

## ЦЕРКОВНА ОБЩИНА ТА ЕТНІЧНІСТЬ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ КАНАДЦІВ CHURCH COMMUNITY AND ETHNICITY OF UKRAINIAN CANADIANS

*У статті зосереджено увагу на весіллях українців Канади з представниками інших громад, показано як українські церковні організації сприяють привнесенню у весільну обрядовість українського духу та української символіки.*

*Для дослідження обрано чотири українські парафії в Едмонтоні, у яких автор опитав священників та інших учасників весільного обряду.*

*В статті висуваються дві гіпотези: по-перше, елементи матримоніальних обрядів кожної церкви можуть відрізнятися, тому що методи вираження національної ідентичності через релігію можуть відрізнятися в кожній парафії; по-друге, церковні установи відіграють позитивну роль у збереженні українських весільних звичаїв українців Канади.*

**Ключові слова:** українці Канади, весільні звичаї, весільна обрядовість, церква, етнічність.

### I. Introduction

The history of Ukrainians' immigration to Canada began over one hundred years ago<sup>1</sup>. Since then, Ukrainian culture in Canada, has been well integrated into Canadian cultural fabric, and yet remains highly visible. Furthermore, "new ethnicity" of Ukrainian descendants continues to be created and to work well in a pluralistic society of Canada.

According to Cohen (1985), "community" simultaneously implies similarity and difference, both commonality and exclusion. Thus, a community implies and creates a boundary between 'them' and 'us,' between 'outside' and 'inside.' This boundary is marked in symbolic ways (p. 12). The boundaries of a community have many types of symbolic markings such as flags, badges, dances, foods, languages, and rituals like weddings. Thus this study aims to focus how Ukrainian communities, especially, church communities create a boundary between 'Ukrainian' and 'others' in Canadian society, making symbolic marks. For this study, I focus on a wedding across group boundaries which redefine where the boundaries lie, with bride and groom serving forever after as mediators joining two previously separate groups (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002, p. 22). Thus, this study discusses how Ukrainian church organizations promote Ukrainianness and create Ukrainian symbols at Ukrainian Canadian weddings.

Formal religious ceremonies should not fall within the realm of folklore studies since these ceremonies are dictated by official Church doctrine (Lindal, Rikoon & Lawless, 1979, p. 25). However, we can still study the kind of informal vernacular practices that are performed during official church services. In our case, a number of informal elements in Ukrainian marriage services are loaded with significance as Ukrainian symbols.

Not only many Ukrainian Canadians, but also many non-Ukrainians believe that Ukrainian church rituals make a wedding "Ukrainian." Although certain church rituals must be present to make a wedding valid, several others apparently can be omitted or added without altering a service's validity. Some of my informants mentioned that they were asked whether they wanted to walk around the *tetrapod* (a small altar) and whether they wanted their own wreaths or church-owned crowns placed upon their heads during the church service. A bride also mentioned that her mother had suggested

having "one person from each side of the family holding icons in church" (Cherwick, 1990, p. 6). Although they are traditional components of a Ukrainian wedding, they, rituals such as tying the couple's hands together and drinking from a common cup, are not always included. Couples are asked whether they want to include these traditions.

Two denominations with ethnic significance are most common among Ukrainian Canadians in Edmonton: Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Greek Catholic. These two denominations share the same Church rite, the Eastern [Byzantine] rite (Markus, 1984, pp. 59 – 60). Theoretically, the two churches are supposed to practice the same church rituals. However, in Edmonton, the Ukrainian churches' rites of holy matrimony have several differences. In this chapter I discuss the similarities and differences among several Ukrainian parishes' matrimonial rites and also explain the reasons for the different practices, paying attention to expressions of identity and ethnicity.

Among the thirty-two couples that I interviewed for my Ph.D. dissertation,<sup>2</sup> twenty couples had married in Ukrainian churches (Orthodox – 8, Catholic – 12) while three had married in Roman Catholic churches, four in Protestant churches, and five in other places. According to the 1981 census's figures for "the Population of People of Ukrainian Ethnic Origin By Religion," 46.2 % of the Canadian-born Ukrainian population belonged to Ukrainian churches. Around 77 % of my informants, who were born mainly in Canada, said that they belonged to Ukrainian churches. This finding indicates that my interview sample is not representative. My limited interview data do not allow me to make generalizations about quantitative trends in Ukrainian Canadian weddings in Edmonton.

