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AND ST. PAUL, 1989–2014

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EASTERN CHRISTIANITY IN THE TWIN CITIES: THE CHURCHES OF MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL, 1989–2014

by

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MINNESOTA’S Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches have provided spiritual and social homes to generations of Slavic, Greek, and other parishioners since the nineteenth century.¹ The Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul emerged as a center for Eastern Christianity in the United States. Since 1989 European communism has collapsed, and new immigrants from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, Romania, Syria, Armenia, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and other lands have joined these congregations. This article shows how these political, economic, and demographic shifts have created new connections between parishes in this state and sister churches across the Atlantic. At the same time, Eastern Christian communities in the North Star State have been connecting in new ways with fellow Minnesotans.

Twenty-five years have brought significant changes to the vibrant and diverse Eastern Christian churches of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.² This study expands on a 1989 article, “Heirs of Byzantium: Eastern Christianity in Minnesota,” published soon after the 1988 commemoration of a millennium of Christianity among Eastern Slavs.³ Twenty-five years have passed since, and the landscape has changed significantly—in the world, and in Minnesota.⁴

A wide variety of leaders and groups took the first steps for Eastern Christianity in this region. Fr. Alexis Toth served as a pioneer during the earliest days. The Orthodox Church in America canonized Toth in 1994, in part for his role in guiding many Rusyns (also known as Ruthenians, members of a Slavic ethnic group with roots in eastern Europe) from the Austro-Hungarian empire into the Russian Orthodox Church. He had not anticipated this role when he came to Minnesota. Toth, a Catholic priest, planned to shepherd new Rusyn immigrants who had recently arrived from Austria-Hungary to work in the state. They began to arrive in the late 1870s, and in 1887 commenced building their own edifice in the city of Minneapolis; this group named their

parish St. Mary's Greek Catholic Church. Toth requested the authorization of local Roman Catholic archbishop John Ireland for this ministry, but Ireland refused to bless Toth since he was attempting to establish a more uniform, americanized, Latin-rite church in the region. Within a short time in 1891 Toth submitted to the authority of Russian Orthodox bishop Vladimir in San Francisco. This first Orthodox church in Minnesota adopted a modified name: St. Mary's Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church. Emperor Nicholas II contributed to the building fund for the 1907 construction of the current sanctuary. In 1905 the first Orthodox theological seminary in the United States opened in Minneapolis under the direction of Archbishop Tikhon Bellavin, who led the diocese of North America from 1898 until 1907 and later served as the patriarch of Moscow from 1917 until his death in 1925.⁵

From the 1870s to 2014 Eastern Christianity in this region has demonstrated two contrasting trends. First, churches and believers have gradually integrated (to varying degrees) into the local culture, but most have not assimilated. Also, parishes and members have maintained distinctions among themselves according to patterns rooted in Europe. For example, since 1955 Eastern Slavic Minnesotans have worshiped in congregations of five different jurisdictions. This article addresses the most recent developments of twenty-five Eastern Christian parishes located in the Twin Cities; thirty-three currently function in the state.⁶ Most of the earliest congregations continue to serve today's residents, although a few have closed or merged.⁷

This research attempts to analyze the recent development of a group of churches in one area of the United States and pay attention to several trends. As one scholar has written,

Now as in the past, Orthodox Christians in America face the challenge of adapting to the American context, reaching out in witness and mission, without sacrificing their Old World cultural and spiritual heritage. How they will respond to this challenge, given sociological changes in America and political changes on the global level, remains to be seen. The story of Orthodoxy is more complex than the general church historians and jurisdictional spokesmen have sometimes suggested. It is not simply the story of immigrants and their gradual adjustment to American life. Neither is it simply the story of efforts to recreate a mythical primordial unity. The story is as rich and variegated as the story of America itself.⁸

This study intentionally focuses on a relatively small group of churches in an attempt to provide a significant case study of congregational development; it is a response to the following challenge: "While it is the parishes which make up the 'flesh and blood' of these jurisdictions, there has been little serious effort to study these communities of faith in a manner which is realistic, honest and free from triumphalism."⁹

Jurisdiction and Parish Summary

Before 1917, there was only one Orthodox hierarchy in the United States guiding the ethnic and linguistic mosaic of churches. The diversity of cultures did not conflict with a unity of organization.¹⁰ A multiplicity of jurisdictions formed after 1917 due to events in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Minnesota's Eastern Christian parishes have maintained various forms of connection with their related bodies on the other side of the Atlantic. These links form the basis of the multiple dioceses which oversee these bodies. In the United States over twenty major Eastern Christian jurisdictions function; in Minnesota there are sixteen. Church leaders have categorized them as Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, or Eastern Catholic. The majority of Orthodox Christians associate within one of two families of churches, Eastern or Oriental. The Oriental bodies rejected the theological language adopted by the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., which stated that Jesus Christ is one person with a divine nature and a human nature. Each family includes churches of different organizational jurisdictions and distinctive traditions, but they all minister in full communion with each other based on doctrinal unity. Eastern Catholics follow many of the traditions of Orthodoxy but submit to the authority of the pope in Rome.¹¹ In recent gatherings, representatives of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox bodies agreed that they shared the same faith; they are currently working toward the reestablishment of full communion.¹²

By 1906, Minnesota provided a home to more than 1,600 members of Eastern Orthodox churches. By 2010, this number had increased to over 7,500 (including Oriental). In this year, Minnesota held the twenty-fifth highest state population of Orthodox Christians. California topped the list with nearly 152,000, followed by New York and Illinois. Minnesota included the twenty-second highest number of parishes, by state—31. California had 266.¹³

Eastern Orthodox

Seven Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions maintain parishes in Minnesota. The roots of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) extend back to the initiation of missionary work by Russians in Alaska. In 1970, the patriarch of Moscow recognized the OCA as autocephalous, able to appoint its own bishops. Four OCA congregations minister to the Twin Cities area: St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral (northeast Minneapolis), Holy Trinity Orthodox Church (north St. Paul), St. Herman's Orthodox Church (south Minneapolis), and St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church (Eagan, a southern suburb of St. Paul). These four usually celebrate the Divine Liturgy in English. Fr. Andrew Morbey began his service at St. Mary's in 2003, and in 2012 the parish celebrated its 125th anniversary.¹⁴ Holy Trinity was founded in 1916 and had declined by the 1980s; Fr. Jonathan Proctor came to Holy Trinity in 1990, and the congregation plans to celebrate his 25th anniversary in 2015. This community experienced strong growth during the 1990s, and since 2000 expansion has continued at a slower rate. Holy Trinity has added many convert parishioners and

developed a number of leaders who have enrolled in seminary and received ordination as priests.¹⁵ St. Herman's was founded in 1976 as a mission with the support of St. Mary's. The founders intended to celebrate the liturgy in English, practice ministry in a way that is accessible to more Americans, and emphasize Christian education for children. In 1992 leaders purchased a building from a Lutheran congregation in south Minneapolis. St. Mary's sent Fr. Paul Wesche to serve the liturgy at St. Herman's for the first Sunday in the new building; he received a permanent appointment later that year. Most members are converts from other religious heritages: 85 percent are from non-Orthodox backgrounds, while 15 percent are from Slavic, Greek, Romanian, or Syrian families.¹⁶ Fr. Marc Boulos has ministered with St. Elizabeth's since its founding as a mission in 2003. He had been active at Holy Trinity and served with St. Mary's Cathedral after seminary. Fr. Paul Tarazi, biblical studies professor at St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary in New York, has mentored him in this work. The parish currently meets in a converted warehouse in Eagan and plans to build a new building.¹⁷

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) organized in 1920 with a statement of independence from the patriarch of Moscow; leaders held a strong anti-Communist position. In 2007 ROCOR formally re-established communion with the patriarch of Moscow but has retained its autonomy. Local parishes include St. Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church (Minneapolis), founded in 1955, and the Russian Orthodox Church and Skete of the Resurrection of Christ (in Fridley, a northern suburb of Minneapolis), established in 1986 (a skete is a form of monastic community). Fr. Antony Alekseyenko has served St. Panteleimon's since 2012; Fr. Eugene Grushetsky had led the congregation for sixteen years from 1995 until 2011.¹⁸ Fr. Antony believes that the three most significant recent developments for this parish are the arrival of new immigrants from Russia, the reconciliation of ROCOR with the Moscow Patriarchate in 2007, and the departure of several parish members after the 2007 events led by Metropolitan Laurus. St. Panteleimon's celebrates 70 percent of the Divine Liturgy in the traditional Slavonic language, since most members are recent arrivals.¹⁹ Fr. John Magramm has led the Resurrection of Christ church and skete since its founding. Fr. John Cavin, a protodeacon, has served there for four years. This is the only Russian Orthodox monastery in Minnesota; the brotherhood has four members and celebrates the Divine Liturgy in the traditional Slavonic language.²⁰

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States functions as an autonomous organization under the authority of the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey). Its parishes include St. Michael's and St. George's Ukrainian Orthodox Church (northeast Minneapolis) and St. Katherine Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Arden Hills, a northern suburb of St. Paul). St. Michael's and St. George's received its new name in 2002 after the merger of two bodies which had been established in 1925 and 1950; Fr. Evhen Kumka has served here since 1995, conducting services in Ukrainian and English.²¹ St. Katherine's consecrated its magnificent new Baroque building in 1997; formerly the congregation had been known as Saints Volodymyr and Olga Ukrainian Orthodox Church since its 1951 founding in St. Paul. Fr. Peter Siwko began his service here in 1998, and the parish celebrated its 60th anni-

versary in 2011. Fr. Peter offers the Divine Liturgy in Ukrainian and English on alternating Sundays.²²

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America also operates under the authority of the ecumenical patriarch; it serves St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church (Minneapolis) and St. George Greek Orthodox Church (St. Paul). Services at both locations are primarily in English but include prayers in Greek. St. Mary's, founded in 1903, was the sixth Greek congregation in the United States. Fr. George Dokos began his ministry as the senior priest in 2014; Fr. Paul Paris filled this role from 2006 to 2014, and Fr. Thomas Alatzakis ministered as assistant priest from 2012 to 2014. Fr. Harry Pappas also made a number of significant contributions during his leadership from 1995 to 2006.²³ Fr. Richard (Rick) Demetrius Andrews has led St. George's since 1999; the parish plans to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its 1940 founding in 2015.²⁴

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America carries out ministry with autonomy under the patriarch of Antioch (Damascus, Syria). St. George's Antiochian Orthodox Church (West St. Paul) was established in 1913; Fr. Thomas Begley has served the parish since 2006.²⁵

The Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas operates under the authority of the patriarch of Bucharest and directs St. Stefan Romanian Orthodox Church (South St. Paul). Also, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America is a diocese of the OCA. These two Romanian jurisdictions operate in full communion with each other but have functioned independently since 1951. The episcopate oversees St. Mary Romanian Orthodox Church (north St. Paul), founded in 1913. The parish celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2013; Fr. Mircea Vasiiu has served here since 2010.²⁶ St. Stefan's was established in 1924 and celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2014. Fr. Ioan Poptelecan has ministered there since 2005.²⁷ A conversation on the reunification of the Romanian jurisdictions began in the late 1990s but has not concluded. These two congregations maintain friendly relations; over the years several clergymen have worked with both parishes.²⁸ Each celebrates the Divine Liturgy in Romanian, but St. Mary's incorporates English more frequently.

The Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America was established under the authority of the patriarch of Belgrade. St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church (South St. Paul), founded in 1952, follows this leadership and celebrates the Divine Liturgy in a combination of English and traditional Serbian. Fr. Slobodan Spasic began serving at St. Sava's in 1995. Several years ago a fire damaged the building, but restoration has been completed. In 1963 a schism took place within the Serbian parishes in the United States; leaders held different perceptions of relations to the hierarchy in Yugoslavia. In 1990 priests made an effort to reunite U.S. Serbian churches after the fall of communism; the reconciliation took place in the 1990s, but the process has required time. After the 1963 split, Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church separated from St. Sava's. Holy Trinity recently closed for financial reasons, and the remaining members joined St. Sava's parish. For five years, leaders have worked through the process of the merger; the executive board has incorporated members from both congregations.²⁹

Oriental Orthodox

Five Oriental jurisdictions have authorized parishes for Minnesota's Armenian, Coptic, Eritrean, and Ethiopian communities. The Armenian congregation ministers under the direction of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Etchmiadzin.³⁰ St. Sahag Armenian Church (St. Paul) met for its first service in 2001. Fr. Tadeos, the first full-time permanent priest, arrived in 2012. During the 1980s a community of Twin Cities Armenians met once a month for worship on Saturday evenings. This group purchased and renovated the current building, which had been built in 1912 by Presbyterians. The priest conducts the liturgy in traditional Armenian and preaches using contemporary Armenian, Russian, and English.³¹

The Coptic Orthodox Church Archdiocese of North America operates under the authority of the pope in Cairo, Egypt. The Coptic archdiocese was established in 1990; St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church (South St. Paul) serves these believers. The church's roots go back to 1963, when worship services were organized by Egyptian students at the University of Minnesota; the congregation was registered in 1971. A building in South St. Paul was purchased in 1981, and a full-time priest was hired. Fr. Youannes Tawfik has ministered since 1999, and in 2000 the parish moved into its current building.³² Service languages include English (80 percent), Arabic, and ancient (thirteenth-century) Coptic.³³

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo (unified) Church received autocephaly in 1959 from the Coptic Orthodox Church. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Our Savior has met in Minneapolis since the late 1980s. At first the congregation worshipped at St. Panteleimon's and St. Mary's Greek. The parish purchased a building from a Lutheran group which had declined to seventeen members; the building was consecrated in 1997 during a visit from an Ethiopian bishop, who brought a symbolic *tabot*, ark of the covenant, to be placed under the altar.³⁴ Fr. Getahun Mekonnen recently began leading the parish, celebrating liturgy in the traditional Ge'ez language and preaching in contemporary Amharic. On Sundays members begin to meet around 4:00 a.m. for prayer and gather until 11:00 a.m., with times for the liturgy, hymn singing with drums and other Ethiopian instruments, liturgical dancing, and sermon.³⁵

The leaders of the five Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Churches of the Twin Cities maintain few active connections with other Oriental or Eastern parishes. These five have also recently separated from one another for a variety of political, cultural, and leadership reasons. The Church of Our Savior, which has not been affiliated with the patriarch and synod in Ethiopia since the early 1990s, has been supervised by an Ethiopian bishop in Jerusalem who visits Minnesota once a year. St. Mary's Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church in St. Paul, led by Fr. David Berhane, remains under the supervision of the patriarch and synod in Ethiopia. Many members of St. Mary's speak Tigrigna, one of the languages of northern Ethiopia (and Eritrea). St. Ourael Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church in St. Paul, founded in 2004, is supervised by a synod-in-exile based in the United States.³⁶

The Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church of North America functions under the authority of the Patriarchate of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church, which was organized in 1994 after separation from the Ethiopian hierarchy. St. Gabriel Eritrean Tewahedo Orthodox Church conducts liturgy in ancient Ge'ez and preaching in contemporary Tigrigna. The congregation, established in 1998–99, meets in St. Paul under the leadership of Fr. Hailemariam Keleta. Before its formal organization, Minnesota Eritreans worshipped with Coptic and Greek parishes in the 1970s and 1980s, and with Ethiopians in the early 1990s.³⁷ Holy Trinity Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church was established on the east side of St. Paul in 2013, led by Fr. Marikos Debas.³⁸ This group purchased the building previously owned by St. Stephen's Ukrainian Catholic Church.

Eastern Catholic

Four Eastern Catholic parishes serve the Twin Cities: St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church (northeast Minneapolis), St. Constantine's Ukrainian Catholic Church (northeast Minneapolis), St. Maron Catholic Church (northeast Minneapolis), and Holy Family Maronite Church (Mendota Heights, a southern suburb of St. Paul). Papal documents affirm the legitimacy of the distinctives of Eastern Catholic traditions, but these congregations are not always viewed as fully legitimate members of the global Catholic Church.³⁹ Latinization has been one of the primary challenges of these Catholic parishes in the twentieth century; leaders have modified traditional practices in order to conform to the practices of Latin-rite counterparts. Two of the most visible examples of latinization are removals of the iconostasis and the prohibition of marriage for clergy after the 1929 papal decree *Cum Data Fuerit*. Recently, Eastern Catholic bodies in the United States have been pursuing liturgical reform by seeking to balance the need for traditional authenticity of practices with the need for contemporary accessibility.⁴⁰ The Second Vatican Council led to improved relations between Rome and Eastern Catholic communities and issued statements against latinization.⁴¹ St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church was established in 1907, and Fr. Ihar Labacevich arrived just before the celebration of its hundred-year anniversary in 2007. Services are conducted in both English and Slavonic.⁴² St. Constantine Ukrainian Catholic Church was founded in 1913; the current building was completed in 1972. Fr. Michael Stelmach began ministry here in 1992. A series of events commemorating the hundredth anniversary took place in 2013: prayer gatherings, dinners, concerts, and fundraisers. Services are conducted both in Ukrainian and in English. A sister parish, St. Stephen's Ukrainian Catholic Church in St. Paul, closed in 2012 after sixty-two years of ministry.⁴³ The history of St. Maron Catholic Church began with the first Maronite liturgy celebrated by Lebanese immigrants in Minneapolis in 1903; Monsignor Sharbel Maroun has served since 1989. Holy Family Maronite Church was established in 1918, and Fr. Emmanuel Nakhleh initiated his ministry in 2014. Both congregations use the Syriac-Aramaic language for the liturgy.⁴⁴

This article explores five aspects of Eastern Christian life in Minnesota: the cultivation of parish ministries, the experiences of connecting with new immigrants within these churches, the evolution of inter-parish interaction, the development of relationships with other religious and community groups, and the expansion of global connections.⁴⁵

Cultivation of Parish Life

The churches of the Twin Cities each carry out ministry in unique ways, but six themes stand out in recent interviews with leaders: the creation of new congregations, building renovation, outreach efforts, educational programs, monastic inspiration, and ethnic heritage.

Since 1989 the Twin Cities have gained seven new Eastern Christian parishes which are open today; most, including one Armenian, three Ethiopian, and two Eritrean congregations, focus on serving a particular ethnic community.⁴⁶ In contrast, St. Elizabeth's reaches out to a wider range of participants, from American converts to immigrants from several countries.⁴⁷ Eastern Christian parishes are communities of believers who gather to live out their faith in Jesus Christ as part of the universal Church of Christ. The primary goal is to honor God through worship (the Divine Liturgy), teaching (education), and service (ministry). Priests lead each parish, and bishops provide supervision for the priests; no Eastern Christian bishops reside in Minnesota.⁴⁸

Several churches in Minnesota illustrate the architectural legacy of the Byzantine era. One of the central convictions of Eastern worship is the belief in the corporate character of the human relationship with God. The focus is less on the individual and more on the church as a community joined in worship; through the Divine Liturgy, the congregation communicates with God. The church building provides the location of this encounter—where heaven and earth meet. The Byzantine-style dome which crowns many structures marks the point of this connection; the interior of the dome is painted with an image of Christ in glory and draws the focus of the worshiper up into the expanse of heaven. Beneath the dome is the sanctuary, set apart from laypeople by a screen, the iconostasis, which is covered with rows of icons of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the Evangelists, the apostles, saints, and patriarchs. The sanctuary holds the altar and is accessible only to priests and assistants, who move between the sanctuary and the congregation through the north, south, and central “royal” doors.⁴⁹

Several Twin Cities churches have recently renovated their worship spaces: St. Mary's Cathedral, Holy Trinity, St. George's Greek, St. John's, and others have reshaped their interiors in order to improve the environment for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Since the 1970s, an influential liturgical renewal movement, encouraged by the writings of Alexander Schmemmann and Paul Meyendorff, has focused on the celebration of the Eucharist.⁵⁰ This liturgical revival has made a profound impression on Orthodox parish life in the United States.⁵¹

One aspect of liturgical renewal has been the creation of new icons in traditional styles. Debra Korluka, a local iconographer, has created new icons for several Minnesota communities. She has studied in Kiev and Moscow, where she worked with Fr. Xenon (Theodore). Her works reside in a number of Twin Cities churches, including St. Mary's Greek, St. George's Antiochian, and St. John's.⁵² Her artistic and ministry journey developed as she began to lead group tours for Minnesotans to Ukraine and Russia with a focus on art and culture; she cultivated relationships within the artistic and faith communities of these countries and was invited to exhibit her icons. She continued painting and teaching in Minnesota and developed connections with a variety of religious and cultural institutions. The Roman Catholic Basilica of St. Mary contacted her twenty years ago, and the conversation led to the annual Icon Festival, held each year in November at the Basilica; events includes exhibits of icons, lectures, visits to parishes, and concerts. She taught classes on iconography at Luther Seminary in St. Paul for four years. Korluka has worked with approximately five hundred students, and fifty of these continue to actively paint icons. She is currently planning a group tour to Belarus and Lithuania along with Fr. Ihar Labacevich of St. John's.⁵³

St. Mary's Cathedral has been working since 2004 on a major church renovation project, replacing and updating icons and frescoes. The new iconography is rooted in a recovery of a more coherent understanding of Orthodox aesthetics and iconography, based on the thought of Vladimir Lossky, Leonid Uspensky, and Fotios Kontoglou.⁵⁴ Recent renovation projects at Holy Trinity have created additional space for ministry activities; the expanded narthex provides more room for the celebration of the liturgy, and the new Archangel Michael Hall houses coffee hour after services and neighborhood group events. The building now features a Russian-style onion dome and a new bell tower. Construction has led to the addition of iconography which is rooted in biblical themes rather than ethnic patron saints or recently canonized martyrs.⁵⁵ St. George's Greek has updated the interior of its building; improved skylights bring in more natural light and draw the eyes of worshipers to the new carved wood altar and iconostasis. These renovations also mark a return to traditional Byzantine iconography and aesthetics, inspired by the vision of Kontoglou.⁵⁶

