners”). A night school was started, run by the local Baptist minister and his young people, and a building purchased in 1913. It was expected that Kolesnikoff’s son⁴ would serve the new congregation. But with the coming of World War 1, many Bulgarians moved to the United States, some Galicians were interned by the Canadian government, and plans to proceed with the congregation were dropped.⁵

The War, which found Canada and Austria on opposite sides, brought immigration to a stop. Besides the internments, towards the end of the War a government ban was placed on Ukrainian newspapers. The government had some legitimate cause for concern. Nikita Budka, who had arrived (1912) as Bishop of the Greek Catholic community, urged his flock to return and fight for the Austrian motherland. His suggestion, however, was unpopular even among his own people. Of more significance, after the Russian Revolution, was the way English-Canadians associated people who spoke Slavic languages with Bolshevism. To earlier fears that the Anglo-Saxon way of life was threatened by a rising tide of immigrants with a strange language and culture, was added the fear that they would threaten that way of life more directly, by political revolution.

English-Canadians were particularly sensitive to the reddish tinges of the Ukrainian spectrum. A Ukrainian Social Democratic Party formed in 1914, encouraged

³ Though the Baptist Archives at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton hold no copies of *Shvidok Pravda*, a page of one issue is reproduced in Cameron, *Foreigners...*, p. 67.

⁴ Paul Kolesnikoff (1891-1974): born Akerman, studies at McMaster, ordained 1915, served a Russian congregation in Hamilton before moving to the USA. (Biographical file, McMaster Divinity College Archives).

⁵ *Baptist Year Book*, 1915, p. 74.

by the Revolution, had some 1500 members four years later.⁶ In 1916, a branch of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Federation was started in Welland.⁷ The *Welland Tribune* reported the trial in 1919 of three Ukrainians for possession of “Bolshevicki Papers”. The first Labour Temple in Canada was organized in Crowland, in 1916,⁸ later Temples would exist in Thorold and St. Catharines. Despite their pro-Communist orientation, many people were attracted to them because they were focal points for Ukrainian activities in their communities.

When restrictions against immigration were relaxed in 1922, and until the Depression, a new flow into Canada began. This second wave contained a sizeable minority of intellectuals, whose nationalist sympathies had been kindled by the short-lived Ukrainian Republic, and who looked forward to having some part to play in liberating their homeland from its new occupiers, the Poles and Bolsheviks.⁹ English-Canadians were more likely to notice their fervent political convictions than to be aware of what those convictions were.

Despite their political activity, the Ukrainians of the Peninsula had relatively little religious organization in the post-war years. The first Orthodox congregation was established in Welland in 1917, and it was probably this group which rented the Industrial Welland Methodist Church for a few months, after that congregation closed in 1919.¹⁰ A different sort of missionary activity was, however, being carried on, and in 1924 the Anglican Synod of Niagara learned that there were “three Sunday Schools conducted by paid Bolshevik teachers” in the Niagara area.¹¹ The Anglicans were being pressed to undertake work in Thorold, to check the growth of “irreligion and immorality”.

One of the leaders of the pressure was Mrs. George Smith, whose husband was minister of Knox Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines. Presbyterians had long had an interest in Ukrainian new-Canadians, and on the Prairies had sponsored an Independent Greek Church which was “to be Orthodox in form and Presbyterian in spirit”.¹² The experiment, which lasted from 1903 to 1912, was at first highly popular but disintegrated when the Presbyterian Synod sought to assert its control over the Church.

The interest continued, however, and some of the clergy remained on the Presbyterian rolls, while the people continued to be the object of missionary work. They were regarded with the fear and fascination that was shown in Ralph Connor’s popular

⁶ John Kolasky, *The Shattered Illusion: The History of Ukrainian Pro-Communist Organizations in Canada* (Toronto, PMA Books, 1979), pp. 2-3.

⁷ Rev. Fern A. Sayles, *Welland Workers Make History* (Welland, 1963), p. 108. Sayles was associated with the United Church All Peoples’ Mission in Crowland. Presumably the two Social Democratic groups were related, though Sayles says the Crowland branch was the first in Canada, and suggests an American connection.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 193-4.

⁹ V.J. Kaye, “Three Phases of Ukrainian Immigration,” *Slavs in Canada*, v. 1 (Edmonton, Inter-University Committee on Canadian Slavs, 1966), pp. 36-43.