Edmonton has nine Ukrainian Catholic and five Ukrainian Orthodox parishes and a number of other Orthodox parishes. For this study, I chose the following four Ukrainian parishes in Edmonton: St. Basil's Ukrainian Catholic Parish, St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic Parish, St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Parish and St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Parish. I chose these three Ukrainian Catholic churches because in a Ph.D. dissertation, Matiasz (1994) compared them in terms of their expressions of identity and ethnicity. Questioning members of those three churches about whether specific symbols are Ukrainian<sup>3</sup>, Matiasz discovered that even though all three parishes practiced the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Rite, each varied slightly from the other two. Her study demonstrated that variation exists within and among ethnic parishes. Intra-group and individual expressions of identity and ethnicity through religion may change according to time and circumstance (Matiasz, p. 124).

## II. Four Ukrainian parishes

Matiasz (1994, pp. 96 – 99) provided detailed information about three Ukrainian Catholic churches. According to her, St. Basil's parish members were upwardly mobile, professional, third-or fourth-generation Ukrainians who spoke English more than Ukrainian and who had negotiated an ethnic image that emphasized a Canadian identity rather than a Ukrainian one. St. Josaphat's parish had a mixture of all immigrants' and immigrants' descendants' generations. It included descendants of first-wave immigrants and also those of the second and third waves. Matiasz reported that the members of St. Josaphat's parish had negotiated a hybrid Canadian-Ukrainian identity that fluctuated according to the circumstances and socio-economic status of both individuals and Ukrainian sub-groups within the wider Canadian socio-economic and political climate. St. George's parish's members were mainly post-World War II immigrant Ukrainians. Matiasz mentioned that the members of this parish were especially concerned with issues involving contemporary Western Ukraine. This parish's members were perceived internally and externally as predominantly Ukrainian-speaking and as very concerned with political freedom and nationhood in Ukraine. One measure of this concern was "the collective goal for the establishment of a patriarchate in the diaspora as a manifestation of political and religious self-determination and ultimately, in time, of [Ukrainian national] independence" (p. 98).

In addition to these three Ukrainian Catholic churches, I also included St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in this present study because of this church's strong church tradition. St. Andrew's church members are mainly third- or fourth-generation Ukrainians who speak English more than Ukrainian. A few members are second-generation Ukrainians, and this parish has very few recent immigrants.

For this research, I had two hypotheses:

Firstly, the elements of the matrimonial rites of each church may differ because the methods of expressing identity and ethnicity through religion can differ in each parish. For example, St. George's Parish may have more cultural and religious elements in its matrimonial rite because the parish members are more recent immigrants who speak Ukrainian and are attached to Ukrainian traditions and concerned about current issues in Ukraine.

Secondly, church institutions play a positive role in promoting a sense of Ukrainianness and preserving Ukrainian wedding customs among Ukrainian Canadians.

I interviewed a priest in each church and asked questions about each church's rite of holy matrimony. In the following table, I compare the matrimonial rites of the four Ukrainian parishes. The table presents the current wedding service of each church. However, the rite of each church can differ from the findings presented here, depending on the following elements: (1) a priest might have a stronger or weaker association with tradition than other priests in the same parish, (2) the bride and groom might request that certain rituals be either included or included, and (3) a priest from another parish might perform the rite.

The table indicates that the marriage rites in all four parishes have more similarities than differences. Among these four parishes, St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox church includes the most symbolic elements and rituals. Among the three Ukrainian Catholic churches, St. Basil's church has the fewest symbolic elements and rituals. All four churches share the following basic structure: the betrothal (the exchange of rings) and the marriage (the rite of crowning, the reading, the blessing of the bride and groom, the registry, and the singing of *Mnohaia lita*).