From 1988 to 1992 St. John's renovated its landmark building along Byzantine lines. The first wooden structure had been built with an icon screen and no pews—following eastern European traditions. In 1926, the current brick edifice was completed; due to latinization it was identical in appearance to many Latin-rite churches in the United States, with no iconostasis and with three-dimensional western-style statues of Jesus and Mary. In the late 1980s the parish installed new icons and an iconostasis. In 2009 Fr. Ihar continued this process by adding Byzantine icons created by Debra Korluka. He is participating in a nationwide effort to bring back the Eastern roots of Byzantine Catholicism; this, however, proceeds slowly, since many members were brought up in Latin traditions. He uses adult education to help people understand the recovery of these roots; once a month during the sermon he explains some aspect of the Eastern roots of the Divine Liturgy.⁵⁷

Most Twin Cities leaders have emphasized a stronger focus on outreach to the neighboring community. For example, the priest at St. George's

Greek has initiated a number of changes in the parish to attract new members who are not sons or daughters of Greece.⁵⁸ This exemplifies a broader trend in the United States; as one scholar explained, the barriers that often kept immigrant Orthodox Christians in isolation from the broader American society have lowered. Language, educational, and vocational factors rarely separate the second and third generations from their peers.⁵⁹ Social services have recently expanded on the parish level; ministries to the elderly, homeless, and the imprisoned have increased visibility in U.S. communities—beyond annual ethnic festivals.⁶⁰ New converts from other confessions have joined many Twin City congregations; nationwide and in Minnesota, the Antiochian and OCA jurisdictions have welcomed the largest number of converts from different religious backgrounds.⁶¹ Fr. Thaddeus (Ted) Wojcik, who led St. Mary's Cathedral from 1984 to 1999, has guided many converts into the OCA churches of the Twin Cities. During the early 1980s in California he served as an advisor to Peter Gillquist (1938–2012), a native of Minnesota who led a large movement of evangelical Protestants into Orthodoxy. Currently Fr. Ted teaches theology courses at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul and occasionally speaks to student groups about the Eastern tradition.⁶² Local parishes have begun to use new means of outreach, such as the internet and social media.⁶³ The Ancient Faith Radio and Orthodox Christian Network websites attract many exploring these traditions.⁶⁴

Since 1989 St. Mary's Cathedral has cultivated a "greater openness in the [parish] community to life outside the community." Members participate in outreach and charitable ministry through pan-Orthodox organizations and other non-religious local service programs.⁶⁵ St. Mary's Greek has also developed a tradition of very active ministry; many groups in the church reach out to those in need. For example, a group of women from the parish guide weekly Bible studies in the Shakopee women's prison; the priests lead prayer for men at the Lino Lakes prison. The program Families Moving Forward hosts those in need for a temporary stay in the parish facility.⁶⁶ A primary emphasis of St. George's Greek is a transition from an ethnic to a faith orientation. Fr. Rick commented that Orthodox leaders in the United States are coming to understand that "We can't be sectarian, parochial, and still survive. . . . We need to be evangelistic, service-oriented, to help our churches grow and sustain themselves." For example, St. George's has revised the Greek Festival as a significant neighborhood outreach—building tours and open bookstore hours contribute to the new ministry emphasis.⁶⁷ Fr. Youannes also has organized the annual Coptic church festival as an outreach to the neighborhood; currently up to eight hundred people a year participate.⁶⁸

Three types of parishioners participate in Orthodox congregations in the United States: nominal "cradle" Orthodox, committed cradle believers, and converts. Nominal believers may identify with this tradition due to family connections but do not actively participate or deeply understand key beliefs and convictions. Some have become frustrated with ethnic discrimination. They have established stronger connections with others in the surrounding society and do not see the need to frequently participate in the life of church, except for baptism, weddings, funerals, and Christmas and Easter visits. Some nominal believers participate in Protestant or Catholic churches. Committed cradle

believers actively participate in the parish, and often develop a pan-Orthodox vision for service and ministry. Their faith provides a comprehensive basis for their life journey. Convert believers value the historical legacy of the church and also bring new ideas on outreach and social justice from their previous congregations. They believe that Orthodoxy must make a broader contribution within American society.⁶⁹ According to one recent sociological study, two convictions motivate most converts: the belief that Orthodoxy is the objective, universal truth and the belief that they have found a genuine community.⁷⁰ Converts to parishes with one dominant ethnic population occasionally experience “ethnic alienation” from members who resent “outsider” participation in their parish.⁷¹ One recent study attempted to measure the percentage of converts within the two largest Eastern jurisdictions in the United States, Greek Orthodox and the OCA. The study concluded that approximately 29 percent of parishioners in Greek churches are converts, along with 12 percent of the clergy. This dynamic is even more common in the OCA: over half of its members are converts, with 59 percent of the clergy.⁷² Recently, a significant number of converts from evangelical Protestant congregations have come to the Antiochian Orthodox Church. These parishes have actively made connections with a wide variety of Americans while focusing less attention on their own ethnic heritage.⁷³ The Antiochian Archdiocese has utilized church growth principles developed by faculty of the evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California: “a conscious decision has been made to reappropriate some aspects of Evangelical praxis within an Orthodox framework.”⁷⁴ As one researcher concluded:

[Antiochian] Metropolitan Philip is an ardent advocate of evangelizing America, saving souls, planting churches, facilitating Orthodox unity for the purpose of presenting a stronger mission, breaking down ethnic barriers between the Orthodox jurisdictions, using the English language for worship, and for contextualizing Orthodox worship to be more accessible to the American culture.⁷⁵

In spite of the increasing number of converts, most parishes grow very slowly. One study concluded that the majority of U.S. priests make very few visits or phone calls in order to reach out to potential worshipers, Sunday visitors, or newcomers in the neighborhood. Also, very few church members attempt to connect with prospective members. At a time when many Christian denominations operate extensive departments focused on communicating the message of Christianity and increasing the number of members, some leaders in the United States have identified this as a topic of concern.⁷⁶ On the other hand, as priests attempt to make connections in their communities, they are trying to avoid the extremes of income-driven marketing programs and cultural isolation: “all American Orthodox Churches are currently experiencing a deep-seated tension as they attempt to contextualize their Orthodox theology, ethos, world view, identity, and sense of mission in a modernized American society.”⁷⁷

Eastern Christian leaders desire that new members regularly join the parish, and they also hope that very few members or children choose to leave or drift into inactivity. Greek and OCA clergy and parishioners agree that the

most urgent ministry issue is young people leaving the faith. Interfaith and interconfessional marriages are topics of significant concern to many today. Technically, an Orthodox believer who marries a non-Christian excommunicates him/herself from the church and may not receive the sacraments.⁷⁸ Leading sociologist of religion Peter Berger has noted:

I find it interesting that there are two, seemingly contradictory trends to be observed. One trend is the increasing rate of intermarriage—that is, of Orthodox individuals marrying non-Orthodox spouses—apparently with the result that the offspring of these marriages tend to be non-Orthodox. . . . The other trend is a still numerically small but significant movement *into* the Orthodox community by individual converts.⁷⁹

Approximately two thirds of all marriages conducted in Greek Orthodox churches in the United States are interconfessional; if one counts marriages taking place outside these parishes, over three fourths of all marriageable adult members are marrying non-Orthodox spouses.⁸⁰

A tension has grown in many parishes between those who attempt to adapt to the surrounding culture to serve the spiritual needs of the next generation and those who seek to guard the ancient languages and ethnic customs. This tension centers on the appropriate degree of adaptation.⁸¹ Greek Orthodox leaders in the United States have usually adopted a moderate posture toward American culture; they have attempted to preserve aspects of Greek culture while also making changes in response to American norms.⁸²

Since 1989, many churches in the United States have increased the level of attention paid to religious education and spiritual formation. Most priests believe that children and adults need opportunities to strengthen their faith and develop bonds with other parish members—if they are to remain actively committed. For these reasons, a number of leaders in Minnesota have highlighted education programs for adults—classes, retreats, and study groups. St. Elizabeth's has set the study and application of the biblical text as a priority. Their Ephesus School meets weekly for an in-depth study of the Bible. Recently, the majority of members of this parish invested one full year to study the book of Ezekiel. The Minnesota Bible Lecture Series also meets two times a year at St. Elizabeth's to provide biblical teaching at a more scholarly level. Richard Benton, a Hebrew language specialist, assists Fr. Marc in teaching for the Ephesus School; they also participate in the Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies, a program organized in 1999.⁸³ The presses of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology have produced a wide range of works on theology and history and have increased the visibility of this tradition among English-speaking Christians.⁸⁴

One of the most influential Eastern Christian leaders for the United States in the field of Christian education, Constance Tarasar (1938–2014) grew up at St. Mary's Cathedral. She was the first woman to receive an M.Div. degree from St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York and later received an Ed.D. from the State University of New York at Albany. She served as the executive secretary of the Orthodox Christian Education Com-

mission for several years and as instructor of religious education courses at St. Vladimir's. Tarasar created a tremendous amount of curriculum material for children and youth which has been used in several jurisdictions around the United States. She believed that the Orthodox tradition should engage the minds and lives of youth.⁸⁵ Women such as Tarasar have made a substantial contribution to Eastern Christian life and ministry in the United States. Another influential Orthodox woman in Minnesota, Magdaline Bovis (1926–2015), an active longtime member of St. Mary's Greek, has spoken on matters of faith for a wide variety of ecumenical organizations and has represented her jurisdiction on the Minnesota Council of Churches.⁸⁶ Nationwide, 14 percent of Greek Orthodox and 6 percent of OCA parishioners support the ordination of women to the priesthood; higher percentages support women ministering as deacons and altar servers. In comparison, among Roman Catholic parishioners in the United States, nearly two thirds favor the ordination of women.⁸⁷

St. Mary's Greek has developed a large active ministry program for children and students; young people meet six hours per month with leaders, four for Sunday School and two for additional meetings. Groups gather by age level: preschool, young elementary (Hope Group), older elementary (Joy Group), middle school (junior GOYA, Greek Orthodox Youth of America), and high school (senior GOYA).⁸⁸ St. Sahag, a smaller parish, also has developed a strong focus on ministry to children; it provides classes in Armenian reading and writing as well as Bible classes. Fr. Tadeos presents children's sermons once a month. Every year, young people participate in a diocesan summer camp near Chicago and attend conferences supported by the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America. St. Sahag's recently began to celebrate an annual Armenian Festival; in 2014 approximately three hundred adults and children attended.⁸⁹ At St. Mary's Coptic, Fr. Youannes established a Sunday School program in 2000. Currently, the church is renovating its children's classrooms, where volunteers teach the Bible and the Coptic language to young people. Approximately thirty students from the parish currently study at the University of Minnesota; in 2001 the parish organized a student ministry with a Bible study program, and in 2011 the students registered their group as an official student group, the Coptic Orthodox Christian Association.⁹⁰ St. Mary's Greek has sent a number of young people to study at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Fr. Thomas Alatzakis knows four parishioners who have recently studied there—two are now priests in other states. Harry Boosalis, professor in dogmatic theology at St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, was a member of this congregation.⁹¹

