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Prospects for the Expansion of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada

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Canada

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
1. Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada Identified	10
2. The State of the Research.....	15
3. Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada: an Inventory	17
Chapter I. THE HOLY TRINITY	20
1. The Foundational Role of the Holy Trinity	20
2. Historical Considerations of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity	25
3. Trinitarian Truth, Love and Trinity as Pillars of Eastern Orthodoxy	26
4. The Relationship between the Church and the Holy Trinity	29
5. The Accessibility of the Holy Trinity	31
6. The Filioque.....	33
7. Theosis.....	43
8. Conclusion	51
Chapter II. THE LANGUAGE OF EASTERN ORTHODOXY.....	53
1. The Theology of Language	54
2. The Historical Use of the Vernacular	57
3. Ethno-linguistic Identity and Candian Eastern Orthodoxy: a Background of Experience	60
4. Language Use in the of Projection of the Eastern Orthodox Image to non-Orthodox.....	65
5. A Survey of Language Use by Eastern Orthodox Parishes in Montreal.....	69
6. Perpetuation of the Status Quo.....	79
7. Conclusion	86
Chapter III. A CHRISTIAN VISION OF THE POSTMODERN WORLD	90
1. Modern vs. Postmodern.....	91
2. The Problem of Truth	102
3. A Christian Remedy	107
4. Remedy Applied	118
5. Conclusion	129

Chapter IV. FACTORS EFFECTING EASTERN ORTHODOX EXPANSION IN CANADA	131
1. The Match between Eastern Orthodoxy and the School of Recovery	131
2. The Eastern Orthodox Edge in Canada	139
3. Oriental Mysticism: Hesychasm and Iconography.....	144
4. East/West Tension.....	150
5. The Ethno-political Divide	155
6. Possibilities for Further Growth of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada	165
7. Conclusion	173
Conclusion	175
Bibliography	186
Appendix	

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ABSTRACT

PROSPECTS FOR THE EXPANSION OF EASTERN ORTHODOXY IN CANADA

After a century of persistent linguistic, theological and cultural isolation, Eastern Orthodoxy is uniquely poised to expand beyond its ethnic-bound limits to take its place in Canadian mainstream Christianity in the twenty-first century, even while many foundations of institutional Christianity are being undermined. Several factors are at work to allow Eastern Orthodoxy to realize this favorable position. One is the strength of its unified doctrine, another is a current in postmodern North America moving to more orthodox expressions of Christianity. Another factor is an increased youthful immigration of Eastern Orthodox faithful which invigorates and validates the established segment of increasingly socially acculturated Eastern Orthodox Canadians. Parallel to those elements is the erosion of certain aspects of Roman Catholic and Protestant strongholds, opening the way to the consideration of alternatives outside those traditions. Protestant membership and attendance have continued to decline over the past several decades while Roman Catholicism is plagued with a tarnished image, largely over sex-related issues. The relatively unknown character of Eastern Orthodoxy provides a fresh outlook of a familiar Christian foundation through intensely Trinitarian doctrine manifested in part in the oriental mysticism of hesychasm and iconography, appealing to a general rising interest in things eastern. As never before, the recent simultaneous convergence of these multifarious factors allows for the prospect of expansion of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada in the twenty-first century.

INTRODUCTION

Christianity by origin is an eastern religion. For the first thousand years of its history the great centers of its life and learning were in lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Gradually the balance shifted westward as the power and wealth and civilization of the West steadily increased, while Islam, then communism, overshadowed the churches of the Christian East. The West has tended to equate the frontiers of Christendom with those of Western Europe and its colonial extensions. Nevertheless, throughout the twentieth century these ancient churches have expanded, especially in the New World. They have taken root in Canada and have a story of their own to tell. This dissertation undertakes the task of examining part of that story. As will be demonstrated, Eastern Orthodoxy is uniquely poised among major church bodies to expand in Canada.

The approximately 180,000,000 adherents of the Eastern Orthodox Church are divided into various jurisdictions worldwide. Individuals who identify themselves as Christian Orthodox in Canada number 479,620 according to the 2001¹ Canadian census, and are members of no less than 13 church bodies represented in Canada.²

¹ Statistics Canada, *2001 Census: analysis series Religions in Canada*, Catalogue number 96F0030XIE2001015, 2003, 18. This figure includes all Orthodox traditions, the vast majority of which are Eastern Orthodox. See discussion on "Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada identified" below.

² *The Canadian Encyclopedia Year 2000 Edition*, David Goa, s.v. "Orthodox Church", 1732-1734; Smaller Eastern Orthodox bodies, such as the autonomous Churches of Japan, Finland, and Estonia, do not have a separate official administrative presence in Canada, although they do have members in

Eastern Orthodoxy has steadily grown³ since being established in Canada more than a century ago.⁴ Yet for all its history and numerical significance for this country, this Christian tradition remains little known, greatly ignored and widely misunderstood. The generalized low profile of Eastern Orthodoxy means that for very many Canadians the extent of exposure to this great tradition is reduced to the level of ethnic festivals and church bazaars.

Theology is necessarily the basis for examination of Eastern Orthodoxy, lest its essence be neglected, thereby inflicting damage on any ensuing discourse. That study of God means the Holy Trinity, the fountainhead from which all flows. The pervasive role the doctrine of the Holy Trinity plays in Eastern Orthodoxy cannot be underestimated. The emphasis on the unifying force of the Triune God as the source of Truth and Love ultimately determines how Eastern Orthodoxy lives with itself and others; thus the pertinence of the Holy Trinity in considering Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada.

The discussion herein does not constitute a treatise on the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather it is an exposition of Eastern Orthodox perception and expression of the

Canada. On Japanese immigrants, see Mark Mullins, *Religious Minorities in Canada A Sociological Study of the Japanese Experience*, Canadian Studies volume 4, Queenston, Ontario : The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989, 30.; on Finnish immigrants, see M. Lefebvre and Yuri Oryschuk, eds., *Communautés culturelles du Québec : Originaires de l'Europe Centrale et de l'Europe du Sud*, Fides :1985, 12.; on Estonian immigrants, see Karl Aun, *The Political Refugees, A History of the Estonians in Canada*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1985.

³ For example, the 1991 statistics show that the Eastern Orthodox category had increased 7% between 1981 and 1991, Statistics Canada, *Religions in Canada*, catalogue number 93-319, 1993,1; the Christian Orthodox (Statistics Canada category name change) another 23,8% between 1991 and 2001, Statistics Canada, *Religions in Canada*, 2003,18.

⁴ Evidence of the vibrant foothold of Eastern Orthodoxy on Canadian soil is the greatest mass conversion in Canadian history : that of thousands of Ukrainian-speaking immigrants converting from Roman Catholicism to Eastern Orthodoxy in the early twentieth century. For a detailed account of this

importance of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Without such understanding, the study of Eastern Orthodoxy and its continuity in Canada is deficient and likely to lead to erroneous commentary. Not only does that concept undergird the very nature of Eastern Orthodoxy in thought, word and deed, it is specifically crucial to the discussion of truth and unity in the Canadian context. That aspect of the doctrine stresses catholicity, the harmonious fusion of diversity into mutual inclusion into unity, of many into one, and orthodoxy, the belief of the fusion of three persons into mutual inclusion in one Godhead. These are the very tenets of faith joining mankind to the single truth of unity in faith through Christ.

The exposition of Trinitarian doctrine will be examined through the writings of such twentieth-century Eastern Orthodox theologians as Hilarion Alfeyev, Paul Evdokimov, Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, John Meyendorff, Cistos Yannaras, Kallistos Ware and John D. Zizioulas. Eastern Orthodox thought thereby presented is an attempt to portray and convey the church's insistence on upholding Orthodoxy unaltered.

Nevertheless, the underlying principle of Trinitarian truth, love and unity is seemingly contradicted in the reality of a divided Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada. That division is the subject of the following chapter on language use.

conversion, see Paul Yuzyk, *The Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, 1918-1951*, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1981.

Language has played a major role in the ethos of Eastern Orthodoxy and will thus be examined as a key factor. Historically, this religious tradition has demonstrated creativity and flexibility in matters of language. By contrast, the last two centuries have seen the climax of a tendency toward linguistic fossilization that began in the 15th century with the fall of the Byzantine Empire. Because the generalized fossilization was already well in place at the time of Eastern Orthodox immigration to Canada, this country has been particularly influenced by that linguistic rigidity. The role of language in Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is considered through the church's theology, history and exposure in Canadian society.

To put a specific face on this consideration, Eastern Orthodox parishes in greater Montreal were surveyed on their use of language. For the past century, a significant and ethnically-varied segment of the country's Eastern Orthodox population has made Montreal home: the 2001 census shows that 94,700⁵ of Canada's 479,620⁶ Christian Orthodox individuals reside there. In addition to the ethnic diversity and substantial population, Montreal parishes represent most of the Eastern Orthodox branches in Canada.

Its divisiveness notwithstanding, the underlying unity and integrity of Eastern Orthodoxy seemingly holds the key to the presentation of Christianity to postmodern Canada, as discussed in Chapter III.

⁵ Statistics Canada, *Religions in Canada*, 2003, 12.

⁶ Ibid., 18.

That chapter discusses the thesis that Christianity in North America has a window of opportunity to expand membership in a postmodern culture. The expansion is seen as possible through a recovery of what is termed "classic consensual Christianity" through such currents as Anglican spirituality, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox tradition and Lutheran confessionalism. This school of thought is promoted in a variety of Christian churches by writers expressing discontent with what they consider to be hollow and bankrupt aspects of Christianity in modern times. Those writers hold that the renewed discourse of holistic worldviews in postmodern thought, as they perceive it, will allow the Christian truth claim to reach audiences through avenues that were hindered in Modernist and scientific thought.

For the purpose of this study, this school of Christian thought is applied to the Canadian context to determine the likelihood of a viable form of Eastern Orthodoxy taking root in this country, outside its present boundaries. That is the topic of the final chapter.

The exclusive truth claim of Eastern Orthodoxy is filtered through the precepts of the school of Christian thought on Postmodernism presented in Chapter III. The research attempts to demonstrate that Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is uniquely poised to use that alleged window of opportunity to allow for the evangelization of portions of Canadian society beyond its traditional boundaries in ways that other Canadian denominations cannot. The prospects of the expansion of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada are considered through the examination of factors that may help or hinder the integration

of Eastern Orthodoxy into the mainstream, non-immigrant society. Elements inside and outside Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada are discussed.

I. EASTERN ORTHODOXY IN CANADA IDENTIFIED

The extent to which the general literature of Canadian church history has left Eastern Orthodoxy uncovered necessitates some background information on Eastern Orthodox identity, numbers, and the state of the research. Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions in Canada are then listed for further clarification of the general picture.

Name

A particular difficulty with research on Eastern Orthodox churches lies in divergent nomenclature for the Eastern Orthodox churches. This is partially due to non-Orthodox Canadian over-generalization and partially due to names used by the churches themselves. Sometimes, to clearly identify the Eastern Orthodox nature of the church body, the word "Greek" is included in the church name after a national label, not because of use of language or ethnicity, but for doctrinal affiliation with the portion of the Eastern Church that bound itself to all ecumenical councils, and that was indeed Greek-speaking. Such is the case, for example, for the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada which in no way is Greek in nationality or ethnicity, but definitely so in doctrine.

Statistics Canada further confuses the issue with insufficient categories and the grouping of combination of church bodies under the heading "Christian Orthodox",

changed for the 2001 census from the heading of "Eastern Orthodox". Moreover, Statistics Canada used to include Ukrainian Greek Catholic (Eastern (Roman) Catholic) and Ukrainian Orthodox (Eastern Orthodox) in the same category. Although one may dismiss such confusion as having minimal effect, the paucity of references concerning Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is so extreme that Statistics Canada is a chief source of statistical information outside the church bodies themselves, making Statistics Canada's information the most-quoted source, thus constantly reinforcing mistaken or unclear identification.

Before any discussion of the Eastern Orthodox in Canada, a clarification of terms is in order. First we will define Eastern Orthodoxy for purposes of this study, then will present problems encountered when attempting to establish the numbers of the Eastern Orthodox community in Canada.

The Orthodox Church herein discussed is commonly known as the Eastern, the Eastern Orthodox, Greek, or Byzantine church. For the purpose of this research, the terms "Eastern Orthodox" and "Orthodox" are used to designate those churches that accept the theological formulations of the first three ecumenical creeds. The present-day Eastern Orthodox church includes the ancient patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem; the national Orthodox churches of Serbia, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Albania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia; daughter churches of these, formed in Europe and North America; and the autonomous churches of Sinai, Finland and Japan. The unity of these churches is their mutual recognition of a common faith and worship. In practice, patriarchs of the various

churches tend to recognize the historical primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.⁷

As illustrated in the list on page 18, most of these churches are represented in Canada. In addition, some church bodies consider themselves to be authentically representative of the Eastern Orthodox faith, but their canonicity is contested by other ecclesiastical jurisdictions related to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Those divergent Orthodox groups usually differ on principles of political nature related to communist regimes, although sometimes liturgy and practice are also in question. In Canada, The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, The Church of True Orthodox Christians of Greece, and the Greek Orthodox Church of Canada represent those divergent movements. The family of Eastern Orthodox churches described in the preceding two paragraphs is the subject of the study herein.

There are other Eastern church bodies, which bear the name Orthodox or follow Eastern liturgies, but are not part of Eastern Orthodoxy in that they do not profess exactly the same ecumenical creeds as the churches being surveyed. These churches fall into three categories: the East Syrian or Jacobite (Nestorian) churches which accept only the first two ecumenical councils; the Oriental Orthodox or non-Chalcedonian (Monophysite) churches which only accept the first three ecumenical councils; and the Eastern Catholic (Uniate) churches which, as Roman Catholic churches, accept twenty one councils. None of these categories of churches fully recognizes the other's ecclesiastical or sacramental legitimacy, or that of other church bodies. They are

⁷ Goa, 1733-1734.

mentioned here for clarity's sake, but are not the subject of this study on Eastern Orthodoxy.

Number

Disclaimers on the accuracy of numbers in the literature on Eastern Churches is standard fare. Among others, Ware, Waddams, Roberson, and Mentzer explain the difficulty in establishing a reliable enumeration. Minority status under communist and Moslem regimes, the diaspora, jurisdictional rivalry and perhaps even a differing attitude⁸ from the Western obsession for counting, are at play in this numbers question.

Eastern Orthodox statistics in Canada are even further complicated. The most comprehensive listing of churches in Canada is that found in *The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. The manual provides a list, albeit partial, of Orthodox Churches. Nevertheless, the list is not particularly helpful. A major shortcoming of that list is that not all of the Eastern Orthodox bodies are represented every year, others are listed but submit the same membership statistics for several consecutive years.⁹ Others submit the same including United States membership.¹⁰ The result is astounding inaccuracy.

⁸ For example, adherence counts often reflect the size of ethnic communities affiliated with an Eastern Orthodox church. See note 2, Mark Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World The History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002, 283.

⁹ For example, the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada reports 140,000 members in the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* for 1975, 1980, 1985, then 120,000 members in the 1990, 1995, 2000 Yearbooks.

¹⁰ For example, the Orthodox Church in America – Canadian Diocese.

Because the scarcity of resources is such that this Yearbook is a standard reference, the faulty numbers are problematic. Even respected writers quote the statistics given therein without question. For example, church historian Mark Noll lists the Orthodox Church in America – Canadian Section as one of the few Canadian church bodies as having more than 1,000,000 members,¹¹ despite a Canadian membership that is but a small fraction of that figure.

While the 2001 Statistics Canada reports 479,620 Canadians identify themselves with the Christian Orthodox category, as explained above, the total number of Orthodox, according to the church reports in the 2000 Yearbook is 1,702,400.¹² There appears to be no consistent criterion for counting Eastern Orthodox.

Church statistics are never an easy affair. Eastern Orthodox statistics are painfully vague and there is no list for the churches in Canada that is either comprehensive or reliable.

Marc S. Mentzer notes the discrepancies between church-reported numbers and those provided by Statistics Canada. In his article, "The Validity of Denominational Membership Data in Canada"¹³ he singles out the Orthodox groups as being particularly problematic in the discrepancies: "These groups show an extreme tendency to overestimate the number of adherents. For example, some of the Eastern Orthodox

¹¹ See Noll, 283.

¹² 2000 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 332-336.

¹³ Mark S. Mentzer, "The Validity of Denominational Membership Data in Canada". 293-299, in *Sociological Analysis*, volume 52, number 3, Fall, 1991.

groups show denomination-reported membership that is *twenty times* what the census shows...these groups show suspiciously round numbers; some Orthodox groups report the same round number of members year after year".¹⁴ Precisely sorting numbers of Eastern Orthodox in Canada (or elsewhere) is a task yet undone, and doing so would be a valuable contribution to research in this area.

Nevertheless, precise membership statistics are not essential to the discussion below. Any statistics given are those of Statistics Canada, limitations notwithstanding, unless otherwise indicated.

II. THE STATE OF THE RESEARCH

The paucity of sources in English and French on Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is in itself revealing. Despite more than a century of existence in Canada, no general work on Canadian Orthodoxy is available. Certainly, numbers are not a particularly determinative factor in that absence of literature in Canada official languages since some 490,000 Canadians consider themselves Orthodox Christians. Literature on Jews, Mennonites and Hutterites, for example, with even fewer numbers in Canada, and whose presence in Canada roughly covers about the same time span as the Orthodox, is abundant. Some of the reasons for the lack of literature are offered below.

¹⁴ For example, the entries for the *Antiochan Orthodox Christian Diocese of North America* in both the 1973 and 1983 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* list inclusive membership as the round number of 25,000. The entries for the *Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada* in both the 1973 and 1986 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* list inclusive membership as the round number of 140,000. The Greek Orthodox and the Russian Orthodox figures in the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* vary, but are consistently rounded off to the nearest thousand or even ten thousand.

Primary sources such as pastoral letters, parish journals and records are usually in the language of the founding immigrant group. Thus, most archival material is in Arabic, Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian, Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, or other languages. The use of those languages is normal in that it reflects the languages of discourse of the initial Orthodox constituency. A striking fact is the minimal transition to English and French, even though the dominant language of the third and fourth generations of Orthodox in Canada is either English or French. The churches have not moved along with their members' daily linguistic reality.

Research on Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is greatly hampered by the rich diversity of the languages used in writing church-related documents and accessibility to the same.¹⁵ Presumably, only a team of scholars could hope to adequately summarize Canadian Orthodox history as told by the Eastern Orthodox themselves. Any comprehensive work would necessitate direct access to the several languages mentioned above as well as the liturgical languages used in Greek and Russian churches. That remains a challenge for Canadian church historians, worthy of acceptance.

Indeed, non-Orthodox authors tend to ignore Orthodoxy, and Canadian historiography is blatantly guilty of excluding Eastern Orthodoxy from its pages. At best, the literature makes an occasional passing reference to Orthodoxy. Even otherwise

¹⁵ One Montreal-area priest of the Orthodox Church in America remarked that the church did not have enough money for archives or archivists and any documentation that would exist would probably be in a box somewhere in someone's basement.

well-rounded syntheses of Canadian church history fall into this category. The uncovered territory, then, is vast. This treatment of Eastern Orthodoxy is necessarily broad in scope, and attempts in whatever modest way to convey some understanding of this tradition in Canada, opening up the way for further, more specific research.

III. EASTERN ORTHODOXY IN CANADA: AN INVENTORY

The arrival of Russian missionary monks among the Aleut people of Alaska in 1794 marked the beginning of Orthodoxy in North America. The history of the Orthodox Church in Canada began more than one century ago with the establishment of the first church in Wostock, Alberta in 1897.¹⁶ By 2001 approximately 470,000 Eastern Orthodox believers in Canada were distributed among numerous jurisdictions.

As Eastern Orthodox immigrants began to arrive in Canada in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, there was no organization of their ecclesiastical tradition to welcome them. Not only did language and culture separate them, but they were often geographically isolated from one another, arriving at different times, under different circumstances, creating divergent dynamics of adaptation to their new world.

Each group, to varying degrees, thus retained allegiance to the church of the land from where it had come, most often under direct episcopal control of a non-Canadian church. The Eastern Orthodox Church, then, was organized in function of ethno-political-national identity of scattered groups arriving in Canada in differing situations. Continued

¹⁶ The Orthodox Church in Canada: A Chronology, Edmonton: Archdiocese of Canada, Orthodox

Eastern Orthodox immigration of disparate groups has perpetuated the pattern until the present time. The list below, reflecting that divided organization, provides an inventory of the church bodies, and the number of member parishes.¹⁷

Eastern Orthodox Church jurisdictions in Canada¹⁸

<u>Church Body name</u>	<u>number of parishes</u>
The Orthodox Church in America (3 different administrative units) :	
The Orthodox Church in America- Canadian Diocese	66
Romanian Orthodox Episcopate	20
Bulgarian Diocese	2
The Russian Orthodox Church in Canada	17
The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia	25
The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America	62
The Antiochan Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America	11
The Ukrainian Orthodox Church In Canada	278
The Ukrainian Orthodox Church Of America	4
The Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church in Exile	2
The Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church - Diocese of North and South America and Australia	1
The Serbian Orthodox Church in the United States and Canada	24

Church in America, 1988.

¹⁷ Goa, 1733-1734.

¹⁸ The above jurisdictions include almost all Eastern Orthodox church members. Nevertheless, as with other church bodies, there is always a certain state of flux as splinter groups form and disband. See, for example, "The Great Lent Clergy Conference of the Eastern part of the Canadian Diocese", *News from the Diocese*, www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/english/pages/news/clergiecanda.html.

The life of these churches in Canada is examined in the following pages so as to establish their uniqueness of theology and practice. As will be shown, the distinctive internal qualities of the Eastern Orthodox church have led it to the present juncture with the external socio-religious Canadian context, affording it a privileged position that may well allow this tradition not only to survive, but even thrive on Canadian soil. An inattentive reading of these pages may erroneously lead to imposing on them a declaration of the triumph of Eastern Orthodoxy expansion in Canada. Such a conclusion would be unwarranted, as a successful outcome is not in fact predicated by the privileged position newly enjoyed, albeit, that possibility is posited. It may also be, despite the positive factors in place, that the Eastern Orthodox churches do not seize the day, and the opportunity be lost.

CHAPTER I

THE HOLY TRINITY

1. The Foundational role of the Holy Trinity in Eastern Orthodoxy

The pervasive role the doctrine of the Holy Trinity plays in the whole of Eastern Orthodoxy can not be underestimated. The emphasis on the immutable truth of the Triune God as the source of unity and love ultimately determines how Eastern Orthodoxy lives with itself and others; thus the pertinence of the Holy Trinity in considering Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada.¹

Any attempt at describing Eastern Orthodoxy devoid of some understanding of its theological undergirding would yield but an unnatural study. The intent of this chapter is neither the development of a doctrinal treatise on the Holy Trinity, nor the history, nor the defense thereof. Rather, it is a survey of representative twentieth-century Eastern Orthodox theologians' presentation of

¹ This conception of the Trinity is by no means specific to Canadian Orthodoxy. Indeed, the value placed by Eastern Orthodoxy on the catholic nature of theology does not incite ethnotheology, although adaptive expression of that universal theology is certainly no stranger to its tradition. Two examples, describing particular emphases of Orthodoxy in Russia, are: George Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1946, and Georges Florovsky, *Les voies de la théologie russe*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991. Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada has not (yet) produced its own particular forms.

the Trinity as the very foundation of Eastern Orthodoxy.² In Orthodox thought, the unity of the Christian faith is grounded in that of the Holy Trinity, the key to the resulting cohesion of the Church.

The teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Church on the Holy Trinity is expressed in the confession of faith adopted by the second ecumenical council of Constantinople in 381. Commonly called the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, this symbol of faith is considered authoritative and normative for all ensuing commentary on the Holy Trinity. The received text is as follows:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through whom all things were made. For us and for our salvation, He came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and He suffered and was buried. On the third day He rose according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets.

In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I expect the resurrection of the dead. And the life of the age to come. Amen.³

² The theologians herein presented are Hilarion Alfeyev, Sergei Boulgakov, Olivier Clément, George Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, John Meyendorff, Dimitru Stanislou, Kallistos Ware, Christos Yannaras and John Zizioulas.

³ The Orthodox Page in America, The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostomos, <http://www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/liturgy/liturgy.html>.

Inspired by the biblical and creedal texts, these theologians' intransigent attitude toward dogma is conveyed in their exposition of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The reasoning revealed in the insistence on the retention of immutable Truth, and what that Truth entails, is what is crucial in this presentation. That stance is a basic component in the incapacity of the culture of Eastern Orthodox theology to be incorporated into the rest of Western-rooted Canadian Christianity.

Individual elements of Orthodox doctrine may well be found in other Christian traditions, but the way they are put together, as well as the choice of which aspects are emphasized, are unique to Eastern Orthodoxy. Thus, the frequency and proportion of attention paid to the Holy Trinity indicate its particular importance in the vastness of Orthodox teaching. This discussion focuses on the key nature of the Holy Trinity as a determinative factor in Eastern Orthodoxy, with a view to establish a meaningful window of understanding for the non-Orthodox observer.

Orthodox theologian Olivier Clément sets the stage for this look at the Trinity:

Il n'y a pas de connaissance théologique sans transformation réelle de celui qui connaît. Pour citer encore Lossky, c'est une connaissance 'existentielle' engageant l'être entier en le plaçant sur la voie de l'union, en l'obligeant à transformer sa nature pour parvenir à la vraie 'gnose' qui est la contemplation de la Sainte Trinité.⁴

⁴ Olivier Clément, in Cristos Yannaras, *De l'absence et de l'inconnaissance de Dieu*, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1971, 12.

Kallistos Ware claims "*our private lives, our personal relations, and all our plans of forming a Christian society depend upon a right theology of the Trinity.*"⁵ Underscoring the crucial nature of the Holy Trinity in Eastern Orthodoxy he cites theologian Vladimir Lossky, "*Between the Trinity and Hell there lies no other choice.*"⁶

Another glimpse of the pervasive impact of this teaching is provided by one observer's impression: "*As soon as this term (Trinity) is mentioned, there comes life into every Greek and Russian, and he shows scholarship and acumen.*"⁷ This intense emphasis was established in earlier centuries when the emperor in Constantinople, long the great center of Christendom, was by law required to be "*glorified in his divine zeal and versed in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.*"⁸

Again, the theology of the Holy Trinity herein expressed is not the work of an isolated group of revisionist, extremist or marginalized men. Their work reflects and is reflected in virtually all contemporary books on Orthodox teaching. These doctors of the twentieth-century Eastern Orthodox Church are among its foremost spokesmen, forming a united front. Not only are they widely-read, well-known, and oft-quoted as authoritative voices, they also often cite and affirm

⁵ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967, 216.

⁶ Lossky, quoted in Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 216.

⁷ Kattenbusch, quoted in J. L. Neve, *Churches and Sects of Christendom*, Blair, Nebraska: Lutheran Publishing House, 1944, 56.

⁸ John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, New York : Fordham University Press, 1974, 5.

each other, weaving a tapestry of consistency no longer found in such cohesive manner in Western Christian traditions.⁹ It is remarkable that these theologians, often writing in Greek or Russian, are presently being published in translation, mostly in French and English¹⁰ (fortuitous for Canadian Orthodoxy); this is not some historical recollection or report of church history, a distant academic enterprise, but theology as being generally taught and applied in contemporary Eastern Orthodoxy.

Moreover, these writers further express their commonality in their frequent use of the same patristic sources, a practice that is itself a mark of Eastern Orthodox theology: "*Le grand critère de la rigueur en théologie, selon la conception orthodoxe, est le consensus patrum, 'l'accord des Pères', portant sur les questions fondamentales de la doctrine.'*"¹¹ Meyendorff repeatedly makes the point that the theology of Byzantium (452- 1453) persists in contemporary Eastern Orthodoxy.¹² This continuity is an integral part of the consistency of Eastern Orthodox theological thought.

⁹ For example, the great divide in all major branches of Western Christendom between liberalism, that can deny the virgin birth or the existence of a revealed God (much less the Trinity), and conservatism, is absent in Eastern Orthodoxy.

¹⁰ The theological center for Russian Orthodox emigrés after the Bolshevik Revolution came to be Saint Sergius Seminary in Paris; The great Orthodox emigrations of the twentieth century were largely to the United States of America and Canada.

¹¹ Hilarion Alfeyev, *Le mystère de la foi*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2001, 13.

¹² See John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*.

2. Historical Considerations of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity

Historically, the defense of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity demarcated Orthodoxy, truncating Christendom while adding weight to the high esteem accorded to Trinitarian teaching. In the far East of Christendom, controversies over the third ecumenical council of Ephesus (431) formulations concerning the two natures of Christ resulted in the separation of the East Syrian Church from the rest of Christianity. That eastern-based teaching, labeled "Nestorianism", rejected the title "Theotokos" (God-bearer – Mother of God) for the Virgin Mary. It was condemned by the rest of the Church of the Roman Empire for exaggerating Christ's human nature to the detriment of his divine nature, thereby violating the teaching that Christ is fully of human and divine natures at once, while a single and undivided person.

One century later, to the South and again to the East, further controversies over the two natures of Christ described in the fourth ecumenical council at Chalcedonian (451) led to the separation of the bulk of the churches in Ethiopia, Egypt and Armenia. Then the ecumenical council condemned the teaching labeled "Monophysitism" for exaggerating Christ's divine nature to the detriment of the human nature; again thereby violating the teaching that Christ is fully of human and divine natures at once, while a single and undivided person. While these were properly Christological issues, they were intrinsically bound to the place of the Second Person in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity set forth in the first two ecumenical councils: Nicaea I (325) and Constantinople I (381).

These developments heightened and concretized an acute awareness of the import of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in the first centuries of the Christian Church. They also created a climate of extreme caution concerning any innovation. When the Western Church under Rome began (starting with the Council of Toledo, 587) to alter the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the ecumenical council's doctrinally-binding declaration of correct teaching on the Trinity, the eastern part of the Roman Empire under Constantinople protested. As will be seen below, the acceptance or refusal of that addition, the *Filioque*, was to become a shibboleth dividing the churches of the East and West. That term became a bone of contention representative of the particular position of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Eastern Orthodoxy setting it apart theologically from the rest of Christianity, adding to already differing cultural, political, social, geographical, and linguistic factors.

3. Trinitarian Truth, Love and Unity as pillars of Eastern Orthodoxy

Theologian Hilarion Alfeyev offers further reason, really the ultimate justification, why the Holy Trinity is of such import: "*L'enseignement sur la Trinité n'est pas une invention de théologiens, mais une vérité divinement révélée.*"¹³ All Eastern Orthodox theologizing stems from this premise. This exclusive truth claim is the very heart and soul of Eastern Orthodoxy, and the driving force behind that church tradition. "*Beyond the affirmation that God's revelation in*

¹³ Alfeyev, *Le mystère de la foi*, Paris: Cerf, 2001, 45.

*Jesus Christ is Truth there is no discussion, that is a 'wholesome Truth' standing beyond and above doctrinal formulae."*¹⁴ There can be no negotiation or compromise, the belief is "orthodox", etymologically, "right way."

From the truth of God revealed in the Trinity flow love and unity, two basic and recurrent pillars of Eastern Orthodoxy. What is true of the Triune God is true of God's presence on earth, the Church. Sergei Bulgakov provides a sense of the intricately integrated view of Trinitarian love and unity. The ensuing necessity of upholding the integrity doctrine, lest the divinely-revealed Truth be violated and misinterpreted, thereby becomes clearer.

The love of God, that of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father, is not an attribute or even a simple relation: Love itself possesses personal being, it is "hypostatic". Love is the Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the Father toward the Son, and which rests on him. In the Holy Spirit, the Son, begotten by the Father, exists for the Father as the One born and beloved, on whom rests the "good will" of the Father. The Son, the object of paternal love, knows the Father who begat in love, and loves him in return. In the Holy Spirit is the joy of the love and mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son, as well as its fulfillment.