### III. Comparison of Ukrainian symbols in the parishes

In my first hypothesis, I expected that St. George's parish, compared to the other Ukrainian churches, would express a relatively strong cultural and religious identity through its matrimonial rite because its members are mainly post-World War II immigrant Ukrainians and their children, as well as recent immigrants. Table 13 indicates that this hypothesis is partly correct. Among the three Ukrainian Catholic churches, St. George's parish is relatively stronger in presenting cultural and religious symbols and practicing rituals in the traditional way. For example, according to Father Tarasenko, the priest of St. George's parish, during his four-year service in this church, he had only one case in which the bride wanted the non-Byzantine way of entering the church: walking down the aisle with her father. At St. Basil's and St. Josaphat's parish, almost ninety percent of couples have wanted to have this Canadianized entering ritual. Even in St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox church, according to Father Lakusta, around sixty percent of couples' request this non-Byzantine ritual. At the preliminary meeting with the bride and groom, each priest usually explains not only the traditional matrimonial rite, but also its adapted and optional variations. Father Lakusta told me that before couples go to see a priest, they usually have already decided whether they want to include non-Byzantine elements in their wedding. However, at St. George's parish, according to Father Tarasenko, he does not mention the non-Byzantine elements, and the couples do not usually request them. The betrothal rite becomes different if a couple follows the non-Byzantine way of entering the church. This rite, which traditionally takes place in the church's vestibule, has to start in the front of the church if the bride chooses to walk down the aisle with her father or parents. In terms of the betrothal rite, St. George's church is the most traditional (Byzantine) of the four churches.

St. Basil's parish and St. Josaphat's parish tend to be more open to adapting non-Byzantine rituals, such as the candle ritual, during which the bride's and groom's mothers light a candle on the altar. According to both priests of those two parishes, couples often request this ritual, and the two churches include this non-Byzantine tradition in their services. In contrast, St. George and St. Andrew's churches rarely practice this ritual. St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox church has a different candle ritual in which the bride and groom are blessed thrice with two candles and then hold them during the sacrament. According to a pamphlet from St. Andrew's church, the candles are like the lamps of the five wise maidens in the Holy Scriptures (Matthew 25:1-13), who, because they had enough oil in their lamps, were able to receive the Bridegroom, Christ, when he came in the darkness of night. By holding the candles, the couple expresses their spiritual willingness to receive Christ, who will bless them throughout the sacrament. This ritual is normally not practiced in the other three Ukrainian Catholic parishes.

Table 13: Comparison of the rite of matrimony of four Ukrainian churches in Edmonton

The order of church service	St. Basil's Ukrainian Catholic Church	St. Josephat's Ukrainian Catholic Church	St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Church	St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Church
The betrothal in the vestibule	Yes (few)	Yes (few)	Yes (mostly)	Yes (60%)
The giving of rings (in the traditional way of betrothal)	Yes (in the front)	Yes (in the vestibule)	Yes (in the vestibule)	Yes (in the front)
The entrance into the church, led by the priest	Yes (few)	Yes (few)	Yes (mostly)	Yes (60%)
The wedding icons, carried in the wedding procession	Yes (few)	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Candles, held by the couple	No	No	No	Yes
The Candles on the altar, lit by parents	Yes	Yes (if requested)	No	Yes (very few)
Marriage vow	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kneeling on a white cloth or kneeler	Yes	No (standing)	Yes	Yes
The rite of crowning	Yes (crown or wreath)	Yes (crown or wreath)	Yes (crown or wreath)	Yes (crown and/or wreath)
The Readings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The common cup	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Joining of the Right Hands with embroidered cloth	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
The ceremonial walk	No (optional)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Venerating the icons by the couple during the ceremonial walk	No	No	No	Yes
The removal of the crowns	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Blessing of the bride and groom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Blessing of the bride	No (optional)	Yes	Yes	Yes (few)
Signing of the registry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mnohaia lita (May God grant many happy years)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Placing the icons on the hands of the couple, by the priest	No	No	No	Yes