Since 1989, monastic spirituality has increased in influence on U.S. believers.⁹² For example, Kyriakos Markides's books have reached many: *Inner River: A Pilgrimage to the Heart of Christian Spirituality* (2012) and others express the spiritual teachings of the monastic movement in a lively and engaging style for laypeople.⁹³ Groups from St. Herman's make an annual pilgrimage in July to the Holy Dormition of the Mother of God Orthodox Monastery near Jackson, Michigan (affiliated with the Romanian episcopate of the OCA). The parish has sent groups every year since 2006; currently an average of twenty members participate. The goal is to experience the life of the monastery,

which is the home of Fr. Roman Braga, an elderly priest who was imprisoned in Romania for his faith.⁹⁴

Several churches continue to make a significant effort to preserve and promote their ethnic communities. Occasionally, this is combined with an emphasis on outreach. For example, many in the area surrounding St. Constantine's know the parish for its weekly Friday sales of *perohi* (filled Ukrainian dumplings). Leaders view serving and selling *perohi* as an outreach. People from the neighborhood come to help; 30 percent of the volunteers are not members. In an average week, thirty takeout orders are received, and eighty-five people eat on site; this project raises over thirty thousand dollars a year. Holodomor services, remembering the victims of the Ukrainian famines of the 1930s, are held once a year, sponsored by St. Constantine's and the Ukrainian Orthodox parishes of the Twin Cities. The Cardinal Josyf Slipyi Museum displays Ukrainian cultural items—embroidery, pottery, wedding bread, and photographs.⁹⁵ St. Constantine's ninetieth anniversary book strongly stresses the contributions of Ukrainians to world culture.⁹⁶ According to a recent study, 26 percent of Orthodox churches in the United States make conscious efforts to preserve their ethnic identity, 25 percent make some effort, and 48 percent do not make any effort.⁹⁷

Connection with New Immigrants

Leonid Kishkovsky has summarized the life of Eastern Christianity in the United States in this way:

The streams of immigrants from the Middle East and Central and Eastern Europe continued through the decades, sometimes representing waves of economic immigration, sometimes representing waves of political refugees who were fleeing from totalitarian regimes and wars, and sometimes slowing down or even stopping. Today, there is a renewal of immigration from the post-communist societies.⁹⁸

In general, the movement of the nineteenth century was more voluntary and motivated by economic need, while the process of the first half of the twentieth century was forced by political developments. Since 1990, immigration has depended on both economic and political factors. Examples of events which have led to emigration to Minnesota include World War II (Romanians, Serbians, Ukrainians, Russians), the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus in 1974 (Greek Cypriots), wars in the 1980s (Arabs, Syrians, Armenians), the 1988 Armenian earthquake and war in Karabakh, and conflicts during the collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. After forced migrations, immigrants often view themselves as members of their ethnic diaspora; and their respective congregations may see their role as an extension of the mother church in the homeland. This experience may lead to less outreach to those of the surrounding society who are not members of the community. Service focuses on those in need of occupational, financial, legal, and educational assistance. In addition, these com-

munities value the preservation of their cultural and religious identity and distinctives. Therefore, they often continue to use their traditional language (rather than English) for worship. They often organize full-time or part-time schools for children which offer instruction in the language, literature, history, and geography of the home country.⁹⁹ In the United States, approximately one fourth of Orthodox parishes use a first language other than English.¹⁰⁰

The first wave of Eastern Slavic immigration to Minnesota took place from the 1880s until 1917, primarily for economic reasons. A smaller second wave came from 1917 into the 1920s, usually for political reasons. The larger third wave arrived from 1945 until around 1955 with those displaced by World War II. A new fourth wave came after 1989, often for economic reasons. Over 80 percent of the state's fifty thousand Russian-speaking residents have come since 1990. Many immigrants from Eastern Europe have recently come, but relatively few have joined Orthodox parishes. A local leader has estimated that for every one hundred new Slavic Minnesotans, only one joins an Orthodox congregation.¹⁰¹ Many in this area are Jews, Baptists, or Pentecostals, but a significant number do not participate in any religious organization.

Four paths to permanent residence status exist in the United States: employment (including religious workers), the diversity lottery, family, and refugee asylum. The diversity lottery provides visas to residents of countries which are less represented in the United States; the government occasionally adjusts the lottery limits for each country. From 1989 to 2014, U.S. immigration laws did not change significantly, but economic and other factors inside the countries of origin have changed.¹⁰²

As mentioned earlier, recent immigration to Minnesota has contributed significantly toward change during the last twenty-five years. Of course, this process has influenced parishes in different ways. One group of churches has fundamentally changed in recent years. For example, the current membership of the two ROCOR parishes includes almost entirely recent Russian-speaking immigrants. The Resurrection of Christ church started out with an English-language ministry, but now conducts all services in Slavonic.¹⁰³ Recent immigration has strongly influenced the Ukrainian, Romanian, Serbian, Armenian, Coptic, Eritrean, and Ethiopian congregations as well. OCA parishes have been less strongly influenced, since they worship primarily in English. Nevertheless, they have welcomed new members from abroad and responded to their needs and preferences. For example, St. Mary's Cathedral has offered occasional services in Slavonic.¹⁰⁴ The two Greek communities have experienced the least amount of change, due to the small number of recent immigrants from Greece and Cyprus. Leaders and members of these churches have interacted with many through a variety of pan-Orthodox programs.¹⁰⁵ Immigrants encounter and benefit from a more organized ministry approach in the United States.¹⁰⁶ For example, congregations in the United States offer Christian education programs for children more frequently than in Europe, the Middle East, or Africa.

Approximately 10 percent of St. Mary's Cathedral parish members are recent arrivals; the majority are from Belarus, while others are Russians from former Soviet republics, such as Estonia and Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁷ At Holy Trinity, approximately 10 percent of parish participants are new arrivals; six Russian-

speaking families have joined.¹⁰⁸ St. Elizabeth's, which includes families of Arab, Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, and American (convert) cultural backgrounds, has incorporated several recent immigrant families. The liturgy is celebrated in English, but Arabic, Greek, and Russian are used as well.¹⁰⁹ During the 1990s few new immigrants worshipped at St. Panteleimon's—about half were American converts and half were members from previous generations. Several members left after the 2007 reunion with the Moscow Patriarchate and joined parishes of other jurisdictions.¹¹⁰

The membership of St. Mary's Greek is approximately 80 percent Greek-American; the Divine Liturgy is celebrated in English, and very few recent immigrants are involved.¹¹¹ There has been very little movement from Greece since the 1970s. Since 1990 the amount of English used in the worship service at St. George's Greek has increased: 80 to 90 percent is in English, 10 to 20 percent is in Greek, but both languages are used for the Lord's Prayer, creed, and gospel.¹¹²

New immigration is the basis for the existence of St. Mary's Romanian; according to Fr. Mircea, the church would have closed without these members. Now, 80 percent of the congregation is made up of recent arrivals from Romania and Moldova. In the 1970s and 1980s services were celebrated in English; currently, the liturgy is 50 percent in Romanian and 50 percent in English. The Sunday school program for children is in English.¹¹³ Approximately 75 percent of active parish members of St. Stefan's came after 1989. They worship in Romanian, unless Fr. Ioan sees guests in attendance; he uses English for Sunday school and for children's prayers during the liturgy.¹¹⁴ In the 1990s many came to the United States from Serbia to escape warfare and economic hardships. Approximately 35 percent of current St. Sava parish members are new immigrants, who have come to Minnesota since 1990s.¹¹⁵

St. Sahag's celebrates the liturgy in classical Armenian; Fr. Tadeos presents the sermon in a combination of English, contemporary Armenian, and occasionally Russian, depending on those present. The 1980s and 1990s brought an increase in immigration, but this process has since slowed down. In the Armenian community, members often associate within cultural sub-groups. Around 50 percent of the parish community was born to Armenian families living in the United States. Many of these had joined Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Episcopal congregations before the founding of St. Sahag; some were baptized and married in these churches, so they maintain dual connections and often worship in two services on Sundays. In addition, approximately 20 percent are from Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, 10 percent from Armenia, 10 percent from Russia, and 10 percent from Azerbaijan.¹¹⁶

Most families at St. Mary's Coptic are from Egypt and Sudan, but in the last three years a few new families from Ethiopia and Eritrea have joined. Coptic immigration began in the 1960s in response to Islamic radicalism in Egypt.¹¹⁷ Since 2007 the number of parish families has increased from 155 to 240. In 2011 the Coptic Church in Egypt faced new difficulties due to violence; fifteen additional families have moved to Minnesota as a result.¹¹⁸ At St. Mary's, Fr. Youannes personally visits all new families and provides assistance with needs. Two common issues are the language and jobs; he provides advice on language classes, continuing education, and visas. St. Mary's makes a strong

effort to provide hospitality for newcomers; the parish organizes regular welcome celebrations.¹¹⁹ The Ethiopian population in the United States began to grow after the 1974 Marxist revolution and persecution of religious leaders. Eritrean immigration increased after a 1998 border war with Ethiopia.¹²⁰ As for the Church of Our Savior, 30 percent of the current congregation came to the United States in the 1990s, and 70 percent moved to the United States after 2000.¹²¹

St. John's has very few new immigrants, although Fr. Ihar, the priest, is from Belarus.¹²² The congregation was founded by women and men who communicated in Rusyn, but now only one fluent speaker participates: Maria Schweikert, a recently retired Russian language instructor at the University of Minnesota. Her relative, Monsignor Basil Shereghy, served as a Byzantine Catholic priest at St. John's from 1958 to 1966.¹²³ Ten percent of parish members at St. Constantine's are "new wave" immigrants who have arrived from Ukraine since 1990.¹²⁴

Discussing the relationship of immigrants and ethnic churches to the surrounding Minnesota culture is a complex task, and a few social science terms can assist with describing common visible patterns. The relationship between faith and culture has been discussed by using the terms adaptation, acculturation, assimilation, and transnationalism. Adaptation refers to the process of preserving one's cultural identity (language, religion, customs, etc.) while adopting aspects of the new host culture in an effort to adjust to the new location. Acculturation refers to the modification of one culture in response to interaction (over time) with another culture. Assimilation refers to the ending of identification with one's original cultural group.¹²⁵

Transnationalism refers to the dynamic of immigrants maintaining connections and involvement with their homelands.¹²⁶ Since the 1990s this dynamic has produced tensions as newcomers have requested the use of their traditional languages and holiday dates, as practiced in their respective homelands.¹²⁷ Ties between some Orthodox groups in the United States and the Old World mother churches appear to be growing stronger. The latest waves of immigration have increased the numbers of both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox believers in America. Most of these newcomers have adjusted quickly to life in the United States, but the ease and relatively low cost of communication and travel has allowed many to maintain close contacts with family, friends, and religious authorities in their homelands. The presence of growing numbers of these believers in Minnesota and elsewhere in the United States is a vivid reminder of the diversity and vitality of the Eastern Christian tradition.¹²⁸ On the other hand, as mentioned previously, a large percentage of immigrant families do not maintain any contact with their churches after the second and third generations. Vigen Gurorian, a leading religious studies scholar, summarized his view on this dynamic:

The loss of vast numbers of my generation of American-born Armenians was not due to any failure by the Armenian Church to be Armenian or national enough. Rather, this happened because the Church sacrificed its evangelical mission and catholic teaching on the altar of a secular nationalism which was not by any stretch of the imagination the faith of the fathers and did little to

meet the spiritual needs of a generation born in America and already twice removed from the Ottoman past. I tell this sad story because it could well stand as a symbol for much of what has gone wrong with Orthodoxy in America. Ukrainians, Greeks, and Russians of the second and third generations relate similar versions of this tale. In each case, a national church uprooted from its natural soil has continued to behave as if that uprooting never happened, or at least as if the new soil into which it had been transplanted was no different than the soil from which it was removed.¹²⁹

Today's Eastern churches face a difficult task, as they try to help generations of families make a transition from one culture to another while maintaining their spiritual beliefs, values, and practices.