The Son only exists for the Father in the Holy Spirit who dwells in him, while the Father reveals himself to the Son in his love through the Holy Spirit, who is the unity of the life of the Father and of the Son. The Holy Spirit, who is

¹⁴ Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 4.

the love of the "Two Others", exists in his personal being only in function of the Father and the Son. Bulgakov describes this overriding factor of divine love:

*Tel est l'amour: il vit en mourant et il meurt en vivant; être, c'est ne pas être en soi ni pour soi, c'est être dans et par les autres. L'amour rend transparente à autrui sa figure hypostatique et il semble s'effacer alors même qu'il manifeste sa force la plus grande.*¹⁵

Greek Orthodox theologian Cistos Yannaras similarly expresses this relationship of divine unity and love in the Trinity, stemming from the biblical principle that God is love, not merely the possessor of it as a quality or attribute. God is a Trinity of Persons and that Trinity is a Monad of life, because the life of the hypostases of God is not simply survival, a passive event of maintenance in existence, but a dynamic realization and indissoluble unity of love. Each of the Persons exists not for itself, but as an offering to the communion of love with the other Persons. The life of the Persons is a 'mutual co-penetration' of life, the life of one becoming the life of the other. Their "*existence surges from the realization of life as communion, of life which identifies itself with the gift of self, with love.*"¹⁶

Alfeyev also presents this manner of thought concerning the love of God. Since there is only selfish love without a loved one, it is actually not love at all. Any manifestation of love must be an interpersonal relationship to reveal the true

¹⁵ Sergei Bulgakov, *L'Orthodoxie*, Lausanne: Éditions de l'âge de l'homme, 1980, 70.

¹⁶ Cistos Yannaras, *La foi vivante de l'Église – Introduction à la théologie orthodoxe*, Paris : Les Éditions du Cerf, 1989, 56.

nature of the persons involved, be it with humans or with God. Thus, God in Trinity is the fullness of love, each person being turned toward the other two with love. Quoting the Gospel of John, he explains :

Au sein de la Trinité les Personnes se reconnaissent comme 'Je et Tu' : 'Toi Père, Tu es en Moi et Moi en Toi', dit le Christ au Père (Jn 17,21). 'Tout ce que le Père a est à Moi; c'est pourquoi J'ai dit qu'Il (l'Esprit) prend de Moi ce qui est à Moi, et qu'Il vous l'annoncera' (Jn 16,15).¹⁷

4. The Relationship between the Church and the Holy Trinity

The communion that exists among the three persons of the Trinity gives rise to the communion that exists between God and man in general and to the Church in particular. The pivotal role of the personal Trinity is found in the Eastern Orthodox teaching on 'deification' or 'ingodding,' the very heart of Christian life.¹⁸ Clément presents the relationship between the Trinity and mankind:

Si, comme le disent les pères, 'Dieu s'est fait homme pour que l'homme puisse devenir Dieu', une approche existentielle de la révélation part de la seconde partie de la formule pour trouver son fondement dans la première. Evdokimov cite Grégoire de Nazianze: 'Il n'y a pas d'autre moyen de connaître Dieu que de vivre en lui'. Approche 'personnaliste' qui se fonde – puisque l'homme est à l'image de Dieu –, sur le mystère de la Trinité: où l'hypostase apparaît comme 'un mode de subsistance' unique de l'abîme suressentiel, comme un centre de communion existant non seulement avec les autres, mais dans les autres.'¹⁹

¹⁷ Alfeyev, 51.

¹⁸ Kallistos Ware, "Eastern Christianity," 558-576, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 571.

¹⁹ Clément in Paul Evdokimov, *L'Orthodoxie*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1979, ii.

Boulgakov also explains how Eastern Orthodoxy interprets the bond between the nature of the Trinity and that of man and the church. He first clarifies that the Eastern Orthodox church is the church of Christ on earth, not a human institution, since it is new life in and with Christ, moved by the Holy Spirit. By coming into the world incarnate, Jesus Christ unites his divine life with that of humankind.²⁰ The accent on this theanthropic aspect is a basic component in the doctrine of theosis, discussed below.

Yet, because of the Trinitarian hypostatic union, the church is not Christ's alone since his own life is indivisible from that of the Holy Trinity: He is only one of the Holy Trinity, his life is one and consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit. What is true of Christ then, is true of the church, namely that the church, being the body of Christ, is "*life in the Trinity*."²¹

Living from the life of Christ, the Body of Christ participates in Trinitarian life by virtue of its bearing the seal of the Holy Trinity, Holy Baptism, administered "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". That baptismal union engenders participation in divine Trinitarian love, uniting the individual with God the Father, through God the Son, Jesus Christ, by action of God the Holy Spirit.

²⁰ Boulgakov, 71.

²¹ Ibid., 71.

Being begotten of the Father; Jesus receives life from the Father while it is the Holy Spirit who gives life and who rests upon him since before time. Thus the church is the Body of Christ, as described by Boulgakov,

...comme participation à la vie du Dieu qui est la Sainte Trinité, comme vie dans le Christ qui demeure en union indivisible avec la Trinité entière, comme vie dans l'Esprit qui nous rend fils du Père, qui appelle dans nos cœurs: Abba, Père! et qui nous révèle le Christ qui vit en nous.²²

Clément reiterates the intimate, fundamental relationship of Trinitarian love and unity to that of the man and the Church, extending its application to serve as the basis for the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of catholic ecclesiology:

Corps de 'l'Un de la Sainte Trinité', l'Église participe intimement au mode d'existence de celle-ci : elle est au sein de l'humanité, la dispensation de l'amour trinitaire. Dieu se révélant unité des uniques, l'homme réel, c'est-à-dire l'homme en Christ, doit à l'image de Dieu et par la participation à la vie divine, se réaliser comme Église, elle aussi unité d'uniques... Toute l'ecclésiologie orthodoxe se fonde par conséquent sur le fondement de la Trinité... Ce principe trinitaire constitue pour les théologiens orthodoxes la véritable catholicité.²³

5. The Accessibility of the Holy Trinity

Lest this concept of the Holy Trinity be dismissed as the lofty realm of theologians, it is important to note its accessibility and real impartation to every Christian. Kallistos Ware thus states:

²² Ibid., 71.

²³ Olivier Clément, *L'Église Orthodoxe*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961, 63.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not merely a theme for abstract speculation by specialists; it has practical and indeed revolutionary consequences for our understanding of human personhood and society...Our human vocation is therefore to reproduce on earth at every level, in the church and society, the movement of mutual love from all eternity within God the Trinity.²⁴

Thus, the doctrine does not remain aloof in ivory towers, but is applied catechistically for simple Christian instruction. Even at the elementary level of the basic *Catéchisme Orthodoxe*, (which, significantly, begins with the teaching on the Holy Trinity), the text succinctly and clearly captures the themes of Trinitarian love, unity and deification and demonstrates their importance at all levels of Eastern Orthodox teaching :

Dieu-Trinité, Dieu-Amour : Les Juifs, les Musulmans adorent, comme les chrétiens, un Dieu unique, mais les chrétiens ont le grand privilège d'adorer Dieu comme Trinité. Ce mystère du Dieu en Trois Personnes nous fut révélé par Jésus-Christ. C'est lui aussi qui nous révéla que Dieu est Amour. Dieu est Amour parce qu'il est Trinité; il est Trinité parce qu'il est Amour. L'amour peut aussi unir les hommes entre eux : on dit qu'il y a des époux unis, une famille unie, formant unité. Mais lorsqu'il s'agit des hommes, on ne peut prendre ces expressions à la lettre, l'amour humain n'étant jamais parfait. Au contraire, l'Amour divin n'a point de mesure : Dieu est Amour (1 Jean IV.) et les Trois Personnes de la Trinité sont véritablement un seul Dieu, une seule essence, une seule vie. L'unité dans l'amour : Les hommes pour qui Dieu est une unique personne, l'imaginent souvent comme un être sévère et despotique; et, en effet, si Dieu était solitaire en lui-même, pourrait-il aimer? L'amour est d'autant plus parfait que les êtres qui s'aiment sont parfaits. Au sein de la Trinité, l'Aimant et l'Aimé sont parfait, car les Trois Personnes sont Dieu : le Père, aussi bien que le Fils et l'Esprit. La Sainte Trinité est une parfaite unité dans l'Amour. La Sainte Trinité et nous : Nous glorifions la Sainte Trinité, Père, Fils et Esprit Saint, parce qu'elle nous destine à la même perfection, au même Amour, à la déification; quand nous recevons la grâce divine, la voie nous est ouverte vers la perfection dans l'unité, à l'image des Personnes de la Sainte Trinité. Nous chrétiens, en recherchant l'unité de tous sur la terre, nous ne plaçons pas notre espoir en une utopie, mais nous nous

²⁴

Ware, "Eastern Christianity," 571.

*approchons de ce qui existe de toute éternité et qui est à l'origine de toute vie véritable. Pouvons-nous craindre ceux qui haïssent, ceux qui divisent, ceux qui tuent, alors que notre Dieu est l'Unité dans l'Amour? Telle est la signification pour nous du dogme de la Trinité. Elle est digne et juste d'adorer le Père, le Fils et le Saint Esprit, Trinité consubstantielle et indivisible.*²⁵

With such force of conviction and insistence on the Truth of the Trinity and its relationship with the Church, one can begin to understand the emphasis put on upholding the interdependency of each element of Trinitarian doctrine. As God revealed Himself in the Scriptures, so did he in the ecumenical councils that formulated Trinitarian doctrine. Neither the former nor the latter means of revelation of God's will is subject to change by human caprice; thus, the Eastern Orthodox refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of any modification to ecumenical conciliar formulations.²⁶

6. The Filioque

The critical importance of upholding the integrity of the doctrine of the Trinity is its impact on the whole of the Christian faith, never the defense of a dogma in a vacuum for its own sake. That manner of thinking is reflected in the vehement insistence that the addition of the *Filioque* threatens to violate divinely-revealed Truth. The discussion below outlines the interlocking character of the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of the Holy Trinity in the context of the *Filioque*.

²⁵ Alexandre Semenoff-tian-chansky, *Catéchisme Orthodoxe*, 1960, Nice : Revue Orthodoxe "Contacts", 1960, 3-4.

²⁶ On this point Kallistos Ware states, "The doctrinal decrees of these seven councils, together with the holy scripture, embody in the eyes of the Eastern Orthodoxy the basic truths of the Christian faith, accepted by all members of the church", Ware, "Eastern Christianity," 562.

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed confirmed by the Second Council of Constantinople in 381 simply declared the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father. In 589 the Spanish council of Toledo, the Latin Church, added "and the Son" (Latin "*Filioque*", from which word the ensuing controversy took its name) after the word Father. The insertion was made mainly to exalt the divinity of the Son, in opposition to endemic Arianism.²⁷ The addition was used for almost two hundred years before it was formally accepted at the Council of Aachen in 809, where Charlemagne approved the insertion, although Pope Leo III was opposed to it as being an innovation. Nevertheless, by 1014 the *Filioque* had become the standard formula in the West. The term remains a divisive issue far beyond what could easily appear to be a dispute over the minor detail of one word.

Accordingly, Orthodox theologians persistently strive to elucidate the issues at stake with the *Filioque*. In fact, the wording itself is not the source of the conflict since Orthodox theology concedes there is an allowable meaning to the principle of the Spirit proceeding from the Father. Evdokimov explains, "*Si l'Esprit saint procède éternellement du Père par la procession d'origine, il procède aussi par le Fils, mais dans la seule procession de manifestation.*"²⁸ However, he then continues to elaborate that other more fundamental aspects are in question.

²⁷ Arian teaching held that Jesus Christ was not eternally divine, being created by God the Father, thus not infinitely part of the Holy Trinity. The doctrine was condemned by the first ecumenical councils but persisted sporadically throughout the first millennium.

²⁸ Evdokimov, 139.

Already in the ninth century, there was mutual excommunication by Pope Nicolas of Rome and Patriarch Photius of Constantinople, mainly because of claims to the primacy of Roman authority and the *Filioque*. Photius maintained serious doctrinal problems concerning the addition of the *Filioque* were at hand, the real point of contention being two-pronged.

The first difficulty was the schismatic, sectarian act of modifying a truly catholic and orthodox sacred text, namely the Creed. That act was the "*great sin against love, against the charitable character of the Body, 'moral fratricide' according to Khomiakov.*"²⁹ The Council of 879-880 solemnly confirmed the original text of the Creed and formally anathematized anyone who would either "*compose another confession of faith*" or corrupt the creed with "*illegitimate words, or additions, or subtractions.*"³⁰

The second difficulty was the opinion that the eventual widespread adoption of the insertion of the *Filioque* really represented a generalized, Western, and defective view of the Holy Trinity potentially permitting a deluge of aberrant doctrine. In his work entitled *Mystagogy*, Photius prepared a detailed refutation of the doctrine of the "double procession". His major objection to the interpolation was that it presupposes a confusion of the hypostatic characters of

²⁹ Ibid., 138.

³⁰ Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 92.

the Persons of the Trinity and was thus a new form of Modalism or semi-Sabellianism.³¹

He clearly exposes that behind the dispute lie two concepts of the Trinity. First was the Greek personalistic concept that the personal revelation of the Father the Son and the Spirit was the starting point of Christian theology; then, the Latin, Augustinian approach to God as a simple essence, within which a Trinity of persons can be understood only in terms of internal relations.³²

Meyendorff and Evdokimov approvingly quote Théodore de Régnon as accurately describing the East/West gap :

*Latin philosophy considers the nature in itself first and proceeds to the agent; Greek philosophy considers the agent first and passes through it to find the nature as the content of the person. Practically speaking, the difference of emphasis means that in both the lex orandi and the lex credendi of Byzantine Christianity, the Trinity remained a primary and concrete experience.*³³

The Western position was seen as permitting an intolerable imbalance imposed upon the perfection of the Trinitarian equilibrium. Such jeopardizing of the purity and integrity of divine revelation ultimately impinges upon Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, even soteriology itself.

³¹ Modalism and Sabellianism were condemned as heresies in the fourth century for teaching that the three persons of the Trinity manifested themselves successively and were not eternally co-existent.

³² Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 61.

³³ Ibid., 180-181.

Again, this perspective continues to be the position of contemporary Eastern Orthodoxy. Yannaras explains the *Filioque's* destabilizing effect on pneumatology, christology and deification, stating that the West has not yet really grasped the pneumatological character of the Church. Instead the christological character has been emphasized, exemplified in the formulation of the *Filioque*, placing as it does, the Son and the Father as equals in the source function of the procession of the Holy Spirit.

By centering the mystical experience of union between God and man on the incarnate Son and the whole church, rather than the manifestation and revelation of the energies of the Holy Spirit in each person, Yannaras claims the West has externalized Christian life:

'L'édification' de la personne, l'art d'oeuvrer notre 'icône' personnelle, c'est-à-dire l'oeuvre dans laquelle se rencontrent l'éléction' humaine et la grâce du Saint-Esprit – a été remplacé en Occident par la 'destination' universelle du Corps de l'Église. L'oeuvre de l'homme ne pouvait plus être que l'imitation du Christ: la conformation pratique, concrète, rationnellement compréhensible, à son exemple moral, qui est aussi une conformation contrôlée aux exigences de l'Église, le Corps universel du Christ.³⁴

Evdokimov offers an even more severe warning of the danger of the *Filioque*. In the East, the fundamental affirmation, "*one God alone because one Father alone*", maintains that the hypostases condition the unity and the diversity

³⁴ Christos Yannaras, *De l'absence et de l'inconnaissance de Dieu*, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1971, note 108, 132.

of divine life at the same time, because the unity goes back not to the nature, but to the Father, source and principle of the eternal circumincession. By making the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father and the Son (*Filioque*), the unity of the nature is accentuated since the Holy Spirit is spirated from the one nature of the Father and of the Son. Eastern Orthodoxy theology holds that the Son is born and the Spirit is spirated through the hypostasis of the Father.

By contrast, Evdokimov contends, the West approaches the Trinity from the primacy of the principle of unity. That is cause for too great an identification between the relations of opposition, or rather between the “oppositions of relation” and the hypostases, resulting in the designation and characterization of the Persons, but at the expense of the Trinitarian mystery.

The *Filioque* thus displaces the principle of unity of the hypostasis of the Father toward the divine nature. That, in turn, impinges on the monarchy of the Father and breaks the Trinitarian equilibrium, the perfect equality of the Three Persons. The break in equilibrium makes the triune Monad into two dyads: “Father-Son” and “Father Son-Spirit”, diminishing the Spirit and exalting the Son, because the Spirit is then alone in having nothing in common with another Person. If the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, considered as one sole principle, the two are transformed into an impersonal deity, “a matrix substance.” Eastern Orthodoxy considers this difference serious for its faulty interpretation that deprives the doctrine of the Holy Trinity of its fullness of

dynamic truth, love, and unity, thus endangering access to the benefits of the Christian faith itself. Evdokimov thus warns:

La réduction des Personnes à la relation d'opposition fait voir dans le Fils la Deitas diminuée de la faculté d'engendrer (le Père la possédant seul, et dans l'Esprit cette part de Deitas diminuée encore de la vertu spirative (seuls Père-Fils la possédant en commun) On comprend bien Duns Scot se demandant comment l'Esprit de Vie pouvait être 'une Personne stérile'. C'est le résultat de substitution, à la relation positive de la communion, de celle négative d'opposition.³⁵

Meyendorff explains the foundational nature of the Trinitarian formulations and the necessity of the plenary divinity of the Holy Spirit in relationship with soteriology. In the East, that essential doctrine is thought to be obscured by the West's teaching of the Holy Spirit's procession, not just from the Father, but from the Son as well. Meyendorff explains how very much is at stake from the Eastern Orthodox point of view:

The Fathers were actually preoccupied, not with speculation, but with man's salvation. The Nicæan doctrine of consubstantiality meant "the confession of the fullness of divinity in Christ and implied that the Incarnation was essential to the redemptive act of Christ"; and maintained, similarly, that if the Spirit is not fully of God, He is unable to bestow sanctification." In itself, the Cappadocian doctrine of the Trinity remains totally meaningless unless one remember that its goal is to maintain the Christological and pneumatological presuppositions: the incarnate Logos and the Holy Spirit are met and experienced first as the divine agents of salvation, and only then are discovered to be essentially one God.³⁶

³⁵ Evdokimov, *L'Orthodoxie*, 136-138.

³⁶ Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 180.

Vladimir Lossky goes yet further and sees the imbalance as a threat to the very identity of God. He comments on the real significance and ultimate danger of the *Filioque* from the Eastern Orthodox viewpoint:

By the dogma of the Filioque the God of the philosophers and savants is introduced into the place of the Living God...The unknowable Essence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit receives positive qualifications. It becomes the subject of a Natural Theology, concerned with 'God in general,' who may be the God of Descartes, or the God of Leibniz, or even perhaps, to some extent, the God of Voltaire and the dechristianized Deists of the eighteenth century.³⁷

The point made in these theologians' observations is that much more is at play in the Eastern and Western positions than a conflict over a mere word, as Western theologians often maintain. Meyendorff underscores the doctrinal nature of the dispute. He dismisses the notion that the real cause was primarily a combination of socio-political or cultural failures, since such difficulties created by history could have been resolved. He insists, with the other Eastern Orthodox theologians, that the *Filioque* is really a matter of whether the hypostatic existence of the three Persons of the Trinity could be reduced to their internal relations as the post-Augustinian West taught, or whether the primary Christian experience was that of a Trinity of Persons, whose personal existence was irreducible to their common essence. "*The question was whether tri-personality or consubstantiality was the first basis and content of Christian religious experience.*"³⁸

³⁷ Lossky, quoted in Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 182.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 91-94.

Such doctrinal rigidity as portrayed above may leave the impression of a static or dead orthodoxy. But far from a lifeless body of teaching, an infinite, dynamic flexibility is retained through the Orthodox insistence on negative theology, the “apophatic” aspect of the knowledge of God. While what is revealed is never subject to change, what is hidden, unknown, and unrevealed about God surpasses any possible knowledge or experience. Thus for example, while God is Truth, He surpasses truth as described by language and cannot be embodied in that limited human concept. Again, this doctrine is not at the scholarly level alone and even the catechism teaches: “*Nous ne pouvons connaître l’essence divine, mais Dieu se révèle à nous comme Vérité, Amour, Beauté. Sainteté – par toute la multitude de ses noms, - de ses énergies.*”³⁹ That apophatic concept in Orthodoxy theology has not allowed theological systematization to the extent known in the West from Aquinas on. Meyendorff, quoting Lossky, clarifies the apophatic aspect in relation to the Holy Trinity:

*The Fathers always affirmed that we cannot know what God is, only that He is, because He has revealed Himself - in salvation history- as Father, Son, and Spirit. God is Trinity, 'and this fact can be deduced from no principle nor explained by any sufficient reason for there are neither principles nor causes anterior to the Trinity.'*⁴⁰

“Positive”, or “cataphatic”, theology must then always be balanced and corrected by the use of negative language since positive statements about God

³⁹ Semenoff-tian-chansky, *Catéchisme Orthodoxe*, 6.

⁴⁰ Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 182.

will forever remain inadequate in their insufficiency of describing the inner divine nature.

The infinite unknown constantly spawns creative impetus for ongoing reflection through the Trinitarian dynamic. Accordingly, the theme of divine personhood continues to inspire Eastern Orthodox theology. Examples of such reflection in the twentieth century are readily found. Two theologians in particular have expounded upon the theme of Trinitarian personhood. One is John Zizioulas, who develops the themes of the human person, the eucharist and interpersonal relationships in light of Trinitarian perichoresis with its emphasis on reciprocal love. The other, Dumitru Staniloae who develops a theology of creation, is guided by the premise, "The Trinity alone assures our existence as persons."⁴¹

For both, it is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity involving the issue of the *Filioque* that once again serves as the starting point for discussion. Zizioulas expresses it thus:

*The one God is not the one substance but the Father, who is the cause both of the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit. Consequently, the ontological 'principle' of God is traced back, once again, to the person.*⁴²

⁴¹ See Kallistos Ware, "Eastern Orthodox Theology," 184-186, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, Adrian Hastings, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 186.

⁴² John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, Crestwood, New York: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985, 40-41.

7. Theosis

Furthermore this vision of the Holy Trinity, as alluded to above, involves more than the doctrine of the divine personality of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It determines the concept of “deification” (Greek *theosis*) as well, considered by many to be the distinctive heart of Orthodox Christianity. The “theosis”, “deification”, “divinization” or “ingodding” of mankind is based on the internal relationship found among the persons of the Trinity, the result of the dynamic of Trinitarian love generated by that relationship. Theosis is thus rooted in the Incarnation of God the Son, Jesus Christ, that manifestation of love that compelled God to restore all creation to its intended glory, expressed in the oft-quoted formula of Athanasius of Alexandria: “God became human, that we might become god.”

Theosis is the process of becoming more like God and more united with God. In the words of Saint Basil, man is “a creation who has received the order to become a god.”⁴³ Deification is for Orthodoxy the goal of every Christian and means becoming what human beings, “made in the image and likeness of God,” were originally created to be. This doctrine holds that it is possible for man to become like God, to become deified, to become god by grace. It is based on many passages of both the Old Testament and the New Testaments (e.g. Psalm 82 (81).6; II Peter 1.4), and corresponds to the teaching both of St. Paul, who

⁴³ Quoted in Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 236.

expresses the concept in the language of filial adoption (Romans 8.9-17; Galatians 4.5-7), and the Fourth Gospel (John: 17.21-23). The language of II Peter was employed by St. Irenaeus: "If the Word has been made man, it is so that men may be made gods", become a standard expression in Greek theology.

Deification reflects the paradoxical Johannine affirmation that the "Word was God" and that it "became flesh" (John 1:1,14). Created human beings can not boast in the face of God in their "fleshly" nature, but do so "in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor 1:29-30), as members of His Body, anticipating the eschatological fulfillment when God will be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). Thus, Deification "reflects the experience of Christ's divinity." God became man, and the Son of God assumed human mortality, so that by his life, death and Resurrection he might become the first of a new, deified humanity. He is the "New Adam -- the Forerunner, the Trailblazer, the Firstborn of mankind in communion with God."⁴⁴

In the Eastern Orthodox understanding, Christianity signifies not merely an adherence to certain dogmas, not merely an exterior imitation of Christ through moral effort, but direct union with the living God, the total transformation of the human person by divine grace and glory. Salvation is understood to mean 'participation' or 'sharing' or 'fellowship' with God, or 'indwelling' in the words of

⁴⁴ John Meyendorff, "Theosis in Eastern Christian Tradition," in *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*, edited by Louis Dupré and Don E. Saliers in collaboration with John Meyendorff. New York, NY: Crossroad, 1989, 471.

the Gospel of John. Salvation as Deification does not imply that created human beings become God in a pantheistic sense.

On the contrary, Deification takes place when when they enter into a personal relationship with God through Baptism and participate fully in God's life through the sacraments in the church, the body of Christ. Moreover, Eastern Orthodoxy insists that men become "gods," only through grace and not through nature. Man gratuitously acquires the condition of divine life fundamentally foreign to his natural state. Man is never divine in and of himself; he only becomes divine through a participation in Christ who is alone divine by nature.

Not only does this aspect of Eastern Orthodoxy permeate that tradition in faith and practice, it distinguishes it from the Western church. This is the point underscored by Yannaras when attacking deprivation of the plenary manifestation of deification in Christian life and teaching that results from the inclusion of the *Filioque* in western word and deed.⁴⁵ For Orthodoxy, man's salvation and redemption mean his deification. Again the Trinity predominates in the development of this doctrine.

Behind the doctrine of Deification there lies the idea of man according to

⁴⁵ See text referred to in note 27.

the image and likeness of God the Holy Trinity. Just as the three persons of the Trinity dwell in one another in an unceasing movement of love, so man made in the image of the Trinity is called to dwell in the Trinitarian God. Christ prays that his followers may share in the life of the Trinity through a personal and organic union between God and man, in the movement of love which passes between the divine persons. He prays that we may be taken up into the Godhead. According to Maximus the Confessor, believers, then, are those who express the Holy Trinity in themselves.⁴⁶

The departure point of inter-personal love as the foundation for Christian faith and practice is at disjuncture with Western Christianity which, from Augustine on, tends to rather emphasize the judicial character of the divine economy.⁴⁷ In Western Christianity salvation is most often expressed in forensic, juridical terms. God the Father is owed the debt created by sin, the non-payment of perfect obedience to his will on the part of humankind.

Motivated by love for the Father and for mankind, God the Son, Jesus Christ, through the vicarious atonement of his undeserved death on a cross, pays the debt incurred by human sinfulness. All who believe in the meritorious person and works of the Son are united to the person and works of the Son. They

⁴⁶ Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 236.

⁴⁷ On this point, "We can say, then, that in addition to theosis Eastern theologians affirm any number of biblical metaphors for salvation, including juridical ones. They acknowledge that the work of Christ cannot be reduced to any single metaphor. Thus, while legal metaphors are truly Pauline and should be affirmed, they should not be allowed to dominate, but should be 'relocated' among the host of other biblical images.", Daniel Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*, Baker Books, 1994, 35.

thereby receive, through faith, the benefits of the Son's self-sacrifice accepted by the Father as sufficient payment to redeem mankind, thus restoring and reconciling God the Creator with his creation and establishing peace.

Any sin charged to the human account is covered by the all-sufficient great ransom paid by Christ with his crucified body and blood. Any charge of iniquity against anyone is immediately and efficiently contested by the Son who advocates on behalf of the believer, rightfully claiming through the proof of payment he himself already made by substitution, that the debt has been paid, so that the sinner, through repentance and absolution, has been acquitted. Thus, in Christ, there is no condemnation. The believer has been forgiven, declared just, innocent, justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, thereby being spared a sentence of eternal death and instead being granted the gift of eternal life.

Theosis overlaps with, but surpasses the Western Christian concept of justification. Neither the forensic justification in which God declares humankind "just" solely by virtue of Christ's sacrifice stressed by the *sola gratia* principle in Protestantism, nor the concept of *satisfactio* in Roman Catholicism is particularly challenged, *per se*. The Eastern Church has always understood salvation to be a doctrine of synergy, God in his sovereignty does his part; man is responsible to

do his.⁴⁸ In the Orthodox Church, the issue of faith vs. works was never an issue as it was in Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. The Orthodox Church sees justification and sanctification as one divine action, one continuous process. Grace and nature are dynamic and living realities, and salvation is a living communion with God in Christ, constituting the synergy between God and man in salvation by grace. Whereas the West often treats salvation as being rescued from something, the Eastern Orthodox tradition views salvation as an active participation in the divine life. Good works then are not done to earn or merit salvation; they are themselves an expression of the salvation itself, a concrete living of the divine life already here on earth.

Salvation is seen as encompassing all of life, not just as an event that happened at a certain time in the individual's past. No one aspect of the salvation process is isolated either in the theology or practice. Christ, in both his person and his work, is present in faith and is through this presence identical with the righteousness of faith.

The idea of a divine life in Christ is thus the central emphasis on the believer's actual participation in the divine life through union with Christ. Nevertheless, the core of Eastern Orthodoxy does not fixate on Christo-

⁴⁸ It is this synergism that has caused the western church to accuse Eastern Orthodoxy of semi-pelagianism, a heresy considered to diminish divine glory by making mankind a co-redeemer along with Jesus Christ. Orthodox teaching, however, insists it maintains that salvation is by divine grace, unmanipulated by human merit.

centricism; rather, the focus is on communion with the Holy Trinity, the heart and soul of Christianity being the knowledge of the fullness of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Deification must always be understood in the light of the distinction between God's essence and His energies. Union with God means union with the divine energies, not the divine essence. This distinction does not introduce any "complexity" in God, since it is not a question of two essential realities; both the essence and the energy belong to the one God. That distinction is possible since Eastern Orthodox theology identifies the source of the Godhead hypostatically, in the Person of the Father, instead of in the abstract divine essence, as explained above. While the divine essence and the energy of God each has its source in the Father, Son, and Spirit, God remains transcendent in His essence, even while man is deified in Christ through communion with the divine energy.

Again, the Eastern Orthodox Church, while speaking of Deification and union, rejects all forms of pantheism. While the mystical Deification deifies human nature, the deified creature remains itself and distinct. It is thus dissimilar from Indian pantheism or even Mormon interpretations of divinization. Ware elucidates this difference:

This does not mean that the distinction between creator and creature is abolished, or that we humans lose our characteristic personal identity and are 'absorbed' in the 'abyss' of the godhead. On the contrary, even in the glory of heaven the differentiation

*between God and humanity continues; the beatific vision 'face to face' is a union without confusion.*⁴⁹

Thus, the mystical union between God and man is a true union in which the Creator and Creature do not become fused into a single being, unlike eastern religions which teach that man is swallowed up in the deity.

That aspect of unconfused unity is anchored in Trinitarian theology. In his being, man is thus created in the image of the "tri-unity" divine hypostasis. He exists not just as "I" but also as "you" and "we" by virtue of the inseparable unity that exists between the Father and the Son, maintained through the creative force of the Holy Spirit, conferred through the Son to those who believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The whole process of salvific theosis, justification, sanctification, and reconciliation is based on a relationship of love, the Trinitarian dynamic so forcefully and fiercely maintained by the Eastern Orthodox as the essence of Christianity. Boulgakov sums up this quality, while acknowledging the place for juridical theology :

*Sans diminuer l'équité et la justice de Dieu, qui doivent être satisfaites, l'Orthodoxie place au centre de la doctrine du salut l'amour de Dieu, qui n'a pas épargné son Fils pour sauver le monde par la déification de l'homme.*⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ware, "Eastern Christianity," 572.

⁵⁰ Boulgakov, *L'Orthodoxie*, 123.