Even though the members of St. Andrew's parish are mostly third- and fourth-generation Ukrainian immigrants, this parish tends to include more Ukrainian cultural and religious elements in its matrimonial service than the three Catholic churches do. Father Lakusta mentioned that couples often bring Ukrainian wedding bread, *korovai*, and display it near the altar. In contrast, the three Catholic priests have never seen a couple bringing a *korovai* to their churches. Furthermore, Father Lakusta remembered that around five years ago, a couple wore traditional garments and walked during their wedding procession from their house to the church, just as couples did in Ukraine. This couple's action is consistent with the observation that some members of the young generations of Ukrainian Canadians feel strongly about the need to express their identity and ethnicity. The Office of Missions and Education in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada distributes educational materials about the Eastern Orthodox marriage rite and establishes which ceremonies will be included in the marriage service of Ukrainian Orthodox churches throughout Canada. A pamphlet, *The Symbolism of the Eastern Orthodox Marriage Rite*, guides the bride and groom in how to prepare for their wedding service. Not only rings, but also candles, white cloths (or Ukrainian embroidered cloths), and wedding icons are recommended for the marriage service in Ukrainian Orthodox churches in Canada. My interview materials indicate that many couples that married in St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in Edmonton included most of the same items and rituals in their weddings as those included in weddings in St. Andrew's church. Father Tarasenko stated that Ukrainian Catholic Churches have fewer traditional elements in their church service than Ukrainian Orthodox churches because "There are certain things neglected in the past. There was a certain period in which Roman Catholic was regarded as real Catholic. Now we are coming back to the tradition. [The] Common cup and [the] ceremony [of] walking [around the *tetrapod*] were put aside. But now it is becoming more and more normal."

The rituals that were not always practiced by Ukrainian Catholics were the common cup ritual, tying hands with *rushnyk*, and the ceremonial walk around the *tetrapod*. According to Father Tarasenko, who came from the former Yugoslavia, Ukrainians also did not practice those rituals there because they were associated with the Serbians: "For me, in the country where I came from, we didn't use a common cup, we didn't use walking around, because it was Orthodox [ritual]. Our people said I am not Serbian. Because Serbs do that, we do differently"<sup>4</sup>. Father Tarasenko always believed that these ceremonies were "something [Ukrainian Catholics] forgot in [their] history." When he came to Canada, he thought that Ukrainian Catholics should practice the old traditions. The example of the Ukrainians in Yugoslavia shows that certain symbols or rituals can be markers dividing one ethnic group from another. Even though tying hands and the ceremonial walk are Byzantine rituals that both Serbian and Ukrainian churches were supposed to practice, Ukrainians in the former Yugoslavia regarded these rituals as "Serbian" ethnic symbols. As Cohen (1985) explained, the boundaries between ethnic groups are relational rather than absolute. Ethnic groups make their communities in relation to other communities. Father Tarasenko believed that if Ukrainian Catholics in Edmonton accept the neglected rituals as "normal" ones, these symbols can become "ours" and "Ukrainian ethno-religious symbols." Symbols can be reinterpreted through popular usage to become symbols of ethnic group identity.

Sometimes, a different interpretation of a certain ritual can cause different practices in a marriage service. One example is the marriage vow. In many Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches in Edmonton, couples make their marriage vow when kneeling on the Ukrainian *rushnyk* before the altar. However, in St. Josaphat's church, the bride and groom always exchange their vows while standing. Father Planchak explained, "Here we don't kneel, we stand. Standing is very solid act. Marriage vow is very solid moment. We don't understand why people should kneel. We are not asking for forgiveness for their sins. So we never ask people to kneel for their marriage vows."

The most significant inter-parish differences have also been seen in terms of an individual's association with traditional or ritual practices. The response "We do practice that in our parish, so it must be Ukrainian" was quite common in the interview responses. According to Matiasz (1985), symbolic markers have been recognized as signposts, or as a means of reflecting a consciousness of common origin. These religious and cultural markers have been accepted as a reflection of a group phenomenon (p. 125).