¹⁰ *Zbirnik Materialiv z Narodi Jubileynich Svyatkuvay u 50-Littyi Ukrainskoi Hreko-Pravoslavnoi Tserkve V Kanadi, 1918-1968* [Collection of Material Relating to the 50th Anniversary of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, 1918-1968] (Winnipeg, 1968), p. 190; *Concern* (February 1964). *Concern* was published by the United Church All People’s Church.

¹¹ *Niagara Synod Journal*, 1924, p. 101.

¹² Odarka S. Trosky, *The Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada* (Winnipeg, 1968), p. 6.

novel, *The Foreigner*.¹³ It was not unusual, then, for a Presbyterian minister's wife to be involved in the formation of the Protestant Federation of Women of St. Catharines, to work with the Ukrainian population of the area.

The Protestant Women engaged a Presbyterian minister from Toronto, the Reverend Paul Crath, to visit the area. This he did in the late summer of 1922, conducting evangelistic services, and lecturing on the superiority of Christianity over Bolshevism. He reported that there were about 2000 Ukrainians in Welland, 1500 in the vicinity of Thorold and 400 in St. Catharines.¹⁴

Ukrainian Bibles were obtained from the Bible Society, and distributed in Thorold Park and Township. A Baptist evangelist carried on the work, opening Sunday Schools in the Ontario Paper mills and the Pilkington glass works, attracting over 200 children. But funds ran short, and in May 1923 the children were transferred to the Methodist Sunday School.

In November of that year, Mrs. Smith visited the Bishop of Niagara, William Clark, proposing that the Anglicans, with their liturgical form of service, should take over

¹³ Colin G. Young gave a sympathetic account of Ukrainians to the 1920 General Assembly, but went on to picture them historically as "the shield to keep back the Asiatic barbarian from Western Europe." *Acts and Proceedings of the 46th General Assembly, 1920, Appendix*, pp. 33-41.

¹⁴ Estimates like those of Kolesnikoff or Crath are only approximate, and even census returns should be treated with caution. They always surprise church leaders, since they usually show more people claiming allegiance to a denomination than the most inflated parish rolls would hint at. Thus, in 1941, of the 571 Ukrainians in the St. Catharines-Niagara area, only four did not claim an attachment to one of the major churches. Yet active membership in a Labour Temple and in a major church should have been mutually exclusive.

The returns do at least give an indication of the relative influence of the denominations. The rest of those 571 people considered themselves to belong to the Greek Catholic (169), Roman Catholic (155), Greek Orthodox (92), United (42), Baptist (42), Anglican (35), Presbyterian (8) or Lutheran (2) churches. Another problem with the census is that it is particularly difficult to identify what constitutes a Ukrainian. Thus, where only 169 Ukrainians said they were Greek Catholic, another 122 people also listed themselves as Greek Catholic. People whose origins were shown as Polish, Austrian, Russian, Czechoslovak, other European and, increasingly, British declared themselves adherents of the Greek Catholic Church. Ukrainians in St. Catharines-Niagara identified themselves as follows:

	1941	1951	1961	1971
Greek Catholic	169	529	1036	2810
Roman Catholic	155	338	829	2710
Greek Orthodox	92	364	675	1770
United Church	42	128	479	1595
Anglican	35	97	427	1005
Presbyterian	8	33	86	300
Lutheran	2	6	40	190
Baptist	42	48	84	250
Pentecostal	22		10	35
Mennonite		20	48	55
Other	4	36	102	835

And in Welland (1961): Greek Catholic (313), Roman Catholic (597), Greek Orthodox (244), United Church (318), Anglican (87), Presbyterian (56), Lutheran (17), Baptist (39), Pentecostal (2), Other (20). Source: William Darcovich (ed.), *A Statistical Compendium on the Ukrainians in Canada 1891-1976* (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 1980), p. 185.

the work. About the same time, some Ukrainian residents of Thorold were making similar suggestions to the rector of the town, Canon Piper.