Cultivation of Inter-Parish Fellowship

According to one scholar, most Orthodox jurisdictions have held a “pronounced ethnocentric approach” during the twentieth century which has led to three consequences. First, ethnocentrism has hindered the development of organizational church unity. There is no one single Orthodox Church of the United States, since leaders see the congregation as a means to maintain cultural distinctives as well as religious faith. Second, this has hindered the development of mission. Many parishes have focused on survival and preservation—to the exclusion of reaching out to those who are not members of their jurisdiction. Third, ethnocentrism has hindered a sense of social responsibility. A strong focus on one's own ethnic group has often led to a sense of isolation from American society.

On the other hand, a greater desire for Orthodox unity, outreach, and social responsibility has continued to emerge since 1989.¹³⁰ Two episcopal organizations have made special contributions to unity in the United States: the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the Americas (SCOBA) and the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches in America (SCOCH). Founded in 1960 and 1973, respectively, these bodies brought together the leaders of most jurisdictions for discussions of common concerns and promoted closer relationships and cooperation among these jurisdictions. In 1994, twenty-eight bishops from SCOBA member jurisdictions met at Ligonier, Pennsylvania, in the largest meeting of this type held in the United States. Documents called for an end to the use of the term “diaspora” for churches in North America and expressed hope for structural unity in the near future. Yet, some clergy on both sides of the Atlantic opposed changing the status quo.¹³¹ The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America replaced SCOBA in 2009. The assembly stated:

Unlike SCOBA . . . the Assembly is a transitional body. If it achieves its goal, it will make itself obsolete by developing a proposal for the canonical organization of the Church in the United States. This proposal will in turn be presented to the forthcoming Great and Holy Council, which will consist of all canonical Orthodox bishops throughout the world. Should this proposal be

accepted, it is hoped that the Assembly of Bishops will then come to an end, ultimately to be succeeded by a governing Synod of a united Church in the United States.¹³²

OCA, ROCOR, Ukrainian, Greek, Antiochian, Romanian, and Serbian churches participate in the assembly, while Armenian, Coptic, Eritrean, and Ethiopian bodies take part in SCOOC. The assembly and SCOOC possess limited influence, since they have no authority over member jurisdictions; any decisions must be approved by the bishops and/or the homeland authorities. Krindatch believes that “it is very unlikely that Orthodox jurisdictions in America will be reorganized into a unified structure in the near future.”¹³³ Frances Kostarelos sounds a more hopeful note as he writes that

there are demographic, sociological, and technological forces converging to pave the way for pan-Orthodox unity and collaboration with other religious bodies that would have been difficult for earlier generations of Eastern Christians—who embodied a legacy of nationalism . . . —to imagine and institute.¹³⁴

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has called for a council in Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey) in spring 2016, a “Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church.” Some hope this council will lead to greater Orthodox unification and administrative centralization. Minnesotan leaders who have expressed their views on this proposed process do not expect significant changes.¹³⁵

In 1964, representatives from the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox communions began to meet informally for theological dialogue. These conversations led to the first meeting of a Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue in 1985:

In its statements, the commission has concluded that both the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox share the same historic apostolic faith despite over fifteen centuries of formal separation. The Joint Commission has recommended that the churches take the appropriate steps to end their division and to restore their unity.¹³⁶

Churches of both communions in the United States have been working actively and effectively toward the completion of these goals for many years at both national and local levels; examples include joint participation in clergy associations, sharing of facilities, and partnerships for theological education.¹³⁷

Among Twin City parishes there is an unusually high level of friendship and cooperation, due to the ongoing work of the Minnesota Eastern Orthodox Christian Clergy Association (MEOCCA), organized in the 1950s. This group welcomes Oriental clergy and has promoted collaboration on ministry projects for over sixty years. For example, several priests in this association work together to teach a semi-annual three-month course for adults from local parishes, “An Introduction to Orthodox Christianity.”¹³⁸ The clergy association has also served as a catalyst for an annual pan-Orthodox summer camp. An active chapter of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) brings together students at the University of Minnesota for learning, service, and mutual support.¹³⁹

The founder of MEOCCA, Fr. Anthony Coniaris, continues as president of Minnesota-based Light and Life Publishing, the first U.S. publisher of popular-level Orthodox books in English. He established Light and Life in 1966 to publish his first book, *Eastern Orthodoxy as a Way of Life*. Fr. Anthony emerged as one of the most influential Eastern Christian leaders in this area; he led St. Mary's Greek full time from 1948 until 1993 and continues to emphasize a cooperative, outreach-focused ministry as pastor emeritus.¹⁴⁰ Paul Gavriluyk suggests that the close cooperation of churches in Minnesota is unique in the world, due to the wide variety of jurisdictions and the small number of parishes per jurisdiction.¹⁴¹

The Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and Eastern Catholic churches of the Twin Cities maintain a high level of collegiality and cooperation. Several examples support this claim: Fr. Tadeos at St. Sahag's participates in MEOCCA and has strong connections to St. Mary's Coptic; Fr. Youannes Tawfik from the Coptic Church preached a sermon for the Armenian congregation.¹⁴² He also takes part in clergy association events, and youth from his parish volunteer regularly with a local pan-Orthodox ministry program, which provides free meals to those in need. Fr. Jacob Zaki, assistant priest at St. Mary's Coptic, participates in the MEOCCA prison ministry.¹⁴³ St. Mary's Greek welcomed Coptic believers first to attend, then to hold their own services in the St. Mary's building.¹⁴⁴ St. Ourael's worships near Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in St. Paul; Fr. Jonathan visited and presented a gift of icons to welcome the parish to the neighborhood.¹⁴⁵ The Eastern Catholic priests of St. John's, St. Maron's, and St. Constantine's occasionally serve the liturgy in each other's churches and maintain friendly relations. St. Constantine's Saturday Ukrainian School for children is organized together with St. Michael's and St. George's Ukrainian Orthodox Church. According to Fr. Michael, the relationship between the parishes has never been close since the Orthodox group left St. Constantine's and built a new church in 1926.¹⁴⁶

Cultivation of Community Relationships

In recent years, Minnesota's Eastern Christian parishes have expanded their relationships with other cultural groups and churches. They have often attempted to find a "narrow way" to avoid isolation on one hand and assimilation on the other.¹⁴⁷ The jurisdictions which support Minnesota parishes take part in a variety of interconfessional and ecumenical organizations, including the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.¹⁴⁸ Local Orthodox priests occasionally participate in ecumenical theological conversations and philanthropic programs but do not practice intercommunion, the celebration of the Eucharist with members of other confessions.¹⁴⁹ The Second Vatican Council in the 1960s produced more openness between Roman Catholics and Orthodox. Interconfessional theological consultations with Episcopalians began in 1962, Roman Catholics in 1966, and Lutherans in 1968.¹⁵⁰ Conversations and cooperation with Protestants have taken a number of forms.¹⁵¹ The leaders of world Orthodoxy have stressed the need "to speak

to Christian brothers and sisters in other communions with respect and openness.” Some have opposed any form of ecumenism, however, due to a perception of all non-Orthodox as heretics or out of fear that participants will compromise on the essentials of the faith.¹⁵²

Minnesota’s Eastern Christian leaders have established partnerships with a wide variety of churches and community organizations through philanthropic programs and informal relationships. An annual November lecture at the University of Minnesota has increased the visibility of this tradition in the Twin Cities area. For the past twenty years, the James W. Cunningham Memorial Lecture on Eastern Orthodox History and Culture has gathered up to three hundred on campus to listen to scholars, such as Jaroslav Pelikan and Nadieszda Kizenko, speak on topics related to the historical and cultural development of Eastern Christianity. Professor Theofanis Stavrou, the founder of this lecture, has taught a university class on the history and thought of Eastern churches for many years. In the United States, more Orthodox scholars teach at non-Orthodox institutions than at seminaries, such as St. Vladimir’s or Holy Cross. Recently, this has enhanced the influence of these professors within the intellectual world of the United States. For example, Paul Gavriilyuk, a deacon at Holy Trinity, holds the Aquinas Chair in Theology and Philosophy at the University of St. Thomas, a Roman Catholic institution.¹⁵³ Mother Lois Farag, a member of St. Mary’s Coptic, is associate professor of Early Church History at Luther Seminary in St. Paul.¹⁵⁴ Another venue which has raised the visibility of the Orthodox community in the Twin Cities is The Museum of Russian Art, established in 2002. For example, in 2008 the museum displayed fifty icons from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In December 2013 the choir of St. Mary’s Cathedral sang for museum guests.¹⁵⁵ For those with an interest in theology, MEOCCA sponsors an annual public Orthodox-Catholic dialogue event after one of its pan-Orthodox Lenten vespers services.¹⁵⁶ St. Mary’s Cathedral connects with its neighborhood through the annual Taste of Northeast Festival in September and Art-a-Whirl, a local art festival, which has attracted over seven hundred visitors for iconography demonstrations and church tours. St. Mary’s Cathedral and St. John’s do not have formal cooperation, in spite of their close geographical proximity, but members of both parishes actively participate in the Rusin Association of Minnesota.¹⁵⁷ Fr. Jonathan at Holy Trinity has maintained ties with a wide variety of faith leaders in the Twin Cities. He describes First Covenant Church of Saint Paul as a “good neighbor” and attends quarterly ministerial association meetings to discuss neighborhood concerns; he has also visited a local Franciscan community and The Lift, an evangelical Protestant youth outreach program. Fr. Jonathan has prayed weekly with a pastors fellowship group for twenty years.¹⁵⁸ St. Elizabeth’s supports local philanthropic programs, such as the food shelf of the Eagan Resource Center and a group of Catholic nuns that ministers among the homeless. Fr. Marc believes it is important for the parish to support both Orthodox and non-Orthodox work.¹⁵⁹ The Russian Orthodox Church of the Resurrection of Christ places special emphasis on the celebration of Christmas and invites guests to attend an annual vigil service on the evening of 6 January; recently, this has been held at St. Mary’s Cathedral. The choir of the Basilica of St. Mary, a large Roman Catholic parish in Minneapolis, has sung for this

event in Slavonic.¹⁶⁰ Interchurch organizations provide forums for conversation. Fr. Paul Paris contributed to two ecumenical organizations during his years at St. Mary's Greek. The Minnesota Council of Churches focuses on issues of social justice, interfaith work, and ecumenical dialogue; Fr. Paul was an executive board member. The Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches attempts to unite people through social service.¹⁶¹ St. Mary's Romanian participates in the annual Festival of Nations event in St. Paul through presentations of traditional dancing and food.¹⁶² The Byzantine Choral Festival takes place annually in October at St. Constantine's; several Orthodox, Eastern Catholic, and Protestant choirs have participated and received enthusiastic support from local music lovers.¹⁶³