Among the four priests, the Ukrainian Orthodox priest had the most different view of the young

generation's wedding traditions. While the three Catholic priests thought that the young generation tends to follow the old traditions more than they were followed before, the Orthodox priest disagrees. Father Planchak, a Catholic priest, said, "I would say we have more and more young couples like old traditions." Similarly, Father Tarasenko, another Catholic priest, commented, "After Ukraine became independent, people can travel to Ukraine and see their old tradition. Young generation, they are very proud of that. I hope it is going to continue." In contrast, Father Lakusta, an Orthodox priest stated, "Younger people don't understand the meaning of tradition. Those who are intermarrying ethnically and religiously request the modern day's change." He thinks that young couples might request a garden wedding in the future. He sees this as undesirable and expects that his church will face this problem more and more and that more adjustments between the couples' requests and church rituals will be made. Thus, he emphasized the need for education to explain why the Ukrainian church has to follow the traditions that it has to been practicing for centuries. His concern reflects the potential blurring of church requirements and local informal traditions.

#### IV. Churches and the promotion of Ukrainianness

My second hypothesis is that church institutions play a positive role in promoting a sense of Ukrainianness. My fieldwork materials indicate that the four Ukrainian parishes incorporate Ukrainian elements into their matrimonial rites and promote a sense of Ukrainianness among Ukrainian Canadians. The ethnic symbols or elements that the Ukrainian churches incorporate into their matrimonial rites are embroidered cloth(s), wreaths, Ukrainian songs, and/or the Ukrainian language.

In this chapter, I focus on how Ukrainian Churches influence Ukrainian Canadians to promote a sense of Ukrainianness in their weddings. However, I also provide examples of non-Ukrainian churches or institutions that also allow Ukrainian Canadians to express their Ukrainianness through their wedding rituals. Father Gabriel of St. Basil's Parish explained that an inter-ethnic couple asked him to assist a priest to marry them in a Roman Catholic Church. The presence of a Ukrainian priest in a non-Ukrainian church reflects the Ukrainian bride or groom's ethnic and religious identity. Grant and Karen's (couple 14) wedding also indicated that Ukrainian elements and Ukrainianness can be added and promoted in a wedding ceremony which is performed in non-church institution.

*Rushnyky* (embroidered cloths) are often used in Ukrainian churches for several purposes. First, a *rushnyk* is placed so that the couple can stand on it in front of the altar area. Second, one is used for tying the right hands of the bride and groom during the ceremonial walk. Third, a *rushnyk* is also used for covering the table of registry. These usages of Ukrainian embroidered cloths reflect Ukrainian ethnicity. According to the Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church (1975), Russian Orthodox churches use a different material instead of embroidered cloth in front of the altar:

It is customary, at the beginning of this Office, to lead the bridal pair upon a piece of new, rose-coloured material (or a new rug), which is spread before the lectern. In olden days the Russian Tzars and their brides were led upon a piece of flowered silken material and sable skins (sometimes as many as forty in number), which were intended as emblems of happiness and plenty in the new path upon which they were entering. This is the significance in general. (p. 604)

According to a pamphlet, *The Symbolism of the Eastern Orthodox Marriage Rite* (2002), the white running cloth is supposed to be used for this purpose: "The couple stand on a white cloth throughout the rite of Crowning. This cloth represents the road of life, which, from this day forward, they will walk as one." This example of using different materials for the same purpose indicates that certain rituals can be ethnicized by using specific ethnic-heritage materials.

Another example of how church rituals can be ethnicized is "the Crowning." The Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church explains the differences between the Russian and Greek versions of this ritual: "The crowns represent the honour and reward bestowed upon the wedded pair for the purity of their lives. In Greece the crowns are woven of olive leaves (emblematic of fruitfulness), or of laurel, intertwined with flowers. But in Russia, metal crowns are kept in the churches. They are adorned with icons (*ikóni*); that of our Lord Jesus Christ being upon the crown of the bridegroom, and that of his holy Mother upon that of the bride" (p. 604). In Ukrainian churches in Edmonton, either a crown or a wreath or both can be used for the Crowning. Some Ukrainian

churches follow the folk tradition of wearing a *vinok* for the Crowning. The Russian Service book claims "the Crowning" indicates an ethnic difference when it was earlier likely to have been more related to social class. The lower class might have used wreaths while the higher classes used crowns.