When seeing the Bishop, Mrs. Smith was accompanied by Mary Gooderham. Though an Anglican, Mrs. Gooderham had a wide outlook, and had organized a group known as the Protestant Women's Federation. She and her husband (Colonel A.B. Gooderham) were heavily involved in a variety of patriotic and imperial causes.¹⁵

Bishop Clark was receptive to the proposal of Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Gooderham, for a variety of reasons. In his charge to Synod the following year (1924), he echoed the prevailing xenophobia, warning that the influx of foreign elements was

likely to put the vitality of Anglo-Saxons, Anglo-Saxon institutions and traditions to a sharp test. It is not population only that is being imported, but also wild political and social heresy, moral laxity and infidelity. Already in several Provinces the German, Italian, Russian, Polish and Jewish votes are great factors in politics.¹⁶

But he denied being an alarmist, urging English-Canadians to show some acceptance and fellowship: they should not exploit their European fellow countrymen or regard them as inferiors. English-Canadians would reap what they sowed; and if they alienated their neighbours, they should not be surprised to discover "distrust instead of confidence, prejudice instead of frankness, and Communism instead of Canadianism".

In the same year that he read that charge, Bishop Clark ordained a 40-year-old Ukrainian, Maxim Chawrink, to take charge of the Thorold mission; he would be stationed there 1924-1927.¹⁷ Property on Pine Street was bought, and a basement erected to serve the new All Saints' Church. The project gained the financial support of the Missionary Society of the Canadian Church, and was overseen by a committee of the Diocese.¹⁸

Mrs. Gooderham's patronage had another effect, for she thought a translation of the Anglican prayer book would be useful, and offered to pay for it. Paul Crath was engaged to do the work. At the time of church union in 1925, Crath entered the United Church. There was some consideration of the possibility of his taking Anglican orders, but nothing came of this. More Presbyterian clergy had joined the United Church than did congregations, and Crath seems to have been left without regular employment. He lived in Thorold and was associated with the Welland pastoral charge, but supported himself as a supply minister.¹⁹

¹⁵ Cf. *Who's Who in Canada, 1928-29* (Toronto, 1929), pp. 183, 758.

¹⁶ *Niagara Synod Journal*, 1924, p. 27.

¹⁷ Maxim Charles Chawrink was born in the Ukraine in 1884, and educated in a Pedagogical Seminary. He came to Bishop Clark with testimonials from the Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Newark, N.J., and others, and was ordained in 1924. He seems to have remained in Thorold for some time after he resigned the mission, and there are various oral traditions about why he resigned. The 1930 Crockford's Clerical Directory places him in Winnipeg, without a pastoral office. He is not listed in the 1932 *Crockford's*. Cf. *Niagara Clergy List*, p. 125 (Niagara Synod Office, Hamilton).

¹⁸ MSCC Report, 1921-24, p. 52; *General Synod Journal*, 1927, p. 196; *Niagara Synod Journal*, 1925, p. 96, 43; 1926, p. 78; 1929, p. 89.

¹⁹ R.F. Nie to Bishop David Williams, 30 Dec. 1925. Prayer Book Committee Correspondence. (Anglican General Synod Archives, Toronto); *United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1928, p. 937. In 1929 Crath was

The Prayer Book committee of the Anglican General Synod was concerned that the translation should be reviewed by an Anglican scholar before it received the *imprimatur* of the Church of England in Canada. Archdeacon W.J. Armitage of Halifax was particularly concerned that the word used to denote 'priest' be carefully chosen. The problem was to find an Anglican capable of vetting the translation. Eventually the Reverend P. Levertoff of the Missions to the Jews in London was found, and his Anglo-Catholicism was considered a good balance to Crath's Presbyterianism. Levertoff at first questioned some of the scripture translations, but on discovering that they came straight from the Bible Society's version, decided they should be acceptable.²⁰ When the book appeared in 1926, it mentioned Mrs. Gooderham, Mr. Chawrink, Bishop Clark and Canon Piper, but not the translator, Mr. Crath.

When Chawrink resigned, the mission was placed under the care of neighbouring clergy, who seemed uncertain what to do about it. At the 1930 Synod it was reported that a theological student, A. Beryk, was helping there; but that the work, always difficult, was especially so in the cold, wet weather because of the unsuitable building. An offer had been made for the basement, and if Synod accepted it, it was proposed to build a more satisfactory church.²¹

The Ukrainian Relief Society No. 23 did purchase the property, and with the onset of the Depression, the terms of payment had to be eased. Meanwhile the Synod's Ukrainian committee was losing interest for, although it was reappointed in 1932 and 1933, it did not report, and finally in 1933 it disappeared.²²

In 1941 the Greek Catholic priest in St. Catharines started holding services in the basement, and by the end of the decade it had been acquired for the Thorold Greek Catholic congregation. Anglicans continued a sporadic interest in the area, and in 1957 purchased the Ukrainian Labour Hall to become the Church of the Resurrection.²³ Again the attempt to form a Ukrainian Anglican parish failed, although the old St. John's parish in Thorold has many Ukrainian families on its present rolls.