As one might imagine with such a pregnant concept of this doctrine, the commentary could continue endlessly. However, for the purposes of this treatment the above serves first to establish a basic understanding of the crucial position of the Trinity in Orthodox thinking. Also presented is the consequent reasoning for the rejection of teaching that even as much as opens the possibility of any doctrinal expression that would alter the Trinitarian Truth as conceived by Eastern Orthodoxy. In sum, the encompassing essential character of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Eastern Orthodoxy is captured in Fédorov's oft-quoted poignant statement : "*The Trinity is our social platform.*"⁵¹

8. Conclusion

This vision of the Holy Trinity in Eastern Orthodoxy sets it apart from other Christian traditions, not just through doctrinal formulation, but also in the place granted to that doctrine and its application, as seen in the foregoing discussion. Agreement on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and its application is the foundation for Christian unity.

That basic trait puts to rest any suggestion that Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is a temporary "immigrant condition" which will fall away as the Orthodox faithful somehow become more "truly Canadian" and their religion de-ethnicized. Eventual assimilation into Roman Catholicism or Protestantism, the forms of

⁵¹ For example, Olivier Clément, *L'Église Orthodoxe*, Paris : Presses Universitaires, 1961, 58.

Christianity that have been professed by most Canadians since the country's founding,⁵² is not an option for the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Again, the underlying distinction of Eastern Orthodoxy is theological, stemming from the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. To whatever extent the Eastern Orthodox Church may become somehow canadianized through acculturation, it will not through that process become doctrinally more Roman Catholic or Protestant. Failure to effectively transmit the Trinitarian distinction would likely result in stagnation of this church tradition and eventual relegation to an accidental residual existence in Canada.

⁵² The Statistics Canada 2001 census indicates that 70% of Canadians identify themselves as Roman Catholic or Protestant.

CHAPTER II

THE LANGUAGE OF EASTERN ORTHODOXY

The underlying principle of Trinitarian truth, love and unity is seemingly contradicted in the reality of a divided Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada. That division, in the context of language use, is the subject of this chapter. Two aspects of language are examined throughout. One is which language is used for liturgical purposes, the other is how language is used in the projection of the image of Eastern Orthodoxy in the public arena to non-Orthodox Canadians.

Language has played a major role in the ethos of Eastern Orthodoxy and will thus be examined as a key factor. Historically, this religious tradition has demonstrated creativity and flexibility in matters of language. By contrast, the last two centuries have seen the climax of a tendency toward linguistic fossilization that began in the 15th century with the fall of the Byzantine Empire. Because the generalized fossilization was already well in place at the time of Eastern Orthodox immigration to Canada, this country has been particularly influenced by that linguistic rigidity. The role of language in Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is considered through the church's theology, history and exposure in Canadian society.

To put a specific face on this consideration, Eastern Orthodox parishes in greater Montreal were surveyed on their use of language. For the past century, a significant and ethnically-varied segment of the country's Eastern Orthodox population has made Montreal home: the 2001 census shows that 94,700¹ of Canada's 479,620² Christian Orthodox individuals reside there. In addition to the ethnic diversity and substantial population, Montreal parishes represent most of the Eastern Orthodox branches in Canada.

I. THE THEOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

The language of worship in Canadian Orthodoxy distances that community from its Canadian surroundings. No Eastern Orthodox jurisdiction in Canada uses only French or English for its liturgies. A most probable message conveyed to the outside is that Eastern Orthodox worship is foreign, a remnant of an immigrant past, and deliberately not intended to freely embrace those in Canada unfamiliar with Orthodoxy. Not only are the languages used not exclusively French or English, those two languages are proportionately rarely used at all.

After explaining the centrality of liturgy in Orthodox practice in his 1961 introduction to Orthodoxy, Olivier Clément carefully makes the point that Orthodox liturgy is in the language of the people of the country.³ He particularly notes, however, that both the Russian and the Greek churches have failed to apply that basic tenet of

¹ Statistics Canada, *Religions in Canada*, 2003, 12.

² Ibid., 18.

³ Olivier Clément, *L'Église Orthodoxe*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961, 88.

Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

Indeed, most Russian Orthodox services are in Church Slavonic, an old liturgical language no longer the vernacular anywhere, while the Greek Orthodox liturgies are in an archaic form of Greek. The situation is such, then that the majority of Eastern Orthodox adherents attend worship services in languages spoken by virtually no one anywhere.⁴ Despite Clément's expressed hope that linguistic situation be transitory, it has generally persisted, certainly so in Canada, and as demonstrated below, specifically in Montreal as well. That usage reinforces the notion that Eastern Orthodoxy is not just for foreigners, but foreigners of another time, far removed from contemporary Canada.

The implications of Canadian Eastern Orthodoxy's insistence on the predominant use of languages that are not those of the membership's daily discourse goes far beyond mere retention of old and familiar cultural forms often observed in other immigrant groups. In Eastern Orthodox practice and teaching the use of the vernacular of the faithful falls into the realm of doctrinal theology and is an expression of cosmic reconciliation in the divine economy. Failure to speak the faith in comprehensible terms betrays the principle of restorative communication, a basic tenet of Orthodox theology and historical practice.

Jesus Christ is presented in the gospel of John as the *logos* – the Word – the

⁴ Various sources list approximately 250,000 Greek Orthodox church members, and roughly 15,000 Russian Orthodox church members of a total of about 479,000 Orthodox adherents in Canada (that total is the approximate number of individuals who describe themselves as Orthodox according to Statistics Canada). While those church membership statistics do not correspond completely to those identifying with the respective groups according to Statistics Canada, they are given only to show the relatively

quintessential incarnation of God's communication with His own creation. All that sin did to rupture harmonious dialogue between God and mankind was restored and repaired in the work and life of Jesus Christ.

Two episodes in the biblical narrative elucidate the fundamental place of creator/creation communication as conveyed by language. The first, in the Old Testament, presents the idyllic ease of communication that was violated by human pride and God-envy, resulting in the brokenness of human relationships through the confusion of language at Babel. The second was the hallmark event of Pentecost in the New Testament, that restorative act when men, moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God, so that all could understand the message in their own language.

That moment of Pentecost linguistic lucidity set the pattern for communicating the Christian message. Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada priest Bohdan Hladio thus remarks :

First of all, we have the example of the Apostles. Jesus taught and preached in Aramaic...The Apostles and the Evangelists, however, used the Greek language (the "lingua franca of the day) to write and preach of the Risen Lord. If any language can claim to be 'Holy' we can all agree that the Aramaic language should be first in line – for it is the language of Our Lord used to preach the Gospel. Yet, the Apostles used the Greek language. Why! Because they knew the difference between the medium and the message.⁵

Not to seek the linguistic means that most effectively communicates the logos-

important share of Eastern Orthodox in Canada who belong to jurisdictions which usually do not offer liturgies in languages they actually speak.

⁵ Bohdan Hladio, "The Question of Liturgical Language," at <http://www.uocc.ca/language.html>.

wrought reconciliation is an aberration of the divine purpose, a perpetuation and propagation of the Babel brokenness. Eastern Orthodox theologian John Meyendorff explains the relationship between biblical theology and missiology in this context :

The Byzantine Orthodox hymnography for the day of Pentecost is entirely built on the biblical theme of the opposition between the story of the tower of Babel ('the tongues divide men from each other') and the miracle of the tongues in the upper room ('the same spirit speaks in the languages of all nations'). Catholicity therefore implies comprehensiveness : not indifference and individualism, but a comprehensiveness built upon the universality of redemption. The Orthodox claim of being the 'Catholic' Church involves the Church's mission to the world, a world which has been redeemed by Christ in its entire wholeness... A true sense of our mission must also recognize that catholic tradition has had in the past expressions other than Greek or Russian and that any reduction of Christian truth to a particular historic form presupposes a reduction of catholicity itself.⁶

II. THE HISTORICAL USE OF THE VERNACULAR

For almost two thousand years, Eastern Orthodox Christians have been actively spreading the Gospel. Following the gradual conversion of the Roman Empire over the first three centuries, missionaries from the Greek-speaking Church of the Eastern Roman Empire (hence the term "Eastern Orthodox") evangelized much of the Middle East, the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and lands to the east in the language of the local people.

The most remarkable, and ultimately successful, missionary effort of this era was undertaken by Saints Cyril and Methodius, brothers who are credited with creating the Cyrillic alphabet and who helped to lay the foundations for Slavic culture. Following that

⁶ John Meyendorff, "The Orthodox Church and Mission : Past and Present". 59-71, in *Mission Trends* No. 1, Anderson, Gerald H. and Thomas Stransky, eds., Toronto : Paulist Press, 1974, 69-70.

example, other monks journeyed east to Kazan, learned the Tartar language, and established a monastic community for the conversion of the Mongol peoples. St. Stephen of Perm (1340-96), another monk, would in turn journey beyond Kazan, across the Ural mountains, into the forests of Siberia to labor among the pagan Zyrians where he devised a Zyrian alphabet, translated the Gospel, and subsequently converted an entire people.

In the same vein, after his arrival in Alaska in 1824, Father Veniaminov learned Unangan Aleut, the language of the Fox Islands and translated the Gospel of St. Matthew with the assistance of local Aleut chief, Ivan Pan'kov. The two also collaborated on the translation of a catechism. Veniaminov impressed his parishioners with his fluency in their language, respect for their traditions, and pastoral concern. Later, as the Bishop of Kamchatka, the Kurile and Aleutian Islands, he quickly learned the local Tlingit language. When later transferred to Yakutsk, Siberia as archbishop, he learned yet another native language and continued his missionary work among the native peoples.

The Alaskan Mission demonstrated the linguistic adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and educational outreach characteristic of Orthodox missions from Moravia to Kamchatka. With the transfer to American rule in 1867, most ethnic Russians, including the vast majority of Orthodox priests, returned to Russia. The Orthodox Church in Alaska was able to survive because, from its very beginning, it was envisioned, in the best tradition of Orthodox missionary spirituality, as an indigenous church, not as a

diaspora.⁷

Historically then, even in North America, Eastern Orthodoxy served the divine liturgy in the vernacular to facilitate the communication of the faith to the non-Orthodox. That is all the more reason for surprise at the reluctance of the Eastern Orthodox Churches in Canada to do so as even their own membership becomes increasingly anglophone or francophone.

This reluctance to adapt linguistically not only conflicts with Eastern Orthodox theology and historical practice, it also contrasts with other Canadian denominations which have deliberately reached out to speakers of languages other than that of the dominant group of the mission-minded denomination.⁸ Hladio warns of the serious consequences of such reticence:

Practically speaking, if we don't use either English or French in our parishes we often drive our own children and grandchildren out of the Church -- an extremely grave sin. Even though there still are parishes and individual members of our Church who would like to see a totally Ukrainian-language approach to our ministry, the fact of the matter is that in virtually every parish the necessity of using the English or French languages is absolute. We cannot do our "mission work" without them.⁹

⁷ See: Mark Stokoe, Leonid Kishkovsky, *Orthodox Christians in North America, 1794-1994*, New York : Orthodox Christian Publications Center (OCPC), 1995, chapter one.

⁸ See, for example, J.W. Grant, "Presbyterian Home Missions and Canadian Nationhood", Paper presented at the Seventh International Convention of Canadian Studies, Acireale, Italy, May 18-22, 1988, Biblioteca della ricerca. Schone Editore, 1988, 139-153; Edward N. Herberg, *Ethnic Groups in Canada : Adaptations and Transitions*, Scarborough, Ontario : Nelson Canada, 1989, 146-147; David Millett, "Religious Identity : The Non-Official Languages and the Minority Churches," 182-195, in *Two Nations, Many Cultures - Ethnic Groups in Canada*, Elliot, John Leonard, ed., Scarborough, Ontario : Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1979.

⁹ Hladio, "The Question of Liturgical Language".

III. ETHNO-LINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND CANADIAN EASTERN ORTHODOXY : A BACKDROP OF EXPERIENCE

It would be inaccurate and unfair to suggest that Canadian Orthodoxy was not concerned about doctrine. The point made here is rather that a dominant driving force in Canadian Orthodoxy has been linked to ethno-linguistic and cultural factors. It appears that thus far, the experience of Orthodoxy on Canadian soil fulfills one author's prediction in 1963: *"If the Canadian church does not develop a strong Canadianism, Orthodox churches in North America will tend towards organization along ethnic lines with their central authority in the United States."*¹⁰

It would be a mistake to assert that the socio-religious situation of the Eastern Orthodox in Canada is unique to that church tradition. A like case could be observed in the bulk of the Canadian Lutheran constituency in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. That community's cultural, religious and linguistic isolation put it into a similar position to that of much of the Canadian Eastern Orthodox constituency in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries.

The decisive moment for the Lutherans came with the World Wars and Canadian hatred of things German. The animosity forced the German Lutherans to make a choice between culture and doctrine. Through their church they chose doctrine, remaining theologically Lutheran, but becoming politically, linguistically and culturally Canadian. Their church is now an overwhelmingly anglophone denomination, ranking among the numerically most important Protestant traditions in Canada.

¹⁰ Milos Mladenovic, "Canadian Orthodoxy and the Union of Churches," 102-118, in J.W. Grant, ed., *The Churches and the Canadian Experience*, Toronto : The Ryerson Press, 1963, 109.

Such a cataclysmic event has not transpired for Canadian Orthodoxy. An important difference is the linguistic and cultural diversity among the dominant Eastern Orthodox groups : Arabs, Greeks, Ukrainians, and Russians. A single socio-political event would not simply bring about the same massive, group dynamic that brought the majority of German Lutherans into mainstream Canadian society, while retaining their confessional identity.

Two examples, dealing with the Ukrainian Orthodox in Canada, will be discussed to illustrate the dominant role of culture and language in Orthodoxy in Canada. Both cases saw doctrine taking a secondary place in the determination of church affiliation.

When the nationalistic Ukrainian Orthodox Church came into being in Canada, there was a dramatic increase in Orthodox membership. Since Ukrainian identity had been put into the forefront by the newly-formed church, many Ukrainians left the Eastern rite (Uniate) Greek Catholic Church to become members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. As long as the Russian-dominated Orthodox Church had worked with Ukrainians in Canada, the Uniates stayed away from that institution, opting for the more Ukrainian Eastern rite Roman Church (itself also under pressure to "Latinize" by Canadian Roman Catholic authorities). But, when the option of a specifically Ukrainian Church that promoted things Ukrainian became available, Orthodoxy became the more attractive choice.

For the same resistance to Russian domination, most Ukrainians who had been in the Russian Orthodox Church became members of the newly-formed Ukrainian

Orthodox Church when that avenue was opened. Doctrine was not apparently the main factor in the switching of church membership, while language was.¹¹ Further underscoring that point is the fact that as the importance of Ukrainian identity has waned among the younger generations, so has the membership in the Ukrainian churches.¹²

The second case occurred when former Orthodox and Uniate Ukrainians were ready to become part of the Presbyterian-linked Independent Greek Church as long as they were allowed to retain the Eastern rite. However, when they later were forced to become more Protestant in liturgical form, having to change not just doctrine, but also national and ethnic identity in liturgical forms, most of the members left the church.

*The Presbyterian church ordered all Orthodox forms to be discarded. The Ukrainians reacted with a tremendous outcry against this attempt at assimilation and anglicization. Some priests resigned, and many members of the church started to go to other churches. Bodrug (the Ukrainian Presbyterian-linked leader) was of the opinion that the Ukrainians were deeply rooted in Eastern Orthodox forms and would not accept the less colorful Protestant liturgy.*¹³

These cases would indicate that cultural considerations override doctrine. Other examples, such as politically motivated schisms among Russian Orthodox and Serbian Orthodox in Canada could be cited, although the latter are arguably at least partially doctrinally related.

¹¹ See Hladio, "The Question of Liturgical Language".

¹² Carla Yu, "Domes of silence : rural depopulation and Old Slavonic threaten historic Ukrainian churches", *Alberta Report*, August 30, 1999, 37.

¹³ See J.W. Grant, "Presbyterian Home Missions and Canadian Nationhood".

The identification of Orthodoxy with ethno-nationalistic ties is so strong that the youth who assimilate into anglophone or francophone culture and seek out church affiliation are most likely to do so within the fold of the Roman Catholic or Protestant churches, the forms of Christianity of the majority of Canadians. One priest describes that situation in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which had declined from 140,000 members in the early 1980's to 100,000 by 1997, in the following terms: *"The services are held in languages that their (the pioneers') grandchildren and great-grandchildren have never understood. So they're largely lost to the faith. It's hard to imagine how specifically Ukrainian Christianity can recover, without any new immigration from the Ukraine."*¹⁴ Because of the expressed perceived unity between faith and culture, the youth tend to easily lose both their ethnicity and religious faith at the same time, along with the use of the language.

One Orthodox Archbishop in Edmonton explained the link between language and religion this way: *"...the present generation is not offering its tongue to their children. If they don't practice their language and faith in their home, the young won't have them to carry into the church."*¹⁵ Another article concerning the same church body reports the frustration of a father over the lack of English for his anglophone children in the liturgies: *"It's hard to continue to go with hard feelings, but not attending is just as bad or worse."*¹⁶ The possibility of using English does not appear to be an alternative. Again, it

¹⁴ Joe Woodard, "A Century of Eastern worship, Alberta's steadily declining Ukrainian Christians celebrate two centennials". *Alberta Report*. August 18, 1997, 38.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Yu, 37.

would seem that culture has been a dominant determining factor in the perpetuation of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada.

The situations described above have reinforced the impression that Eastern Orthodoxy is a church for immigrants. In describing the Orthodox Church in Canada in the 1960's, Kilbourn, Forrest and Watson stress the fact most Canadians could not understand the rivalries and animosities within that Church, nor could they appreciate the historical and spiritual traditions preserved by Eastern Orthodox Christians:

Saturated as they were with these rich traditions, the Eastern Orthodox Churches in Canada remained somewhat aloof from the mainstream Canadian and religious and social life; their priests continued to worship in their traditional or national languages and endeavored to serve their flock from Eastern Europe or the Near East, with no concern for proselytizing or spreading faith among other people.¹⁷

An Orthodox priest echoed similar observations three decades later when speaking of the parishes in Montreal that constitute almost a fourth of Canada's Orthodox faithful:

Malgré les richesses culturelles de chaque groupe orthodoxe établi à Montréal, l'une des grandes faiblesses de ses paroisses ethniques s'avérait presque mortelle pour certaines, et très débilitante pour d'autres: le refus ou la lenteur de l'adaptation à la nouvelle situation. En dépensant tant d'énergie à préserver le trésor culturel du pays d'origine, surtout la langue, ces paroisses ont perdu beaucoup de jeunes qui ont compris - faussement en réalité - que la foi chrétienne orthodoxe ne peut pas se séparer de la culture du vieux pays et s'enraciner dans une autre culture, tout en préservant son intégralité d'Église.¹⁸

¹⁷ Cited in T. F. Jeletzky, T. F., ed., *Russian Canadians*, Ottawa: Borealis Press, 1983, 134.

¹⁸ Stéphane Bigham, in "Présence Orthodoxe en Amérique et à Montréal" *Interface*, Service de pastorale: Université de Montréal, vol. 4, no. 4, mars-avril, 1997, 8. (emphases mine)

An illustration of the source of the above-quoted author's lamentations is the story of Saint Michael's Greek Orthodox Church in Montreal. In that parish, in the 1950's, the second-generation faithful keenly grasped the difference between language and faith and were prepared to adjust to facilitate the transmission of faith to the Canadian-born Eastern Orthodox generation : *"We wanted some English in our church. If our parents wanted us to keep attending church, then some changes had to be made ... they had vetoed our proposal to use English... The Archdiocese gave us a hard time. We wanted the sermon in English They did not allow this."*¹⁹ This anecdotal incident shows the desire and attempt to transmit the faith in an optimal linguistic environment to the Canadian-born Eastern Orthodox generation was squelched by the church hierarchy itself.

IV. LANGUAGE USE IN THE PROJECTION OF THE EASTERN ORTHODOX IMAGE TO NON-ORTHODOX

NOMENCLATURE

The mere nomenclature used by the church bodies is a vehicle of alienation from Canadian mainstream culture. Persistent use of the terms "Western Church" and "Eastern church" consistently and constantly reinforce the notion that Eastern Orthodoxy is out of place in Canada, a country so soundly part of the Western world.

Further, the use of language that identifies Eastern Orthodox groups heightens

¹⁹ Sophia Florakas-Petsalis, *To Build the Dream*, Montreal: K-Litho Printing, 2000, 291-293.

the foreign character of Orthodoxy by choice of identifying vocabulary. A sample listing of Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions in Canada quickly makes that usage apparent: *The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, The Greek Orthodox Church, The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada, The Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America, The Macedonian Orthodox Church - Diocese of America, The Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church, The Antiochan Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.*

In fact no major jurisdiction in Canada is without a foreign-related qualifier (depending on how America is interpreted). The Orthodox Church of America comes the closest and is indeed the church body which most actively seeks to establish non ethnic-bound Orthodoxy in Canada. The vocabulary chosen by Eastern Orthodoxy distances Orthodoxy from the wider Canadian context. While such designations may be meaningful on historical or theological grounds for Orthodoxy, the psychological space created between outsiders and Orthodoxy by their usage is not due to chronological or doctrinal developments, but rather to mere external identification. In this sense, the case for a Canadian-rooted Orthodoxy, accessible to the general population, is thus weakened by the terminology of the jurisdictional nomenclature.

National and linguistic tags used more than once often reflect political separations in Europe. For example, though the Russian revolution is long over, and the Soviet-associated governments of Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine have been toppled, the churches founded as reflections of the political climate remain separated even after the

political climate has changed.²⁰ The Serbian Orthodox Church, which united differing parties, has provided an example of an exception to the rule and perhaps is an indication of things to come for other Eastern Orthodox bodies in Canada.²¹ Montreal's Greek community did once also, its hand forced by practical considerations and the realization of the non-sensical nature of the perpetuation of Old World politics in the New World. Two parishes, each of different, divisive political persuasions, came together to form Holy Trinity Parish, largely due to lack of funds during the Great Depression. It remained the only Greek Orthodox parish in Montreal until 1961.²²

PRESS COVERAGE

A perusal of the few articles on Eastern Orthodoxy in the Canadian press, written by Orthodox and non-Orthodox authors again readily reveals the tradition's foreign character. Virtually all references to Orthodoxy in Canada refer to non-Canadian national, ethnic or linguistic ties. Thus, for example, articles carry headlines such as: *A century of Eastern worship, Alberta's steadily declining Ukrainian Christians celebrate two centennials*;²³ *Domes of silence : rural depopulation and Old Church Slavonic threaten historic Ukrainian churches*;²⁴ or, *Orthodox Church unites cultures in Epiphany celebration*²⁵ about a Lebanese-born priest in Ottawa encouraging Greek, Russian, and

²⁰ Thus, for example, Russian Orthodoxy in Canada is divided into three jurisdictions: The Orthodox Church in America - Canadian Diocese; The Russian Orthodox Church in Canada; The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

²¹ Goa, 1734.

²² Florakas-Petsalis, *To Build the Dream*, 284-286.

²³ Joe Woodard, "A Century of Eastern worship, Alberta's steadily declining Ukrainian Christians celebrate two centennials", *Alberta Report*, August 18, 1997, 38.

²⁴ Yu. 37

²⁵ Pauline Tam, "Orthodox Church unites cultures in Epiphany celebration: Mix of parishioners fills St Elias Church for four-hour service," *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 6, 1997.

Ukrainian cooperation; or, *Greek Church in Toronto marks its independence*.²⁶ Also, articles tend to include such statements as *Western Christians will celebrate Easter... while the Orthodox holiday...*,²⁷ explaining Orthodox Easter in Montreal. Yet another article, *Faithful celebrate Orthodox Easter* begins: "Montreal's Eastern Orthodox community - Greeks, Ukrainians, Russians, Serbians and Romanians-...".²⁸ This differs from other Canadian denominational news items in which church bodies speak about themselves, or are spoken of, without ethno-linguistic or non-Canadian modifiers, and are presented as an integral segment of the general culture.

The high level of restrictive identification between ethno-linguistic and given nationalities in Eastern Orthodoxy to the exclusion of others as portrayed above is not a simple question of bad theology or narrow-mindedness. While it may be both, the implications of such are graver indeed, jeopardizing as it does the very existence of the church. Meyendorff expounds upon the ultimate serious nature of the consequences of imposing unchecked political, geographic, ethnic and national limitations:

It should be understood, first of all that catholicity does not imply bland cosmopolitanism – a renunciation of the cultural diversities, identities, and particular « talents » of nations, civilizations, or ethnic groups. The Cyrillo-Methodian pattern of creating national churches without imposing upon them linguistic conformity was a direct application in the field of mission of the miracle of Pentecost, and therefore the best possible witness to catholicity....Catholicity therefore implies comprehensiveness : not indifference and individualism,...the Church, therefore, cannot be "Eastern" or Western in its very nature if it is to remain the Church of Christ (conversely if the Church remains virtually "Eastern" or "Western

²⁶ "Greek Church in Toronto marks its independence", Canadian Press Newswire, September 29, 1996.

²⁷ John Tkachuk, "Orthodox Christians celebrate Resurrection: Observance tomorrow marks the end of Holy Week," *The Montreal Gazette*, April 26, 1997, 17.

²⁸ Alan, Hustak, "Faithful celebrate Orthodox Easter", *The Montreal Gazette*, April 26, 2003, A7.

in its very (incarnational character) nature does it remain the Church of Christ?)...²⁹

V. A SURVEY OF LANGUAGE USE BY EASTERN ORTHODOX PARISHES IN MONTREAL

So as to concretize the discussion of the use of language of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada, parishes in Montreal, home of approximately one fourth of Canada's Eastern Orthodox, were surveyed. Various tools were used to ascertain the use of language by the parishes. One was a questionnaire on language usage within the parishes; the others, exterior signage, the yellow pages and the Internet, were used to determine various aspects of language usage in the public arena.

Eastern Orthodox Church jurisdictions in Montreal³⁰ (those parishes surveyed by questionnaire are in bold)

Jurisdiction	number of parishes	parish name
The Antiochan Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America	3	St Nicholas St George St Mary
The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America (Ecumenical Patriarchate) Diocese of Toronto	8	Archangels Michael and Gabriel EvangelismosTis Theotokou Holy Trinity Koimisis Tis

²⁹ Meyendorff, 187.

³⁰ See *Directory of Orthodox Parishes and Institutions in North America Millennium Edition*, Torrance, California: Orthodox Christian Communications Network, 1998.

		Theotokou Saints Constantine and Helen St George Cathedral Saint Markella Chiopoliotis St Dionysios Church
The Greek Orthodox Church of Canada	1	Evangelismos St Nektorius
The Orthodox Church in America (2 different administrative units in Montreal)		
The Orthodox Church in America- Canadian Diocese	2	The Sign of the Theotokos St Benoit de Nursie SS Peter and Paul
Romanian Orthodox Episcopate	2	St Nicholas Mission Church of the Annunciation
Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese America and Canada	2	Saint John the Baptist
The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia	2	St. John the Martyr St. Nicholas Cathedral
The Serbian Orthodox Church in the United States and Canada	1	Holy Trinity
The Church of True Orthodox Christians of Greece	1	Hagia Sophia
The Ukrainian Orthodox Church	3	Sophie

THE QUESTIONNAIRE³¹

The chief concern of the questionnaire and that of most interest for this study, is that of which language is used for the liturgy. To better understand the importance of that question, it is necessary to understand the crucial place of the liturgy in Eastern Orthodoxy.

Many factors have contributed to the liturgy's occupying a key place. One is that it succinctly and effectively conveys salvation history every time it is celebrated so that the whole of the faith is experienced in intensely concentrated form. The liturgy constitutes part of authoritative Eastern Orthodox Holy Tradition.

On top of that basic foundational function are other factors that have heightened the profile of the liturgy. One was the generally low level of education in most Orthodox countries. That situation persisted for many centuries, assigning the liturgy an important pedagogical function through its frequent repetition, extending the function of the liturgy beyond that of worship. Moreover, in the twentieth century, catechetical instruction was greatly restricted under communism, but the liturgy was allowed to be "served," or celebrated, albeit in limited circumstances. Virtually all legal, public religious instruction for the faithful was thus channeled through the liturgical texts. Another factor

³¹ See Appendix.

that puts the liturgy in the forefront is the fact that no religious instruction is required to be a member of the Eastern Orthodox church after Baptism, Chrismation (confirmation in the West) and participation in the Eucharist. Since these three sacraments are usually bestowed concurrently in infancy, the liturgy often remains an individual's most important educational contact with the church. It is *"the most profound and effective medium of all, ... (let us not forget there was a Divine Liturgy 300 years before there was the collection of books we now call the New Testament)."32*

Given the centrality of the liturgy, the language in which it is served was the main question of the survey of Montreal Eastern Orthodox parishes. That question is crucial as an indicator in Canadian Eastern Orthodoxy's capacity to transmit the faith to its own faithful as well as to non-orthodox.

The first question, then was, "What main language is used for the liturgy?" The findings were as follows: The Orthodox Church of America – Canadian section uses predominately English then Church Slavonic at Sign of the Theotokos ; The Orthodox Church of America – Canadian section uses predominately French then Church Slavonic at Saint Benoit de Nursie; all other respondents indicated that liturgies are served in the language indicated by the geographic tag in the church name, i.e. Greek, Russian, Arabic (Antiochan), Ukrainian. The findings of the question on the main language of the liturgy are unsurprising and unremarkable. They did however, empirically and locally confirm what is generally presented as the ethno-linguistic situation of Eastern Orthodoxy in North America, and that almost in caricature so closely

32

Hladio.

fitted to the generalized template they were. The two OCA exceptions only serve to confirm the norm.

On two occasions the respondents incidentally indicated that it was not essential to understand the language of the liturgy since mere presence in the prayerful atmosphere was in itself spiritually edifying. The implication seemed to be that such participation, while the bare minimum, was acceptable if need be. For the non-Orthodox this may seem to be a strange attitude, given the emphasis on the role of the liturgy. But the liturgy itself, with all its importance, is still not the ultimate goal of Eastern Orthodoxy, knowing God is. Thus one Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada priest could freely write:

The English language will not save our Church. Were we to begin to serve the Liturgy even 50% in English (or French) throughout Canada, attendance numbers would in all likelihood go down, not up. The Ukrainian Catholics have had English language Services for decades, and their numbers have been steadily falling. We must keep in mind the fact that those who most often say, "I'd come to Church if there was more in English" are simply making an excuse -- they don't come to Church because they don't want to. After all, if our eternal salvation is dependent on being a dedicated member of the Church, it shouldn't matter if the Liturgy is in Swahili! The problem of Church attendance is a problem of faith, not of language ... We must not be apologetic for using the Ukrainian language. After all, if we are the Church, if we do offer eternal salvation, the fact that Services are in Ukrainian is only a minor inconvenience on the eternal scale of things.³³

Public exposure

Signage

³³

Ibid.

Lest the significance of this category be minimized, it is important to note the degree of importance the government of the province of Quebec accords exterior signs. While private, non-profit organizations are excluded from the provincial language laws, mentioning the impact of the language of signs is pertinent to this discussion. The issue of the language of exterior signs and the effect thereof is a frequently recurring theme in Montreal media. The importance of signs in the establishment of identity is often expounded upon and is at the forefront of public discourse. Once again, through its publicly visible exterior signs, the foreign nature of the Eastern Orthodox community in Montreal is clearly communicated. Another related issue too broad to be dealt with here, is the question of the degree to which Montreal's Eastern Orthodox community has adopted English, rather French, when using a Canadian official language.