The use of the Ukrainian language for the church service and Ukrainian choral singing are another two elements that make weddings "Ukrainian." Most songs during the service are restricted to response songs and religious hymns. However, Ukrainian songs are sometimes sung during the registry or at the end of the ceremony. For example, at Tim and Bailey's (couple 19's) wedding, Bailey's bridesmaids and one of her choir members sang a Ukrainian song as a gift for the couple during the registry. A well-known traditional song, "*Mnohaia lita*," is usually sung to announce not only the end of ceremony but also the beginning of a new life with God's blessing. *Mnohaia lita* originated from Byzantine tradition taken to Ukraine officially in 988. However, this song has been used much as "folk" song and transmitted orally. Now, in Edmonton, this song has become so popular among Ukrainian Canadians that it has become a Ukrainian symbol.

In all four Ukrainian churches, "*Mnohaia lita*" is customarily sung by the choir or all participants at the end of the ceremony. Father Gabriel emphasized the importance of this song at Ukrainian Canadian weddings: "They [the young generations] can throw out everything, but not the '*Mnohaia lita*'." Father Planchak also emphasized the religious meaning of this song: "*Mnohaia lita*, that's always [sung in weddings] in Ukrainian, [or in] English. Well, we sing it in all happy occasions not only in church, but also outside the church. It is also like a prayer, you know, many many years God bless them. It is like a church hymn. It became a religious expression."

The co-operation of church organizations also plays an important role in promoting a sense of Ukrainianness. Church choirs in particular contribute to making a wedding special and Ukrainian. All weddings are special, but a good church choir is perceived as a kind of "icing on the cake" (*Pacholok*). Church choirs usually provide a voluntary service at weddings. Each church choir has a different tradition and service. According to Roman Kravec, who is a member of St. Basil's church choir, around eight or more people from the church choir sing for the choir and parish members' weddings. However, the choir can sing for non-church members' weddings if the choir is requested to do so. In this case, the singers can be paid a small amount of money as a gratuity, but singing is absolutely voluntary. According to the language preference of the bride and groom, the choir can sing response songs and hymns in English or Ukrainian. In contrast, St. Josaphat's Church choir sings only for the choir members' weddings. Also, songs are sung only in Ukrainian. Thus, for non-choir members' weddings, St. Josaphat's priests recommend other Ukrainian choirs to the bride and groom. St. George's parish does not have its own choir. However, some church members, who are active singers in other choir groups, sing at weddings in the church. Father Tarasenko usually gives couples a list of those choir singers. Couples also can arrange by themselves to hire other Ukrainian choirs. At St. Andrew's Orthodox Church, in contrast, only its own church choir or cantor(s) can sing at weddings. Father Lakusta usually lets the bride and groom choose between St. Andrew's church choir and its cantor(s). In most cases, the bride and groom prefer the church choir. Usually, around thirty choir members sing at a wedding. It is customary for the bride and groom to donate a specified amount of money for the choir service. All songs for the church service are chosen by the choir and should be religious songs. During his eight years of service at St. Andrew's church, Father Lakusta has witnessed only three or four times when the church choir could not sing at a wedding. In those cases, Father Lakusta arranged for other Ukrainian choirs to sing.

Not only church-choir members, but also other church members, such as the church-hall manager, hall helpers, the cook, and kitchen helpers do voluntary work at wedding events in their churches. Since a Ukrainian church usually has its own hall, wedding receptions are often held in it. According to Mrs. Malanchuk, who has been a manager of St. Josaphat's Parish hall for six years, the number of wedding receptions held in the hall varies each year. Two years ago, during the summer, three receptions were held in the hall each month, while this year, one wedding reception has been scheduled per month so far. The bride and groom typically have to book the hall one year or one and half years in advance. The church hall is available not only for church members but also for non-church members or non-Ukrainians. Those who had attended their relative's or friend's wedding and have been satisfied with the service often want to have their wedding reception in St. Josaphat's

hall. Also, the reasonable rental price is another attraction. The hall is very close to the church, so that many couples choose this hall because of its convenience.