New organizations have also increased Orthodox involvement in the Twin Cities. FOCUS North America has emerged in the last ten years as the first pan-Orthodox organization in the United States to provide a compassionate response to those in financial need; it now operates in twenty cities across the country. The acronym describes both the agency (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) and the resources provided (Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, and Shelter). The FOCUS Minnesota center organized recently to provide assistance with food and clothing to all in need; several parishes provide volunteers and financial support. FOCUS North America has grown out of a conversation which began after 2000, at a time when many U.S. Orthodox churches were beginning to work together on international relief and development projects. Several philanthropists from a variety of jurisdictions began to discuss the need for work in urban areas of the United States. FOCUS North America was established and set up centers across the country in cities where local parishes expressed their willingness to support this new venture. Vera Proctor of Holy Trinity was hired as the director of FOCUS Minnesota, which opened its doors in August 2010. The center has received enthusiastic support from MEOCCA, and congregations participate to varying degrees. Orthodox teaching has always emphasized the need to serve and love others, even though this has often been applied primarily within one's own ethnic/political community; FOCUS has attempted to shift the focus to helping any neighbor in need. The three primary goals are to assist the neighborhood, engage Orthodox churches, and enlist other Christians as volunteers. The program is located on Lake Street in a low-income area of Minneapolis. The first steps were building local relationships, measuring needs, and assessing what could be done. In this way, FOCUS endeavors to blunt the stress of poverty; an average of one thousand clothing items are given away each week, and a meal is offered at no charge every Sunday. The specific services of FOCUS are not unique—some of these resources are also provided by government or private programs. According to the director, the philosophy of outreach is based on the ethos and theology of the Eucharist; believers receive the sacrament on Sunday and are filled by Jesus Christ. In response, they should look for ways to share the love that has filled them. The organization also works to cooperate with other agencies, non-Orthodox churches, and community groups. FOCUS attempts to serve the broader area beyond the Lake Street neighborhood. Currently, the director and volunteers are setting up the St. Luke Mobile Medical Clinic to provide care at different sites in the Twin Cities; soon they

will be offering life skill support groups, such as classes for fathers. FOCUS Minnesota serves three thousand clients, and 90 percent live in the neighborhoods near the center. The organization receives donations from a variety of local businesses; for example, Tom's Shoes provided ten thousand pairs of shoes in one year.¹⁶⁴

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) began to work within the United States after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Orthodox clergy were turned back from serving in New York City at ground zero, because they did not have chaplain credentials. The IOCC created a program to provide training and certification in crisis ministry for priests and laypeople; over one hundred people have so far received training. Three of these "Frontliners" are Minnesotans: Dan Christopoulos, Rick Andrews, and Paul Hodge. Members of this new team served after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007; the hurricane catalyzed a new IOCC partnership with Habitat for Humanity. Over one thousand volunteers have worked with Habitat; ten teams completed repairs on buildings in north Minneapolis after a destructive 2011 tornado. IOCC coordinated youth from St. Mary's Greek to do flood cleanup in the southern part of the state in 2014.¹⁶⁵ The organization attempts to function as a catalyst for parishes in reaching out to the community. "Serve-X-Treme Youth Leadership Conference" is a new IOCC program designed to encourage high school youth to address social needs; its first conference took place in August 2014. Organizers invited bishops to send high school student representatives to the conference; twenty-five came from many jurisdictions across the country. The conference offered Orthodox teaching on philanthropy and service, participation in active projects, and evening times of reflection. Students worked on projects in partnership with FOCUS Minnesota, Harbor Light Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, and Habitat for Humanity.¹⁶⁶

An increasing number of clergy in the United States now work or volunteer as military or police chaplains. Fr. Rick at St. George's Greek volunteers with the St. Paul police department,¹⁶⁷ and Fr. Andrew Jaye serves with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Fr. Oliver Herbel, a former member of Holy Trinity, ministers with the North Dakota Air National Guard in addition to his work as a parish priest in Fargo.¹⁶⁸ Fr. George Oanca, formerly with St. Mary's Romanian, now works as a U.S. Army chaplain.¹⁶⁹

Several Twin City churches maintain close ties to associations which support their particular ethnic group. St. Mary's Romanian works with the Heritage Organization of Romanian Americans in Minnesota for language classes and other programs.¹⁷⁰ St. Sahag's cooperates closely with the Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota. The parish and organization plan to hold an April 2015 memorial event for the hundred-year commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. Leaders will host a large ecumenical prayer meeting with Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Minnesota Council of Churches representatives. A new *khachkar* (cross stone) will be dedicated on the grounds of St. Sahag's. These crosses are doubly symbolic—Armenians carried them by hand as they fled from the Ottoman Empire to Russia.¹⁷¹ The Church of Our Savior maintains close ties to the Ethiopian Community in

Minnesota, a local association; the parish and this group have partnered to offer recreational summer programs for children.¹⁷²

Cultivation of Global Relationships

The collapse of European communism has contributed to immigration but also served as a catalyst for many new projects of ministry and philanthropy.¹⁷³ Jurisdictions sponsor a variety of global outreach programs and organizations. The OCA has sponsored the Russian Child Adoption Project and a Christmas Stocking Project to provide aid for children abroad. In addition, the OCA has initiated collaboration between individual U.S. and Russian parishes. Ukrainian congregations support the St. Andrew Society, which provides aid for Ukraine. The Serbian church in the United States has provided funds for refugees from the Balkans. The Armenian archdiocese has operated the Fund for Armenian Relief and the Women's Guild to provide aid for Armenia. In addition, the Bless USA association has sent aid for Copts in Egypt.¹⁷⁴

Two national pan-Orthodox organizations for global ministry have formed recently: the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC, noted previously for programs in the United States) and the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC). These ventures have encouraged believers from a variety of jurisdictions to work together in relief and development work and global outreach. IOCC (founded in 1992) has worked in Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Greece, Georgia, and Palestine. Projects have included aid for orphans, schools, hospitals, refugees, and the elderly. The OCMC has been working in multiple locations in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia.¹⁷⁵ Minnesota believers have actively supported both of these ventures.

The IOCC director for ministry within the United States works from an office in Edina, a suburb of Minneapolis. A small group of philanthropists in the United States founded IOCC as an organization under the direction of SCOBA. Currently, IOCC employs about thirty U.S.-based staff and two hundred international workers (with only four overseas U.S. and Canadian expatriate employees); locals assess needs and recommend sustainable solutions. U.S. government agencies have provided large grants for a variety of projects.¹⁷⁶

Connections from Minnesota to many points on the globe have greatly increased in multiple ways through parish trips, personal travel, ministry sponsorship, and political action. Paul Gavrilyuk has spoken out against Russian military intervention in Ukraine and called on Patriarch Kirill of Moscow to oppose this development; his open letter to the patriarch was signed by several leaders from different U.S. jurisdictions.¹⁷⁷ He also organized a public panel discussion at the University of St. Thomas in October 2014 to highlight the historical, political, and cultural factors at work in the current Ukrainian conflict.

Since the 1980s, St. Mary's Cathedral has renewed personal links with believers in Slovakia. Almost every year since 1998, St. Mary's members have made regular trips to their home region. They raised money to help build a new church in Becherov, Slovakia, and support a seminary in Prerov, Czech

Republic; a core group of seven Rusyn-American families sustains these projects. Also, St. Mary's recently began to offer Slovak/Rusyn language classes for teens and adults.¹⁷⁸ Holy Trinity takes three collections a year for a variety of philanthropy and mission programs: recent donations have supported displaced Ukrainians and an African education fund. The church has also supported the development of OCA mission parishes, but two missions in the state have closed, including Christ the Savior Mission in Anoka.¹⁷⁹ Many St. Panteleimon's members maintain active transnational connections to Russia; they visit family and friends and worship in Russia; occasional fundraising supports Russian ministry projects.¹⁸⁰ St. Mary's Greek has an active missions and evangelism committee. For nearly twenty years, St. Mary's parishioners have traveled to Guatemala to help with an Orthodox orphanage. The parish also supports Anastasia Barksdale, an OCMC missionary working in Albania. She visits Minnesota every year or two and meets with groups. Half of the proceeds from the annual Greek Festival (in September) supports mission and outreach programs, and the other half funds philanthropic ventures.¹⁸¹ St. Stefan's maintains active connections with fellow believers in Romania and takes collections through the archdiocese for ministry programs.¹⁸² St. Sahag's, which works with the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia, every year builds a house in Armenia to help address the housing shortage created by the 1988 earthquake. The parish also supports orphanages in Armenia.¹⁸³ St. Mary's Coptic youth participate in annual mission trips to Africa in association with other Coptic congregations; recent trips have gone to Kenya and southern Nigeria. The Coptic Church in Egypt sends visitors to Minnesota on a regular basis, and Fr. Youannes travels to Egypt for events such as weddings of members. Recently, he visited Pope Tawadros II to congratulate him on his new role.¹⁸⁴ The Church of Our Savior regularly sends charitable assistance to Ethiopia.¹⁸⁵ St. John's takes collections for believers in Transcarpathia, and their bishop makes regular trips to this region in Europe.¹⁸⁶ Since 1989, St. Constantine's has experienced a new level of communication with fellow Catholics in Ukraine. These churches had operated unofficially and with great difficulty during the Soviet period, with minimal communication between Ukrainian and U.S. leaders. Members now make trips to Ukraine on tours to Lvov and Kiev; Fr. Michael visited in 1995. The parish sponsors ministries, including a seminary, through the diocese. Participants of St. Constantine's are concerned about the 2014 crisis in Ukraine, especially for the safety of relatives and friends there; many read the diocesan newspaper for updates.¹⁸⁷

Ogbazghi Sium, formerly a founding member of St. Gabriel's, has led one of the most ambitious Minnesota-based projects of global engagement for over twenty years. Project Jandereba is named in memory of the Ethiopian eunuch who received the message of Christianity, as recorded in the eighth chapter of Acts. From 1995 through 2003, virtually every Orthodox family in the entire country of Eritrea received a copy of the Tigrigna New Testament. The bishops in Eritrea and the Bible Society of Eritrea worked together to distribute approximately three hundred fifty thousand New Testaments and fifty thousand complete Bibles. Project Jandereba raised the funds for this venture. The current focus of the project is to raise financial support for printing and distributing five million New Testaments, one for every household in the

northern Tigrigna-speaking region of Ethiopia. The Bible Society of Ethiopia recently released a New Testament translation for this language which has been accepted by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. Global Horizons, a Minneapolis nonprofit organization which promotes ethnic and racial reconciliation, provides accounting support for this project.¹⁸⁸

Conclusion

Fr. Andrew Jaye believes that Orthodoxy in the United States is in “crisis” with a set of challenges that include both problems and opportunities. One challenge is ethnocentrism, a belief in the superiority of one’s own ethnic group; this is present in varying degrees in churches. A second challenge is the arrival of converts, with their positive and negative contributions. One group of recent converts motivated Orthodox to emphasize outreach within the United States. Some converts, however, have developed an idealistic ultra-conservative approach to Orthodoxy, based on their own study of history and theology. A third challenge is the challenge of leadership. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann and Fr. John Meyendorff left a void of intellectual and spiritual leadership for many Orthodox in the United States after their deaths in 1983 and 1992. The community, however, has welcomed emerging intellectual leaders, such as Paul Gavriyuk and Nicholas Denysenko, who served in Minnesota parishes before moving to California for a teaching position.¹⁸⁹ Another aspect of the leadership challenge is the episcopacy; the OCA and Greek churches have experienced difficult recent challenges with bishops. Fr. Andrew believes there is an opportunity for change and hope for skilled leadership and humility in the future. A fourth challenge, according to Fr. Andrew, is outreach. For example, the OCA has expressed enthusiasm for new mission parishes but has not provided sufficient direction, training, and support.¹⁹⁰

In conclusion, this article has provided evidence for two contrasting trends which shape the current direction of Eastern Christianity in the Twin Cities and the United States. On the one hand, many jurisdictions and churches are maintaining a link between the ethnic and denominational identities in a particularly strong way. On the other hand, the slow but inevitable process of indigenization of Orthodoxy in America, and the growing influence of third and fourth American-born generations, along with an increasing number of Anglo-American converts raised in different religious traditions, have challenged this link.¹⁹¹ Minnesota’s Eastern Christian churches have not dominated the religious landscape of the North Star State, but they have grown in visibility as they practice their faith. These parishes continue to integrate with the surrounding community, as they simultaneously build connections with their lands of origin.