In 1939, the United Church All People's Mission recalled the abandonment of the Anglican mission some 15 years earlier, attributing to the Anglican 'missionary' the comment, "Work among the Ukrainians is hopeless; nothing can be done with them". It then proceeded to gloat over its own congregation of 60 and Sunday School of 150 in the same area.²⁴ The Methodist mission in the industrial Crowland part of Welland, which lasted from 1914 to 1919, failed largely because it confined its ministrations to people of English extraction in a non-Anglo-Saxon area. After three years, however, the Methodist Women's Missionary Society appointed a deaconess (Miss Hind) to start Sunday Schools in the same area, for the children of new Canadians. In 1923 the Reverend Harvey Forster

living in Toronto and was Secretary for Missions Abroad of the Ukrainian Evangelical Alliance in North America: cf. letterhead on Drath to H.G. Forster, 25 Dec. 1929 in the Forster Collection (United Church Archives, Toronto). He referred to United Church support for missionaries to Galicia in "For Canada in Ukraine", *The United Church Record and Missionary Review* (Dec. 1929).

²⁰ *Sobornay Molitovnik* (Common Prayer) (London, SPCK, 1926), copy in St. Vladimir's Institute, Toronto; Prayer Book Committee Correspondence (General Synod Archives).

²¹ *Niagara Synod Journal*, 1930, p. 110.

²² *Niagara Synod Journal*, 1931, p. 73; 1932, p. 15; 1933, p. 47; 1934.

²³ "Thorold Church Dedicated", *The Niagara Anglican* (Nov. 1960).

²⁴ *All People's Missions Report*, 1939, p. 5.

was placed in charge of the mission to non-Anglo-Saxons, and he was joined in 1926 by the Reverend Fern Sayles.

The Methodist (United Church after 1925) mission had more success in the Peninsula than the other Protestant missions, for three reasons. The denomination and the mission's clergy were committed to the work, and persisted in supporting it over the years. By contrast, the other denominations rushed in with enthusiasm, but were equally quickly discouraged to the point of abandoning their efforts. Secondly, there was a strong social dimension to the mission. Much was done on a personal level to help people cope with a strange Canadian society, such as helping them obtain citizenship or pensions. But the mission was concerned as well with broader issues. It protested during the Second World War when the Dominion government put the United Farm Labour Temple Association halls into trusteeship. The stereotype was that the original owners were Communist, and that the nationalist political or religious Ukrainian groups who tended to buy or use the halls were Fascist. In Thorold the mission rented the UFLTA temple from the government custodian (1941-1943), while in Crowland it allowed the dispossessed group to use its buildings for language classes, music rehearsals and meetings.²⁵

Moral and social reform were seen as related, and Forster requested the provincial police (1946) to investigate Thorold South for brothels, gambling, distilling, bootlegging and firearms. The identification of Forster and Sayles with the plight of their parishioners, shown in their support of union activities and their public statements, led both men to be branded by some within the United Church as Communists. Some remarks by Sayles made at a funeral in the Labour Temple in St. Catharines sparked an investigation (1948) into the alleged Communism of both ministers by Niagara Presbytery, but both were exonerated.

A third reason for United Church success was its willingness to adapt to the Byzantine liturgy. Mike Krivonos joined the mission about 1929, holding services in its various stations. He had been converted in the Ukraine a few years before coming to Canada, as had most of his congregation in Port Colborne. When he left Welland, he had hoped to become an Orthodox priest, but was unable to do so.

Anton Babiuk²⁶ worked for the mission 1936-1962. He was born in Galicia, where his father was a prosperous tanner. He studied medicine at Prague, where he met his future wife, who was herself a graduate in medicine. At the time of the revolution, his father's factory was destroyed, and Babiuk escaped with his wife to Canada. In Toronto they were volunteer workers for the Church of All Nations, where his polyglot abilities would have been useful. In the All People's Mission, Babiuk used not only the language but the services of the eastern church.