The decoration of the hall is up to the bride and groom. However, some church halls already have their own decoration, reflecting Ukrainian ethnicity and heritage symbols. Hall managers often provide photos, which were taken at the previous wedding reception, and give the bride and groom some idea of how to decorate the hall and how to set up the head table and where to display the *korovai* and wedding cake. Mrs. Malanchuk usually asks a couple for permission to take photos at a reception. Then she shares these pictures with new couples and gives them an idea of how to decorate the hall. She recommends that new couples have *korovai* and Ukrainian foods. She often introduces these couples to *korovai* makers who are also church members. She also prepares a Ukrainian embroidered cloth for covering the podium and provides vases with Ukrainian designs. Thus, any couple wanting to add an extra heritage item to their weddings can use them for decorations. St. Josaphat's parish hall has three kinds of set menus, each of which include Ukrainian foods. Cabbage rolls and *pyrohy* are the most popular Ukrainian foods that the bride and groom usually prefer. The hall can alter the menu. Besides cabbage rolls and *pyrohy*, the couple can have additional side orders, such as baked *pyrizhky* and *borshch*. The committee in charge of managing the hall has regular meetings and decides the menu. The hall has a professional chef, but the other people who work for wedding events are all volunteers. Thus, the bride and groom can obtain all the necessary services and support from church organizations and their members.

The bride and groom are the major actors in and producers of their own wedding. However, Ukrainian church communities also play an important role in creating elaborate and ethnic elements for weddings. Throughout the preparation process for a wedding, not only the priest but also the choir, the hall manager, cook, *korovai* maker and other volunteers can advise the bride and groom about what Ukrainian Canadian weddings should be like as well as what items should be included and how to display them. Ukrainian church organizations transform Ukrainian Canadians' weddings from a private to a public display. Using their cohesive church organization, church members help to put on a wedding event, creating a sense of community. Relying on the religious and communal resources of the large Ukrainian communities in Edmonton, Ukrainian Canadians make a wedding a telescoped representation of many ethnic symbols.

#### IV. Conclusion

Ethnicity has been seen as the collective, sociocultural entity of those who share a sense of common origin. From this perspective, all four Ukrainian churches have an identity revolving around the Eastern [Byzantine] Church Rite. The wedding rites at all four parishes have been considered to be legitimate expressions of the Byzantine Rite. However, within this orientation, the rites at each church vary slightly from those of the other three. Durkheim (1975) has commented on the societal power of religion in its transmission of symbols and rituals. At the four churches, symbols have been reinterpreted through popular usage to become symbols of group identity. Religion has provided a strong initial base for social identity, within which the individual can identify, establish, maintain or alter an ethnic identity according to the situation. Therefore, religious organizations have had the function of combining personal expressions with ethno-religious orientations. As Matiaz (1985) mentioned, ethnic groups vary and can be classified according to a range of typologies (p. 124). Religious organizations and their manipulation of ethno-religious symbols have been considered to be creators of a strong intra-group identity.

Communities use rituals as one way to convey information to members and to identify particularly significant occasions (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002, p. 87). This study showed that Ukrainian communities, especially Ukrainian church communities, play an important role in promoting Ukrainianness among their members, creating elaborate and ethnic elements for weddings. Using their cohesive church organization, church members help to put on a wedding event, creating a sense of community. Relying on the religious and communal resources of the large Ukrainian communities in Edmonton, Ukrainian Canadians make a wedding a telescoped representation of many ethnic symbols. Cultural organizations such as choirs and dance groups can also serve powerfully in this respect, and with similar results.



<sup>1</sup> 2001 Canadian census, 1,071,055 persons reside in Canada (mainly Canadian citizens) of Ukrainian origin, making them Canada's eighth largest ethnic group, and giving Canada the world's third-largest Ukrainian population behind Ukraine itself and Russia. The total population of Ukrainian ethnic origin gradually increased to 1,054,300 by 1991, slightly decreasing to 1,036,470 between 1991 and 1996, and then increasing again until it reached 1,071,055 in 2001. At the provincial level, during the last ten years, the Ukrainian ethnic population has increased in Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario while it has decreased in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Ontario has been the province with the largest number of Ukrainian Canadians, and Alberta has had the second-largest number. Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Toronto have been the three metropolitan areas that have had the largest Ukrainian populations during the last thirty years.