*Eastern Christian Parishes in the Minneapolis/St. Paul Area
Listed in order of introduction in this article.*

St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral
1701 5th Street Northeast
Minneapolis, MN 55413
<http://www.stmarysoca.org>

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
956 Forest Street
St. Paul, MN 55106
<http://www.htoc.us>

St. Herman's Orthodox Church
5355 38th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55417
<http://www.sthermanmpls.org>

St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church
2020 Silver Bell Road, No. 5
Eagan, MN 55122
<http://www.seocc.org>

St. Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church
2210 Franklin Avenue Southeast
Minneapolis, MN 55414
<http://www.stpanteleimon.org>

Russian Orthodox Church and Skete of the Resurrection of Christ
1201 Hathaway Lane Northeast
Fridley, MN 55432
<http://www.resurrectionskete.org>

St. Michael's and St. George's Ukrainian Orthodox Church
505 4th Street Northeast
Minneapolis, MN 55413
<http://www.stmstguoc.thishouse.us>

St. Katherine Ukrainian Orthodox Church
1600 West Highway 96
Arden Hills, MN 55112

St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church
3450 Irving Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55408
<http://www.stmarysgoc.org>

St. George Greek Orthodox Church

1111 Summit Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55105

<http://www.stgeorgegoc.org>**St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church**

1250 Oakdale Avenue

West St. Paul, MN 55118

<http://saintgeorge-church.org>**St. Mary Romanian Orthodox Church**

854 Woodbridge Street

St. Paul, MN 55117

<http://www.saintmarymn.org>**St. Stefan Romanian Orthodox Church**

350 5th Avenue North

South St. Paul, MN 55075

<http://www.sfantulstefan.org>**St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church**

357 2nd Avenue South

South St. Paul, MN 55075

<http://www.stsavamn.org>**St. Sahag Armenian Church**

203 North Howell Street

St. Paul, MN 55104

<http://www.saintsahag.org>**St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church**

501 6th Avenue South

South St. Paul, MN 55075

<http://stmarymn.org>**Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Our Savior**

4401 Minnehaha Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55406

<http://debreselam.net>**St. Mary Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church**

678 South Robert Street

St. Paul, MN 55107

St. Ourael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

1144 Earl Street

St. Paul, MN 55106

St. Gabriel Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church
206 East Robie Street
St. Paul, MN 55107

Holy Trinity Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church
1260 Greenbrier Street
St. Paul, MN 55106

St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church
2215 3rd Street Northeast
Minneapolis, MN 55418
<http://stjohnsminneapolis.webs.com>

St. Constantine Ukrainian Catholic Church
515 University Avenue Northeast
Minneapolis, MN 55413
<http://stconstantine.com>

St. Maron Catholic Church
602 University Avenue Northeast
Minneapolis, MN 55413
<http://stmaron.com>

Holy Family Maronite Church
1960 Lexington Avenue South
Mendota Heights, MN 55118
<http://www.holyfamilymaronitechurch.org/mn>

Additional Eastern Christian Parishes in Minnesota

Holy Anargyroi Greek Orthodox Church
703 West Center Street
Rochester, MN 55902

Holy Cross OCA Mission
28005 Old Towne Road
Chisago City, MN 55013

Holy Myrrhbearers OCA Mission
601 7th Avenue South
St. Cloud, MN 56301
www.holymyrrhbearers.org

St. Basil of Ostrog Serbian Orthodox Church
543 6th Street Southwest
Chisholm, MN 55719

St. George Serbian Orthodox Church
1216 104th Avenue West
Duluth, MN 55808
www.orthodoxduluth.org

St. Michael Serbian Orthodox Church
701 East 40th Street
Hibbing, MN 55746

Three Holy Hierarchs OCA Mission
1651 Jefferson Parkway
Northfield, MN 55057
www.threeholyhierarchs.org

Twelve Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church
632 East Second Street
Duluth, MN 55805
www.12holyapostles.org

There is also a Russian Old Believer church in Erskine, Minnesota.



St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral



St. Katherine Ukrainian Orthodox Church



St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church



St. Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church



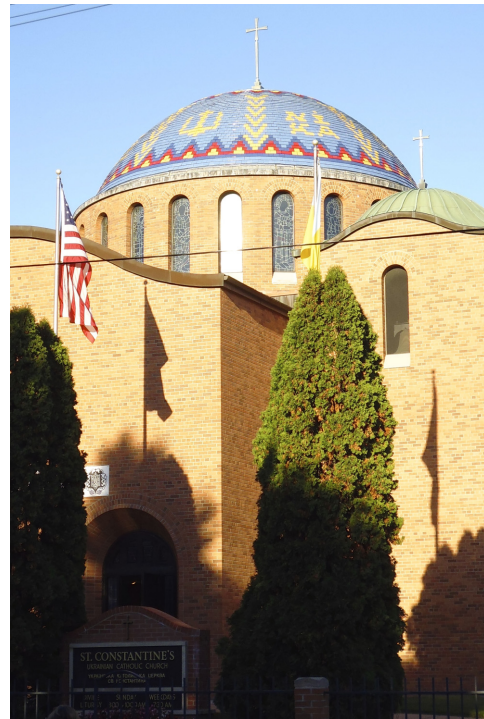
St. Sahag Armenian Church



Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Our Savior



St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church



St. Constantine Ukrainian Catholic Church

NOTES

1. In this article, Eastern Christianity refers to the faith and practice of Orthodox churches and Catholic churches which follow many traditions of Orthodoxy, but submit to the authority of the pope in Rome. For an introduction, see John Binns, *An Introduction to the Christian Orthodox Churches* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Thomas E. FitzGerald, *The Orthodox Church*, Denominations in America, no. 7 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995); John H. Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America: A Short History*, 2^d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Fred J. Saato, *American Eastern Catholics* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006). The names of the Orthodox jurisdictions are listed in order of rank, with estimated memberships, in Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 113-16. For a recent, in-depth discussion of the history, organization, and variety of ministries of Orthodox parishes in the United States, see Anton C. Vrame, ed., *The Orthodox Parish in America: Faithfulness to the Past and Responsibility for the Future* (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2003).

2. This project builds on the author's experience as a historian of Eastern Christianity and Russian-American cultural relations. See Matthew Lee Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture: The Preservation and Expansion of Orthodox Christianity, 1900–1940* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2013), which explores the unusual contributions of an American Protestant organization to Russian Orthodox émigrés in Central and Western Europe. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) founded the YMCA Press, advised the Russian Student Christian Movement, and supported the St. Sergius Theological Academy in Paris. Through these ventures the YMCA facilitated the preservation, enrichment, and expansion of Russian Orthodox Christianity.

3. Keith P. Dyrud and James W. Cunningham, "Heirs of Byzantium: Eastern Christianity in Minnesota," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 5 (1989): 181-226. For identification of primary sources and analysis of these foundational developments, see D. Oliver Herbel, *Turning to Tradition: Converts and the Making of an American Orthodox Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 25-60; James Jorgenson, "Father Alexis Toth and the Transition of the Greek Catholic Community in Minneapolis to the Russian Orthodox Church," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (1988): 119-37; Alex Simirenko, "Case Study: The Minneapolis Russian Community in Transition," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 5, nos. 1-2 (1961): 88-100; and Joel Brady, "Transnational Conversions: Greek Catholic Migrants and Russky Orthodox Conversion Movements in Austria-Hungary, Russia, and the Americas (1890–1914)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2012). See, also, Keith P. Dyrud, "After the Revolution: The Heirs of the Russian Orthodox Church in North America and Europe," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 7 (1991): 217-36; and Dallas Oliver Herbel, "Orthodoxy in North America," in *The Orthodox Christian World*, ed. Augustine Casiday (New York: Routledge, 2012), 164-78.

4. The author wishes to thank Edward Kasinec and Robert Davis for the opportunity to participate in the June 2013 National Endowment for the Humanities summer institute, "America's Russian-Speaking Immigrants and Refugees: Twentieth-

Century Migration and Memory,” Columbia University, New York City. The author is also grateful to Scott Kenworthy (Miami University, Oxford, Ohio) and Vladimir von Tsurikov (formerly at Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary, Jordanville, New York; currently at The Museum of Russian Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota) for their comments and suggestions on this research project.

5. Dyrud and Cunningham, “Heirs of Byzantium,” 182-94.
6. Clifford Grammich et al., *2010 U.S. Religion Census: Religious Congregations and Membership Study* (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, 2012), 29; figures in this article have been updated to reflect recent changes.
7. For insightful analysis on the roles of religious institutions within U.S. immigrant communities, see John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 144-68.
8. Alexei Krindatch, ed., *Atlas of American Orthodox Christian Churches* (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2011), 19.
9. Thomas FitzGerald, “The Development of the Orthodox Parish in the United States,” in *The Orthodox Parish in America: Faithfulness to the Past and Responsibility for the Future*, ed. Anton C. Vrame (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2003), 12. For comparison, see a historical study of parishes in southern Illinois: William Furry, “Shadows of the Motherland: Russian Orthodoxy in Downstate Illinois—A Photoessay,” *Illinois Heritage* 12, no. 4 (July-August 2009): 17-23.
10. Leonid Kishkovsky, “Orthodoxy in America: Diaspora or Church?” *Religion in Eastern Europe* 24, no. 3 (June 2004): 36-37.
11. Alexei D. Krindatch, “Orthodox (Eastern Christian) Churches in the United States at the Beginning of a New Millennium: Questions of Nature, Identity, and Mission,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 3 (September 2002): 534-53. This study also draws on Alexei Krindatch, *The Orthodox Church Today: A National Study of Parishioners and the Realities of the Orthodox Parish Life in the USA* (Berkeley, Calif.: Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, 2008), an outstanding recent publication which summarizes the experiences of female and male parish members of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and the Orthodox Church in America—the two largest jurisdictions. Most studies address the views and opinions of priests, so this provides a broader scope for church analysis. Study data provides comparison between these two jurisdictions and between clergy and laity. He also compares views on Orthodox practice held by self-described conservatives, traditionalists, moderates, and liberals within these churches. For his previous research on clergy, see Alexei Krindatch, *Evolving Visions of the Orthodox Priesthood in America* (Berkeley, Calif.: Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, 2006). For historical information, statistics, and contact information for these jurisdictions, see John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008); and Frank S. Mead, Samuel S. Hill, and Craig D. Atwood, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 12th ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2005).
12. FitzGerald, *The Orthodox Church*, 6.
13. Krindatch, ed., *Atlas*, 29-31. Most Eastern Christian churches in the Twin Cities area welcome thirty to one hundred worshipers on an average Sunday morning. The four largest congregations, each with over three hundred in attendance, are the

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of our Savior, St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church, St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, and St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral. Three additional congregations regularly gather more than one hundred for weekly worship: St. Constantine's Ukrainian Catholic Church, St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, and St. George Greek Orthodox Church.