Despite the success of the United Church mission, it was still a church provided for, rather than by Ukrainians. The Galicians who came to Welland via western Canada after World War I, to work on the Canal and in the railway yards, brought with them some of the initiative which had already dotted the Prairies with churches. In 1924 (the year that Chawrink was ordained in Thorold), a committee was formed to establish a Greek Catholic congregation, and a priest from Hamilton held services for them in the

²⁵ Sayles, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-4. 1941-1943 Correspondence, Forster Collection (United Church Archives).

²⁶ On Babiuk (1896-1969) see the Biographical File and Forster Collection in the United Church Archives. On retiring, he moved to Toronto, where he attended the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

Catholic church. In a similar way, an itinerant priest held services in the twenties in Thorold, in a building identified only as the 'barn church'. The Church of the Blessed Archangel Michael was begun in Welland in 1926, but it was another 22 years before the parish received its first resident pastor. A new church was consecrated in 1956, and in the aftermath of a fire the interior is presently being transformed with rich icons, being painted by an Orthodox priest (Fr. Ted Koufos). Such semi-official cooperation between Orthodox and Greek Catholic clergy would have been unthinkable a generation ago.

In the ensuing years, other Greek Catholic parishes, all of them still active, were begun: the Dormition of the Mother of God, Grimsby (1929); Saints Cyril and Methodius, St. Catharines; the Protection of the Mother of God, Thorold (in the early forties); the Nativity of the Mother of God, Niagara Falls (1950); and the Church of Blessed Michael, Beamsville (1956). Their parish stories are told in a volume published by the Toronto Eparchy.²⁷

As with all ethnic churches, they face the problem of knowing how and how much to adapt to the surrounding culture. Most parishes now use a mixture of English and Ukrainian in their services. At the same time that Saints Cyril and Methodius Church is starting an elementary school to preserve the old language, a new parish has begun in St. Catharines with the intention of speeding up the pace of adaptation. Greek Catholics face particular problems in this respect. The struggle to gain a separate hierarchy was successful before the Peninsula parishes were begun. In one sense their eastern ways are a matter of pride and even necessity to Roman Catholics; without them, Rome "might seem open to the charge that she was merely Western and not Universal".²⁸ On the other hand, North America is officially a land of the Latin rite, and there is always pressure on the Uniate church to conform to this. Particularly in western Canada, there has been a move from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, and from married to celibate clergy. In theory, if not in practice, celibacy is required of Canadian Greek Catholic priests. The tensions that face any ethnic church are writ large for the Greek Catholics.

The other traditional church of the Ukraine was the Orthodox. Although the churches which served western Canadians in the first years of this century originally met with positive response, they left many dissatisfied, because they seemed to deny the aspirations of their flocks. The attempt to establish an independent Greek Catholic Church was defeated with the advent of the Latinizing Bishop Budka in 1912; the popular but short-lived Independent Greek Church disintegrated when its Presbyterian godfather sought to assert its control; and the Russian Orthodox Church alienated an increasingly nationalist people with its increasingly anti-Ukrainian policies.²⁹ The dissatisfaction led in 1918 to the formation of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada.

It was largely lay initiative which led to the formation of the Church, and lay involvement in its sobors and control of congregational property by trustees were important features of its polity. Indeed, finding a bishop was sometimes a problem. Although Ukrainians were traditionally associated with the Patriarch of Constantinople, through Metropolitan Germanos the Canadian Church became linked to the Patriarch of

²⁷ Julian Beskyd (ed.), *Chvert Storichia na Vlodechomu Prestoli: Torontonska Eparchia, 1948-1973* [A Quarter Century on the Episcopal Throne: Toronto Eparchy, 1948-1973] (Toronto, 1975) pp. 391-462.

²⁸ *Brief Outline of the Ukrainian Mission in Canada, 1891-1943* (Toronto, Mission Press), p. 4.

²⁹ Paul Yuzyk, *The Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, 1918-1951* (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 1981), p. 80.

Antioch. This caused problems in the mid-thirties, when Archbishop Theodorovich, who held jurisdiction over both the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada and the similar Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, seemed ready to bow to the pressure of a third group, that he be reconsecrated by the Patriarch of Constantinople. This third body, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of North America (also called Zukites, after their leader) were Greek Catholic defectors who demanded the reconsecration as a condition of joining the older Orthodox bodies. The Canadian Church recognized that such an action would call into question the validity of its whole hierarchy, and opposed it successfully.