<sup>2</sup> For my dissertation "Ukrainian Canadian Weddings as Expressions of Ethnic Identity," I interviewed Ukrainian Canadians and their spouses who had married within the last 15 years as well as with other participants who had directly participated in Ukrainian Canadian weddings. The Ukrainian Canadians in the study include not only those who are descendants of Ukrainian immigrants, but also those who are recent immigrants themselves. The married couples who participated in this study can be classified into two groups: (1) twenty intra-ethnic couples and (2) twelve inter-ethnic couples. Each participant was further identified as single origin (his/her parents were both Ukrainian), or multiple origin (previous generations experienced inter-ethnic weddings). I attempted to interview each husband and wife as a couple together. I chose to limit myself to weddings that had occurred in or near Edmonton.

Besides married couples, I also interviewed other wedding participants who had played a specific role in wedding rituals: a priest, folk crafter, church choir member, cook, florist, painter, *korovai* (wedding bread) maker, icon maker, and others. For this article, I mainly used these interview materials.

<sup>3</sup> Matiasz conducted telephone surveys of 100 members from each of St. Josaphat's and St. Basil's parishes as well as fifty members from St. George's parish. Those symbols that people were asked about were the following: the rosary, three-barred cross, statues, the confessional, the flag, choirs, icons, embroidered vestments, liturgy, embellished walls, iconostasis, Taras Shevchenko, the trident, Marian Sodality and Cardinal Slipyj. The use of symbols and cultural markers reinforced the legitimacy of cultural expression in these three churches. The survey results show that support for the use of the liturgy of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Rite was universal. The timing of the celebrations differed according to the Julian or Gregorian calendar. Whether the liturgy was recited, sung by the choir, or sung by the congregation appeared to be immaterial to the respondents. However, the Marian Sodality, the Knight of Columbus, and the rosary did not conform to this traditional perception of religious practice. Symbols chosen because of their perceived relevance (to the researcher) — the Ukrainian flag, the trident, and the issue of the Patriarchate symbolized in the Ukrainian Cardinal of the time, Cardinal Slipyj — elicited different responses from parish to parish.

<sup>4</sup> Father Tarasenko did not mention whether he was referring to Ukrainians in the Croatian or the Serbian area. Ukrainian Catholics in Serbian areas kept the old calendar to make themselves look more like the Serbians. Ukrainian Catholics in Croatian areas kept the new calendar, to make themselves look more like the Catholic Croatians. This practice of dividing can also be used as a practice to unite. If Father Tarasenko was referring to Ukrainians in Croatian areas, perhaps those Ukrainians did not perform the tying of hands and the ceremonial walk to unite themselves to Croatian Catholic.

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## Interview

- Haber, Reverend Father Gabriel. Recorded interview by Sogu Hong. Edmonton. May 13, 2004.
- Lakusta, Reverend Father Victor. Recorded interview by Sogu Hong. Edmonton. May 27, 2004.

Malanchuk, Jenny. Recorded interview by Sogu Hong. Edmonton. May 30, 2004.

Planchak, Reverend Father Mihajlo. Recorded interview by Sogu Hong. Edmonton. May 20, 2004.

Tarasenko, Reverend Father Mykola. Recorded interview by Sogu Hong. Edmonton, May 20, 2004.

Turgen, Melanie. Recorded interview by Sogu Hong. Edmonton. May 27, 2004.

*В статье сосредоточено внимание на свадьбах украинцев Канады с представителями других общин, показано как украинские церковные организации способствуют привнесению в свадебную обрядовость украинского духа и украинской символики.*

*Для исследования выбрано четыре украинских прихода в Эдмонтоне, в которых автор опросил священников и других участников свадебного обряда.*

*В статье выдвигаются две гипотезы: во-первых, элементы матримониальных обрядов каждой церкви могут отличаться, потому что методы выражения национальной идентичности через религию могут отличаться в каждом приходе; во-вторых, церковные учреждения играют позитивную роль в сохранении украинских свадебных обычаев украинцев Канады.*

**Ключевые слова:** украинцы Канады, свадебные обычаи, свадебная обрядовость, церковь, этничность.