As shown in the list below, the signs include the language of the linguistic or geographic tag of the jurisdiction's name. Usually English and French are included. Only three parishes have Greek only on their signs :

Jurisdiction

parish

The Antiochan Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of North America

St Nicholas

Sign is in Arabic, French and English

The Greek Orthodox Church of Canada

Evangelismos
St Nektorius

Sign is in Greek only

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of
North and South America
(Ecumenical Patriarchate)
Diocese of Toronto

Evangelismos Tis Theotokou
SS Constantine and Helen
St Markella Chiopoliotis

Signs for the first two parishes in Greek, French and English; for the last in Greek only

The Orthodox Church in America (2 different administrative units in Montreal)

The Orthodox Church in America-
Canadian Diocese

The Sign of the Theotokos
St Benoit de Nursie

Signs for the first in French and English; for the last in French only

Romanian Orthodox Episcopate

The Church of the Annunciation

Sign in Romanian, French and English

Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese
In America and Canada

Saint John the Baptist

Sign in Romanian and French

The Russian Orthodox Church
Outside Russia

St. John the Martyr
St. Nicholas Cathedral

Sign for the first in Russian and English; sign for the second, in Russian, French and English

The Serbian Orthodox Church
in the United States and Canada

Holy Trinity Church

Sign in Serbian, French and English

The Church of True Orthodox
Christians of Greece

Hagia Sophia

Sign in Greek only

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church
of Canada

St. Mary the Protectress
Sophie Cathedral

Signs for both parishes in Ukrainian, French and English

The one exception of a French-only sign for the St Benoit de Nursie mission indicates that Eastern Orthodoxy remains distanced from the majority population of its setting in officially uni-lingual Quebec. The question of Montreal Eastern Orthodox allophones and the choice of English is discussed below.

The Yellow Pages

Taking the cue from Statistics Canada, one could perhaps expect to find a general heading of "Eastern Orthodox" under which various Eastern churches might be listed. However, no such heading is found in the Yellow Pages entitled "Île de Montréal – Centre/Island of Montreal – Centre Mars/March 2001-2002". Still under "Orthodox" there are four listings: Romanian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, St-Jacques Syrian Orthodox Church, Serbian Orthodox Church, Sign of the Theotokokos Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church in America). Note that St-Jacques Syrian Orthodox Church is a Jacobite, not an Eastern Orthodox Church.

In the Yellow Pages entitled "Île de Montréal – Ouest et Environs/Island of Montreal – West and surrounding Area Mars/March 2001-2002" there are three listings under the English heading Orthodox: Église Copte Orthodoxe St-George et St-Joseph, St-Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of St-George. In the French portion of both telephone directories, under Orthodox, the results are the same. Note that Église Copte Orthodoxe St-George et St-Joseph is an Oriental, not

Eastern Orthodox Church.

In light of the foregoing discussion, what observations can be made? The most flagrant is the lack of cohesiveness and cooperation among the Eastern Orthodox churches to present a united front to the general public. No general listing would ever offer any indication that the Eastern Orthodox Church is one in doctrine as so vehemently expressed by its theologians. Any attempt for an outside observer to grasp even a superficial encompassing picture of Eastern Orthodoxy in Montreal (much less Canada) is tedious indeed. It cannot be done through the yellow pages no matter how far and long the fingers walk. That detail seemingly indicates a low level of interest and desire on the part of the church to avail itself to the general population since the yellow pages remain the most used source for locating institutions.

The net

Another relatively easily accessible source of initial contact is the internet. With its propensity for providing lists and summaries, the search is more productive than the yellow pages, up to a certain point. Only a small effort is required to discover a directory of Orthodox institutions in North America. The introductory user notes however specify that the listing is for SCOBA-related jurisdictions and Oriental Orthodox churches. Such qualifiers require much from the uninitiated browser. Basic knowledge is necessary to answer : What is SCOBA (it is a conference of mainline Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions)? What is a jurisdiction? What is Oriental if not Eastern? Still, a rather comprehensive list is just clicks away.

Nevertheless consulting the directory provided excludes those jurisdictions of Eastern Orthodox theology not in communion with the majority SCOBA listing. There is no obvious way for the outside visitor to know what parish belongs with what jurisdiction without further research. In the case of Montreal, the discrepancy between those parishes qualifying for listing and those not, translates into a significant gap. Two of the Greek Orthodox parishes in Montreal are "non-qualifying"-Old Calendarist, while the only two Russian Orthodox parishes are part of the "non-qualifying"-Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia and thus do not appear. In other words, four of the Eastern Orthodox churches are not listed in the "comprehensive listing" even though the Oriental churches, not professing Eastern Orthodox theology, are (and that through the site for the Eastern Orthodox Church of America site), – thus providing incomplete, if not confusing information. Only the two Orthodox Church in America – Canadian Diocese parishes have their own web pages : Sign of the Theotokos in English; and Saint Benoit de Nursie, in French.

Noteworthy, in this context of public exposure, is a newspaper announcement for *Le Centre d'Emmaüs de spiritualité des églises d'Orient*, since it expresses the problem well. While the center is not exclusively Eastern Orthodox, the Eastern Orthodox do participate in offering courses to present various aspects of Eastern Christianity to the general public. The Center's large advertisement in a francophone Montreal neighborhood newspaper is clearly visible to the general public it addresses. But even here the same linguistic problems lurks and the advertisement reads : "*Le Centre d'Emmaüs de spiritualité des églises d'Orient est heureux de partager avec les gens*

d'ici les richesses des Églises chrétiennes orientales,"³⁴ Despite this effort to make Eastern Christianity accessible to the general population, the invitation to "the people from here" implies that Eastern Christianity is not at home in Canada.

VI. PERPETUATION OF THE STATUS QUO

The use of language by the Eastern Orthodox parishes in Montreal as described above is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Statistics show that the number of Greek, Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian and Arabic speakers in the city is on the rise.³⁵ Moreover, the percentage of those who retain the country of origin language in generations subsequent to immigration is relatively high and apparently increasingly encouraged. Of the non-official languages most spoken by Eastern Orthodox, it appears that only Ukrainian is rapidly losing ground (see chart below).

Articles in the *The Canadian Encyclopedia Year 2000 Edition* on various nationalities and ethnic groups offer a glimpse of the role of language among those groups that have strong Eastern Orthodox majorities or minorities. Of note is the high percentage of the national total of those same groups settled in Montreal. For Arabs ("20% Eastern Orthodox"), maintaining the Arabic language *"is important, and the family and community language school helped with this process with varying degrees of*

³⁴ NDG/CDN Actualités. October 16, 2002, 4 (emphasis mine).

³⁵ Santé Montréal statistics claim Greek speakers are also on the rise.

success ... the past 50 years cultural preservation has been facilitated by the steady inflow of immigrants from the Arab world".³⁶

For Greeks ("95% Eastern Orthodox") "the preservation of the Greek language is important to Greek families ... the church has contributed significantly to the preservation of Greek identity through the use of the Greek language in religious services ... since the 1960's Greek language schools have grown in variety and enrollment"³⁷. In fact the majority Eastern Orthodox jurisdiction in Canada, the Greek Orthodox, which is also the most-represented Eastern Orthodox church in Montreal, ruled that every parish should have a Greek school.³⁸ The Montreal parishes continue to comply with that directive, further delaying adaptation to their linguistic surroundings.

For Romanians ("most Romanians belong to the Romanian Orthodox Church") the situation differs. While the encyclopedia article speaks of fewer than 30% of Romanians who speak Romanian,³⁹ it does not take into account the 2001 statistics Canada figures that show the number of those Romanians who speak Romanian at home in Montreal, one of the main centers of the Canadian Romanian population, has risen considerably since 1996 because of recent immigration, thus changing the statistic. Among Serbs ("almost all Serbs adhere to the Serbian Orthodox Church"), "about 70 % of the first and subsequent generations have maintained the Serbian

³⁶ Baha Abu-Laban, "Arabs," 95, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Year 2000 Edition*, James Marsh, ed.. Toronto : McClelland and Stewart, Inc, 2000.

³⁷ Peter Chimbos, "Greeks", 1014, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Year 2000 Edition*.

³⁸ Demetrios Constantelos. *Understanding The Greek Orthodox Church*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1982, 153.

³⁹ G. James Patterson, "Romanians," 2034, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Year 2000 Edition*.

language.”⁴⁰ In fact, Statistics Canada figures for Montreal show that the number of speakers of those groups with significant Eastern Orthodox populations have all recently increased, except the Ukrainians (18% Ukrainian Orthodox) and the Greeks (see chart)⁴¹:

Mother Tongue among groups in Montreal with a strong majority or minority Eastern Orthodox constituency (single responses):⁴²

	<u>1996</u>	<u>2001</u>
Arabic	53,715	70,325
Bulgarian	1,535	1,800
Greek	42,030	41,040
Ukrainian	5,840	4,685
Russian	8,680	11,880
Romanian	9,650	11,660
Serbian	880	975

The point of this information is that the use of language from the country of origin remains high, so that the linguistic distancing between Orthodox adherents and their religious language over time is less than perhaps expected. The high retention is probably greatly due to the triple minority factor of ethnicity, language and religion, as well as relatively high concentrations of populations of the various Eastern Orthodox

⁴⁰ Walter A. Kenyon, "Serbs," 2143, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Year 2000 Edition*.

⁴¹ By contrast are Western European groups such as the Dutch (majority Roman Catholic and Reformed): "The various faith communities encouraged integration and the adoption of things Canadian that were not antithetical to social or religious practices ...The Dutch language has been largely discarded, as have "old-country" practices that could have blocked the attainment of economic security ... The rate of integration among first-generation immigration is very high and assimilation is almost complete in Canadian-born Dutch". See Herman Ganzevoort, "Dutch", 708, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Year 2000 Edition*.

⁴² See Statistics Canada, Detailed Mother Tongue (125): Number of Respondents by Type of Answer (2) and Sex (3) for Population, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 1996 and 2001 Censuses - 20% Sample Data - Cat. No. 97F0007XCB01002.

groups in Montreal. The continued daily use of language also means the perceived need to change the church language is probably not great, since those most comfortable with the language and the cultures are likely those most unlikely to break ties with the group's institutions. Recent, young increased immigration reinforces the Eastern Orthodox parishes as havens for the familiarity of non-Canadian elements found in the country of origin. Furthermore, the Eastern Orthodox priests retained by the parishes in Montreal are usually foreign-born.

The following salient facts on language and immigration in Montreal indicate that conditions are favorable not only for the continuation of the status quo of language usage in the Eastern Orthodox parishes, but perhaps even for an intensifying of the use of languages other than English or French.⁴³ 1996 statistics showed 70% of all immigrants to Quebec settle on the Island of Montreal. 27% of the Montreal population are allophones, of whom 3% speak neither French nor English. The 10 languages spoken by 70% of allophones, in order of importance, are: Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Creole, Portuguese, Polish, Vietnamese and German. Three languages, Arabic, Chinese and Greek⁴⁴, are on the rise. In Quebec, the situation differed somewhat from the rest of the country. A higher proportion of allophones (68%) were speaking their mother tongue at home, compared with the other provinces and territories (59%).

An already complex linguistic situation for the Eastern Orthodox diaspora is rendered more so by the peculiar position of allophones in Montreal. Upon arrival in the

city, immigrants usually chose one of two official Canadian languages to interact with those in their new surroundings. A variety of reasons led to most choosing English. For many the foreign language most taught in their country of origin was English and continuing in the same language seemed most logical. The exception to that situation was the Romanians who most often learned French as the foreign language.

Part of that choice was encouraged by the general notion that moving to America meant arriving in an English-speaking environment. Part of it was the fact that their compatriots, including friends and relatives, who settled elsewhere in North America usually learned English.

But there were more specific local issues as well. One was economic. As the immigrants arrived in the early and mid twentieth century, English dominated business and work, making it more attractive for practical situations and seemingly the key to a more prosperous future. The other compelling reason pushing immigrants to learn English was the educational system. Desirous of safeguarding the French and Roman Catholic character of its schools, the Catholic school board did not accept immigrants into its system, forcing them to enroll their children in the Protestant English-medium schools. Thus the Eastern Orthodox community came to choose English over French more often than not.

⁴³ See: Public Health Department, 1996 census,
http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/index.asp?url=en/informations/prof_ethno.htm

⁴⁴ The chart cited in note 42 differs, indicating stability rather than growth.

In recent decades, with the religious character of Quebec education waning, the legal requirement that all immigrants attend French-language schools and the opening of more francophone Protestant (accepting all non-Roman Catholic pupils) schools, the percentage of new immigrants learning French was on the rise. In addition, by 2001 Quebec public school boards were organized along linguistic lines alone, eliminating religious school boards. At the same time the changes were made to the educational system, French has increasingly become the language at most levels of public Quebec society. Accordingly, a shift has occurred resulting in more allophones choosing French than before.

In Quebec, the difference between the number of people using a language at home and the number of those who have it as mother tongue is an indicator of the net impact of language shifts. English and French groups both benefit from the net impact of language shifts in Quebec. For example, in 1996, the number of people who spoke French at home was 89,000 higher than the number of those who had French as mother tongue. The net gains for the English group were 140,000. Still, the net gains of the French group have increased more than those of the English group over the past 25 years. In 1996, 39% of the overall net gains were to French, compared with 33% in 1991 and only 4% in 1971.

Language shifts from allophones explained most of the net gains of both English and French groups. Among those who did shift to either English or French, an increasing proportion were shifting to French: 39% in 1996, compared with 37% in 1991 and 29% in 1971.⁴⁵ While the above statistics are for the entire province of Quebec, it must be kept in mind that the majority of allophones in the province are in Montreal. It is thus reasonable to conclude that these statistics include the indication of a tendency for the Eastern Orthodox allophones in Montreal to choose French.

The important element in these Montreal-specific considerations is that the Eastern Orthodox community, even when it adopted a Canadian language, most often opted for English, again excepting the Romanians. The minority Eastern Orthodox community then tended to identify with the linguistic minority. In terms of making Orthodoxy known to the non-Orthodox community then, the community was cut off from the francophone community, rendering it more difficult to make Eastern Orthodoxy known to the surrounding outside community.

Hindrances notwithstanding, the Eastern Orthodox church has nonetheless established a small French-language mission (OCA).⁴⁶ The growing Romanian community, because of its traditional tendency to identify with French, may prove to be an important link for the Eastern Orthodox community to communicate the Faith in

⁴⁵ See *The Daily*, Statistics Canada, Tuesday, December 2, 1997, <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/971202/d971202.htm>.

⁴⁶ The average attendance at services in this francophone parish of Saint Benoît de Nursie, was 18 people, mostly converts to Eastern Orthodoxy - a small but important development for Montreal Eastern Orthodoxy.

Montreal and facilitate an eventual transition into the incorporation of greater use of French in the Montreal Eastern Orthodox parishes.

CONCLUSION

One century of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada has seen a consistent and recurring pattern of its religious communities turned inward. There are many reasons for this behavior. The first may be the differences in culture, language and religion from the majority cultures. While the Orthodox are Christian, they are not Protestant or Roman Catholic Christians. As such, they were consequently not considered part of the emerging nation being formed by the new nation of Canada. Just when Canada was seeking a united identity, epitomized on the religious front by the negotiations leading up to the formation of the United Church in 1925, Orthodox immigration was increasing. The anomaly of their presence encouraged them to isolate themselves to create a niche of normality for their own identity, so different from the world surrounding them. Grouping according to like language and culture and religion was the most natural avenue of protecting the group faced with the host culture which was foreign on all fronts.

As time went on, increased immigration reinforced the ranks of Orthodox communities and renewed the need for the retention of traits distinct from the majority culture. Some of the most active and vibrant communities are among recently-arrived

immigrants who find the same strength and support from the church as other immigrant groups did before them. The ongoing establishment of recent-immigrant, ethno-linguistically-based Orthodox communities perpetuates the status quo. While that immigration invigorates Canadian Orthodoxy, it also entrenches its ethnic divisions and further retards a transition to a francophone or anglophone pan-Orthodox body. One result of that entrenchment is reduced accessibility to non-Orthodox Canadians.⁴⁷

Or, as was the case for the Ukrainians, the very lack of immigration meant that the church became the last and sole place for the immigrant culture to flourish. Both patterns are likely to persist. Initially, as new immigrant groups arrive in Canada, the church will serve as a refuge of welcome while it retains familiar characteristics from the homeland. Later, as the group integrates into Canadian society, the church becomes an outpost of the waning past, a final anchoring in the non-Canadian culture.

Fragmentation and retention of foreign ties have not created a climate conducive for Eastern Orthodoxy to establish a foothold in mainstream Canadian society. Language, culture, liturgy, and insistence on foreign-linked jurisdictions have contributed to preventing the church from attracting other Canadians. Inter-marriage, one avenue for bringing people into a group, has tended toward the Eastern Orthodox partner being assimilated into the more Canadian mainstream group instead of the non-Orthodox spouse becoming Eastern Orthodox. The ethnic, linguistic and national barriers presently inherent in most of Canadian Eastern Orthodoxy seem to outweigh any great attraction of doctrinal nature for the non-Orthodox.

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Stéphane Bigham, "Présence Orthodoxe en Amérique et à Montréal", 8.

It would be erroneous to say that Orthodox Christianity has no place in Canadian society at-large. That is, as yet, unknown. Canadians, on the whole, have not consciously rejected Orthodoxy theology. Some developments indicate change is in the making. For example, an official Orthodox presence on campuses more directly place Montreal Eastern Orthodoxy in the mainstream of Montreal society. One is the establishment of a certificate program through the Université de Sherbrooke at its Longueuil campus across the river from Montreal. The other is a campus ministry primarily targeting Orthodox students at McGill University.

Still, the form and structure of Orthodoxy in Canada has so greatly obscured its content from the outside that it would be fair to say that it is virtually unknown to the wider Canadian population. The state of affairs within Eastern Orthodoxy has so alienated it from the majority Canadian society that any general exposure of Orthodox teaching to the outside has been precluded. Thus, choosing "the Orthodox option" has not been a real possibility on Canadian soil as particularly shown by the survey of the Montreal parishes, and Eastern Orthodoxy remains largely limited to those who know that branch of Christianity through their ethno-linguistic background, or personal theological research.

It would seem that this fractious linguistic situation spells doom and gloom for Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada, but not necessarily so. The picture is broader than the seemingly apparent. Despite the divisions, Eastern Orthodoxy remains strikingly unified in doctrine grounded in the Holy Trinity as well as its liturgy. Precisely because of the

existent oneness, the jurisdictional divisions are considered a great spiritual tragedy depriving the Church of the edification outward unity could afford, as well as a more powerful witness to the non-Orthodox world.

The linguistically-related limitations are a powerful deterrent to free access to Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada. Deterrent notwithstanding, even still more powerful forces are driving Eastern Orthodoxy beyond its surface-level confinement. The next chapter presents a developing socio-theological current of the postmodern age, largely external to the Eastern Orthodox Church, that is conducive to Eastern Orthodox expansion in Canada.

CHAPTER III

A CHRISTIAN VISION OF THE POSTMODERN WORLD

1. Modern vs. Postmodern

This discussion of a Christian vision of the postmodern world does not pretend to define or expound upon the nebulous subject of Postmodernism in any global terms.¹ Rather, the concept of Postmodernism presented is that of a composite of ideas with a definite commonality, expressed by a wide variety of North American Christian authors (hereafter referred to as the "school of recovery") who outline their own definition of Postmodernism.² From that springboard, they develop a Christian response and remedy to address the identified ills. They intend their analysis to serve as a guide to entry points through the window of opportunity for Christianity afforded by postmodernist culture, considered the dominant, pervasive influence in the worldview of contemporary North America.

Postmodernism has moved beyond its birthplace in the academic, artistic,

¹ In this discussion the adjectives "modern" and "postmodern" refer to a time period, while "Modernism" and "Postmodernism" refer to ideologies.

² Not within the scope of this treatment is another Christian theological trend which adopts and endorses much of postmodernist thought. See, for example, Graham Ward, ed., *The Postmodern God*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1998, and Michael Ingham, *Mansions of the Spirit*, Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1997.

architectural and entertainment realms into pop culture. Its influence also has become entrenched in the discourse of churches. Already, by the late 1980's, scattered Christian authors began addressing the subject of the church in the postmodern era. That trickle of interest has become a steady stream, growing in amplitude, with second-generation applications and enthusiastic progress reports of movement to orthodoxy being printed with the passing of each year for the Christian public, as well as potential converts. A perusal of title listings from major bookstores in North America soon reveals the extent to which this topic has made its way into popular circles far away from ecclesiastical board rooms and seminary classes.

The sundry assortment of writers discussed demonstrates the depth and breadth of this interest in the postmodern age. The representative voices herein presented are those of professor theologians, lay and ordained, for the most part independent one from the other, though expressing similar thought. Among the chief voices considered are Methodist Thomas Oden, Episcopal Philip Turner, Evangelicals³ Mark Noll and Brian Ingrassia, Lutherans Carl Braaten, Eugene

³ The terms *evangelical* and *evangelicalism* are prone to confusion because of inconsistent usage, with a variety of meanings. This study does not escape that ambiguity. In general, the term *evangelical* as used by the author refers to that which is of Christocentric, biblical content in whatever Christian tradition, based on the Gospel of salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and the forgiveness won through his death and resurrection (all of the school of recovery authors – Roman Catholic or Protestant – thus profess an evangelical stance). *Evangelicalism* as used herein by the author, refers to a Protestant movement in North America often termed *born-again Christianity* which includes, but should not be confused with, fundamentalism. Authors quoted each use the terms as they choose, and not necessarily with a consistent definition within a given text. In all cases context is crucial in determining the intended meaning. Part of the confusion stems from applying the term *evangelical* in substantival form to adherents of both the theological position as defined by the author, and North American evangelicalism (Noll, for example, can be classified as both). For the purposes of this study, in the adjectival form, *evangelical* refers to the former while *evangelistic* refers to the latter.

Veith, Glenn Nielsen and Anglicans Craig Gay, Barabra Pell, David Jeffrey and Loren Wilkinson. Other voices of Presbyterian, Lutheran and Roman Catholic persuasion, expounding upon elements of the school of recovery position, are also presented, demonstrating the scope of the school's support.

Despite the variety of their assessments, the writers considered nonetheless reach a consensus in identifying truth in the absolute as the necessary corrective for the ills proliferated under Postmodernism. Moreover, that truth is specified as the Holy Trinity, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, embodied in Jesus Christ. They reject the basic relativistic premise of Postmodernism, while some embrace, to varying degrees, certain of its other ideas. Capital in importance for them is Postmodernism's success in putting Modernism to death, creating a vacuum they believe Christianity can fill. Below is a representative collection of Christian authors' writing on this aspect of Postmodernism. Each author offers threads of thought that together weave a tapestry portraying this view of the postmodernist world. That picture presents their perspective of the modern era now in its death throws, their appraisal of various aspects of Postmodernism, their vision of how Christianity should respond to that appraisal, as well as how it already has begun to do so.

The form of Christianity promulgated in this vision is orthodox, adhering to the creeds, liturgies, and doctrines set by the early ecumenical councils and accepted over two millennia - including the Trinity, incarnation of God in Jesus

Christ, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Termed "classic Christianity", "new-ancient ecumenism",⁴ it is an appeal to a historical consensus as the essential force of the Christian faith.

The term "Postmodernism" presupposes the existence of Modernism. In this discussion the concept of Modernism is foundational in understanding these writers' treatment. The chronological definition of modernity varies. For some, it lies somewhere between the fall of the Bastille (1789) and the fall of the Berlin wall (1989), extending from the beginning of the Enlightenment to the collapse of the Enlightenment. Some associate the time period with that of the literary movement between World I and World War II,⁵ some mark the beginning of the end as the 1950's when science and materialism were starting to show cracks of inadequacy. Others see modernity in nascent form already in the fourteenth century.⁶ More important than dates, however, is the perception of what Modernism represents.

For this school of thought, Modernism imposed a period of decay and destruction for Christianity. There is a sense of profound disillusionment and disappointment, a conviction that much of Christianity has abandoned God, especially at the hands of church academics more profoundly interested in

⁴ This form of ecumenism strives for consensus, unlike the twentieth-century ecumenical movement, which the school of recovery considers marked by compromise.

⁵ Barbara Pell, "Truth and Fiction in the Present Age", 53-71, in Craig M. Gay and C. Peter Molloy, eds., *The Way of Truth in the Present Age*, Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1999, 64.

⁶ Craig Gay, "Being True in the Present Age", 73-89, *The Way of Truth in the Present Age*, 78.

validation from their contemporary modern culture than in propagating the historic Christian faith. This compromise causes Jeffrey to exclaim, *"It is not to the credit of Western Christianity that we have made so many ardent and repeated accommodations to fashion, courting the gods of the marketplace, Much of what is essential to the truth of the Gospel has been sacrificed to our desire not to seem too different from our contemporaries – much more than the truth can afford"*.⁷ Ingraffia explains the root of at least one aspect of the decadence within Christianity decried by the school of recovery:

*The epistemology of both rationalism and empiricism, as in the writings of Locke and Hume, worked to undermine belief in divine revelation and miracles; consequently, both the authority and the content of the Bible were attacked ...The German higher criticism, building upon the work of English Deism, worked diligently to undermine the belief in the historical validity of the New Testament.*⁸

Another writer explains that Modernism deliberately foreswore philosophical and theological judgment for the sake of the prosperity that was to be made possible by scientific knowledge and by technological development. Reinterpretation of religious belief and psychology as projected human desire for the ideal man then fashioned religion into a tool to be manipulated by man, rather than seeking to submit to transcendent divine will.⁹

⁷ David Jeffrey, "Knowing Truth in the Present Age", 117-133, in *The Way of Truth in the Present Age*, 126-127.

⁸ Brian Ingraffia, *Postmodern Theory and Biblical Theology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 3.

⁹ Gay, 79.

Theologian Glen Nielson, gleaning from Stanly Grenz's *A Primer on Postmodernism*, characterizes modernity, with such words as "certainty, objectivity, dispassionate knowledge, and rational expertise. Nielson then broadly summarizes Modernist thought: "*The ideal was an autonomous mind, discovering knowledge and rational expertise which could then be transmitted to others, often pictured as an individual reading and working in a private study If something could not be known in this way, it did not count as certain, objective knowledge and was relegated to the much lesser status of opinion and subjective belief*".¹⁰

Modernism's move away from God's sovereignty to man with "*its grounding of causality and freedom in the unfettered rational human consciousness*"¹¹ qualifies it as the vehicle of inept, arrogant anthropocentrism. Oden, a once-avid promoter of modernist Christian thought, more specifically spells out the damning indictment:

*Modernity is epitomized by the reductive naturalism of Freud, which is no longer viable as a therapy, the historical utopianism of Marx, which is now in collapse from Vilnius to Managua; the narcissistic assertiveness of Nietzsche and the modern chauvinism of Strauss, Troeltsch and Bultmann which exalts the ethos of the late modernity itself to an undisputed norm that presumes to judge all premodern texts and ideas.*¹²

¹⁰ Glenn Nielsen, "Preaching Doctrine in a Postmodern Age", 17-29, *Concordia Journal* 27, no. 1 (January 2001): 17.

¹¹ Mary McClintock Fulkerson and Susan J. Dunlap, "Michel Foucault (1926-1984): Introduction", 116-134, in *The Postmodern God*, 117.

¹² Thomas C. Oden, "After-Modern Evangelical Spirituality - Toward a Neoclassic Critique of Criticism", 6-24, *Concordia Journal* 20, no. 1 (January 1994): 16-17.

In short, the verdict is that man's capacity to provide fulfillment and happiness through science fell short.

The end of Modernism is accepted as fact, despite apparent, enormous vestiges yet intact at most levels of society and culture. Oden declares Modernity *"characteristically embraced a secular worldview that once cast a long ideological spell – but has fallen into irreversible decline"*.¹³

Still, with the breaking of Modernism's vice-grip on the Western mind, there is a sense of true Christianity having survived a period of persecution. Joy, liberation, affirmation and freshly-fueled zeal reflect the mood of this Christian movement upon witnessing the demise of Modernism. *"Today the assumptions of Modernism, including those that have bedeviled the church in this century, are being abandoned. Christians can rejoice at the dawn of the postmodern age"*.¹⁴

At times a distinctly vindictive tone is heard in comments about the welcomed changes in recent decades. There is a sense of relief, not so triumphant as reassured as non-modernist voices of the modern age come out of the shadows to witness widespread evidence supporting their theocentric position, ridiculed under modernist tyranny.

¹³ Thomas C. Oden, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003,

¹⁴ Gene Edward, Jr. Veith, *Postmodern Times*, Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 1994, 19.

Even outside the school of recovery, Modernism's undoing is noted and celebrated. Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby, though not particularly part of the return to orthodoxy, seemingly hardly contains his in-your-face delight as he documents to what extent Freud, Durkheim and Marx missed the mark in predicting the disappearance of religion in a section entitled "*Why the Wise Men Were Wrong*":

*Freud was wrong because he failed to understand that science cannot move fast enough to fill holes in knowledge. Durkheim was wrong in assuming that, theoretically, science would be able to fill the holes. Marx was mistaken in asserting that the resolution of inequality and deprivation would result in people's no longer needing religion. The limitation of science, as well as the limitations of material well-being, mean that religion has a significant place in people's lives.*¹⁵

In a similar vein another observer, noting the acute interest in Scriptural teaching and supernatural orientation among the growing segments of Christianity in the world, remarks, "*one can only smile at Bishop Spong's book, Why Christianity Must Change or Die, which argued the church must become relevant and abandon outmoded supernatural doctrines and traditional moral positions*".¹⁶ Oden reveals a gleeful vindictiveness over the downfall of Modernism:

The turning point we celebrate today is that evangelical piety, scholarship, and institutional life have in fact outlived the dissolution of modernity... there is an emerging resolve in the

¹⁵ Reginald Bibby, *Restless Gods*, Toronto: Stoddard Publishing Co. Limited, 2002, 228-231.

¹⁶ Paul Raabe, review of *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, by Philip Jenkins, *Concordia Journal* 29, no. 2 (April 2003): 204-206.

*worldwide evangelical family to return to the familiar, classic, evangelical, spiritual disciplines: daily Scripture reading, prayer, mutual care of souls, intensive primary group accountability, and seeking faithfully to walk by grace in the way of holiness, regardless of how the envioning world interprets it.. Having been disillusioned by the illusions of modernity, evangelicals are now engaged in a low-keyed, quiet determination unpretentiously to return to the spiritual disciplines that have profoundly shaped our history and common life together.*¹⁷

This is not a call for old time religion of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century revivals in North America or the simplistic fundamentalism of the twentieth century. Those expressions of North American Christianity incite repulsion for this school of thought and are roundly denounced. One such example is *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* by Mark Noll, a litany of laments over North American evangelicalism's emptying Christianity of its depth and breadth and historical anchoring.¹⁸ Although he places himself in the camp of evangelicalism, Noll commences with the declaration, "*The problem with the Evangelical mind is there is that there is not much of one*".¹⁹ Martin Marty described the superficial approach of evangelicalism as "*largely ahistorical ...they pay little attention to the fact that there were Christians between the time of Christ and the Reformation, leaving unmet a basic need in people of faith to feel a connectedness with the past*".²⁰

¹⁷ Oden, "After-Modern Evangelical Spirituality - Toward a Neoclassic Critique of Criticism", 9.

¹⁸ "As I will try to show in the chapters that follow, the scandal of evangelical thinking in America has just as often resulted from a way of pursuing knowledge that does not accord with Christianity as it has been an "anti-intellectual" desire to play the fool for Christ." Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996, 12.

¹⁹ Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 1.

²⁰ Martin Marty quoted in Jeffrey Scheier, "From Evangelicalism to Orthodoxy", *U.S. News and World Report* (Jan. 15, 1990): 58.