When a similar question arose a decade later (1946), Archbishop Theodorovich resigned. Archbishop Mstyslav Skrypnyk³⁰ was invited to replace him, and in 1948 the Canadian Church was pronounced autocephalous. Archbishop Skrypnyk's Canadian career, however, was soon cut short. In 1949 he purchased a six-acre orchard in Grimsby, which was outfitted with living quarters, chapel, museum and library, and consecrated the following year as St. Nicholas Monastery (named after the patron of the ancient monasteries of the Ukraine). The Church felt called to dissociate itself from the endeavour, emphasizing that the Archbishop had purchased it, and continued to own it, privately.³¹

Even more irritating was his involvement in American church affairs. In 1948 Skrypnyk was elected to lead the Zukites, and arranged their union with Theodorovich's American church.³² Again Canadian officials objected to the action, and again an archbishop resigned.

The first Ukrainian Greek Orthodox parishes in southern Ontario were established in the mid-twenties, in Toronto and Hamilton. It was only around the time of World War II, however, that congregations began in the Niagara area. In 1939 the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox church took over from the earlier Orthodox congregation in Welland, and continues as Holy Trinity Church. St. George's parish in Grimsby began in 1943, bought a disused brick United Church, and altered it to appear more Orthodox.³³ The parish of Saints Peter and Paul in Niagara Falls began in 1952.

The confused relations with the American churches affected the beginnings of the St. Catharines congregation. Early in 1947, the Reverend Nicholas Moosey, a priest of the American Zukite church, arrived with the intention of forming a congregation. At the time, he understood that the American and Canadian churches were about to unite, and indicated that to potential adherents. A congregation was begun, using St. Barnabas' Anglican Church to hold their services. When it came time to register a building lot,

³⁰ Skrypnyk was born in Poltava in 1898; during the Revolution he served on the headquarters staff of the Ukrainian Republican Army; won a deputy seat in the Polish Sejm, where he defended orthodox rights; when his wife was murdered in 1942 he became a monk, and was ordained Bishop of Perislav that year; after the War organized congregations in displaced persons' camps; in 1946 established a western European eparchy.

³¹ Yuzyk, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

³² Theodorovich was reconsecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch in 1947. The new church was called the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States of America.

³³ *Zbirnik op. cit.*, wrongly identifies the building as a former Anglican church, as does the parish history, *Uvileena Kneeha Ukrainskoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkve Sv. Uriya..., 1943-1968* [Jubilee Book of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of St. George 1943-1968]. It also contains histories of the Welland and Niagara Falls parishes.

however, a dispute arose about in which church the title should be held, and the uncertainty continued for some years.³⁴ Today, St. George's is one of the four Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada congregations of the Peninsula.

The very name 'orthodox' or 'right teaching' suggests the exclusiveness of the true believer. At some time or other all of the churches working among Ukrainians in the Niagara Peninsula seem to have regarded themselves as the proper church to which they should belong. Kolesnikoff seemed to think it a matter of indifference whether a person was converted from orthodoxy or from infidelity. Despite their policy of not proselytizing the Orthodox, the Anglicans were persuaded to undertake the Thorold experiment. The United Church, forgetful of its costly city churches, chose the Greek Catholic church in St. Catharines to illustrate the "contrast between a church of the people and a church of the priest. Our people have had their fill of great cathedrals in Europe, erected as they say 'on the backs of the people.' They are content with humbler buildings provided they are clean and pleasant."³⁵ The Ukrainian churches, however, are very much churches of the people, organized and maintained by an active laity. Remembering Ukrainians would have reason to be wary of clerical autocracy. But in Canada they had something they lacked, or paid dearly for, in the Ukraine: they had choice. The diversity of religious allegiance they have shown on the Peninsula indicates that they value and use that privilege of choice.

³⁴ The Hon. Mr. Justice Spence, *Nicholas Moosey vs. Windjack et al.*, *Reasons for Judgment* (Toronto, Supreme Court of Ontario, 1958).

³⁵ Kenneth J. Beaton, "Work and Worship at All People's Churches" (slide presentation, 1951), p. 16.



St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Regional Road 12, Grimsby. Designed by the Rev. Phillip Ruh, who was also the architect of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, St. Catharines. Photograph from Special Collections, Brock University Library, courtesy H. Allan Gleason, Willowdale.



St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Towpath Street, Thorold. This is the successor to two previous churches of the same name. Photograph from Special Collections, Brock University Library, courtesy H. Allan Gleason, Willowdale.