14. *One Hundred Twenty-Five: St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral Anniversary Celebration, 1887–2012, Remembering, Rejoicing, Reaching Out* (Minneapolis, Minn.: St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral, 2012).

15. Fr. Jonathan Proctor, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, interview by author, 24 September 2014; and Erich Lippman, former member of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, interview by author, 21 November 2014.

16. Fr. Paul Wesche, St. Herman's Orthodox Church, interview by author, 21 October 2014.

17. Fr. Marc Boulos, St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church, interview by author, 7 October 2014.

18. St. Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church website, <http://www.stpanteleimon.org/история-святого-пантелеймона-русско/> (accessed 13 December 2014).

19. Fr. Antony Alekseyenko, St. Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church, interview by author, 10 September 2014.

20. Fr. John Cavin, Russian Orthodox Church and Skete of the Resurrection of Christ, interview by author, 30 September 2014.

21. St. Michael's and St. George's Ukrainian Orthodox Church website, http://www.stmstguoc.thishouse.us/linked/parish_history_in_english.html (accessed 13 December 2014); and Dyrud and Cunningham, "Heirs of Byzantium," 198. This church received unusual national publicity in 2013, when the Associated Press published accusations that a longtime parish leader served as a commander of a Nazi SS Ukrainian military unit, which burned a Polish village when it was filled with women and children. Michael Karkoc and his son Andriy Karkoc vehemently deny these accusations. David Rising, "Commander in Nazi SS-led Unit Linked to Atrocities Living in Minneapolis," *StarTribune*, 14 June 2013, <http://www.startribune.com/local/211526631.html> (accessed 11 December 2014); and Curt Brown, "Minneapolis Man 'Crushed' by Allegations of Nazi Ties," *StarTribune*, 24 May 2014, <http://www.startribune.com/local/minneapolis/260497231.html?page=all&prepage=1&c=y#continue> (accessed 11 December 2014).

22. *Sixtieth Anniversary Book, 1951–2011: Saint Katherine Ukrainian Orthodox Church and Saints Volodymyr and Olga Ukrainian Orthodox Church* (Arden Hills, Minn.: Saint Katherine Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 2011), 8, 45, 56. In a forthcoming monograph, Nicholas E. Denysenko analyzes several Orthodox parishes in America and examines "the symbiosis of architecture, liturgy, memory, and ecclesial identity in each community." He focuses significant attention on St. Katherine's and explores the recent transition of the parish into its new building (chapter manuscripts sent with a letter from Nicholas E. Denysenko, 6 November 2014).

23. Dyrud and Cunningham, "Heirs of Byzantium," 184–204; *The First One Hundred Years: St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church of Minneapolis* (Minneapolis, Minn.: St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, 2000); Fr. Thomas Alatzakis, St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, interview by author, 20 August 2014; and St. Vladimir's Orthodox

Theological Seminary website, <http://www.svots.edu/team/very-rev-harry-pappas> (accessed 15 December 2014).

24. Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews, St. George Greek Orthodox Church, interview by author, 17 September 2014; and *1990, 50th Anniversary Celebration of Saint George Greek Orthodox Church and Community, St. Paul, Minnesota* (St. Paul, Minn.: St. George Greek Orthodox Church, 1990).

25. St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church website, <http://saintgeorge-church.org/meet-our-church/our-history/> (accessed 13 December 2014).

26. Fr. Mircea VasIU, St. Mary Romanian Orthodox Church, interview by author, 28 October 2014; and *100th Anniversary, St. Mary Romanian Orthodox Church, 1913–2013* (St. Paul, Minn.: St. Mary Romanian Orthodox Church, 2013). See, also, Gerald J. Bobango, *Historical Anniversary Album: A Survey of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America and its Parishes in the United States and Canada* (Jackson, Mich.: Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, 1979); and idem, *The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America: The First Half Century, 1929–1979* (Jackson, Mich.: Romanian-American Heritage Center, 1979).

27. Fr. Ioan Poptelecan, St. Stefan Romanian Orthodox Church, interview by author, 13 November 2014; and Vicki Albu, *90th Anniversary of St. Stefan Romanian Orthodox Church, Biserica Ortodoxa Romana Sfântul Ștefan, South St. Paul, Minnesota, 1924–2014* (South St. Paul, Minn.: St. Stefan Romanian Orthodox Church, 2014).

28. Fr. Mircea VasIU, interview.

29. Mike Pavlovich, president of executive board, St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church, interview by author, 19 October 2014.

30. For a sociological study of Armenian-American culture, identity, religion, and language, see Anny Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans: From Being to Feeling Armenian* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1993).

31. Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan, St. Sahag Armenian Church, interview by author, 23 September 2014.

32. Natalie Gessert, “St. Mary’s Coptic Orthodox Church,” in *Mission and Migration: Fifty-two African and Asian Congregations in Minnesota*, ed. Dana K. Nelson (Minneapolis, Minn.: Lutheran University Press, 2007), 168-70.

33. Fr. Youannes Tawfik, St. Mary’s Coptic Orthodox Church, interview by author, 15 October 2014.

34. Dana K. Nelson, ed., *Mission and Migration: Fifty-two African and Asian Congregations in Minnesota* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Lutheran University Press, 2007), 28-30; and Chuck Haga, “Once Again, Minneapolis Church Welcomes Immigrants,” *StarTribune*, 8 November 1999, <http://www.oocities.org/~dagmawi/NewsNov99/DebreSelamMedhanealem.html> (accessed 12 December 2014).

35. Derese Gebregiorgis, church secretary, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Our Savior, interview by author, 21 October 2014.

36. Ibid.; and “St. Ourael’s Church of Twin Cities to Celebrate 10th Anniversary July 27,” *Ethiomeia.com*, 21 July 2014, <http://www.ethiomeia.com/17file/2520> (accessed 13 December 2014). See Ari L. Goldman, “U.S. Branch Leaves Ethiopian Orthodox Church,” *The New York Times*, 22 September 1992, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/09/22/nyregion/us-branch-leaves-ethiopian-orthodox-church.html> (accessed

11 December 2014); for a scholarly perspective on the complex divisions of Ethiopian Orthodox churches, see Walle Engedayehu, "The Ethiopian Orthodox in the Diaspora: Expansion in the Midst of Politics, Religion, and Schism," *Awramba Times*, 15 November 2012, <http://www.awrambatimes.com/?p=4447> (accessed 10 December 2014).

37. Nelson, ed., *Mission and Migration*, 171-73; and Ogbazghi Sium, a former founding member of St. Gabriel's, interview by author, 10 December 2014.

38. Ogbazghi Sium to author, letters, 11 and 12 December, 2014.

39. Joan L. Roccasalvo, *The Eastern Catholic Churches: An Introduction to Their Worship and Spirituality* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 5.

40. *Ibid.*, 54-59.

41. Saato, *American Eastern Catholics*, 39.

42. Fr. Ihar Labacevich, St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, interview by author, 17 October 2014; *100th Anniversary, November 24-25, 2007, St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota* (Minneapolis, Minn.: St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, 2007); and Keith P. Dyrud, "The History of St. John's Byzantine Rite Catholic Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota," unpublished paper, no date.

43. Fr. Michael Stelmach, St. Constantine Ukrainian Catholic Church, interview by author, 22 October 2014; and *Saint Constantine One Hundred Years, 1913-1971, 1971-2013* (Minneapolis, Minn.: St. Constantine Ukrainian Catholic Church, 2013).

44. Websites of St. Maron Catholic Church and Holy Family Maronite Church: <http://stmaron.com> and <http://www.holyfamilymaronitechurch.org/mn/> (accessed 11 December 2014).

45. This research is based on thirty interviews conducted by the author from August to December 2014. The author extends his thanks to all those who participated in these interviews and shared about their communities. He has attempted to provide an accurate description of churches and activities, and welcomes corrections, additional information, and suggestions for future research at mlmiller@unwsp.edu.

46. Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan, St. Sahag Armenian Church, interview by author, 23 September 2014.

47. Fr. Marc Boulos, interview.

48. For a reflection on the foundational purposes, goals, and leadership of Eastern Orthodox congregations, see Thomas Hopko, "The Orthodox Parish in North America," in *Speaking the Truth in Love: On Education, Mission, and Witness in Contemporary Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 85-95.

49. Jeanne Halgren Kilde, *Sacred Power, Sacred Space: An Introduction to Christian Architecture and Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 58-60; photographs and architectural details of three Twin Cities parishes are presented in Alan K. Lathrop, *Churches of Minnesota: An Illustrated Guide* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 6-7 (St. Katherine's), 110-11 (St. Constantine's), and 112-13 (St. Mary's Cathedral); another Twin Cities architectural gem, the Byzantine-style Lakewood Cemetery Chapel, is featured on pages 104-5.

50. FitzGerald, *The Orthodox Church*, 122-23.

51. Mark Stokoe and Leonid Kishkovsky, *Orthodox Christians in North America: 1794-1994* (Orthodox Christian Publication Center, 1995), 93.

52. Debra Lyn Korluka, *Seeking the Face of Christ: The Way of an Iconographer* (St. Petersburg, Russia: Kolomenskaya Versta, 2012); see Korluka Studios website, <http://korlukastudios.com> (accessed 13 December 2014). For a discussion of the revival of Russian iconography, see Irina Yazykova, *Hidden and Triumphant: The Underground Struggle to Save Russian Iconography* (Brewster, Mass.: Paraclete Press, 2010).

53. Debra Korluka, interview by author, 13 November 2014; and Basilica of Mary website, Icon Festival, <http://www.mary.org/who-we-are/art/icon-festival#.VIofnksijwI> (accessed 11 December 2014).

54. Fr. Andrew Morbey, St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral, interview by author, 9 September 2014.

55. Fr. Jonathan Proctor, interview.

56. Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews, interview.

57. Fr. Ihar Labacevich, interview.

58. Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews, interview.

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