Still, there is a hearkening back to what once was, the vestiges of which are splattered across Protestantism and need to be recuperated. For Oden, there is hope for those who deliberately remain under the discipline of Lutheran, Calvinist, Baptist, or Wesleyan connections of spiritual formation especially in their renewing phases, fully subject to classic Protestant teaching, admonition, and guidance.²¹ Like Noll, Oden disparages North American evangelicalism, but acknowledges a remnant of salvageable spirituality nonetheless in place therein, by no virtue of adherents of evangelicalism itself, *"but rather almost through happenstance of origins popping through coincidentally, even as they continue to sing the hymns of the Reformation tradition, share in its liturgy, and re-appropriate certain lively fragments of Classic Protestant spiritual formation"*.²²

The postmodern return to historical Christianity, then, involves the rejection of Modernism's corruption of the Faith as well as fundamentalism and traditionalism. It is not a mere return to premodern methods as if modernity never happened. Rather it is a careful rebuilding from the ashes of modernity using treasures old and new for moral and spiritual reconstruction.²³ Barbara Pell elucidates the point:

I believe we must resist the temptation to retreat from Postmodernism into a simple, nostalgic embrace of the "good old days" of so-called Truth, especially when it seem clear that the last five centuries of Western intellectual thought have been

²¹ Oden, "After-Modern Evangelical Spirituality - Toward a Neoclassic Critique of Criticism",

8.

²² Oden, 8.

²³ See Colleen Carroll, *The New Faithful: Why Young Adults Are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy*, Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002.

*marked with so much human manipulation of that Truth. What good, for example, is "the faith of our fathers" if it is defined in such a way to exclude our mothers?.*²⁴

An increasing number of recent publications from Lutheran, Anglican, and Roman Catholic authors indicate this postmodern Christian reality goes well beyond evangelical circles. In terms of sheer numbers worldwide, elements of the acclaimed orthodoxy are most evident among otherwise often dissimilar Roman Catholics and Pentecostals²⁵ in non-European areas. Still, there is no pretension that this development is a force that now dominates contemporary Christianity. Rather, there is recognition the decline of Modernism has given rise to the possibility of this movement towards more orthodox forms of Christianity, a movement that has gained more momentum more quickly than perhaps imagined by early observers and proponents.

Nowhere is the resilience of classical Christianity more applauded than in the former Soviet block where atheistic Marxism battered churches for most of the twentieth century. The Soviet Union itself, with its Russian Orthodox majority and Lutheran, Baptist and Roman Catholic minorities valiantly survived communism. For many, those churches' survival and vitality is largely attributed to the absence of modernist theology, permitting them to minister to the faithful with Christianity in its transcendent, Trinitarian, incarnational forms. That persistent Eastern confession greatly contributed to the impetus for the beginnings of the present western examination of the necessity of upholding

²⁴ Pell, in Gay, 56.

²⁵ See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, New York:

"consensual Christianity" in utter contrast with the surrounding culture.²⁶ In that light, Thomas Oden was one of the first postmodern scholars to take note of the state of Eastern Orthodoxy in the former Soviet Union as an example for the West in *Two Worlds: Notes on the Death of Modernity in America and Russia*.²⁷

For the school of Christian thought under examination, Postmodernism is acknowledged as the catalyst for the demise of Modernism. The fracas of wrestling free from modernity through Postmodernism allows Christianity to benefit from the ensuing, often confusing, flux of change in regime. Still, Postmodernism is hardly wholeheartedly welcomed as a salvific agent for Christianity.

Indeed, the warnings against postmodernist positions are scarcely omitted in the literature and the lesson of jumping from the frying pan into the fire is well-noted: "*Postmodernists reject Christianity on the same grounds that they reject Modernism, with its scientific rationalism. Both Christians and modernists believe in truth. Postmodernists do not*".²⁸ After decrying the negative impact of modernist criticism, one author furthermore clearly declares: "*Christian thought must not let postmodern theory guide its critique*."²⁹

Oxford University Press, 2002.

²⁶ The theme of decadent western spirituality opposing true eastern orthodoxy, however, is an old one, as discussed later in the context of the Slavophiles. See chapter IV.

²⁷ Oden, 10.

²⁸ Veith, 20.

²⁹ Ingraffia, 239.

These writers are aware use of the term postmodernist is burdensome for all its enormity. *"Postmodern' is one of those terms, like 'culture' and religion' that sometimes seem to have no end of uses and therefore holds out no hope for agreement on its meaning. The problem with using it, of course, is not that the term carries too little meaning but too much".*³⁰ Nielson characterizes Postmodernism with such words as contingent, participation, holistic, and community-based. His further description delineates the Christian concept of Postmodernism being considered herein:

*Instead of an optimistic certainty, Postmodernism is focused on biases, subjectivity, and community influence any interpreter brings to the act of knowing. There is no such thing as dispassionate knowledge, only meaning as it emerges from the dialog between text and interpreter. No one works as an individual, everyone is a part of an interpretive community that colors, nuances and filters everything known. Knowledge is much more than a rational, intellectual, understanding. It includes many other sources such as intuition, emotions, bodily experiences, behaviors, and transrational encounters with the supernatural. While the mind continues to play a role, merely analytical understanding is now relegated to a lesser status, while a holistic, participatory experience that rings true for the person involved is prioritized.*³¹

2. The Problem of Truth

Despite its vastness, there is a clear perception of certain prominent traits of Postmodernism that directly affect the church. The foremost and most critical point for Christianity is the postmodernist position on absolute truth. One after

³⁰ Joel Okomato, "Lutherans speaking the Gospel into Postmodern Ears", 100-107, *Concordia Journal* 27, no. 2 (April 2001): 101.

³¹ Neilsen, 17.

the other this varied group of Christian observers, each on the basis of biblical Christianity, focuses on that absence of truth as the chief and fatal flaw of postmodernist thought, rendering it inherently incapable of co-existing with Christianity. These voices express that incompatibility and even a brief survey of their appraisal promptly reveals the perceived necessity to respond to the postmodernist position on truth. A typical example of that expressed necessity is found in the introduction to a recent Anglican collection of essays on Postmodernism:

Truth with a capital "T," after all, has never been easy to affirm ... Still, the forcefulness and vehemence with which recent advocates of pluralism, multiculturalism, and other "isms" falling under the larger rubric of "Postmodernism" have attacked the notion of Truth is unsettling, even if not completely surprising. If, instead of Truth, there is finally only a cacophony of "truths" relative to the particular desires and circumstances of individuals and groups, as is being so boldly asserted these days, then what, besides simple coincidence and/or coercion, can ever be expected to bring people together?³²

Lutheran theologian Quentin Wesselsschmidt comments, *"Although some of the tenets of Postmodernism may correct some of the deficiencies existing in Modernism, other postmodern assertions offer definite threats to Christianity, especially its claims of being the only saving faith and of possessing the absolute truth of the teachings of Holy Scripture".³³* Ingraffia writes, *"Postmodernism theory has been intent on completing Nietzsche's project of vanquishing God's shadow. Not only is God seen as fiction or a projection of man, as in Modernism,*

³²

Gay, 11.

³³

Quentin Wesselsschmidt, Editorial, 94-95, *Concordia Journal* 27, no. 2 (April 2001): 94.

but the Christian God is rejected as bad fiction".³⁴ Craig Gay flatly states, "In fact, the postmodernists assert there is no such thing as truth. There are only various groups of people doing the best they can do to make sense of their own circumstances in an ultimately meaningless universe and contending against each other in a context of material scarcity".³⁵

These Christian writers and their colleagues share in the conclusion of their assessment of the present postmodern age. One after the other they describe this era as a labyrinth of moral, intellectual, and spiritual chaos, characterized by an insatiable obsession with tolerance. Philip Turner, for example, claims that postmodern culture considers tolerance to be a greater virtue than zeal for the truth: *"God forbid that anyone should formulate a reasoned argument. It might contradict or 'marginalize' the experience of others ... The truth and falsity of all claims depend upon one's 'perspective'. Everyone must be affirmed ; the views of all must be validated. We must 'share' rather than debate. We are trained to be non-judgmental".³⁶* Lutheran theologian Carl Braaten claims, *"In Postmodernism we enter the swampland of religious pluralism and epistemological relativism, whereby one set of beliefs is as true as any other, and there is no way to adjudicate the difference".³⁷* Yet another author decries the non-directional situation, *"the postmodern world is above all a credulous culture that in moral and religious matters lacks a compass, resulting in*

³⁴ Ingraffia, 2.

³⁵ Gay, 77.

³⁶ Philip Turner, in Carl Braaten and Robert Jensen, eds., *Re-evangelizing in the Postmodern World*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 2002, 63.

³⁷ Braaten, 82.

*repristinated superstition".*³⁸

For the school of recovery, the precise postmodernist predicament concerning truth is relativity, as Okomato explains:

*Even though postmodern pluralism grants Christianity the right to speak, its bias toward relativism trivializes any claims the Christian religion makes. Christianity is not rejected as false. It is affirmed as merely relatively true, true for those who believe. Where rationalism said that a belief was either true or false, Postmodernism says that a belief is true for whoever holds it and false for whoever does not... What we call truths are really nothing more than opinions, preferences, biases, or even prejudices held by either individuals or communities of like-thinking persons.*³⁹

While that relativism is seen as problematic, it does not constitute the crux of the challenge for Christianity. Were Postmodernism truly relativistic and tolerant, Christianity would merely proclaim the Truth, confident that Truth would overcome all other doctrine. The possibility of that "the truth shall prevail" scenario, however, is not permitted in the censured nature of postmodernist thought. It only seems that in Postmodernism everything is relative, nothing absolute. Roman Catholic systematician Lawrence Brennan claims that in fact, the postmodern mindset allows for little tolerance: "*the philosophy du jour, deconstructionism, attacks the very notion of a truth that is greater than our minds or is able to compel our assent*".⁴⁰ Presbyterian theologian Michael Williams describes the monopolizing import of the individual:

³⁸ Jensen in Braaten, 22.

³⁹ Okomato, 102.

⁴⁰ Lawrence Brennan, "Roman Catholics speaking the Gospel into Postmodern Ears", 116-123, *Concordia Journal* 27, no. 2 (April 2001): 119.

Something is absolute in this relativist view of the world: The Self. While Postmodernism affirms the subjectivity of all knowing and moral value, it rejects the notion that the human is subject to anything outside of itself. Postmodern relativism rejects all authorities – all authorities except the self. The apparent humility and tolerance of postmodern relativism actually hides the hidden hubris of human autonomy, for the postmodern claim is that humans themselves are determiners of truth and meaning. In a significant sense, we are the makers, the creators of reality. The very order and meaning of reality is manipulated, negotiated or even manufactured by the self. This is the heart of postmodern relativistic culture. There is no reality in itself...We generate our own experiences, clarify our own values, and construct our own narratives. In the process we make our own worlds. Each world transcends the critical analysis, judgment, and censure of others. It is good and true because it is mine. Is Christian faith possible in a society that no longer believes in truth outside of the personal or tribal truths we fashion for ourselves?⁴¹

All of these Christian observers answer that concluding question in the negative. Canadian Anglican Craig Gay, responds that by adopting a fundamentally instrumental and manipulative attitude toward truth, the present age has effectively nullified the possibility of knowing the truth of the living God. So overwhelming is the wave of inner subjectivity that effective universal revelation is rendered void. He develops the argument that postmodern culture and thought are completely dominated by self-determination to the extent that no element of Postmodernism can be seized upon to present Christianity, so radically the scriptural reality differs from that of our culture. The sole value of Postmodernism to Christianity is *"to set the Bible's teaching about truth and truthfulness off in greater relief"*.⁴² He contends, *"It should be amply clear by now that, to the extent that the Christian faith is made to appear attractive from*

⁴¹ Michael D. Williams, "Presbyterians speaking the Gospel into Postmodern Ears", 108-115, *Concordia Journal* 27, no. 2 (April 2001): 109.

⁴² Gay, 76.

*the point of view of the present age, this probably means that the faith has somehow been emptied of the possibility of any real encounter with the living God, and so has really ceased to be faith at all".*⁴³

Gay's coreligionist, David Jeffrey, concurs with him and further contends the present challenge goes well beyond any immediate problem at hand. Postmodernism, he suggests, is the latest of a long line of opposition to Christianity and provides no unique obstacle, as the Truth has forever been thwarted, to varying degrees, inside and outside the Church. The Christ encountered resistance to his declaration of being the truth, and every subsequent generation of his followers saw their repetition of his message repudiated.⁴⁴

3. A Christian Remedy

Yet, for all the emphasis on postmodernist denunciation of the exclusive truth claim of Christianity, Postmodernism is seen by many, to a greater or lesser extent, as an unwitting ally, a liberating agent, that directly targets the hegemony of Modernism's claim as the end-all and be-all of knowledge, effectively breaking its stranglehold. Despite the pitfalls then, not all of these Christians observers believe total abstinence from all things postmodern is the way to propagate the faith. For many, postmodernist insistence on pluralism has granted religion a

⁴³ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁴ Jeffrey, in Gay, 119.

forum of exposure that had been eclipsed: *"The modernist beast has been slain. The Christian faith can again be heard, for Enlightenment rationalism and naturalism no longer muzzle the Gospel. The faith has the same rights as any other ideology in the public sphere, and its claims are to be respected and tolerated"*.⁴⁵ Another writer voices hope in the new era, *"after stultifying and oppressive modernity of unfreedom and soullessness, a plea for freedom and for genuinely human meaning"*⁴⁶ is encountered in the postmodern age. Okomato expresses ambivalence between congratulations and condemnation of the postmodern mindset from the stance of classic Christianity: Postmodern thinking *"rejects modernity's view of the universe as disenchanting, mechanistic, and deterministic, and instead embraced a re-enchantment of the cosmos, mystery, and openness"*.⁴⁷ Yet a different reviewer observes, *"If reason and science have been dethroned as the only routes to truth by various epistemological tribalisms – feminism, Marxism, multiculturalism, gay and lesbian studies – that dethronement opens the way for Christian perspectives to be put forward among the many others"*.⁴⁸

Homiletician Glen Nielsen holds a similar view of the present cultural climate as conducive to the presentation of the Christian message:

⁴⁵ Williams, 109.

⁴⁶ Gay, 12.

⁴⁷ Okomato, 102.

⁴⁸ Robert Benne, review of *One Incarnate Truth: Christianity's Answer to Spiritual Chaos*, by Uwe Siemon-Netto, ed., *The Life & Mind Desk*, October 12, 2002, United Press International, 2002.

*Postmodernism has done us a favor by calling us back to a more holistic understanding of what it means to know something. Granted, it has privileged emotion and event over mind and understanding. Yet it has pushed us to reconsider just what is involved in the act of knowing, and, as a result, drives us to see who our listeners are in a different – and I contend – more Biblical light than Modernity ever allowed ... doctrinal truth involves the whole of our being as we live and move within a particular community of faith.*⁴⁹

Therein lies the window of opportunity afforded by Postmodernism. But these scholars stress that understanding the postmodernist framework is essential if the opportunity is to be seized and serve the purpose of the recovery of classical Christianity. Their understanding of postmodernist culture is related to text.

The most crucial area of postmodernist thought effecting Christianity is that of the deconstruction of language, since language is the vehicle of divine revelation in the biblical text professed to be the source of truth. Already a major battle ground in Christianity under Modernism, hermeneutics is again the theatre of conflict and central activity in the present era. Indeed, Postmodernism has largely developed out of literary criticism.

Postmodernist theory begins with the assumption that language cannot render truths about the world in an objective way. Language, by its very nature, shapes what we think. Since language is a cultural creation, meaning is

⁴⁹ Nielsen, 13.

ultimately a social construction. In Postmodernism the very meaning of words is part of a self-contained system. In fact every cultural aspect, be it clothing, furniture, governments, technologies, histories, social customs or religions, is a linguistic construct and construed as a text, inasmuch as every human creation is analogous to language. From that premise arises the discourse of "intertextuality" where cultural and intellectual life are nothing more than texts interacting with other texts, producing more texts so that humanity is "incarcerated in a 'prison of language'".⁵⁰

Postmodernism is anti-foundational, so that frameworks for knowledge, such as God, economics, and empirical observation, are cast off. Various groups have supposedly constructed "Metanarratives", large-scale theoretical interpretations posing as universals, that are seen as "totalizing discourses", associated with oppression. History, as a set of objective facts, is dissolved as well. In the words of neo-Marxist Terry Eagleton:

*Postmodernism signals the death of such "metanarratives" whose secretly terroristic function was to ground and legitimate the illusion of a "universal human history. We are now in the process of waking up from the nightmare of modernity, with its manipulative reason and fetish of totality, into the laid-back pluralism of the post-modern, that heterogeneous range of lifestyles and language games which has renounced the nostalgic urge to totalize and legitimize itself ... Science and philosophy must jettison their grandiose metaphysical claims and view themselves more modestly as just another set of narratives."*⁵¹

⁵⁰ See Veith, 51-55.

⁵¹ Terry Eagleton in Veith, 49.

Following French philosopher Jacques Derrida's theories, deconstructionists assume that societies' constructions of meaning are oppressive masks for a conspiracy of control to be uncovered. Various pointing to such mutual incompatible bases as Nietzsche's will to power, Marx's class conflict and Freud's sexual repression, or feminist themes on the oppression of women, or suppression of homosexuals, institutions are purported to be covering up something else. Language does not reveal meaning but constructs it. The task at hand then becomes to develop a "hermeneutics of suspicion" to unmask what constructed meaning the text language is hiding. The hermeneutics of suspicion perceives every text as a political tool and deconstructive critics set out to uncover the power relationships that underlie the text by taking it apart.

The postmodern Christian scholars are suspicious of this school of thought that holds no universal truth, accusing it of selfishly seeking control through yet other constructed realities. *"Instead of criticizing the manipulative attitude toward truth that lies at heart of the modern project, recent critics of Modernism have focused only upon the question of 'who has been allowed to control whom', and have – ironically – advocated an even more thoroughly instrumental understanding of truth as the solution to modern problems".*⁵² The attack on text, for its lack of ultimate meaning beyond the construct, is of utmost concern for those who uphold classical Christianity: *"there is no 'transcendental logos', no*

objective meaning, no realm of absolute truth that exists beyond the bounds of our human language".⁵³

Still, the primary tool provided by Postmodernism to the postmodern Christian scholars is precisely that of criticism. Thus Oden seemingly defiantly claims,

*... no longer intimidated by the assertive, absolute relativism of mod rot ... many in postmodern spirituality have doubly paid their dues to modernity and now search for forgotten wisdoms long ruled out by the narrowly fixated dogmas of enlightenment empiricism and idealism. There is, in postmodern evangelical consciousness, a growing critique of criticism, a pervasive discontent with underlying aspects of failed reductionist enlightenment methods, especially with their moral wreckage and cultural impoverishment. Included in this critique of criticism is a growing recognition that many survivable ideas once assumed to be modern are actually postmodern in origin, or in unconscious grounded in ancient wisdoms.*⁵⁴

Oden then goes on to list Christian scholars who critique modernist interpretations of the sociology of knowledge, psychoanalysis, and especially hermeneutical criticism, breaking with modern establishment and venturing into a more complete evaluation of their respective fields than modernist dogmatism permitted.⁵⁵ The list of those rethinking hermeneutical criticism is particularly long.

⁵³ Veith, 53.

⁵⁴ Oden, "After-Modern Evangelical Spirituality - Toward a Neoclassic Critique of Criticism,"

8.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 10-11.

Ingraffia argues a Christian critical theory must not only confront the hermeneutics of suspicion articulated by "masters of suspicions", it must also turn its own hermeneutics of suspicion upon these "masters". There must be a turning point from deconstruction to reinterpretation that is grounded in the Word of God as truth. *"There is again a destruction, but a destruction of what destroys, a deconstruction of the assurances of modern man.'* In order to turn to the positive task of hermeneutics of faith, the hermeneutics of suspicion must be directed not only against Christian, but also against the modern and postmodern masters of suspicion".⁵⁶ It is this thinking that leads to the school of recovery's declaration that orthodoxy is more intellectually free than are Modernist versions of Christianity.

Representative examples of the school of recovery's use of postmodernist tools as taking advantage of the perceived window of opportunity are provided by two Canadian Anglican scholars. The first, Loren Wilkinson, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and Philosophy at Regent College, sees openness to the divine in the truth of a created order in science, art, in human biological life which *"pull us wordlessly to where the word is made flesh, to the one who said, 'I am the way and the Truth and the Life' ... to point others to the place where that Truth has spoken decisively in Jesus"*.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ingraffia, 239.

⁵⁷ See Loren Wilkinson, "The Truth of Creation in the Present Age," 91-116, in *The Way of Truth in the Present Age*, 1999.

Wilkinson holds that Modernism had squelched the concept of creation, thus denying the Creator. He explains that Postmodernism allows for the distinct probability that the premise of science must extend beyond the observable to include "hidden reality", capable of yielding more truth. In the realm of art, he maintains that Postmodernism admits nature and natural form, whereas Modernism was anti-creational, making the individual artist the creator of his own world. The environmental movement encouraged by Postmodernist rejects Modernist resource exploitation and insists on the cosmic relationships that tie all existence together. In all three areas, the author perceives a drastic change from Modernism with Postmodernism as paving the way to an openness to the Creator and his ways, the very teaching of Christianity.

The second example is Barbara Pell, Professor of English Literature at Trinity Western University. She proposes that although Postmodernism's stance of pluralistic truth is a "philosophical and theological cul-de-sac", postmodernist literary criticism nonetheless provides Christians with a powerful critique of modern secular humanism and important clues as to how Christian truth should be represented in modern culture.⁵⁸

Pell charges Modernism with privileging androcentric and Eurocentric power while marginalizing all others. Postmodernism interrogates "universalized",

⁵⁸

See Pell.

“essentialized” and “naturalized” systems about reality, self, and truth. It thereby can accomplish its objectives of baring centuries of metanarratives that *“masqueraded as Divine Truth, but were really only propaganda for legitimizing exclusive hegemonies and exploitive tyrannies (usually white, Western, male and capitalistic)”*.⁵⁹

Christianity should welcome Postmodernism’s insistence of the removal of any false veneers layered on metanarratives to which the religion may have become accustomed. It parts ways with Postmodernism, however, in maintaining the biblical text as the supreme metanarrative. The biblical text must stand on its own as the end authority rather than be exploited as a means to *“exclude, oppress and silence other groups under the rubrics of orthodoxy”*.⁶⁰

Mark Noll accordingly contends the Christianity of evangelicalism must itself take its cue from Postmodernism’s breadth and anchor itself in the transcendent. It is the holistic life and works of Jesus Christ, God the Son, that are seen as the ultimate goal for this movement. Thus Noll urgently pleads for evangelicals to return to “authentic” Christianity:

Ultimately, however the greatest hope for evangelicals’ thought lies with the heart of the evangelical message concerning the cross of Christ. If evangelicals have systematically disregarded the implications of the work of Christ for the life of the mind, they nonetheless continue to talk about Jesus. In that talk is potential

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Ibid.

60

Ibid.

*beyond estimation. The great truth of the incarnation ... The questions with greatest intellectual moment for us are those with greatest moment – period. Does the cross show forth the death of an incarnate savior? Was the Son of God truly born of a virgin, truly incarnate in human nature? Did Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, really live on this earth? Did Jesus die a real death? Did he really rise bodily from the grave? And does the Holy Spirit really extend to repentant sinners the benefits of the incarnate Christ in this life?*⁶¹

The salvation of the Christian faith, then, forever remains the proclamation of the whole gospel of God. The message must always be the same as it should have always been. That line of thought, grounded in the incarnation and addressing the wholeness of humanity motivates Turner to propose a variation on the theme as another cure: *"we need to re-unite those two long-lost siblings – theology and ethics – in a common witness to something quite contrary to Postmodernism, namely, truth".*⁶²

No matter what the observation, appraisal, evaluation, or appreciation presented by these Christian voices, the solution to the postmodern relativization of truth, yielding *"barren and self-destructive incredulity",*⁶³ is unwavering. Knowing the Truth, believing in the Triune God, that is the answer to the ultimate question:

To what, if not justice, is one supposed to appeal in the event of having been wronged? And for what, beyond the satisfaction and legitimization of one's own desires, is one to seek in attempting to live an examined life And, most importantly, how can today's resolute denial of the possibility

⁶¹ Noll, 252-253.

⁶² Turner, in Braaten, 76.

⁶³ Gay, 12.

of Truth ever be squared with the call to believe on the One who says 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life'?⁶⁴

Rather than confusion and disagreement, the broad range of remedial proposals and action indicate the extent of the repair needed, not disorder. For all, the bottom line is the same, *"the only way to really know the truth is through obedience to God"*.⁶⁵

There is a generalized self-assuredness in the boldness. Thus Barbara Pell writes concerning this postmodern Christian voice in the postmodernist culture, *"If Christ is the answer, we don't need to be afraid of the questions ... Let us now go beyond Postmodernism to uphold the scriptural principles of Truth, Justice and Mercy – in order to witness to our fallen world"*.⁶⁶

The solutions offered for the return to authentic, consensual, classical Christianity, however phrased, arrive at the same proposed curative source: The Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit "very God of very God" in Nicene terms. One essay treating the postmodernist challenge to

⁶⁴

Ibid., 11.

⁶⁵

Jeffrey, 13.

⁶⁶

Pell, in Gay, 68, 70.

Christianity and offering a solution to it is simply and tellingly entitled: "*The Trinitarian Remedy*".⁶⁷

4. Remedy Applied

Such a newly conducive climate complete with tools and pertinent insights does not automatically place Christianity in a prominent place on the postmodern scene. For that, proactive steps are in order. If ever Christianity is to be viable in the postmodern age, one necessity is that the whole church itself must first recognize that Truth. Jeffrey states unequivocally that classic Christianity has anything but lost its power. But to counter the falsehood of postmodern subjectivity's dogmatism, the church itself must cease to abdicate its rightful position and instead again humbly take its place as the bold teacher of Truth. He presents three provisos necessary for knowing truth, time-tested and the mark of Christianity's integrity, resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity: "*Each is biblical. First: the recognition of truth depends in part upon the authenticity of one's intention to find truth: Second, would-be discerners of truth must anticipate that now, as ever, truth will tend to be at odds with fashion; third coming to know the truth when we mean to depends in large measure upon our already knowing that One who is Truth*".⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Uwe Siemon-Netto, "The Trinitarian Remedy," 153-158, in Uwe Siemon-Netto, ed., *One Incarnate Truth: Christianity's Answer to Spiritual Chaos*, Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 2002.

⁶⁸ Jeffrey, in Gay, 118.

Applying the school of recovery's observations, Christianity, while using tools from its surrounding culture, must unapologetically and boldly present the faith on its own terms with aim to convert. Evangelism, then, cannot deny the exclusivity of salvation through Christ without contradicting the acts of the apostles. Robert Jensen declares evangelism efforts cannot bow and scrape to the current culture.⁶⁹ R. R. Reno concurs, "*The gospel of redemption will be an offense, no matter how carefully modulated ... therefore, evangelism has no reason to hide the hard demands of the gospel*".⁷⁰ Uncompromised, not softened, is the required stance to let the Gospel speak for itself. In a very nonpostmodernist vein, Philip Turner believes evangelization involves more a confrontation between contending forces than it does a "*conversation between people who basically agree but must clear up a few disagreements*".⁷¹

In addition to evangelism, legion are the avenues that lead to disseminating the way to Truth. Education in various forms is one of those key ways. The Prayer Book Society in Canada, for instance, seeks to promote "*the classic Anglican way (sound, historic, biblical, Trinitarian, and incarnational faith in the public worship of the Church and the private devotion of her members.) – and the historic faith it expounds*" which have "*have fallen into disuse, even contempt*".⁷² It strives to mount a significant educational effort in order to re-

⁶⁹ Jensen, in Braaten, 29.

⁷⁰ Reno, in Braaten, 70.

⁷¹ Turner, in Braaten, 74.

⁷² Graham Eglington, in Gay, 9.

awaken contemporary Christians and non-Christians alike to their loss, their need, and the means to remedy both.

Noll, too, holds education is a crucial medium of restoring the Christian faith, especially through existing Christian institutions of higher learning that retain significant remnants of orthodoxy, to serve as foundations upon which to rebuild. Oden believes one necessary aspect of education is the rediscovery of classic Christianity in the long-neglected patristic pastoral tradition ... especially the Eastern church fathers of the earliest Christian centuries.⁷³

Further focusing the perceived essential educational enterprise is the call to cultivate "confessional Christianity" based on the Trinitarian, incarnational Christian doctrine found in the Bible. Christians, if they are to be an alternative to postmodern relativism, need to confess their faith, in word and deed. This means knowing the faith as a core of Biblical truth that *"will stand as a blazing witness to the relativistic culture. Biblical churches with doctrinal integrity will have a stronger witness than muddled, eager-to-please-everyone congregations that do not stand for anything in particular"*.⁷⁴

Many of these Christian thinkers believe that knowing the faith is not sufficient. Familiarity with the postmodernist world mindset and ability to use its

⁷³ Oden, "After-Modern Evangelical Spirituality - Toward a Neoclassic Critique of Criticism",
^{23.}
⁷⁴ Veith, 220.

vocabulary are essential as well in order to communicate the faith. Being familiar enough with postmodernist thought to glean the good is a laudable goal:

Confessional Christians can also appropriate the insights of postmodern scholarship by taking seriously and emphasizing the epistemological implications of the Fall. Human reason is inadequate as the postmodernists say; but Christians base their beliefs not on reason but revelation. We are wholly dependent upon language, as the postmodernists say, but Christians base their faith on God's language, that is the Bible as the Word of God. Postmodernists say that meaning can only be determined from within an "interpretive community." For Christians, the church is their interpretive community.⁷⁵

Furthering the educational enterprise, Nielsen contends preaching that reflects the postmodernist culture must be central to the church in the postmodern age. Since Christian doctrine was never intended as a purely rational intellectual belief system, but one which addresses the totality of the human body, soul and mind, it fits particularly well with the holistic worldview he observes in postmodern experience. The incarnate God-man Jesus is the ultimate coming together of all things in heaven and earth. Individually applied miracles of healing exorcism and resurrection point to communal well-being in universal, cosmic salvific redemption. The Christ is the sublime marriage of other-worldliness and earthly concerns, the creator of the whole person and all things seen and unseen, encompassing all possible experience. No longer boxed in modernity's narrow, stifling insistence on scientific, empirical knowledge, Nielsen is confident the power of the preached Gospel can penetrate the

⁷⁵ Ibid., 221-222

seeming quagmire of postmodern perception, pierce the confusion of multitudinal interpretations and persuade of its uniqueness and exclusivity; all that in an epistemological system where there are no absolutes. Postmodernism *"drives us to reconsider just what is involved in the act of knowing, drives us to see who our listeners are in a different – and I contend - more Biblical light than Modernity ever allowed ... doctrinal truth involves the whole of our being as we live and move within a particular community of faith"*.⁷⁶

The form and content of worship are proposed by others as areas of critical importance in putting forth divine truth in a world of diluted Christianity. Liturgist Frank Senn explains that stance:

*Today the focus of worship has shifted from God to humanity. J.S. Bach's motto soli Deo gloria has surrendered to the principle that everything done in worship must edify the congregation...There was a time when the concern was not so much the impact of liturgical orders and practices on the worshiper as the truth-value of those forms in the service of the true God ... But today the purposes of this is less to glorify God than to have an impact on the worshiper. Rather than fret about the impact the liturgy has on today's worshipers, we should concern ourselves with what kind of god they are encountering in their worship. We should not be deconstructing the liturgical orders to accommodate the cultural expressions of the secular worldview ; rather, through ritual engagement we should be deconstructing the secular worldview within the seeker who must turn from idols to serve the living and true God.*⁷⁷

Some writers hold that the rationale for right worship is that belief is not

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Nielsen, 19.

⁷⁷

Frank Senn, in Braaten, 153-159.

required as the first step to public worship, but performing the liturgical rite is the first step to belief. Similar to that thought is a comment from the national director for the Prayer Book Society of Canada: "*the classic Anglican way of Common Prayer is a sure foundation for such faith and worship*".⁷⁸

The culmination of the liturgy, Holy Communion, is seen as the vehicle which nurtures a movement from fragmentation to integration: Roman Catholic theologian Robert Imbelli offers this solution in an article entitled, "*The Eucharist vs. Postmodern Chaos*": "*The broken bread becomes the salvific means for the gathering in of the many, the blood outpoured achieves the being "one" of the world. What is de-centered finds its center in the Eucharist. Those who despair can find here God's meaning and purpose*".⁷⁹

Including liturgical text, but going beyond, Anthony Ugolok urges the seminaries of the church to become more involved in the arts because it is one of the few ways remaining by which Christianity can communicate with postmodern society⁸⁰. Another writer suggests, "*as apologetics was well-suited to an age of reason, the arts will be well-suited to communicate the faith in this Therian Age when spiritual things and imagination are highly prized*".⁸¹ While much of film,

⁷⁸ Graham Eglington, in Gay, 11.

⁷⁹ Robert P. Imbelli, "The Eucharist vs. Postmodern Chaos," 115-118, in Uwe Siemon-Netto, ed., *One Incarnate Truth: Christianity's Answer to Spiritual Chaos*, Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 2002, 117.

⁸⁰ Anthony Ugolok in Braaten, 113.

⁸¹ Frederic W. Baue, *The Spiritual Society: What Lurks Beyond PostModernism?*, Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2001, 176. The author coins the phrase "Therian Age" from the Greek word for the beast in Revelation 13:1-10 to describe a culture that is religious and spiritual but hostile to Christianity.

television, art, and literature is considered glaring testimony to the loss of both absolutes and humanness, some art, architecture and literature is recognized by these Christians as offering models for how tradition can be brought back into the contemporary world.⁸²

As part of the Christian artistic expression, music also figures prominently in the formula for right presentation of the truth. Accordingly, the church must continue to use that medium as a pedagogical beacon. Not only the liturgy proper, but also hymnody, then plays a crucial role for "*the average Christian will learn more from hymns than from any systematic theology*".⁸³ As with worship in general, the desired emphasis is on the glorification of God by biblical definition, rather than what may or may not be easy listening for those who will hear. After denouncing romantic and Gnostic tendencies in nineteenth and twentieth-century North American Christian hymns, Dr. Michael Horton, chairman of the Council of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, expresses the necessity of christocentric, incarnational hymnody:

*The mystic's love for Jesus is romantic; the orthodox believer's love for Jesus is filial and is always linked to his saving work ... We do not love Jesus "just for who you are," (a typical line from the hymns he deplores) for apart from his saving acts we do not have any reason to love him any more than we love any other historical figure ... May God grant us a new generation of Bachs, Handels, Newtons and Topladys who can tune their harps to sing God's praises in a way that sacrifices neither truth nor love.*⁸⁴

⁸² See Veith, section three.

⁸³ Michael Horton, "Are your hymns too spiritual?", www.modernreformation.org/mr95/julaug/mr9504hymns.html.

⁸⁴ Horton.

Above and beyond recommended applications are the second-generation outcomes of what the postmodern Christian thinkers foresaw more than a decade ago. There has been an evolution from the predictive and descriptive to the prescriptive. At the parish level, workshops⁸⁵, Bible studies⁸⁶ and conferences⁸⁷ are organized to explain, equip and promote the movement toward classical Christianity. Books with the same goal are appearing on major bookstore shelves. One, by Roman Catholic journalist Colleen Carroll, (*The New Faithful: Why Young Adults Are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy*, Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002.) not only describes the movement, but ventures to say it might transform an American society steeped in moral relativism and secularism, while encouraging that possibility. Another, by Philip Jenkins, (*The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), approvingly demonstrates the present growth of the church on the global level is among those groups adhering to transcendent, Biblical Christianity, unlike modernist mainline churches that, "focused on a rational understanding of faith", leaving them "very anemic spiritually".⁸⁸ Lutheran lay theologian Uwe Siemon-Netto has edited a collection of essays by Roman Catholic and Protestant writers aimed at challenging postmodernist relativism (*One Incarnate Truth: Christianity's*

⁸⁵ For example, The Lutheran Church – Canada, East District, invited its constituency to participate in a workshop on the topic, "How to Reach Out in an Age of Truth Decay", E-mail from K. Hahn, The Lutheran Church – Canada, East District office, Monday, January 13, 2003 4:29 PM.

⁸⁶ For example, Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri advertised a study series for parish use announcing: "Explore Postmodern Issues with *Faith on the Edge*", *Concordia Journal* 28, no. 3 (July 2002): back cover.

⁸⁷ See Gay, 9.

⁸⁸ University of Toronto Wycliffe College Professor David Reed, quoted in Michael Valpy, "It isn't rock' n' roll but they sure like it", *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), December 26, 2001, A3.

Answer to Spiritual Chaos, Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 2002).

Yet another book, by Thomas Oden, among those who first noted the development of the return to early Christianity (*The Rebirth of Orthodoxy: Signs of New Life in Christianity*, New York: HarperCollins, 2003) catalogues the crescendo of the return, while extending the invitation to confess "classic Christianity". He also heads an ecumenical team of scholars working on a 28-volume commentary called *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. In addition, Oden leads the Association for Church Renewal, which coordinates the work of renewal movements within the mainline churches (Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran, United Church of Canada).

The mere magnitude of avenues of access to the subject of more orthodox Christianity attests to its dynamism. Predictably, the internet serves as an active forum for the cause, including websites particularly designed for reaching out to the postmodern "unchurched"⁸⁹ ecumenical online journals⁹⁰ and sites put up by groups and individuals seeking to "reclaim" their own mainline denominations. Oden's 2003 book on the return to orthodoxy lists pages of concerned church members' websites with that goal in mind. In addition, conferences, seminars,

⁸⁹ See, for example, <http://www.eauk.org/contentmanager/content/face-values/fv/html/homepage.htm>.

⁹⁰ See, for example, <http://www.touchstonemag.com/>.

parish-level Bible studies, books, magazines and videos with the agenda of promoting classic Christianity are not lacking.

These incidences of a return to orthodoxy are for the most part not a concerted effort but rather are spontaneous and simultaneous developments issuing from a common set of circumstances as Modernity wanes and Postmodernity, with its plethora of pluralistic possibilities, opens the way for freer spiritual expression. The unorchestrated nature of this global groundswell in more orthodox Christianity is itself seen as validation of the innate vitality of classical Christianity in contrast with modernist and postmodernist interpretations.⁹¹ UPI religion editor Uwe Siemon-Netto describes the widespread phenomenon in that vein:

All this was done "for me," Luther never ceased to point out. It was not done for the postmodern new trinity called, "me, myself and I," as theologian and psychologist Christopher Hershman keeps mocking contemporary hubris. No, it was done "for me" in the sense of one who is in need of salvation ... Consider who it is that attracts young seekers by the millions ... the ones drawing the largest crowds of young seekers are two octogenarians shaking with Parkinson's: Pope John Paul II and Billy Graham, The Sponges of this world do not have a clue as to how demodé they really are. After the calamitous collapse of modern materialism and in anticipation of the traceless disappearance of postmodernity's profusion of "truths," the young seek integrity, which explains the old pope's popularity, according to the Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, president of the Institute on Religion and Public Life in New York. This is a global phenomenon. In Europe, new studies show a return to religion is underway, especially in urban centers. "But none other than the living witness of believers impresses young seekers," says

⁹¹ Such tendencies are not unique to Christianity. Many observers note a rise in traditionalist or orthodox movements worldwide in all major religions. See, Bibby, 1-2.

*the Rev. Johannes Richter, former regional bishop of Leipzig in the former East Germany.*⁹²

Canadians have not been exempt from this movement. An illustration of that point is the 1998 Anglican gathering to address the need for church-wide return to the "classical Anglican way" in the face of postmodernist culture, publishing the collected conference lectures in, *The Way of Truth in the Present Age* (Craig M. Gay and C. Peter Molloy, eds., Regent College Publishing, 1999).⁹³ Yet another Anglican leader, George Egerton, calls upon church members to "*be true to the Lord of the church in reaffirming the essentials of a scripturally revealed faith that transcends time and culture... the greatest promise of regaining cultural relevance in a 'postmodern' world.*"⁹⁴

The Fall 2000 Lutheran Church – Canada – East District pastoral conference guest lecturers were confessionalists speaking on the centrality of sacramental liturgy in the postmodern age.⁹⁵ Members of The United Church of Canada (UCC), a body often characterized by its lack of doctrinal vigor, sponsor several websites offering remedies for the repair of modernist influences in the UCC in the postmodern context. One site, for example, offers such articles as "*Can A Recovery of the Doctrine of the Trinity Assist the Restoration of The*

⁹² Uwe Simon-Netto, "Challenges in the New Church Year", *the Life & Mind Desk*, November 14, 2002, United Press International, 2002.

⁹³ The papers were presented at the Western Theological Conference held in Vancouver, B. C., February, 1998, see Gay, 9.

⁹⁴ Egerton quoted in Bibby, 3.

⁹⁵ "District Events", *East District News*, Lutheran Church- Canada, East District, September, 2000.

United Church of Canada?"⁹⁶ A once-liberal Lutheran Canadian chronicles his change to this classical Christianity in an article entitled: "*My Journey to Orthodoxy – The Confession of a (Now) Confessional Lutheran*".⁹⁷ Perhaps the best-known Roman Catholic voice in the call to orthodoxy in North America is the former-Lutheran and Canadian Richard Neuhaus.

In addition to these specific examples is the perpetual cross-pollination from the United States that characterizes Canadian churches in the form of guest speakers, publications, theological training, personnel, workshops, courses, audio-visual materials and denominational structures. Moreover, unrecorded in any systematic way are the many individuals, often clergy, who seek out affiliation with churches that uphold classical Christianity.

5. Conclusion

The reality of Christianity in the world is being altered as Modernity gives way to Postmodernity. That this change translate into a significant and sustained return to Christian Orthodoxy remains to be seen. Meanwhile, the

⁹⁶ See, for example, www.victorshepherd.on.ca/UCC.

⁹⁷ Charles St-Onge, "My Journey to Orthodoxy - The Confession of a (Now) Confessional Lutheran", *The Cornerstone*, October, 2000, Fort Wayne, Indiana: The Student Association of Concordia Theological Seminary, 4-6.

scholars and writers of the school of recovery who have observed the shift are acting upon their perception of it, themselves becoming a catalyst of the transformation they hold to be possible. In Canada, then, the extent of any future movement toward orthodoxy is also unknown, but certainly has been facilitated with this window of opportunity in these postmodern times. Also unknown is the extent of future movement specifically to Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada. That latter prospect, alongside continued internal Eastern Orthodox growth, is examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FACTORS EFFECTING EASTERN ORTHODOX EXPANSION IN CANADA

This chapter demonstrates how Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is uniquely poised to go through that window of opportunity described in chapter three to allow for the expansion of Christianity in Canadian society, and that, in ways other Canadian denominations cannot. First, Eastern Orthodoxy is compared to the criteria considered necessary by the school of recovery for the communication of Christianity in the postmodern age. Next, Eastern Orthodoxy is examined in its Canadian context. Elements inside and outside Eastern Orthodoxy are discussed in view of their positive or negative impact on the possibilities for expansion.

1. The Match between Eastern Orthodoxy and the School of Recovery

Not only have the elements deemed necessary for recovery always largely been in place in Eastern Orthodoxy, they are now propitiously enveloped in a uniquely Canadian context. Eastern Orthodoxy matches well with the grid proposed by those Christian authors who see a particularly opportune moment for the expansion of Christianity in the postmodern world of North America. The factors of a doctrine of absolute Truth, an authoritative fixed text, historical anchoring, freedom from rationalistic modern theological corruption and a perception of unified tradition-

wide profession of faith, are integral, generalized elements in that eastern tradition. Flowing from that foundation are areas identified by those North American observers as necessary vehicles of that Truth. Among them are liturgy, the arts, education, homiletics, and continuity. Above and beyond that solid framework, there are forces at work in Canada that give Eastern Orthodoxy an edge over other Christian traditions. These include age, numbers, and the novelty of a somewhat exotic aspect of otherwise familiar Christianity. All this could allow Eastern Orthodoxy to expand, through retention of its increasing number of faithful (from biological growth and Orthodox immigration) as well as by attracting converts from the non-Orthodox Canadian population. As seen below, Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada finds itself in a particularly favorable position among Christian churches at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

On the primordial point of Truth, scarcely, if ever, is a united voice heard in any Western Christian tradition. Indeed, as seen in chapter three, it is often from within the churches themselves that the nature of Truth is contested. By stark contrast, a common Eastern Orthodox front declares itself the exclusive guardian of Truth, expressed in typical fashion by Boulgakov:

En premier lieu, elle a conscience d'être l'Église véritable, possédant la plénitude et la pureté de la vie ecclésiale dans l'Esprit Saint. Elle va donc considérer toutes les autres confessions comme détachées, directement ou indirectement, de l'unité ecclésiale. Elle ne peut aspirer qu'à une chose : à rendre orthodoxe la chrétienté entière, de telle sorte que toutes les confessions se rejoignent dans le cours de l'Orthodoxie universelle. Il y va de la logique des choses, car la vérité est une et l'on ne saurait la mesurer l'aune de semi-vérités Or la vérité est inamissable et inflexible, elle ne souffre aucun compromis.¹

¹ Serge Boulgakov, *L'Orthodoxie*, Lausanne: Éditions de l'âge de l'homme, 1980, 212-213.

Closely related to the issue of Truth is fidelity to historically-rooted Christianity, identified as another criterion for the recovery of the Christian faith. Eastern Orthodoxy is acknowledged to be a contemporary faithful witness to the texts of primitive Christianity. Already noted is theologian Alfeyev's claim to speak for all Orthodoxy when stating, "*The great criterion of rigor in theology, according to the Orthodox conception, is the consensus patrum, 'the agreement of the Fathers', concerning the fundamental questions of doctrine.*"²

The exclusiveness of the truth claim and fidelity to it give rise to a sense of integrity and continuity in Eastern Orthodoxy:

*The church is Orthodox, embodies and proclaims the orthe doxe, that is, the right faith in Christ. What Christ taught and his disciples interpreted is still so taught and so interpreted. There is harmony in all essentials between the present Church and the original Church, a harmony that secures tranquility and internal balance, thereby preserving the faith from extremes. The regulator of this harmony and continuity is the Holy Spirit, who abides with the church and guides the Church to all the truth necessary to salvation.*³

Meyendorff makes the point that the theology of early Christianity persists in contemporary Eastern Orthodoxy throughout his writings.⁴ Methodist theology professor Thomas Oden, underscores the widespread perpetuation of this historical anchoring by Eastern Orthodox theologians: "*Georges Florovsky, Alexander Min, Alexander Schmemmann, Vladimir Lossky, John Meyendorff, Thomas Hopko, John D. Zizioulas, Kallistos Ware, and Stanley Harakas...all have survived the death of*

² Hilarion Alfeyev, *Le mystère de la foi*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2001, 13.

³ Demetrios Constantelos, *Understanding the Greek Orthodox Faith*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1982, 58.

⁴ See John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, New York: Fordham University Press, 1974.

modernity ever more deeply committed to the renewal of time-tested evangelical spiritual disciplines."⁵

In the recovery school, time and time again the severing of true Christianity from its foundations through exposure to modernism is denounced, and the call to repair the corrosive damage is repeatedly sounded. Here too is to be found a saving grace in Eastern Orthodoxy. The Eastern tradition has remained largely free of the liberal theology of modernism and rationalism, thereby being spared the kind of dilution and compromise denounced by these western authors. Eastern Orthodoxy needs little corrective on that account, and has always insisted on its fidelity to the continuity of primitive Christian teaching without human intervention or alteration.

Often isolated by politics, language and culture, the irony of the battered and persecuted Eastern church is that it has emerged relatively unscathed with theological richness intact, enviably eyed by the West and proudly valued by Eastern Orthodoxy. Even in North America that tradition has remained protected, relying on ecclesiastical and theological nourishment from European sources:

*The history of the Orthodox in North America during the last 70 years may be written without significant reference to any of the major trends in modern American religion: progressivism, the Social Gospel, neo-Orthodoxy, pentecostalism, revivalism, evangelicalism, or the charismatic movement.*⁶

⁵ Thomas C. Oden, "After-Modern Evangelical Spirituality - Toward a Neoclassic Critique of Criticism", 6-24, *Concordia Journal* 20, no. 1 (January 1994): 9.

⁶ Stokoe, Mark, and Leonid Kishkovsky, *Orthodox Christians in North America, 1794-1994*, New York: Orthodox Christian Publications Center, 1995, 1.

There is clearly a sense of Orthodoxy as the "faithful remnant", expressed both within Orthodoxy as well outside the tradition. Moreover, that integrity is seen not just as a positive passive trait of Orthodoxy, but also as an active source of potential renewal, restoration, and rejuvenation for the West. Eastern Orthodox theologians often refer to the process of the non-Orthodox return to authentic sources as "Orthodoxization". Throughout the twentieth century Eastern Orthodox voices such as Florovsky's have argued for "retraditioning" to redress the fragmentation of global Christendom, lead by Orthodoxy. That call received most hearing at the forum of the World Council of Churches.⁷

For Orthodoxy, largely bypassed by the western historical developments of the Enlightenment and Rationalism, the question is if it can now come out of the shadows in the West, opening its theological treasures to dazzle postmodern North America and even persuade it to appropriate its riches. Mark Noll aligns himself with Eastern Orthodoxy priest Malik's admonition of American Evangelicals to return to the path of a historically-grounded Christian faith such as found in Eastern Orthodoxy.⁸

Full-well recognizing the opportunity at hand as early as the nineteen seventies, Orthodox theologian J. Meyendorff stated,

Orthodoxy could assume a crucial responsibility in reshaping Western Christianity at a moment when the secular activism of the

⁷ Kenneth and Helen Ballhatchet, "Asia", 488-549, in John McManners, *The Oxford History of Christianity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 549.

⁸ Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992, 25-27.

*sixties is subsiding and when people are more ready than ever to understand the language of prayer, of contemplation, of experience and may thus become concerned again with the truth for its own sake.*⁹

Alfeyev also declares the abiding relevancy of Eastern Orthodoxy for the contemporary world :

*La dogmatique orthodoxe ne se présente pas comme un monument de l'antiquité chrétienne: elle exige une réception vivante et un commentaire actualisé, qui intégrerait l'expérience de l'homme du XXe siècle ... fondée sur l'expérience spirituelle, étrangère au rationalisme et à la scholastique, la théologie orthodoxe reste de nos jours tout autant vivante et active qu'aux siècles précédents. Les mêmes questions de jadis se posent toujours à l'homme.*¹⁰

In the area of the arts, Eastern Orthodoxy is again in a particularly beneficial position. Its incarnational emphasis has always encouraged a pronounced sensual aspect in its spirituality that involves sight (iconography, vestments), sound (readings, music, sermon), touch (chrismation, Baptism, the Eucharist, signing, prostration, bowing) and smell (candles and incense), meant to reflect heavenly reality on earth to the faithful and the infidel. Beyond ecclesiastical boundaries have spread its music, and most notably in recent years, its art-form *par excellence*, iconography, as discussed below.

The restoration of meaningful, rich worship form and content is clearly identified by the western call as another necessary element for a return to well-grounded faith. Again, Eastern Orthodoxy meets the standard in its liturgical

⁹ John Meyendorff, *Living Tradition: Orthodox Witness in the Contemporary World*, Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978, 161.

¹⁰ Alfeyev, *Le mystère de la foi*, 13.

expression , epitomized in the eucharistic liturgy. With one masterful stroke, that liturgy, considered of divine inspiration,¹¹ brings together Truth, historical continuity, doctrinal pedagogy, art, worship and prayer.

Boulgakov declares tendencies to return to ancient church worship tradition that predates the “deviations” of the papistic system as living proof of the drawing power of the truth of Orthodoxy towards the universal church. He cites the Benedictine-led liturgical renewal within Roman Catholicism, the Hochkirchliche Bewegung movement within Europe’s Reformation-based churches, and most clearly, the anglo-catholic wing of Anglicanism as evidence of the wider church beckoning the call of the Truth of Orthodoxy.¹² At the time of his writing in the 1970’s, those churchly elements had not even yet been joined by the emergence two decades later of an ongoing North American movement from evangelicalism to more orthodox practice and teaching, including some group conversions to Eastern Orthodoxy. Noting the continuing trend, one article from 1990 remarks: *“While no one expects ritualism to replace evangelical traditions, there is clear recognition that the pendulum has begun to swing in that direction.”*¹³

Of all the areas considered viable entry points to challenge and transform the postmodern reality, there is, however, one that that does not rise to the occasion, at least not as usually practiced. It is that of preaching. Waddams explains that in some Orthodox churches, some parish priests are often actually forbidden to preach

¹¹ Boulgakov, 145.

¹² Ibid., 212-213.

¹³ Jeffrey Scheier, “From Evangelicalism to Orthodoxy”, *U.S. News and World Report* (Jan. 15, 1990): 58.

for lack of theological preparation.¹⁴ In Canada, when sermons are preached, they are usually in a language other than English or French (excepting the small OCA – Diocese of Canada).¹⁵

But even this weakness is not an insurmountable problem. If Canadian Orthodoxy is the least sensitive to its religious surroundings, it may well delve into its own rich homiletic heritage, with such shining examples as Saint John Chrysostom, called “golden mouth” for his pulpit skill. On this account the Orthodox could follow suite of some Protestants who are reclaiming the profound preaching treasures of the Reformation era to communicate the essence of Christianity and release its guiding power to confused postmodern culture.

Overall, Eastern Orthodoxy does indeed fare well in corresponding to the elements deemed necessary by the school of recovery for the restoration of authentic Christianity. Certainly, it does more than any other single Christian tradition in Canada today. There is even more reason to believe that Eastern Orthodoxy is uniquely poised for growth in Canada, enjoying further advantages over other Christian traditions. The most important of those are discussed here.

¹⁴ Herbert Waddams, *Meeting the Orthodox Church*, London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964, 53.

¹⁵ One Montreal Greek Orthodox priest, interviewed in 2002, made it a point to reveal that his parish was then about to introduce English-language sermons into the otherwise all-Greek liturgy.

2. The Eastern Orthodox Edge in Canada

Unlike most of the largest Protestant groups in Canada, the numbers of Eastern Orthodox immigrants are on the rise, and their age is younger. The Statistics Canada observations are helpful, if imprecise,¹⁶ in their portrayal of general trends concerning Orthodox adherents.

Just over 479,600 people identified themselves as members of a Christian Orthodox religion in the 2001 Census, a 24% increase from 1991. They represented 1.6% of the total population, up slightly from 1.4% in 1991... At the same time, the numbers of two ... Orthodox churches, Serbian Orthodox and Russian Orthodox, more than doubled. The census enumerated just over 20,500 members of the Serbian Orthodox faith, up from just under 10,000 in 1991, and about 15,600 members of the Russian Orthodox, up from 6,600 in 1991. These increases are likely a result of increased immigration to Canada over the past decade from countries of the former Yugoslavian and Soviet republics. In addition, the number of people reporting their religion as simply "Orthodox" increased during the past decade, contributing to the overall increase in the number of people of Orthodox faith in 2001.¹⁷

Clearly the increased numbers bode well for an effervescent Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada, particularly in terms of the age of that growth, as indicated by the statistics of the past decade. The growth is not new, already between 1981 and 1991, there had been an increase of 25,830 individuals identifying themselves as Eastern Orthodox.¹⁸ In all likelihood, recent Orthodox immigration conforms to the

¹⁶ The Statistics Canada "Christian Orthodox" category includes East Syrian and Oriental Orthodox adherents as well Eastern Orthodox. Nevertheless the figures for "Armenian Orthodox" and "Coptic Orthodox" (both Oriental Orthodox groups) total only 21,275 out of the 479,615 "Christian Orthodox" listed in the 2001 census. The figure of 165,415 is given under the unspecified heading "Orthodox" in the "Christian Orthodox" category, the majority of which are presumably Eastern Orthodox but may well include some East Syrian and Oriental Orthodox not counted elsewhere.

¹⁷ Religions in Canada, Statistics Canada 9 Catalogue: 96F0030XIE2001015, 2003.

¹⁸ See "Population by religion 1981 and 1991 censuses, Canada", Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 93-319-XPB, 2003.

general tendency of newly-arrived immigrants to Canada as being relatively young, indicating a bright future for Eastern Orthodoxy in regard to the years they could be active in their religious expression.

Furthermore, a recent study using data from the General Social Survey shows the frequency of attendance at regular worship in Canada is consistently higher among non-Canadian-born residents than those who are Canadian-born.¹⁹ This corroborates with Bibby's statement about recent immigrants: "*New arrivals have typically displayed high levels of religious commitment and enthusiasm, and these recent cohorts are no exception*".²⁰

Meanwhile, a decline in Protestant denominations during the 1990's occurred within five of the six largest groups (The United Church of Canada, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Lutherans and Pentecostals).²¹ According to Statistics Canada, the two major influences for the decrease are fewer Protestant immigrants and young people reporting these denominations. Many of the adherents of these European-based faiths (Pentecostalism thus excluded) are immigrants who arrived in Canada prior to 1961, or their children.²²

¹⁹ See Warren Clark, *Canadian Social Trends*, 3-5, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 11-008, no. 68 (Spring 2003): 5.

²⁰ Reginald Bibby, *Restless Gods*, Toronto: Stoddard Publishing Co. Limited, 2002, 83.

²¹ The 2001 census reports since the 1991 census, the number of Protestants fell 8.2% to about 8.7 million. Religions in Canada, Statistics Canada 9, Catalogue: 96F0030XIE2001015, 8. Of the largest groups, only the number of Baptists increased.

²² Between 1991 and 2001 the number adhering to Protestant denominations continued a long-term decline. The number of Protestants fell 8.2% to about 8.7 million. Ibid., 8.

Special note should be made of Canadian Anglicanism, the longest established form of Protestantism in this country. It is torn by controversies, covered nation-wide, over sexual issues, (particularly homosexuality and the ordination of women), as well as the morally and financially damaging charges of abuse in its church-run native residential schools.²³ Those questions heaped on already divisive points of doctrine, practice and liturgy have virtually dashed all hope of the fulfillment of the once-predicted assimilation into Anglicanism of Eastern Orthodox faithful as they became increasingly North Americanized.²⁴

Unlike Roman Catholicism, representing the largest single Christian group in Canada, Eastern Orthodoxy is not tainted by general public scandal in Canada. A consistently bad press for the Roman Catholic Church, covering such issues as the papacy, homosexuality, marriage, divorce, contraception, pedophilia and other abuse, doggedly plagues that church. The resultant discrediting is deep, as Université Laval sociologist and theologian Raymond Lemieux, comments: *"Actuellement, l'église vit une crise majeure de crédibilité. Cette crise est fondamentale et atteint de proportions telles que l'on diffame à peu près tout ce qui vient de l'Église. Dès qu'on parle de religion, certaines personnes se mettent à faire de l'urticaire."*²⁵

²³ See Steven Franck, "Schools of shame", *Time Magazine* (Canadian Edition), (July 28 2003): 30-39.

²⁴ Although of all Western Christian traditions Roman Catholicism is theologically most akin to Eastern Orthodoxy, most intercourse has been with Anglicanism due not only to theology, but also British, Ottoman, Russian, Greek and other politics. Meyendorff alludes to those who predicted that Anglicanism would become the home for Americanized Orthodox, 161.

²⁵ Raymond Lemieux, "Le catholicisme au carrefour des nouvelles tendances", *Revue Notre Dame* 101, no. 1 (January 2003): 26.

While Roman Catholic numbers continue to increase through biological growth and immigration²⁶, real participation in church activities has plummeted so dramatically in the past four decades²⁷ that a depressive pall seemingly reigns, accentuated by depleted clergy ranks²⁸ and the selling off of unused church buildings.²⁹

Despite the net growth of Orthodox numbers, another consideration that negatively effects all religions in Canada, presumably including Eastern Orthodoxy, is the increase of those declaring they are of no religion. While some of that increase is due to "no-religion" immigration, some is also due to people who once identified themselves as adherents of a religion, no longer doing so. Prior to 1971, fewer than 1% of the Canadian population reported having no religion, in 2001, that percentage increased to 16% of the population.³⁰

Also in the negative, it seems the longer Eastern Orthodoxy remains in Canada, the more likely it is to follow the Protestant pattern of membership loss. Certainly Statistics Canada figures would indicate that the longer Orthodox groups

²⁶ The 2001 census lists Roman Catholics as the largest religious group in Canada. "Between 1991 and 2001, the number of Roman Catholics in Canada increased slightly, The census enumerated just under 12.8 million Roman Catholics, up 4.8%, while the number of Protestants fell 8.2% to about 8.7 million ... One reason for the recent growth among Roman Catholics was immigration. Of the 1.8 million immigrants who came to Canada between 1991 and 2001, Roman Catholics accounted for nearly one-quarter (23%) of this total, the highest proportion for any major religion among these recent arrivals. Religions in Canada, Statistics Canada 8 Catalogue: 96F0030XIE2001015, 2003.

²⁷ See Reginald Bibby, *Restless Gods*, 73.

²⁸ See Heather Sokoloff, "North American Catholics meet to find more priests : Celibacy can be 'freeing'", *The National Post*, (24 January 2002): A4; and Tom Lyons, "Church tries marketing for new priests, nuns", *The Edmonton Journal*, March 23, 2002, B6.

²⁹ See Laurent Laplante, "Un glissement continu", *Revue Notre Dame* 99, no. 11 (December 2001) : 3.

³⁰ Religions in Canada, Statistics Canada 9 Catalogue: 96F0030XIE2001015, 2003

remain in Canada, the more they resemble immigrant-based Protestant churches (most notably the Anglican, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches) in their declining numbers and older constituency. For nearly a century the two largest Eastern Orthodox groups in Canada were the Greek Orthodox and the Ukrainian Orthodox. It is those two groups that show the greatest numerical decline (7% and 5% respectively in the last decade), and the eldest adherents. The median age for both groups was older than for the total population: 41 years for Greek Orthodox and 46 years for Ukrainian Orthodox.³¹

Related to those church member losses is the trend toward decreased religious participation for most churches. Statistics Canada reports that attendance at religious services has fallen dramatically across the country over the past 15 years. Nationally, only one-fifth (20%) of individuals aged 15 and over attended religious services on a weekly basis in 2001, compared with 28% in 1986. In 2001, four in 10 adults (43%) reported that they had not attended religious services during the 12 months prior to the survey, compared with only 26% in 1986.³²

Another statistic indicates an increase in those who identify themselves merely as "Orthodox", with no national church specified. This could mean two things, both probably related to the de-ethnicization of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada. One possibility is that a bland, un-rooted, generic Orthodoxy represents a constituency detached from its origins. Another possibility is the de-ethnicization is taking place in such a way that the identification with a national tag of Orthodoxy is overridden by a

³¹ Ibid.

³² Clark, 5.

general sense of belonging to Orthodoxy defined theologically. In any case, the tight bond between ethnicity and religion would seem to be loosening.

Eastern Orthodoxy has the advantage of being relatively unknown to the general Canadian public and is spared, in this country at least, a long history as the instigator of abuse and a bad track record of public scandal. The Eastern church's isolation from Canadian society (rather than a blameless record), and virtual absence from the public forum have paved the way for freedom from constantly having to apologize for past sins or excuse bad behavior when any other church issue is presented.

3. Oriental Mysticism: Hesychasm and Iconography

Along with the positive statistics, there is a confluence of several developments in Canadian society possibly favorable to the expansion of Eastern Orthodoxy which could counterbalance the negative factors. One important development is a relatively recent trend of some Canadians' interest in oriental spirituality, part of a broader interest, including religion in general.³³ Such a tendency is to be found even in oft religion-allergic Quebec:

Elle (la jeune génération intellectuelle) ose s'interroger sur le fil rompu de la tradition. Elle va jusqu'à remettre sur le tapis des questions telles la religion ou le rapport au catholicisme, que les générations précédentes avaient rendues taboues (dixit les sociologues Martin Meunier et Jean-Philippe Warren). Phénomène observable dans le monde du théâtre aussi, où les 'jeunes' Alexis Martin, Wajdi Mouawad et Antoine Laprise (avec sa Bible en

³³ See Susan Catto, "In Search of the Spiritual", 72-80, *Time* (Canadian edition), 24 November 2003; and Bibby, *Restless Gods*.

marionettes) ont fait de la spiritualité et de l'héritage religieux des questions revisitées.³⁴

In a series of articles under the theme *Le Catholicisme québécois*, the eastern attraction is unhappily noted:

*Sur toutes les tribunes, on proclame que toutes les religions sont bonnes. Mais on ajoute en sourdine : toutes les religions sont bonnes, sauf celle que nous connaissons vraiment et qui est la seule que nous ayons pratiquée. Ce qui, c'est que depuis quelques années, on peut parler d'un réel intérêt pour les diverses religions est certain, Peut-on pour autant parler d'un retour de la religion? Les adeptes de diverses religions se réjouissent-ils trop tôt? Ainsi, s'initier aux sagesse orientales et notamment au bouddhisme, est-ce vraiment apprendre une religion? Et surtout cela veut-il dire qu'on est sur le point de pratiquer cette religion? Les religions orientales, il faut bien le dire, nous advient souvent sous la forme de philosophies bien peu religieuses. Le fait de lire un livre du dalai-lama sur le bonheur signifie-t-il qu'on songe à devenir tibétain?*³⁵

The rise of interest in Eastern mysticism in Canada is common knowledge, but it remains to be seen if that interest could include any serious form of Christianity. One observer disparagingly states the interest in things spiritual "*only means people like to read about various religious things and experiment with some of them and not that they practice any religion. They practice do-it-yourself spirituality ... customizing religious practices to fit our understanding of god, faith, and truth.*"³⁶ Still, Eastern Orthodoxy could profit from this burgeoning interest by offering the exoticism and mystic of the East in ways western Christianity does not, without straying beyond the boundaries of Christianity. There is perhaps an advantage to Eastern Orthodoxy's

³⁴ Antoine Robitaille, "Les intellectuels au Québec - Pas de débat?," *Le Devoir*, Montreal, 22-23 February 2003, B5.

³⁵ Paul-Eugène Chabot, "Le catholicisme québécois – Le retour de la religion?", 2-4, *Revue Notre Dame* 101, no. 1 (January 2003): 2.

³⁶ Jenson, in Braaten, 28.

mystical hesychasm and iconography which present the Christian religion familiar to most Canadians, with the appeal of oriental tones.

Quite apart from that front, church historian John Taylor foresees some Christians leaning toward oriental spirituality: *"it seems probable that in the next century the faith of the extreme radicals, many in Europe and North America, will come to look more like a kind of Buddhism than traditional Christianity."*³⁷ If such a development materializes in Canada and is joined by the attraction of oriental religion already in place, Eastern Orthodox mysticism could profit from those tendencies by making known the unique combination of the exoticism of hesychasm and the veneration of icons and the familiarity of its Christian context. But as noted above, mere flirtation with the form is not sufficient, Orthodoxy would have to carefully present the doctrinal content from which the mysticism flows.

While at least some semblance of Buddhist and Hindu mysticism has already become standard fare in Canadian popular culture, the eastern mysticism of Orthodoxy experienced in hesychasm and iconography, like much of the rest of the tradition, remains virtually unknown to outsiders. Riding the wave of oriental interest, Eastern Orthodoxy recognizes the opportunity at hand by attracting attention to Orthodoxy's mysticism as an eastern touch for those used to western Christianity.³⁸

³⁷ John Taylor, "The Future of Christianity", 628-665 in McManners, 660; See also, Cotta.

³⁸ Thus, an ad in a recent edition of a Montreal neighborhood paper: *"Conférence sur les trésors des églises orientales ... méditation hesychaste ... icônes," NDG/CDN Actualités (Montreal), 10 December 2003, 10.*

Aware of the potential draw of hesychasm in that context, Orthodox theologian Kallistos Ware and others, including western authors³⁹, acknowledge its similarity to Buddhist meditation and Sufi dhikr⁴⁰, running the risk of having hesychasm classed with a generic and superficial set of mystic experiences. A better-known oriental aspect is Orthodox Christian iconography which enjoys increasing popularity, but is often accompanied by banalization and commercialization, obscuring the sacred message⁴¹. Those drawbacks notwithstanding, Montreal-based Orthodox priest S. Bigham, who has acted upon that growing interest and written on iconography in French and English, comments, "*C'est une bénédiction qui permet une plus large proclamation de la foi orthodoxe.*"⁴²

Eastern Orthodoxy, in fact, exudes mysticism, at levels unknown in the West.⁴³ To somewhat understand these elements of Eastern Orthodoxy and the extent of their oriental mysticism, a brief description, first of hesychasm and then iconography, is offered below.

Byzantine mystical theology assigns a central place to the vision of divine light. This vision is particularly prominent in the experience of Symeon the Theologian (942-1022) who believed the divine light to be not a physical and material light but

³⁹ See, for example, James Cutsinger, *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East*, Bloomington: World Wisdom / Fons Vitae, 2002.

⁴⁰ For example, Thomas Merton, arguably the most influential American Roman Catholic author of the twentieth century wrote extensively on Zen Buddhism, Sufism, and hesychasm while promoting East-West dialogue.

⁴¹ Stéphane Bigham, *L'icône dans la tradition orthodoxe*, Montréal : Médiaspaul, 1995, 59-60.

⁴² Ibid., *Études iconographiques*, Nethen: Éditions Axios, 1997, 109.

⁴³ See Boulgalov, 162.

the uncreated glory of the Deity, the very presence of God himself. Another feature marking the spirituality of this period, especially in the fourteenth century, is the practice of the Jesus prayer, a short invocation usually taking the form "*Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.*" Its origins date back the fifth and sixth centuries, but its use was by no means universal in the Orthodox East, and it is not mentioned by Symeon. The aim of the Jesus prayer was to produce *hesuchia* ("quiet") in the sense of inner stillness and silence of the heart. Those who practice it are known as Hesychasts.

By the thirteenth century, the Jesus Prayer was often accompanied by a psychosomatic technique involving control of breathing and concentration of attention upon the place of the heart, akin to techniques of Yoga and Sufism. This form of meditation was taught on Mount Athos by Nikephoros the Solitary and by Gregory of Sinai. They and other hesychasts believed that the constant use of the Jesus prayer leads, by God's grace, to a vision of divine light. That experience is wrought through the prayer's invocation of the name of God in the believer's heart, the name that communicates the power of deification.

Hesychastic teaching was revived through publication in 1782 of a collection of spiritual texts known as the *Philokalia*. Translated into Slavonic and Russian, and more recently into Romanian and many Western languages, this book has had a profound effect upon modern Orthodoxy. In the opinion of many, the hesychastic and Philokalic element constitutes the most dynamic aspect of contemporary

Orthodox life.⁴⁴

While acknowledging western interest in this aspect of spirituality, the sharing of that experience with non-Orthodox is not immediately apparent. one Anglican churchman observes: *"the teaching of Gregory Palmas ... is coming to be more appreciated and valued. But more remains to be done before either the teaching of the Orthodox on prayer is clear either to the Orthodox themselves or to others outside their church."*⁴⁵

Iconography, that form of theology-as-art, can be traced back to antiquity perhaps ancient Egypt and certainly pre-Christian Greece. Orthodoxy assigns an important place to icons in what it considers the epitome of materialistic purity, brought to perfection through Christianization to the point that the iconic archetypes are considered divine revelations, not "made by hands".⁴⁶ Icons are venerated, being, *"en fait, la foi de l'Église rendue visible"*.⁴⁷ The veneration of icons thus finds an important place orthodox piety. Typically, the interior of the churches are covered with mosaic icon and feature an iconostasis. Orthodox homes often display icons. The reverence due to icons is founded upon declarations of the seventh ecumenical council and are considered *"an essential need for the Orthodox"*.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ See Kallistos Ware, "Eastern Christianity", 558-576, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 570.

⁴⁵ Waddams, 67.

⁴⁶ Ernst Benz, *The Eastern Orthodox Church its Thought and Life*, New York: Doubleday Anchor Original, 1963, translated by Richard and Clara Winston, 6-7.

⁴⁷ Stéphane Bigham, *Études iconographiques*. Nethen: Éditions Axios, 1997, 109.

⁴⁸ Boulgakov, 155.

The principle of the icon presupposes that God can be represented in man, the image of God fully realized through the Incarnation where God assumes human nature. Jesus Christ is the visible face of God and can be described in that revelation to man. What is true of the person of Christ is true of the events in the life of Christ, all Christ-related events are considered the divine revelation of the face of God, observable through the senses. The need for an icon is the access it provides, through a spiritual relation, to material representation of God himself. The link between the prototype and the image is established through the power of sanctification accessed through church's blessing of the icons. The icon thus becomes a mystery-filled point of encounter between the icon-praying believer and God, be he portrayed in the Holy Trinity, Jesus and his life, the Virgin, or the saints. The icon becomes the conveyor of succor as if it were from the prototype itself, whence its miraculous quality. As with Hesychasm, icons present familiar Christian themes, accessed through oriental forms, generally foreign to Western Christianity. They are thereby another possible avenue for Eastern Orthodoxy to consolidate the familiarity of Canadian Christianity and fascination with things spiritual of oriental bent.

4. East/West Tension

Another area that strengthens the Orthodox consciousness in Canada among its faithful is the long history of friction between Western and Eastern Orthodox churches. The thrust of immigration into North America jolted Eastern Orthodoxy into a definition of its own identity in the face of its new Western Christian neighbors, from

whom it had been long-severed. The contrast of the new, non-Orthodox environment easily revived the collective memory of barriers between the East and the West which often entailed much more than theological issues. Even but a brief account of the most salient of these is crucial to somehow understand the Eastern Orthodox diaspora in countries such as Canada.

Although hardly limited to one date or event, the year of the schism between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church is often cited as 1054. That was when the pope of Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated each other, although mutual excommunication had already occurred in the tenth century between Photius and Pope Nicolas because of papal claims to supremacy over the Orthodox patriarchs and the insertion of the Filioque. The relationship between the East and the West has been marked with many painful incidents.

Above all else the Crusades administered a violent shock to Eastern relations with the Latin West. Particularly odious were the Roman Catholic conquests of Jerusalem (1099) and Constantinople (1204). For the first time the East realized how far the Roman papacy had moved from the idea of universal spiritual dominion to a claim of universal political dominion. The Crusades actually operated along the entire Eastern front from Scandinavia to Palestine and Egypt, not only as assault upon the Islamic kingdoms but also as assault upon the Orthodox Church and Orthodox countries of the West. As a result of the Crusades the Orthodox people were alienated and cut off, largely against their will and against their ancient

traditions, from Western Europe. Moreover, that Western offensive hindered the Orthodox states of the East from defending the rest of Europe from the non-Christian nomadic peoples of Asia advancing with ever-increasing strength, or from forcing them to settle down under the sway of Christian rulers.

The power of the Byzantine empire had already been broken before the Turk's capture of Constantinople in 1453 when the Roman Catholic armies of the Fourth Crusade first took Constantinople in 1204. The subsequent establishment of the Latin Empire and patriarchate in Constantinople (the beginning of the Eastern rite, Uniate churches) and the suppression of Orthodoxy in Orthodox lands forced the Greek emperor and the Greek patriarch to take refuge in Asia minor.

The extensive damage incurred at that time on East-West relations is described by historian Deno Geanakoloplos:

It was only after 1204, when the Latin army under the guise of a holy crusade sacked Constantinople itself, carved up the Byzantine Empire, and forcibly imposed Roman Catholicism on the Greek people, that the growing animosity of the Greeks for the Latins was transformed into a mass revulsion, a permanent hostility that permeated every level of society and was to poison all subsequent relations between the two peoples.⁴⁹ It is at this point, when the ecclesiastical schism became ethnic and political as religious in scope, that the break between the two churches may be said to have been truly consummate.⁵⁰

While the attack on Byzantium made the Eastern Slavs more inclined to be suspicious of the Latins, they themselves had not been directly affected. But

⁴⁹ Lest the importance of this East/West distrust be considered bygone, the outcry over the American use of the word "crusade" in the aftermath of 9-11 serves as a reminder of the enduring emotions involved.

⁵⁰ Deno Geanakoloplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West : Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle*

suspicion turned to hatred when the Catholic knights of the Teutonic order, who had hitherto been crusading against the pagan tribes of the Baltic region, launched an attack upon the Orthodox duchies in northern Russia threatening them from the West at the same time the mounted armies of Mongols were harassing them from the East. These fresh invasions from the West seemed to the Russians a continuation of the Crusades, for one of the professed claims of the Polish invaders was the subjugation of the Orthodox Church to the leadership of Rome, including the introduction of the Latin rite among West Slavic peoples. To the Orthodox Russians, the Poles were worse foes than the Tatars who had never interfered with the Orthodox church, whereas all the Polish campaigns were hostile to Orthodox.⁵¹

In the nineteenth century the Slavophile movement took root in Russia, the self-proclaimed "fourth Rome", the most powerful center of Eastern Orthodox Church. Largely in reaction to increased Western influence throughout the world, that group of Russian intellectuals and their subsequent admirers treasured the idea of an unbridgeable gulf existing between Russia and Europe, expounding upon the claim that Russia is the carrier of Orthodox truth, and arguing the inner degeneracy of the West is due to Roman Catholicism.⁵²

While those events are long-past, the divisions and Orthodox suspicions of the West have remained alive. The differences were aggravated in North America as Eastern rite Roman Catholic immigrants returned to Orthodoxy by the tens of

Ages and Renaissance, Hamden, Connecticut : Archon Books, 1976, 20.

⁵¹ Benz, 117.

⁵² Ibid., 189.

thousands after centuries of affiliation with Rome.⁵³ The catalyst in that conversion was the attempt by North American Roman Catholic ecclesiastical authorities' to Latinize Eastern rite faithful through imposition of Western liturgies and the requirement of unmarried clergy. That attempt at latinization in early twentieth-century North America reinforced Orthodox charges that conformity to Latin Rome was the ultimate agenda of the Roman Catholic Church.

Most recently, since the late 1980's, with the fall of communism, violence has flared in disputes over rights to parish properties that had been confiscated in Eastern European countries and returned to either Eastern Orthodox or Eastern Catholic parishes.⁵⁴ Increased activity by Western churches in Eastern Orthodox territories has renewed old fears. A 1991 statement from the Joint Committee of Orthodox and Catholic expresses concern that misguided efforts by some in the West, both Protestant and Catholic, will treat the newly opened lands of the East as mission a territory ripe for "conversion". The statement also notes,

the fear expressed by many Orthodox that at the present juncture the Catholic Church may be 'changing its mind in regard to basic presuppositions upon which the Orthodox Church and the Roman

⁵³ Noll, 346; The publication of the Papal Decree *Ea Semper* in 1907 requiring, among other things, celibacy of the Uniate clergy in America helped dramatically increase conversions to Orthodoxy. By 1916 the Roman Catholic Church in North America had lost 163 Uniate parishes, with more than 100,000 faithful, to the Russian missionary diocese. See Stokoe, chapter 2; For specifics on Eastern Catholic conversions among Ukrainians in Canada, see David Millett, "Religious Identity: The Non-Official Languages and the Minority Churches", 182-195, in *Two Nations, Many Cultures - Ethnic Groups in Canada*, Elliot, John Leonard, ed., Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1979.

⁵⁴ Eastern-rite Catholics have also suffered the antagonistic situation. Particularly portentous for Orthodox-Catholic relations was the reemergence of the Eastern Catholic Churches in Romania, Slovakia, Poland and the former Soviet Union. With the rise of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe following World War I, these churches were brutally suppressed. Bishops and leading churchmen were arrested and sent to prison camps; a state-orchestrated 'reunion synod' in Lviv (1946) and elsewhere had declared the liquidation of the Union of Brest (1596) and similar unions; state authorities seized church properties and converted them to secular purposes.

Catholic Church meet as equal churches, manifesting the fullness of the catholicity of the One, Holy, and Catholic and apostolic Church'.⁵⁵

A 1993 Joint (Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) International Commission statement on "Uniatism, Method of Union of the Past, and the Present Search for Full Communion " outlined necessary conditions to *"lead to a just and definitive solution to the difficulties which the Oriental [Eastern] Catholic Churches present to the Orthodox church", while calling for the cessation of all proselytism and all desire for expansion by Catholics at the expense of the Orthodox church".⁵⁶* The Roman pope's subsequent overtures to bolster Roman Catholicism in Russia have hardly put Orthodox suspicions to rest.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, recent increased immigration to Canada of both Eastern Orthodox and Eastern rite Roman Catholics from the countries involved has renewed the painful controversies as some faithful join their coreligionists and tell of events they have experienced at close range.

5. The Ethno-political Divide

The litany of contentious issues is long and quickly facilitates the perpetuation of a clear Eastern Orthodox identity in the face of Western Christianity. The influx of

⁵⁵ *The Quest for Unity : Orthodox and Catholics in Dialogue*, John Borelli and John Erickson, eds., Crestwood, New York/Washington, D.C. : St. Vladimir's Seminary Press/United States Catholic Conference, 1996, 158-190.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ See, for example, "Pope riles Russian Orthodox", *The Edmonton Journal*, 2 March 2002, A4.

the East to West dynamic through sheer numbers of immigrants thrust Orthodox into non-Orthodox Christian environments, unwittingly providing the opportunity for a heightening of an orthodox consciousness. That consciousness, though, as seen below, was also divided in its loyalty to religion and ethno-national sympathies. Some understanding of Orthodox immigration to North America is another crucial element in this discussion on expansion of that religious tradition in Canada.

From the collapse of the Byzantine Empire (1453) until the early nineteenth century, the Greek Orthodox world, together with the Romanian principalities and most of the Slav Orthodox territories apart from Russia, lay under the rule of the Ottoman Turks. The ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople was regarded by the Muslim authorities as "ethnarch," head of the Orthodox Christian ethnos, or nation (the *millet* system), with both religious and civil responsibility for all Orthodox in the Turkish empire, Greek or otherwise. The Patriarch, as the chief of that nation, was looked upon as the instrument for the reconciliation of the subjects with the conquerors, and the granting of a privileged status on the Church was intended as an act of reconciliation, a necessary presupposition to the consolidation of the new empire. It was in the interest of the State that the subjects be given favorable conditions of existence, so as to ensure social political and economic success.⁵⁸

With the liberation of the subject Orthodox peoples from Turkish rule in the nineteenth century, the jurisdiction of the patriarch contracted and a succession of autocephalous churches was set up: Greece: (1833), Romania (1864), Bulgaria

⁵⁸ Theodore Papadapoulios, *The Greek Church and People Under Turkish Domination*, New York: AMS Press, 1973, 24.

(1871), Serbia (1879), and Albania (1937). Since nineteenth-century nationalism was a fundamentally secular phenomenon, the Orthodox world, in adopting it, passed through its own peculiar experience of 'secularism'. The Church often became directly involved in causes which a particular ethnic or national group considered as 'holy' even at the expense of the national interest of others.

Just as the Orthodox churches were emerging from the yoke of the Ottoman empire, communism stepped in and again relegated the Orthodox church to a highly contained niche, once again marginalizing the Orthodox faithful and pushing them into a closed social group that was forced to fight for survival, defend itself, and seek self-preservation producing a deep conservatism. Evangelization and mission work were overshadowed by expediency to the point they no longer figured as prominent features of the Eastern Orthodox stage.

Not only did Orthodox immigrants arrive in North America with the background of the group marginalization from the majority culture, divided along European national lines, that pattern of isolation from mainstream society continued and even intensified. Although physically in North America, these "ethnic churches" formalized a spiritual, communal and social existence of their own apart from America, and thereby entered a period of cultural hibernation. *"With the seasonal exceptions of Russian Easter recipes, colorful Ukrainian eggs, Balkan line dancing, Greek parish festivals, or an occasional celebrity wedding, the ethnic churches rarely entered*

America."⁵⁹ Moreover, Eastern Orthodox theology's continued dependency on Europe reinforces the foreign ties.⁶⁰

While the ethnic church pattern was a logical outcome of immigration, it does not correspond to Orthodox theology. Canon law forbids the appointment of a bishop in a province or district where a canonical bishop already exists, and there were in the New World Orthodox bishops of the Moscow patriarchate, stemming from the eighteenth-century missions in Alaska. Despite earnest hopes and plans of a united, multi-ethnic Eastern Orthodox church under one Russian Orthodox jurisdiction, the various national churches whose members emigrated to North America most often established satellite churches dependent on the respective mother churches.

Further dividing the Soviet block-related churches were splits largely due to degrees to which the church could accept communist interference.⁶¹ Thus for example the Russian Orthodox in Canada was divided into three jurisdictions: the Orthodox Church in America, the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, and the Russian Orthodox Church directly under the Muscovite patriarchate. Conflicts ensued and still persist. One author's comments shed light on the tone of the divisions among the North American Orthodox: *"It is rather unjust to blame 'Greek nationalism' for the reluctance of the Greek faithful to accept Russian leadership. It may have been inefficiency, lack of unity and turmoil within the Russian church that*

⁵⁹ Stokoe, 1.

⁶⁰ Mark Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World The History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002, 188.

⁶¹ Despite the fall of the communism, these politico-ecclesiastical divisions are perpetuated. A case in the point is the rather bizarre 2001 incident in Quebec of the RCMP-thwarted attempted abduction of an elderly Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia bishop related to control of assets allegedly involving former KGB agents. See Paul Cherry, "Rift in Russian Church", *The Gazette*

persuaded the Greeks to seek their own leadership".⁶² The Eastern Orthodox consider this failure of unity a spiritual tragedy, especially in the light of guiding principle of Trinitarian oneness.

Culturally isolated, financially unstable, and administratively splintered, the Orthodox came to fear any kind of change – whether linguistic, theological, liturgical, or even musical. New members were little welcomed in these ethnic enclaves so any missionary spirit was effectively squelched . Most parishes settled into an unbroken routine of local, regional, and national ethnic activities, that effectively provided a rich social life for participants, albeit self-contained and self-perpetuating within the confines of the ethnic church.⁶³

The story of Eastern Orthodox isolation in Canada does not end here. Through its official policy of multiculturalism since 1971, the Canadian government has proudly promoted the image of a mosaic of cultural identities noting it as a distinguishing mark from the identity-effacing melting pot pattern of the United States of America. This mosaic is often championed as a model of tolerance and sensitivity that allows for the formation of an accepting society with a common-values Canadian culture that appreciates and celebrates differences.

Celebrating differences can be a way of forcing those differences to the forefront, assuring the essence of the differences is distanced enough from shared

(Montreal), December 23, 2001, A1.

⁶² Demetrios Constantelos, *Understanding the Greek Orthodox Faith*, New York : The Seabury Press, 1982, 130.

⁶³ Stokoe, 2.

sameness so as to be pushed to the periphery for the sake of the common good, acceptable for "those people" but "not for us". The resultant lowest common denominator for all Canadians necessarily excludes many particularities from the mainstream. That exclusion can lead to stigmatization of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic peculiarities which become the uncommon element, foreign to what being Canadian is for all, not truly an integrated part of the publicly shared values, ethics or beliefs. At worst the differences can be categorized as un-Canadian, certainly not a potential ingredient in the common system, accessible or desirable for all Canadians.⁶⁴ Each cultural community's uniqueness can thus be isolated, sequestered as it were, the price paid for the protection of the common good. There is arguably, in multiculturalism a certain element of ghettoization, containment, trivialization, and relativization.⁶⁵

While perhaps not intentional, multiculturalism can result in sufficient-enough marginalization that minorities understand that to fully participate in general Canadian society means casting off or suppressing foreign aspects of one's origins. Such pressure would fall in line with historical precedent in Canada. The cases of attempts at homogenizing Canadian society, including the arranged assimilation to Anglicanism of the "foreign Protestants" brought to Halifax in the late eighteenth century⁶⁶ and the Finnish Lutherans to Roman Catholicism brought to the Saguenay-

⁶⁴ See Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, Toronto: Penguin Books, 1994, for a critical presentation of Multiculturalism.

⁶⁵ See Jean Burnet, "Multiculturalism", *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, vol. III, Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1988, 1401.

⁶⁶ See Carl Cronmiller, *A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada*, The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada, 1961, 38-39.

Lac St. Jean in the late nineteenth century,⁶⁷ the Durham report of 1840 recommending absorption of francophone Roman Catholics into anglophone Protestantism, as well as the Presbyterian Home Mission efforts in converting Ukrainian Orthodox (and others) in the Prairies at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁶⁸ Those instances are over and above the many attempts to assimilate indigenous populations.

In the case of the Eastern Orthodox community in Canada, it is perhaps this very policy that has helped to contribute to the retardation of the expansion of this Christian tradition among non-Orthodox. Through government grants and programs encouraging cultural events so intimately linked with the national churches, close association between ethno-linguistic identity and the churches is promoted. The activities of one affect the other. Examples of overlapping functions are not lacking.

A few cases in Montreal serve to illustrate this point: it is the Greek Association of Montreal, not the Greek Orthodox Church, that administratively controls the Greek parish of Evangelismos Tis Theotokou in Park Extension; the offices for the Antiochan Orthodox Saint Nicolas parish is housed in the same facilities as the Syrian cultural center; a Greek-language elementary school is in the same complex as the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George in Montreal, and the Romanian community library and archives are part of the building of Saint John

⁶⁷ See Gérard Bouchard, "Les Saguenayens et les immigrants au début du 20^{ème} siècle : légitime défense ou xénophobie?", *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 21, no. 3 (1989): 20-26.

⁶⁸ See J.W. Grant, "Presbyterian Home Missions and Canadian Nationhood", Paper presented at the Seventh International Convention of Canadian Studies, Acireale, Italy, May 18-22, 1988, *Biblioteca della ricerca*, Schone Editore, 1988, 139-153.

the Baptist Romanian Orthodox Church (OCA). Culture, language, national origins and ethnicity are closely linked within the Eastern Orthodox community. Those same facets are continually reinforced and publicized through the multicultural policy so as to remain distinguishing pronounced features from common Canadian culture, communicating the non-Canadian nature of Eastern Orthodoxy as expression of Christianity. The politics of multiculturalism make for a good marriage with pluralistic-prone postmodern thought, ensuring Eastern Orthodoxy will continue to face the challenge of marginalization for the foreseeable future in Canada.

When whatever marginalizing effects of Canada's multiculturalism are set in the collective Eastern Orthodox experience of the Rom Millet policy under the Ottoman empire, containment and control under communism, and the protective immigrant ethno-nationalist enclave church phenomenon, entrenchment of differences is but encouraged and perpetuated. By contrast, the absence of an official policy of multiculturalism may be a contributing factor to acceleration of the americanization of Eastern Orthodoxy as well as its sustained attraction for non-Orthodox in the United States.⁶⁹ The precise influence of the multicultural policy on Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is an area of research yet to be explored.

The extreme level of association between Eastern Orthodoxy and foreign influences subjects Eastern Orthodoxy to another obstacle to its expansion: social prejudice . Predictably enough, it would seem the "two founding nations",

⁶⁹ In the United States, in addition to the Episcopal, evangelical and Eastern-rite Roman Catholic group conversions, there have also been such high-profile conversions as that of Yale's church historian and Luther scholar, Jaroslav Pelikan.

namely British (mostly Protestant) and French (mostly Roman Catholic) prefer their own kind. One study brings this to light by asking groups of Canadians of British or French background to rank those nationalities with whom they feel the most comfortable.⁷⁰ Not surprisingly, the majority groups chose the majority groups as those with whom they feel most at ease. This is important in the present discussion since the number of Orthodox belonging to those majorities is statistically insignificant. According to the study, none of the national groups to which Eastern Orthodox members typically belong figure among the most-favorably ranked nationality groups. Those findings were long before 9-11 with its wave of suspicion of certain national and ethnic groups, often targeted at Arabs, regardless of religious affiliation.⁷¹

Moreover, Bibby has amply documented the fact that ethnic and national groups in Canada overwhelmingly tend to remain within the religious tradition of their fore-bearers. When the negative attitude of the majority groups toward minorities is coupled with the general tendency to remain within one's own ethno-religious background, the Eastern Orthodox are disadvantaged in view of expansion, except among themselves and perhaps among other closely-related religious and ethno-national groups.

⁷⁰ See Leo Driedger, *Multi-Ethnic Canada Identities and Inequalities*, Toronto : Oxford University Press, 1996, 194-197.

⁷¹ Arab immigration to Canada was long overwhelmingly Christian (20% Eastern Orthodox), while significant Muslim immigration is relatively recent. See Baha Abu-Laban, "Arabs", 95, *Encyclopedia of Canada's People*, Paul Robert Magocsi, ed., Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, 95.

In the positive these factors contributed to a high sense of denominational loyalty and group cohesion, keeping the church at the very center of Eastern Orthodox community life. That concentration of ethno-religiosity in turn has allowed at least some of its adherents to examine the differences between themselves and their western neighbors, motivating them to reflectively reach into their own theological treasures. Some discover the aspects of Orthodoxy which surpass historical, ethnic, linguistic, psychological and political boundaries and in turn offer their religious tradition to the North American setting as an alternative form of Christianity. The presence of such theologically-minded Orthodox in America grants them the opportunity to introduce Protestants and Roman Catholics to what Father Hopko has described as the "*essential mystical existence of the one holy, catholic, Orthodox church – expressed in the integrity of its scriptures, sacraments, canons, spirituality and hierarchical structures*".⁷²

The discussion above shows Eastern Orthodoxy does indeed have a unique advantage over other Christian groups in Canada in view of expansion. Not only are the points of entry as proposed by the recovery school in place, they have so been without interruption or mutation of modernism. Linguistic, geographical and cultural isolation have helped preserve the integrity of continuity in Eastern Orthodoxy until this time of postmodern opening. In addition to those characteristics, a composite of factors external to the church have put Canadian Eastern Orthodoxy in a relatively favorable and strong position when compared with other Christian traditions, despite

⁷² Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992, 348.

significant obstacles. Still, it remains to be seen if Eastern Orthodoxy is conscious of that fact, considers it important, is willing to pick up on those factors that favor it so highly at this time in Canadian history and act accordingly to draw people into itself.

5. Possibilities for Further Growth of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada

Lest the possibility seem a pipe dream, it should be remembered there is precedent for movement to Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada. While not of the same relative velocity as the conversion to Eastern Orthodoxy in the United States, the historical record shows group movement in Canada on at least two occasions. The twentieth century twice saw collective conversions towards Eastern Orthodoxy. The first was that of the tens of thousands of Ukrainians of Roman Catholic Eastern rite, the second, that of a group of evangelical Mennonites⁷³ at the same time as the Campus Crusade leaders' conversion in the United States. These incidents are significant not only in their occurrence but also in their rarity among instances of what could be classified as group conversions to any religious tradition on Canadian soil.

While the possibility of expansion is real, the probability is another matter. Sociologist Reginald Bibby predicts the possibility of a bright future for churches in Canada, if they meet certain conditions. *"The groups that thrive will be groups that are in touch with the spiritual, personal, and social needs and interests of Canadians"*.⁷⁴ He describes ethnic churches as doing just, but for their limited group,

⁷³ David Goa, "Orthodox Church", 1732-1734, *The Canadian Encyclopedia Year 2000 Edition*, 2000, 1734. This group adopted Eastern Orthodox theology but did not become part of an Eastern Orthodox jurisdiction. The source does not specify numbers involved.

⁷⁴ Bibby, 234.

being largely geared toward to meeting the needs of their own members and their children. "the initiated, plus offspring". He continues to explain that the problem for expansion of those churches *"lies rather with their need to expand their ministries so that they touch the lives of other people in their communities and cities ... sociologically speaking, they look for all intents and purposes like homogenous religious clubs."*⁷⁵

No one can know what directions Eastern Orthodoxy will take in the near future, but there could conceivably be a simultaneous convergence of factors culminating in external and internal growth. Some of the scenarios outlined below indicate what could happen, given the present confluence of elements conducive to Eastern Orthodox expansion. All of these scenarios provide fertile, yet near-virgin ground, for further research.

Eastern Orthodoxy could perhaps take on a consolidating role as the majority religion for Eastern Christians. Among non-Eastern Orthodox, Eastern Christian immigrants (minority in relation to Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada), could be involved in the same dynamic of the non-Christian minority moving to a majority religion. Here the question is if Eastern Orthodoxy can act as a critical mass with sufficient drawing power to slow the flow of its own faithful to the Protestant and Roman Catholic majority, while becoming a third option for immigrants belonging to minority groups. For example, when small numbers of Oriental, East Syrian, and Eastern Catholic Christians move to a place where there is no parish of their own specific religious

tradition, they could be drawn to their Eastern Orthodox theological and liturgical cousins. Still, if any change does take place, it may be to leave Eastern Christianity altogether to move to the culturally more-established Protestant or Western rite Roman Catholic traditions. There is however reason to believe transition with the Eastern traditions could take place in Canada as there is already a precedent among Middle Eastern Christians (particularly Lebanese), for rather easy movement from one Eastern Christian tradition (particularly among Maronites, Eastern Orthodox and Melchites) to another.

The deeply diverse immigration to Canada has made for geographical proximity of disparate Eastern Christian communities. In Montreal, for example, concentrations of the Arabic (majority Christian), Greek, Romanian and Armenian communities greatly overlap in the physical distribution of their communities⁷⁶ so that ignorance, isolation and prejudice might be lessened. Whether that exposure ultimately facilitates religious cross-fertilization is of yet a subject unexamined.

Eastern Orthodoxy, building on its credibility as a global religion, could establish its reputation as a viable Canadian Christian alternative to attract non-Christian eastern immigrants. For example Muslims, Buddhists and Sikhs, falling into the pattern of assimilation into the religious majority,⁷⁷ seek some middle ground in the Eastern elements of Orthodoxy while satisfying the motivation to adopt majority

⁷⁶ The adjacent Montreal communities of Outremont, Villeray, Park Extension and Saint Laurent are home to tens of thousands of Eastern Christians and their churches, schools and monasteries (Eastern Orthodox – mostly Greek and Russian, Arabic, Oriental Orthodox – mostly Armenian, and Eastern Catholic – mostly Lebanese Maronite). See entries for respective nationalities in *Profils des communautés culturelles du Québec*, Sainte Foy Québec: Les Publications du Québec, 1995.

⁷⁷ Bibby, 235-236.

Christianity. The growing number of "no religion" Chinese immigrants⁷⁸ might undergo the same process.

Some segments of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism may seek out Eastern Orthodoxy as part of the general swing toward classic Christianity. Mark Noll, writing about the United States, observes while *"still an exotic exception ... the appeal of Orthodoxy to disillusioned adherents of Western churches remains surprisingly strong"*.⁷⁹ Certain groups of Anglicans, for example, sensitive to the historic connection between Anglicanism and Eastern Orthodoxy and in light of recent controversies, may follow the precedent of former American Episcopalians who joined the Antiochan Orthodox Church *"in large measure because of discontent with the ordination of women, liturgical tinkering and dogmatic relativism in the Anglican church"*.⁸⁰ Of note in this context is the English-language Antiochan Orthodox Evangelical Mission (part of the Antiochan Orthodox Church) whose origins stem from converts from various Protestant denominations and whose activities are *"taking place in many parts of North America and England"*.⁸¹ Indeed, in his study of Canadian baby-boomer conversions, Peter Emberly claims the move is already underway, stating some disenchanted Anglicans and Roman Catholics are seeking out Eastern Orthodoxy.⁸²

⁷⁸ "Immigration was a factor in the growth of those with no religious affiliation. One-fifth of the 1.8 million immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1991 and 2001 reported they had no religion, especially individuals born in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region) and Taiwan.", Religions in Canada Statistics Canada, 9 Catalogue: 96F0030XIE2001015.

⁷⁹ Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World The History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 138.

⁸⁰ Antony Gabriel, *The Ancient Church On New Shores - Antioch in North America The Autocephalous Churches*, no. 5. San Bernardino, California : St Willibrod's Press, 1996, 36.

⁸¹ Ibid., 158.

⁸² See Peter C. Emberley, *Divine Hunger: Canadians on Spiritual Walkabout*, Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2002, 81-92.

Meanwhile, Eastern Orthodoxy must convince its own membership, as it remains longer in Canada, of the church's rightful place, not only as a legitimately Canadian church, one that is not necessary to leave in order to fully be part of the general society's religious culture,⁸³ but also of its unique offerings to the rest of Canadian Christianity. Orthodox theologian Meyendorff states, "*The moment of truth is coming for Orthodoxy ...The ethnic-political structures which provided it with a sense of continuity are crumbling rapidly. Only its truth and catholicity can preserve its credibility to the young.*"⁸⁴

That transition is a major challenge since it requires a de-ethnicization of Eastern Orthodoxy that more values theology than attachment to origins, the latter being so integral to the Eastern Orthodox experience in North America. That revised vision of the Eastern Orthodox Church allows the freedom of being in the West, not as a foreign religious system, but as the full expression of Christianity, pure and simple, transcending geography and national and ethnic boundaries. There are signs that such a vision is beginning to take form, particularly in The Orthodox Church in America-Canadian Diocese, which strives for a unified Eastern Orthodoxy, concretizing the vision, in part, with its English and French services.⁸⁵

⁸³ The possibility of Eastern Orthodoxy becoming a major American denomination is the projection one researcher has made on the basis of the high level of interethnic and interreligious marriages among Orthodox, most which take place in the Eastern Orthodox church, thus making Orthodoxy the religious identity of choice for the mixed couple and their offspring. See Philip Kayal, "Eastern Orthodox Exogamy and "Triple" Melting Pot Theory: Herberg Revisted", 121-139, American Sociologist Association, 1979.

⁸⁴ Meyendorff, 157.

⁸⁵ The OCA is nonetheless not alone in beginning to realize the pan-Orthodox reality. For example, the following news item reports concerning Saint Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox parish in Kenora, Ontario: "The Ukrainian Orthodox community in Kenora is joined now by some local Greeks," 7Jan 2002, *The Herald Online*, <http://www.uocc.ca/visnyk-feb1.html>.

Such a vision of Orthodoxy would be facilitated by a higher degree of external cohesion, co-operation and unity among the various Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions, an elusive dream for over a century. Meyendorff explains the magnitude of the implications of the realization of Orthodox catholicity:

Indeed overcoming ethnic divisions and acting truly as one church is the precondition for meaningful witness in the West, especially in America. But the ultimate problem lies on an even deeper level. Is Orthodoxy intrinsically the Eastern form of Christianity? Or, conversely, is Christianity intrinsically, fundamentally and culturally inseparable from the East? An affirmative question to the latter would imply that to be a Western Christian or a Western Orthodox is, to say, the least, a great handicap in one's spiritual progress for true Christianity and the West are actually incompatible. Those among the Orthodox adopt that position and rationalize it in terms of practical behavior, reduce Orthodoxy to the sectarian pattern of American religion. One simply cannot be both American and Orthodox but one has to become – at least culturally and spiritually – a Greek or a Russian. However quite often this identification of Orthodoxy with Eastern cultural or ethnic patterns also leads to a practical 'denominationalism' Some people believe that since one cannot reasonably expect to have Eastern Christians transformed into Greeks and Russians one should try to coexist with them peacefully, sharing the common interdenominational deism of American religion. This corresponds to the so-called unity without union pattern in ecumenism, Thus paradoxically, ethnicity naturally allies itself either with the 'sectarianism' or with 'denominationalism' because it constitutes, first of all a negation of catholicity of the Church. Thus a definition of the Orthodox mission in the West today requires, first of all, a clear understanding of what catholicity means, what is implied by a truly catholic church life - which is more than a conceptual definition of the third « attribute » of the Church ... the Church, therefore, cannot be "Eastern" or Western in its very nature if it is to remain the Church of Christ (conversely, if the Church remains virtually "Eastern" or "Western in its very (incarnational character) nature does it remain the Church of Christ.⁸⁶

Efforts at establishing a unified presence in North America have long been a project, especially for the Russian Orthodox Church which, as the once sole head of all the multi-ethnic Eastern Orthodox faithful in North America, has always

maintained the importance of unity. Lack of success in the matter is a source of frustration for those who see the potential impact of Eastern Orthodoxy in North America. On that point, one non-Orthodox observer of North American Christianity comments: *"If the American environment helps the ethnic Orthodox churches to cooperate among themselves and to draw from deep historical resources a carefully defined alternative to traditional American church practice, the twenty-first century could witness a blossoming of this ancient form of Christianity in an unexpected setting"*.⁸⁷ A visibly unified front in the public eye, thoroughly in keeping with Eastern Orthodox Trinitarian theology and spirituality, would also conform to the Canadian mindset of compromise, considered a desirable characteristic, certainly when churches are concerned.⁸⁸ That barrier to Canadian sensitivity overcome, Eastern Orthodoxy might be a more convincing church option.

Typically, Eastern Orthodoxy is not particularly party to the consciously-organized recent North American movement toward classical Christianity per se. To be so would be oxymoronic, since the ground to be recovered has not been lost and joining forces with young Turks of orthodoxy could be cause for confusion, paramount to identification with heterodox beliefs. It is not that Eastern Orthodox writers are uninterested in the subject, but their vision is one of promoting and expounding upon the very essence of the unchanged Orthodox "right way" that has always been an integral part of that tradition. The Orthodox attitude is more that, in

⁸⁷ Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World The History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 138.

⁸⁸ This positive outlook of ecclesiastical unity, epitomized by the United Church of Canada is commonly expressed in Canadian Church history literature. See for example, John W. Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era*, Burlington, Ontario: Welch Publishing Company Inc., 1988.

the fullness of time, it is meet right and salutary that Western Christianity should at all times and in all places eventually seek out Orthodoxy.

For the time being, one crucial element for expansion beyond traditional boundaries that does not seem to have taken hold in any widespread or effective manner is an Eastern Orthodox awareness of the opportunity which lies at its Canadian doorstep. The exception, albeit relatively limited, is largely confined to the Orthodox Church of America – Canadian Diocese. Another potential opening is the Antiochan Orthodox Church which has close ties to the OCA and, in the United States has been very active in making Eastern Orthodoxy available to the non-Orthodox public.

One danger in opening up the access to the general population is the confusion of a fine line between form and content of a religious tradition. While there is room for adaptation in Eastern Orthodoxy in terms of liturgy and catechetics, there is a not-unfounded fear that adaptations are merely compromising accommodations to the surrounding culture, rather than theologically reflective ones.⁸⁹ One Greek Orthodox bishop⁹⁰ whose jurisdiction includes Canada, categorizes changes to North America as an undesirable protestantization of Orthodoxy,⁹¹ reminiscent of

⁸⁹ Waddams. 66.

⁹⁰ See Justine Frangouli-Argyris, *The Lonely Path of Integrity*, Athens : Exandadas Publishers, 2002.

⁹¹ That there be reason for concern over potential loss of Eastern Orthodox characteristics to general North American Christian culture, is, by comparison, convincingly argued by Mark Noll. He presents the struggle of the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches to retain their distinctive theological systems while undergoing the process of acceptance into North American society with its predominant mainstream and fundamentalist Protestantism in a capitalist, pluralistic system. See Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World The History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 235-252. A similar dynamic is described in the case of Mennonites in Canada as that group increasingly takes on the general characteristics of Canadian evangelicalism at the cost of losing its particularities.

conservative Roman Catholic reactions to Vatican II. Ironically, the bid to become more Canadian could rob Eastern Orthodoxy of the very elements that might attract, convince, persuade and convert non-Orthodox Canadians. There is the risk that a given religious expression is so much like the surrounding culture that there is no distinction from it, and the church is then devoid of something unique to offer. As yet, Eastern Orthodoxy is still far from that extreme. Still,

*for the Orthodox, as for other immigrant groups, the irreversible process of Americanization offers both perils and prospects. The spirit of American culture does threaten to erode the distinctives of Orthodox spirituality and ecclesiology. Thomas Hopko, one of America's first American-born professors to teach at St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, has warned of Orthodox susceptibility to either 'individualistic relativism' or 'crusading sectarianism' could lead to the 'deeper weakening (if not total disappearance) of the Orthodox Christian vision and way of life among many, if not most, of the Orthodox themselves.'*⁹²

7. Conclusion

While there are multifarious elements of negative and positive force factored into the equation, the reality that Eastern Orthodoxy has never before been in such a favorable position to expand in Canada is unequivocal. Considering the widening of openings for the admissibility of spirituality in the thinking of postmodern culture over and against modernism, the intense calls from within a broad spectrum of the Western church for the resurgence of classical Christianity, as well as the demographics and theology of Eastern Orthodoxy, that church has possibilities that stretch beyond any former predictive projections. The scenarios for possible growth

See George, Rawlyk, ed., *Aspects of Canadian Evangelicalism*, Burlington, Ontario: Welch Publishing Company, Inc., 1990.

⁹² Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 348.

are many, a rather surprising situation since any expansion at all among the Eastern Orthodox was unforeseen a few decades ago.

Ironically, all the while that momentum has been mounting over the past several decades, the developments of the dynamism have come about unnoticed by virtually all observers of Canadian religion.⁹³ Noticed or not, the possibility of the expansion for Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada has never been so real as in this first decade of the twenty-first century.

⁹³ One example of that silence is Canadian religion observer Reginald Bibby. Another rather typical example is an overview of religion in Quebec, speaking of Protestant membership decline, lower Roman Catholic participation, increased Moslem, Sikh, Buddhist and Hindu immigration, without mention of Eastern Orthodoxy. See Claireandree Cauchy, "Religion: le paradoxe québécois", *Le Devoir*, 14 May 2003, A1-A2.

CONCLUSION

Though among the oldest of Christian traditions, Eastern Orthodoxy has been billed as one of the Faith's best kept secrets in Canada. Obscurity notwithstanding, Eastern Orthodoxy is perhaps now well on the verge of expansion that will allow it to take its place among Canada's mainstream religious denominations.

In 2002, Peter C. Emberly of Carlton University published an analysis of his field work on Canadian baby boomers' religious searches.¹ He therein sets forth a compelling argument explaining why conversion to Eastern Orthodoxy attracts at least some of those Canadians on a "spiritual walkabout", yearning to satisfy spiritual longings in postmodern times.

Following Peters Berger's taxonomy of religiosity in a secular, demythologized age, Emberly shows one of four manifestations of spirituality in the postmodern world is what he terms "Traditionalism II", the seeking out of historical, sensual expressions of Christianity, "reaffirming the authority of the tradition in defiance of surrounding challenges".² One of the forms singled out is Eastern Orthodoxy, as exemplified in the case study of a non-ethnic Eastern

¹ Peter C. Emberly, *Divine Hunger: Canadians on Spiritual Walkabout*, Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2002.

² Ibid., 22.

Orthodox parish in Edmonton.³ Emberley thereby claims Eastern Orthodoxy is proving to be a viable option as a new religious experience for some Canadian baby boomers of non-Orthodox background. Drawing his conclusion from but one instance involving just one age group, Emberley builds a solid case claiming those baby-boomers cope with modernity's disenchanting shortfalls through establishing spiritual moorings in Eastern Orthodoxy. While their numbers are few, he contends the sophistication and prominent position held by these and other converts to non-mainstream expressions of religion make their spiritual switching a potentially significant movement with noticeable impact on Canadian society.

While that limited, albeit important, movement itself shows the attraction of Eastern Orthodoxy for some, it scarcely belies the great array of factors at work putting Eastern Orthodoxy in a favorable position of Eastern Orthodoxy for expansion in Canada on a vastly larger scale. How much more then, considering the width and depth of the scope of factors in motion, is the potential for Eastern Orthodoxy to attract still many other segments of Canadian society, pushing it into the religious mainstream.

Again, the underlying basis of strength of Eastern Orthodoxy is its particular view of the Holy Trinity, the springboard for all else Orthodox. The ensuing cohesiveness has preserved that tradition through the ages in diverse

³ Ibid., 81-98.

circumstances, even carrying its present location in Canada's religious landscape.

This vision of the Holy Trinity in Eastern Orthodoxy sets it apart from other Christian traditions, not just through doctrinal formulation, but also in the place granted to that doctrine and its application, as seen in the foregoing discussion. The foundational distinction of Eastern Orthodoxy is thus theological, stemming from the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

That basic trait puts to rest any suggestion that Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada is a temporary "immigrant condition" which will fall away as the Orthodox faithful somehow become more "truly Canadian" and their religion de-ethnicized. Eventual assimilation into Roman Catholicism or Protestantism, the forms of Christianity that have been professed by most Canadians since the country's founding, is not an option for the Eastern Orthodox Church. To whatever extent the Eastern Orthodox Church may become somehow canadianized through acculturation, it will not through that process become doctrinally more Roman Catholic or Protestant.

Accompanying that clear and solid doctrinal distinction, one century of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada has seen a consistent and recurring pattern of its worshipping communities turned inward. Differences in culture, language and religious expression also set this Christian tradition apart from the Protestant and Roman Catholic majorities. The anomaly of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada has

encouraged the minority faithful to isolate themselves, creating a niche of normality for their own identity, so different from the world surrounding them. Grouping according to like language and culture and religion was the most natural avenue of protecting the group faced with the host culture which was foreign on all fronts.

Fragmentation and retention of foreign ties have not created a climate conducive for Eastern Orthodoxy to establish a foothold in mainstream Canadian society. Its language, culture, liturgy, and insistence on remaining with foreign-linked jurisdictions have contributed to largely preventing the church from attracting other Canadians. One avenue for bringing outsiders into a group, exogamy, has heretofore tended toward the Eastern Orthodox partner being assimilated into the Canadian mainstream rather than the non-Orthodox spouse becoming Eastern Orthodox. The ethnic, linguistic and national barriers presently inherent in most of Canadian Eastern Orthodoxy seem thus far to have outweighed any great attraction of doctrinal nature for the non-Orthodox.

The state of affairs within Eastern Orthodoxy has so alienated it from the majority Canadian society that any general exposure of Orthodox teaching to the outside has been, in the main, precluded. Thus, choosing "the Orthodox option" has not been an easily accessible possibility on Canadian soil, as particularly shown by the survey of the Montreal parishes. Eastern Orthodoxy remains mostly limited to those who know that branch of Christianity through their own ethno-linguistic background, or, to a lesser extent, personal theological research.

Nonetheless, that seemingly apparent situation is misleading and perhaps but transitory, about to undergo transformation. Much more is transpiring, affecting that tradition on various levels, than is revealed by too narrowly observing the dynamics directly linked to the Canadian Eastern Orthodox Church.

Tightly compressed veneers of historical experience connected with language, nationality, and ethnicity have been pressed upon the theological core of Eastern Orthodoxy. Often confused but never essentially fused with Eastern Orthodox doctrine, a degree of reversal of the veneer process is presently in process. The challenge for Eastern Orthodoxy is to remove the veneer, skillfully and carefully, without damaging the underlying tissue, as it were, to render the Eastern Orthodox faith more accessible to those without the shared historical experience of people of Eastern Orthodox tradition.

The characteristics of ethnicity, nationality, and language seemingly intrinsic to Eastern Orthodox are but accidental to the nature of that tradition. As those alien attributes are slowly stripped away through the pressure of acculturation and assimilation, the core element of theology is bared, exposed to fend for itself without the supportive props long associated with it. So thoroughly intertwined and confused the sea of essential and non-essential has been, that Eastern Orthodoxy could be easily dismissed as a tradition destined to die for lack of skills of adaptation in its new environment as its immigrant identity are less part of increasing segments of its adherents' Canadian identity.

Yet as history would have it, Canadian Eastern Orthodoxy, at the very time it is gradually experiencing the loss of centuries-old support systems, finds itself the receiver of a new set of alien and accidental circumstantial props that behoove not only its survival but also its expansion. New intermingling of theology and external forces have been thrust upon Eastern Orthodoxy in such a way that inaction is not a possibility, even if it were the desired choice.

One such crucial dynamic in motion is the reality of Christianity being altered as Modernity gives way to Postmodernity. That such change translate into a significant and sustained return to Christian Orthodoxy remains to be seen. Still, scholars and writers of the school of recovery have observed the shift to orthodoxy, are acting upon their perception of it, and thereby themselves becoming a catalyst of the transformation they hold to be possible. In Canada, then, the extent of any future movement toward orthodoxy is also unknown, but certainly has been facilitated with this window of opportunity in these postmodern times as illustrated in the "Traditionalism II cases" cited by Emberly.

While there are multifarious elements of negative and positive force factored into the equation, the reality that Eastern Orthodoxy has never before been in such a favorable position to expand in Canada is unequivocal. Considering the widening of openings for the admissibility of spirituality in the thinking of postmodern culture over and against modernism, the intense calls from within a broad spectrum of the Western church for the resurgence of classical Christianity, as well as the demographics and theology of Eastern

Orthodoxy, that church has possibilities that stretch beyond any former predictive projections. The scenarios for possible growth are many, a rather surprising situation since any expansion at all among the Eastern Orthodox in Canada was unforeseen even a decade ago.

Ironically, all the while that momentum has been mounting over the past several decades, the developments of the dynamism have come about unnoticed by virtually all observers of Canadian religion.⁴ Noticed or not, the possibility of the expansion for Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada has never been so real as in this first decade of the twenty-first century.

Moreover, Reginald Bibby states, "faiths that become too worldly are supplanted by more vigorous and less worldly ones."⁵ "Too worldly" a Christianity is precisely the situation in which the school of recovery claims Christianity finds itself within Modernity's pale. Emberly and Cotta provide empirical evidence that suggest supplantation is already underway in Canada. Eastern Orthodoxy stands to be one of the spiritual options benefiting from the transitory trends, both from the addition of people defecting from mainstream denominations, as well retention of its own faithful, repulsed by the mainstream's accommodation to the surrounding culture.

⁴ The brief Emberly study is a rare exception in the scholarly literature in Canada.

⁵ Reginald Bibby *Restless Gods*, Toronto: Stoddard Publishing Co. Limited, 2002, 60.

While Bibby claims "the worldliness of mainline churches opens the way for new religions (primarily "cults")," he elsewhere defines new religions to include those that are new to most Canadians. Ironically, Eastern Orthodoxy thus then stands to benefit from that "newness" avenue of entry as well. Unlike most newly-organized religions, most of which prove to be statistically insignificant flashes in the pan, Bibby goes on to say that those new-to-Canadians religious groups with time-tested credibility and numbers elsewhere in the world are more likely to establish themselves in Canada because of their proven stability. Indeed, unlike most other "new religions" in Canada, Eastern Orthodoxy, while yet greatly unknown to most Canadians, has the experience of more than a century of progressive growth and stability in Canada. Such proven performance makes the task of rendering that tradition accessible and attractive to the general public all the easier. Eastern Orthodoxy again emerges comparatively positive in its capacity to expand.

Never before have so many components simultaneously converged in favor of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada. First is the window of opportunity afforded by developments in the postmodern age, most notably the demise of modernist critique of Christianity. Second, is a general North American Christian consciousness of that new climate and a directional sense, toward more orthodox Christianity, in response to the situation at hand. Third, is the reality that virtually all the criteria the school of recovery identifies for a return to more orthodox Christianity, namely, Truth, historical anchoring, continuity and means to express those critical points, are found most completely in Eastern Orthodoxy. Included

in the general North American consciousness is at least a limited awareness within Eastern Orthodoxy itself of the present dynamic. Last, is an amalgamation of factors in Canada that bodes well for Eastern Orthodoxy well in comparison with all other Christian denominations, when examining growth through immigration, public perception, oriental aspects of its spirituality and a high level of denominational loyalty.

Still, the bright future is dimmed by growth-deterrent realities such as secularism, eventual assimilation into the dominant Protestant and Roman Catholic religious cultures, continued marginalization through prejudice against things foreign, extreme ethnic identification, predominant use of worship languages other than English or French, and multiculturalism, as well as the relativity of truth in postmodern culture.

There is also the possibility for Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada to slumber in the security of its relative health by comparison with large Canadian churches, creating a complacent comfort zone content with simply caring for those already in the church. That attitude could dominate if the church is preoccupied with the pressing needs of recent increased immigration of Orthodox faithful, perpetuating the role of the church as a haven of ethnic identity and adaptation, largely isolated from the surrounding culture.

Those negative components are, however, not necessarily daunting for a religious tradition that has withstood massive and prolonged persecution at the

hands of the Ottoman Turks and Communist regimes. All things considered, if ever Eastern Orthodoxy stood to expand its influence in Canada by gaining adherents from the non-Orthodox world and retaining its own membership, all the while legitimizing its place in the religious landscape, it is now, in this propitious postmodern period of the new millennium.

Another factor favoring Eastern Orthodoxy is the time bought, a certain grace period circumstantially afforded it through increased Orthodox immigration. That prolongation could allow the tradition to overcome its deterrents to expansion beyond present Orthodox boundaries and allowing for further adjustment to Canadian postmodern culture, while still enjoying vibrant church life through ethnic affinity support, and the moral booster of continuing immigration of co-religionists.

The subject treated in this dissertation is well-encapsulated in the website for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, the oldest, and until recent decades, the largest Eastern Orthodox church in Canada. Along with the Greek Orthodox Church, that church sees its membership diminished through assimilation and secularization. It has vigorously retained and defended the nearly exclusive usage of Ukrainian for worship and its role as the guardian of Ukrainian language and culture. Despite the present reality of limitations of those ethno-linguistic confines, its attractive all-English website invites everyone to come into its midst, discover and adopt the Orthodox faith, therein clearly explained through a series of easily accessible on-site documents. For those of

Ukrainian culture, the same site exhorts the Orthodox to respect and retain their faith and culture while reaching beyond their own experience with Orthodoxy and remember the catholicity of their own tradition and recognizing the desirable eventuality that Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada shall change to fit the Canadian environment. That instruction also includes the reminder that simply switching to English or French for church worship does not equate automatic expansion into the general Canadian population. The site expresses an honest picture of the status quo, while holding forth an attainable vision of things to be, thereby revealing, within at least a portion of the Canadian church, a real awareness of the situation at hand.

When all is said and done, the question of realized expansion of Eastern Orthodoxy in Canada in the twenty first century is in the realm of faith. The outcome ultimately will be played out in that domain, on its own terms: "The Spirit blows where it wills". The poverty and inefficiency of the scientific study of religion is underscored in its limited applicability in ascertaining the future behavior of the future Eastern Orthodox church in Canada. The direction of that uncertain behavior could lead to the flourishing or failure of the tradition as an integrated, regular feature of the Canadian religious landscape. If Eastern Orthodoxy chooses to hinder itself and does not seize the timely situation at hand, the window of opportunity could be reduced to one of no access to the things the promising view affords.

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APPENDIX A

Summary of responses to questionnaire

QUESTIONS

MAIN LANGUAGE USED:

1. Liturgy The Orthodox Church of America – Canadian section uses predominately English, then Church Slavonic at Sign of the Theotokos ; The Orthodox Church of America – Canadian section uses predominately French then Church Slavonic at Saint Benoit de Nursie; all other respondents indicated that liturgies are served in the language indicated by the geographic tag in the church name, i.e. Greek, Russian, Arabic (Antiochan), Ukrainian.

2. Administrative The Orthodox Church of America – Canadian section uses predominately English at Sign of the Theotokos; The Orthodox Church of America – Canadian section uses French at Saint Benoit de Nursie; The Orthodox Church of America – Romanian Church of the Annunciation uses Romanian and French; all other respondents indicated that administrative matters are in the language indicated by the geographic tag in the church name, i.e. Greek, Russian, Arabic (Antiochan), Ukrainian, with English.

3. Parish functions (study groups, retreats, social, home visits) all respondents indicated that extra-liturgical communication is in whatever language that could be used to best communicate with the participants

4. Home languages of parishioners (%) No parish was in the position to accurately answer this question. Except for the Ukrainians, comments were consistently made about recent influxes of Eastern Orthodox immigrants swelling the membership ranks and making the language of church national origin necessary

5. Place of birth of parishioners (%) No parish was in the position to accurately answer this question

CATECHUMENS

1. How is a non-Orthodox individual received into church membership? **all respondents indicated the same general practice : Roman Catholic converts are accepted by Chrismation, all others through Baptism and Chrismation, or decided by individual cases.**

A. Proselyte

I. Christian

- a. RC
- b. Anglican/Lutheran (as per new agreements)
- c. Protestant
- d. Monophysite
- e. Nestorian

II. Non-Christian

B. Eastern Orthodox

What is catechetical content for members?) **all respondents indicated that each individual is treated according to his background**

What is the duration of instruction given?) **all respondents indicated that each individual is treated according to his background**

What is the language of instruction?) **all respondents indicated that whatever language used to best communicate would be used**

What is the language of the instruction material? **all respondents indicated that whatever language used to best communicate would be used.**

WORSHIP

1. What is the language of devotional reading provided by the parish?
The Orthodox Church of America – Canadian section provides

predominately English materials at Sign of the Theotokos along with French and Russian ; The Orthodox Church of America – Canadian section provides predominately French materials at Saint Benoit de Nursie; all other respondents indicated that materials are in the language indicated by the geographic tag in the church name, i.e. Greek Russian, Arabic (Antiochan), Ukrainian.

2. What is the country of origin of devotional materials? Only Ukrainian materials are from Canada. French Orthodox materials are from France, English ones from the United States, Russian and Greek materials are from Russia, Greece and the United States; Romanian materials are from Romania; Serbian materials are from Serbia; Arabic materials are from Syria and Lebanon.

3. Is it important to know any language other than English or French to participate fully in the liturgy? **All respondents indicated that a knowledge of the liturgical language used was important**

4. Is it essential to know any language other than English or French to participate fully in the liturgy? **All respondents indicated that it was not essential to know languages other than Canada's official languages. The priest from the Romanian Church of the Annunciation and the priest from the Serbian Holy Trinity parish indicated one could benefit spiritually by being present at the liturgy and praying**

MEMBERSHIP

1. In the parish, what is the approximate percentage of the members who are Canadian-born? **No parish saw itself in the position to accurately answer this question**

2. Of the Canadian-born how many had just one Orthodox parent **No parish saw itself in the position to accurately answer this question**

3. Of the Canadian-born, how many had both parents who were Orthodox? **No parish saw itself in the position to accurately answer this question**

4. Of those who had Orthodox parents, approximately what percentage are in the same jurisdiction as that of their parents? **No parish saw itself in the position to accurately answer this question**

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (religious)

1. What is the language of instruction? **In Canada, in Ukrainian and English; in the United States, Russian, Greek and English; In Serbia in Serbian; in Romania in Romanian; in Syria and Lebanon, in Arabic.**
 2. What is the language of the texts? **In Canada in Ukrainian and English; in the United States, Russian, Greek and English. In Serbia and Romania, in Serbian and Romanian, in Greece in Greek; in Syria and Lebanon, in Arabic.**
 3. Where does the instruction take place? **Only the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada trains clergy in Canada. All others are trained in the United States in Greek or Russian seminaries. Otherwise, instruction takes place in Syria and Lebanon (for Arabic speakers), or in Greece, Romania, Serbia.**
 4. Is it important to know any language other than English or French to participate fully in the theological education program?) **all respondents indicated that it was important to be able to use at least the liturgical language**
-

5. Is it essential to know any language other than English or French to participate fully in the theological education program?) **all respondents indicated that it was essential to be able to use at least the liturgical language, but that sufficient instruction could be in English or French only**
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Concluding note

In many ways the questionnaire was ill-matched for the intended audience. It may well be evidence of imposing a Canadian mindset on Eastern Orthodoxy (for example, the apparent low level of concern for tracking numbers, nearly a sacrosanct practice for most Canadian parishes and other institutions, as well as other membership particulars), and an indicator of how unassimilated that tradition is to mainstream Canada. On the other hand, the main concern, that of liturgical language usage, was very clearly answered. The one activity most commonly and often shared by the Eastern Orthodox community, as well as that most accessible to the non-Orthodox public, namely the liturgy, remains in a

language not that of every day discourse for the membership. Through habit the language is managed, though not usually completely understood.